

## A Study of Political Will to Understand Anti-Corruption Policy Selection\*

부패방지정책 선택을 이해하기 위한 정치적 의지에 관한 연구

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### 국문초록

Brinkerhoff와 같이 부패방지에 대해 연구하는 학자나 Kwok과 같은 부패방지정책을 다루는 실무자들은 정치지도자의 정치적 의지 부족으로 인해 부패방지정책이 제대로 실행되지 못하였고, 그 결과 부패방지정책이 실패할 수 밖에 없었다고 주장하였다. 부패방지에 있어서 정치적 의지는 부패와 싸우고자 하는 정치지도자들의 결단으로 정의될 수 있다. 하지만, 정치적 의지라는 개념만으로는 왜 서로 다른 정치 지도자들이 서로 다른 부패방지정책을 선택하는지 설명하기 어렵다. 기존의 연구에 따르면 정치지도자가 강한 정치적 의지를 가진다면 부패방지정책을 채택하여 진지하게 실행할 것으로 예측된다. 반면, 정치지도자가 약한 정치적 의지를 가지고 있다면, 부패방지정책을 채택하기를 거부하거나, 채택하더라도 적극적으로 실행하지 않을 것이다. 하지만, 정치지도자가 특정 부패방지정책을 선호하고 다른 부패방지정책을 선호하지 않는 모습을 보인다면, 이는 기존의 정치적 의지라는 개념으로 설명하기 어려울 것이다. 이러한 현상을 설명하기 위해 본고는 정치적 의지를 정치지도자가 특정 정책을 도입하고 실행하기 위해 보여주는 확약이라고 정의하고자 한다. 이러한 정의는 정치지도자들의 정치적 의지가 다양한 부패방지정책에 대해 선택적으로 적용될 수 있음을 보여준다. 동 정의를 가지고 정치지도자가 부패방지정책을 선호하거나 선호하지 않는 현상을 설명하고자 중국과 인도의 사례를 선정하여 비교하였다. 두 나라 모두 심각한 부패문제를 겪고 있는 점, 관련 문헌이 풍부하여 연구에 있어서 접근성이 좋은 점, 부패방지정책의 선호에 있어서는 두 나라가 서로 다른 모습을 보이는 점을 고려하여 사례를 선정하게 되었다. 중국의 정치지도자는 정적 제거의 목적으로 부패방지정책을 채택하였기에 부패에 대한 수사를 강화하는 방향으로 발전하였다. 반면에 신고자 보호나 시민 사회 활성화와 같은 반부패정책은 지도자의 정치적 입지를 약화시킬 수 있으므로 채택되지 않는다. 인도의 정치지도자는 정치적 동지를 보호해야 하므로 부패방지를 위한 수사기구가 강화되기를 원하지 않는다. 반면에 정치적 지지를 얻기 위해 부패방지를 위한 개혁에는 상당한 관심을 피력한다. 이러한 사례 분석 결과는 본고에서 제시한 정치적 의지의 새로운 정의가 각 나라의 상이한 부패방지정책 선호를 설명하는데 있어서 유용한 개념임을 보여준다.

주제어: 부패방지정책의 실패, 인도의 반부패정책, 중국의 반부패 정책, 정치적 의지, 정치지도자

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## I. Introduction

Billions of dollars have been spent on combating corruption (Hough, 2013). However, corruption worldwide has not decreased (Johnston, 2011). Furthermore, anti-corruption investment in developing countries has had no significant effect on controlling corruption (Persson, Rothstein, & Teorell, 2013). The current literature argues that incomplete implementation and failure of anti-corruption policies must be closely related to a lack of political will.

Anti-corruption policies fail because they are poorly implemented, but an anti-corruption strategy can also fail because of poorly selected policies. To reduce corruption effectively, political leaders should adopt various anti-corruption policies, such as ones that educate citizens and guarantee the freedom of the press. Many political leaders, however, select only a particular type of policy and refuse to adopt other types. While some political leaders build a robust investigative agency without increasing transparency in government institutions, others focus on institutional reforms without punishment. This selectivity is associated with the failure of anti-corruption policies. Curbing corruption will not succeed if a government does not use various interconnected approaches.

Many social scientists agree that political will is fundamental in interpreting the failure of anti-corruption policies. However, the current concept of political will is not enough to elucidate the selection of anti-corruption policies. Contemporary anti-corruption literature construes political will as the willingness of a political leader to fight corruption. However, this definition cannot sufficiently explain why leaders select specific anti-corruption policies. If political leaders are only interested in investigating corruption and refuse to accept other institutional reforms, how can we evaluate their political will to fight corruption? The selection of anti-corruption policies cannot be sufficiently explained by the current concept of political will as it is presented in the current anti-corruption literature.

Another phenomenon that the concept of political will seeks to explain is the variation in the implementation of anti-corruption policies. How does political will affect the implementation of anti-corruption policies? This research question has not been fully answered. To analyze the selection of anti-corruption policies, this essay suggests an alternative definition of political will: the demonstrated commitment of a political leader

to adopt and implement a particular policy. While the current anti-corruption literature construes the political goal of political will as the will to fight corruption, this alternative definition confines the political goal of political will to adopt a particular policy.

To test the usability of this definition, this article explores two cases: the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) and the Republic of India (hereafter India). These countries both suffer from corruption but adopt different approaches to control it. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping, relies heavily on punishment but neglects to develop democratic measures. On the other hand, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, has adopted a radical currency reform and does not often punish corruption.

Scholars' evaluations of these leaders are varied. Some authors assert that they have a solid political will to control corruption because they have taken the implementation of an anti-corruption measure seriously (Rotberg, 2017; Dingding, 2014). Others argue that these leaders' refusal to adopt other anti-corruption policies proves that their political will to combat corruption is a facade (Skidmore, 2017; Anand and Kumar, 2016a).

The current definition of political will in the anti-corruption literature cannot precisely assess the behavior of either of these political leaders.

Instead of focusing only on the general political will to fight corruption, this essay considers the concept of political will to adopt a particular policy, which is more suitable for understanding political leaders' choices. In the first case, Xi Jinping in China adopted an investigative agency to fight corruption. However, he also uses this agency to retaliate against his political enemies. Although adopting democratic measures would positively reduce corruption, he has not implemented them because such measures would also cause his party to lose power. In the second case, Narendra Modi in India introduced a radical currency reform to fight corruption. This policy is highly visible to the public and shows an anti-corruption effort. However, Modi does not want to establish a robust anti-corruption organization that might attack his political allies.

Even though these political leaders have adopted some anti-corruption policies, it is unlikely that they have a solid political will to control corruption. Instead, they only implement anti-corruption policies closely related to their interests and ability to stay in power. With these findings, this paper argues that the alternative definition of

political will can help us better understand the different choices of political leaders.

After exploring definitions of political will and the reasons for the failure of anti-corruption policies, this paper explains the limitation of the current concept of political will and suggests an alternative definition. After investigating China and India, this article concludes that the alternative definition leads us to think more deeply about the motivations of political leaders. The current definition of political will is only helpful for blaming political leaders for the failure of anti-corruption policies. However, moral judgment cannot help us scrutinize the reality of the decision-making behind implementing anti-corruption policies. With the new definition of political will, we can explore the motivation behind political leaders' choices of anti-corruption policies.

## II. Political Will

### 1. Definitions of Political Will

Political will is now popularly used to explain policy failures (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010), but a JSTOR search shows that "lack of political will" did not appear in a journal article until 1966. Oxford Dictionaries show that "political will" was mentioned in *The Times*, published in the late 18th century (Political will, 2018). After that, the term was rarely mentioned until the middle of the 19th century ("Address of the Committee Formed at the Late Meeting of the Medical Profession at the Crown and Anchor Tavern," 1844). Google Books Ngram Viewer (2013) shows that the frequency of this terminology has consistently increased since the 1960s. Thus, political will is a relatively new concept, but it is now a familiar idea to many scholars in social science (Min, 2018).

Today, political will is a frequently mentioned but still ambiguous concept (Charney, 2009; Hammergren, 1998; Post et al., 2010). When this terminology was first used, there was no consensus about its definition. Some have construed political will as an individual will, such as the king's political will (Norman, 1974; Sloane, 1899). Others understood the term as an abstract idea, such as the national or social will (MacIver, 1911; Sumner, 1876). Others have construed political will as the people's political will (Reinsch, 1901).

Since the late 1990s, some other definitions of political will have been suggested. In the context of the political will to fight corruption, Sahr Kpundeh (1998) regarded political will as "the demonstrated credible intent of political actors (elected or appointed leaders, civil society watchdogs, stakeholder groups, etc.) to attack perceived causes or effects of corruption at a systemic level" (p. 92). As political will pertains to anti-corruption policies, Derick Brinkerhoff (1999) defined the term as "the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives - in this instance, reduced corruption - and to sustain the costs of those actions over time" (p. 3). More generally, Treadway, Hochwarter, Kacmar, & Ferris (2005) construed political will as "an actor's willingness to expend energy in pursuit of political goals" (p. 231); Rose & Greeley (2006) understand political will to mean "the sustained commitment of politicians and administrators to invest political resources to achieve specific objectives" (p. 5); Post, Charles, & Raile (2008) construe political will as "the sustained commitment of politicians and administrators to invest political resources to achieve specific objectives" (p. 114) Quigley (2009) defined political will as "the demonstrated credible intent of political actors to take meaningful action toward reform" (p. 16).

Some common components can be found in these definitions: actors, demonstrated commitment, and political goals (Min, 2018). In the definition of political will, actors can be political leaders or a group of politicians (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Post et al., 2010). Without demonstrated commitment, political will cannot be seriously accepted by people (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Rose & Greeley, 2006). Political goals can be the reason for the existence of political will (Min, 2018). In sum, political will can be popularly defined as the commitment of a political leader to accomplish political goals such as fighting corruption (Min, 2018).

## 2. Political Will and Fighting Corruption

Since the 1990s, due to broader awareness of its harmful impact, corruption has received burgeoning interest among international organizations and countries (Sayedoff, 2016). In 1991, the World Bank argued that corruption harmed the capacity of governments (World Bank, 1991). One hundred eighty-three countries have ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNODC, 2018). Anti-corruption agencies have been established in more than 100 countries (Transparency International, 2016).

Despite this global interest, corruption has not significantly decreased. Incomplete compliance with anti-corruption policies remains a problem worldwide (Heeks & Mathisen, 2012; Persson et al., 2013). There are several reasons why countries do not fully comply with anti-corruption policies:

1. Some countries simply do not adopt the recommended anti-corruption policies. The Government of Barbados did not enact anti-corruption laws prohibiting public officials from receiving bribes ("Successive Barbados Governments Refuse to Adopt Anti-Corruption Laws, Freedom of Information," 2008).
2. Other countries only adopt a weak version of anti-corruption policies. The Republic of Uganda has built various anti-corruption institutions. Still, these institutions do not have the de facto power to investigate and punish public officials working for the central government (Godfrey & Yu, 2014).
3. Many countries implement anti-corruption policies incompletely.

Numerous anti-corruption agencies have failed due to a lack of independence and cooperation (Meagher, 2005). In summary, as Johnston (2011) declares, the success of anti-corruption policies has been elusive.

Subsequently, a broad consensus has explained the current failure of anti-corruption policies through the concept of political will. For example, scholars assert that the absence of a political will is closely related to the failure of anti-corruption policies in Asian countries (Kwok, 2009; Perlman, 2008) and African countries (Amundsen, 2006; Asongu, 2013). It is widely accepted that the failure of anti-corruption policies can be explained by a lack of political will (Zhang, 2015).

The extant literature also suggests that strong political will should support the implementation of anti-corruption policies that meaningfully reduce corruption (Altamirano, 2007; Brinkerhoff, 2000; Healy & Ramanna, 2013; Hope, 2017; Rotberg, 2017). In the Republic of Liberia (hereafter Liberia), Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the 24th President from 2006 to 2018, has shown a strong political will to eradicate corruption. She punished forty-six senior public officials because they failed to report their assets to the anti-corruption agency (Solihu, 2012). Her actions had noticeable results. In the Corruption Perception Index 2005, Liberia was ranked 132nd out of 153 countries, and its score was 2.2 on a scale of zero to ten, with 10 being the highest level of

anti-corruption (Transparency International, 2017). However, in the Corruption Perception Index 2016, Liberia had moved the rankings to 90th out of 176 countries, and its score had improved to 37.00 on a scale of zero to 100 (Transparency International, 2017).

Another example is Georgia's success, which has significantly decreased its corruption level. Mikheil Saakashvili, a former President of Georgia from 2004 to 2013, fired all traffic police officers, hired the well-educated, and paid them higher wages (Healy & Ramanna, 2013). Since corruption is most frequently motivated by financial needs, increasing street-level bureaucrats' salaries is a reliable way to control it (Quah, 2013). The Saakashvili government also improved public officials' hiring process transparency (Healy & Ramanna, 2013). Like Liberia, Georgia improved its place in global rankings through their anti-corruption initiatives. In the Corruption Perception Index 2003, Georgia was ranked 124th out of 133 countries, and its score was 1.8 on a scale of zero to ten (Transparency International, 2017). Then, in the Corruption Perception Index 2013, Georgia had improved to 55th out of 175 countries, and its score had risen to 49 on a scale of zero to 100 (Transparency International, 2017). It is widely believed that these cases clearly show the power of political will to reduce corruption.

### 3. Limitation of Political Will in the Anti-Corruption Literature

Researchers have developed a general anti-corruption toolkit with the investigation and preventive measures to combat corruption. For example, enhancing transparency (Khan, 2006), enlightening citizens (Pope, 2008), and empowering civil society can all help stop corruption (Klitgaard & Baser, 1998). These recommendations have been developed based on the belief that if we could give the proper prescriptions to political leaders, then the leaders would take them. According to current studies, political leaders with a solid political will to fight corruption will also take the implementation of various anti-corruption policies seriously. Political leaders refuse to adopt these policies if they are not interested in curbing corruption. In this situation, their weak political will to fight corruption negatively affects controlling it.

This logic, however, cannot fully explain the selection of anti-corruption policies. The implementation of anti-corruption policies is often uneven. While some countries are interested in investigating corruption, others try to educate public officials to obey a

code of ethics (Meagher, 2005). If political leaders discipline public servants but refuse to build an investigative agency to fight corruption, how can we evaluate their political will?

Here is one example of a country with an uneven implementation of anti-corruption policies. On September 28th, 2016, the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, also known as Kim Young-ran Act, took effect in the Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea) (Ogura, 2016). The act, created by former Chief of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of Korea Kim Young-ran in 2012 (Ernst, 2016), aims to eradicate the culture of corruption (Ogura, 2016). According to the law, public employees, journalists, and teachers are not allowed to receive meals worth more than 30,000 won, gifts of more than 50,000 won, and condolence cash gifts of more than 100,000 won (Ahn, 2016).

While the Korean government uses acts like this to boost its culture of integrity, it still has not implemented an independent investigative agency. The Korea Independent Commission against Corruption was established in 2002, but this anti-corruption agency has little power to investigate corruption cases (World Bank, 2011). According to Article 59 of the Act on Anti-Corruption and the Establishment and Operation of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission 2009, this new agency only conducts preliminary investigations, and those cases should be referred to other investigative agencies, such as the Korean National Police Agency. In 2008, the Korea Independent Commission against Corruption got a new name, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of Korea, but this name does not guarantee its investigative capacity (World Bank, 2011).

How can we explain this discrepancy? How can we evaluate the political will of politicians in South Korea? Does enacting a new anti-corruption law mean they have a solid political will to curb corruption? Or does their refusal to build a robust investigative agency signal a weak political will to combat corruption? The current concept of political will, as defined in the anti-corruption literature, cannot sufficiently explain this situation.

#### 4. Modifying a Definition of Political Will

This essay argues that we should adopt an alternative concept of political will to explain the selection of anti-corruption policies. This paper construes political will as



the demonstrated commitment of a political leader to adopt and implement a specific policy. The main difference between the current and alternative definitions is the idea of the political goal. While the political goal in the current definition is to fight corruption, the political goal in the alternative definition is to adopt a particular policy. Furthermore, while the contemporary anti-corruption literature evaluates whether political leaders have a strong will to fight corruption, this article explains their motivation for implementing a particular policy.

We should accept the fact that political leaders are essentially self-interested. It is too naive to believe that political leaders merely work for the public interest. It is plausible that they fight corruption for their interests. From the viewpoint of realists who study international relations (Halliday, 1990), this essay assumes that political leaders are rational power maximizers in national affairs.

If political leaders are mainly interested in maximizing their power, then their policy choices may be determined by the policies' expected impact on their power. When political leaders consider adopting a new anti-corruption policy, they evaluate the policy based on its effects on their power. Because their interests are mainly related to maintaining or increasing their power, this is a primary consideration. However, political leaders have little concern for the policy's effectiveness in reducing corruption, especially when it is not in what they perceive as their best interest.

A leader's political will to adopt a specific policy is highly associated with their evaluation of that policy. If a new policy is expected to fortify a leader's power positively, then the leader will have a solid political will to implement it. On the contrary, if a new policy is expected to affect their power negatively, they will not want to implement it. In other words, political leaders tend to select policies that can fortify their power. Thus, when seeking to understand the motivation of political leaders and to explain the variation in the adoption and implementation of anti-corruption policies, examining the political will to adopt a specific anti-corruption policy is more valuable than reviewing the political will to fight overall corruption.

### III. Material and Methods

To test the usability of this alternative definition, this article uses the

comparative-historical method. The comparative-historical method is a method that compares various cases in an attempt to find complex causal relationships to understand the general idea behind the external appearance of those cases (Mahoney & Thelen, 2015). The comparative-historical method employs a case study research. Case studies help us explore complex social phenomena as they enable a deeper examination of the cases involved (Yin, 2014). To deal with cases, comparative-historical analysts adopt historical methods. The historical approach gathers data from secondary sources such as government documents and other studies (Lange, 2013).

Criteria for case selection in this article include corrupt countries, the differing reactions of political leaders, and data accessibility. Countries suffering from corruption are selected because they need to adopt anti-corruption policies. The differing responses of political leaders should be considered because this study seeks to explain the variation in the adoption and implementation of anti-corruption policies. Data accessibility is also important because this study requires ample and various resources for investigating cases deeply.

This article selects two countries: China and India. First, corruption is profound in these countries. Second, since many authors have written about these two countries, there is ample data. Finally, they have chosen different anti-corruption policies: while India focuses on institutional reforms, China sticks to punishment.

## IV. Cases

### 1. China

Corruption is rampant in China (Lee, 2017). In the Corruption Perception Index 2016, China was ranked 79th out of 176 countries, and its score was 40 on a scale of zero to 100 (Transparency International, 2017). In the Control of Corruption, a part of Worldwide Governance Indicators 2016, China's score was -0.25 on a scale of -2.5 to 2.5 (World Bank, 2017). According to the Pew Research Center, four out of five Chinese people believe corruption is widespread in their country (Lockett, 2016).

Throughout recent history, Chinese political leaders have noticed the detrimental impact of corruption on society and economics (Xu & Yano, 2016). Mao Zedong, the

founding father of the People's Republic of China, worried that corruption would become a severe problem in China, and he rebuked corrupt officials for their extravagant lifestyles (Quah, 2015). In 1982, Deng Xiaoping, the former Chairman of the Central Advisory Commission of the Communist Party of China from 1982 to 1987, warned that many cadres were corrupt (Cheung, 2007). In 1989, after the Tiananmen Square protests, Jiang Zemin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China from 1989 to 2002, insisted that corruption hurt the relationship between the party and the people (Cheung, 2007). Jiang Zemin subsequently created the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and disciplined public officials (Lee, 2017). Hu Jintao was the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of China from 2002 to 2012. He also emphasized the severe impact of corruption on economic growth in China ("Power and peace in China," 2004). Thus, political leaders in China have stressed the gravity of corruption multiple times (Fungáčová, Määttä, & Weill, 2016).

These political leaders did more than just talk about corruption. Four anti-corruption campaigns were launched in 1982, 1988, 1983, and 1996 (Dai, 2010). During this time, political leaders adopted many rules and decided to combat corruption (Dai, 2010). These campaign-style anti-corruption policies punished many public servants (Chan & Gao, 2008). There were one hundred thirty-six thousand twenty-four cases investigated and 26,000 criminals were charged by Deng Xiaoping's government (Dai, 2010). Jiang Zemin's government investigated 58,726 cases and arrested 20,794 persons in 1989 (Dai, 2010).

These anti-corruption campaigns were not the end. Xi Jinping started a more powerful anti-corruption campaign to fight corruption in 2012 (Li, 2016; Giannetti, Liao, You, & Yu, 2017). In 2012, after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping appointed Wang Qishan as the Secretary of the CCDI and ordered him to eliminate corruption (Quah, 2015). Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign punished about 180,000 public officials in 2013 (Li, 2016; Yuen, 2014).

Yet experts argue that China should still do more than punish its public officials for corruption. They recommend that China adopt various anti-corruption policies. Transparency International suggests that China should increase the transparency of its government and protect civil society activists who strive to reduce corruption (Transparency International, 2014). Bertelsmann Stiftung (2016) asserts that the absence of a free press and the lack of judicial independence harm controlling corruption.

However, China has not paid attention to these recommendations. The Chinese government is not interested in empowering civil society. Instead, the government has vigorously tried to keep civil society under strict control (Teets, 2015). For example, in June 2016, Lin Zulian, a chief of Wukan village, was arrested while leading protesters (Huang, 2016). In September 2016, in an act that has become a hallmark of the Chinese government, riot police suppressed protesters to quell the disturbance in Wukan.

Furthermore, the Chinese government does not guarantee freedom of speech. Xi Jinping's government operates more than a dozen agencies to control the media, such as the Communist Party's Central Propaganda Department (Xu & Albert, 2017). More than two million employees monitor internet posts (Xu & Albert, 2017). Forty-nine journalists were confined in 2015, and most were charged with subverting state power (Beiser, 2015).

Political leaders in China also refused to guarantee the independence of the judiciary. On January 14, 2017, Zhou Qiang, the Chief Justice and President of the Supreme People's Court of China, criticized the ideology of judicial independence (Huang, 2017). Political elites in China argue that Western ideologies can weaken China's judiciary system. Therefore, the independence of the judiciary is not secured in China. Due to these factors, in the Latent Judicial Independence 2012, China was ranked 120th out of 153 countries, and its score was 0.26 on a scale of zero to one (Linzer & Staton, 2015).

Evaluations of these reactions from Chinese leaders vary (Wang, 2017). Some scholars believe Xi Jinping's political will to fight corruption is sincere. Robert Rotberg (2017) evaluates Xi Jinping as having a strong political will to fight corruption, and Chen Dingding (2014) argues that Xi Jinping seriously combats corruption. However, others doubt Xi Jinping's political will to combat corruption. They argue that if Xi Jinping were honest about his desire to fight corruption, he would adopt various anti-corruption policies, including institutional reforms (Skidmore, 2017).

However, Xi Jinping's political will to combat corruption is unclear. If we focus only on the idea of political will to control corruption, then we cannot fully understand Xi's behavior. This paper's alternative concept of political will pertains to adopting a particular policy more clearly explains Xi Jinping's selection of anti-corruption policies. He sticks to punishment because it has a positive effect on maintaining his power, and he refuses to adopt other democratic reforms because they harm the fortification of his power.

Xi Jinping's prime motivation for fighting corruption is purging political enemies. His anti-corruption strategy relies on punishment, and his anti-corruption campaign is not impartial. Although Xi proclaimed that he would catch not only flies but also tigers (Branigan, 2013), people understood that the tigers were primarily his political rivals and never his allies (Schell, 2016). The CCDI's attack focuses on former party leaders and friends (Yuen, 2014).

Zhou Yongkang was the former Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China. He was one such tiger that Xi Jinping hunted. Zhou is the highest-ranked public official convicted of corruption in the history of the People's Republic of China (Ravi, 2015). Zhou was charged with corruption (Keliher and Wu, 2015), and in 2015, he was condemned to life in prison ("After Zhou, who?" 2015). Xi Jinping's CCDI investigated not only Zhou Yongkang but also his relatives and friends. More than 300 suspects were related to Zhou Yongkang (Lim and Blanchard, 2014). The Diplomat says, "Xi Jinping may be mandating this because, for him, Zhou Yongkang and his allies are expendable. They showed disloyalty during the leadership transition and backed the wrong horse" (Brown, 2014).

The political will to adopt a specific policy can explain Xi Jinping's choices. Xi uses the CCDI not because he is a man of justice but because this use of punishment helps him politically. His political will to drive a robust anti-corruption campaign is genuine because doing so increases his power. However, he has no political will to adopt democratic reforms that would significantly reduce corruption but might also hurt his party's power.

## 2. India

Corruption is a serious and rampant problem in India (Singh & Sohoni, 2016). In the Corruption Perception Index 2016, India was ranked 79th out of 176 countries, and its score was 40 on a scale of zero to 100 (Transparency International, 2017). Sixty-two percent of Indians have given bribes; estimated that five billion dollars in bribes are given annually (Center for Media Studies, 2005). Furthermore, one thousand four hundred fifty-six trillion dollars are hidden in Swiss banks (Hussain, 2012). India is one of the largest economies in the world, but people in India suffer from the negative impact of corruption (Chêne, 2009).

To fight this corruption, Narendra Modi adopted an anti-corruption policy. On

November 8, 2016, Modi announced a radical currency reform (Anand & Kumar, 2016a) in which people in India would have until December 30 to exchange their old 500 and 1,000 rupee notes for the new 500 and 2,000 rupee notes in banks (Anand, 2016). If people wanted to trade more than 250,000 rupees, they had to explain where the money came from to tax officials (Anand, 2016). However, the policy led to chaos. Since the two older notes covered 86 percent of the currency, there was a shortage of new notes (Anand & Kumar, 2016b).

Furthermore, the impact of this reform on curbing corruption remains unclear (Biswas, 2016). People did not change their behavior: they kept their cash in their private safes (Anand, 2016). Because people did not respond to the reform, it might have no significant effect on reducing corruption.

While Narendra Modi has adopted this reform, he has not implemented any other anti-corruption policies wanted by anti-corruption activists. They argue that a new powerful anti-corruption agency should be established. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) are the leading anti-corruption agencies in India (Chêne, 2009). These agencies, however, have not been successful due to their lack of resources. Moreover, the CVC has no powers, and the CBI is not independent (Mohapatra, 2013).

In 2011, a strong anti-corruption movement occurred in India (Singh & Sohoni, 2016). Anna Hazare, an anti-corruption activist, initiated a peaceful demonstration to ask the government to establish the Lokpal, a type of ombudsman (Yadav & Chopra, 2015). Indian politicians rejected the Lokpal Bill ten times (Menon, 2006). Yet, eventually, in 2014, Anna Hazare's movement made the government and politicians enact and promulgate the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (Singh, 2016).

The key features of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013 are as follows. The Lokpal will be an independent anti-corruption agency with investigation power (Yadav & Chopra, 2015). According to Article 3, the Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and members ordained by the President with a selection committee's recommendation. According to Article 4, the selection committee will be composed of the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the House of the People, the Leader of Opposition in the House of the People, the Chief Justice of India or a Judge of the Supreme Court, and one eminent jurist. According to Article 13, the Consolidated Fund of India will pay for the expense of the Lokpal. Lokpal's investigation will be free from the influence of politicians (Yadav & Chopra, 2015). According to Article 11, the Lokpal will conduct a

preliminary inquiry and prosecute corrupt public servants without requiring permission. According to Article 20, Lokpal can order the CBI to investigate corruption cases.

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act was enacted in 2014, but Lokpal was established in 2019. It took five years to be founded because a selection committee had been delayed to be formed. The Indian government insisted that a selection committee could not be established because of the absence of the Leader of Opposition (Singh, 2016). Ultimately, Narendra Modi was not interested in establishing the committee.

If Narendra Modi showed efforts to build a selection committee for the appointment of the Lokpal, then people would believe that his political will to carry out the cash reform to reduce corruption was sincere. We cannot jump to the conclusion that Narendra Modi's political will to fight corruption does not exist, but his attitude leads us to doubt it. According to Harsh Pant, a King's College London professor, Narendra Modi might have only adopted the radical currency reform because it was a more visible political action (Anand & Kumar, 2016a).

The political will to adopt a specific policy can explain Narendra Modi's choice. Indian politicians do not want to build a robust anti-corruption agency because such an agency might attack their enemies and political allies. Those politicians need money and machines to win elections. While attacking their enemies can increase the probability of winning elections, revealing political allies' corruption might decrease the possibility. If politicians in the ruling party have a risk-averse propensity, politicians will not be incentivized to adopt effective anti-corruption policies.

This model can explain why Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, protected his friend in the jeep scandal. Jawaharlal Nehru seemed to be a clean politician, but his political allies were not (Jaffrelot, 2010). Krishna Menon, the former Indian High Commissioner in London, was tied to the jeep scandal in 1948 (Jaffrelot, 2010). He ignored the legal process of public procurement to buy 4,000 jeeps, and only 155 jeeps, all unusable, arrived in India (Jaffrelot, 2010). Jawaharlal Nehru, however, protected Menon from the investigation and appointed him as a minister (Jaffrelot, 2010). Interestingly, this scandal had little effect on a major election because the Indian people did not take this issue seriously (Raju, 2010).

This case shows that political leaders in India want to protect their followers. When people are not concerned about corruption, it is easier for political leaders to offer protection to their followers. There is no reason for leaders to fight corruption if it hurts their supporters. Narendra Modi does not want to build a powerful

anti-corruption agency that might damage the protection of his followers. However, he has adopted a highly visible reform to fight corruption because it positively affects his popularity.

### 3. Comparison

The Chinese political leaders focus on criminalization because they want to purge their enemies in the party. They do not adopt democratic measures that might harm the party's power. In contrast, the Indian political leaders have a powerful political will to implement freedom of information as a tool for curbing petty corruption because this policy can assuage civil society. However, these leaders have not punished corrupt elites. They want to protect their political allies because their friends give them money and machines to win elections.

One might reasonably ask why the Indian political leaders avoid retaliating against their political enemies? Eliminating their political rivals could be an easy way to win elections. They might selectively punish their enemies and protect their political allies because the Central Bureau of Investigation is not independent. What makes them hesitate to fight the grand corruption related to their political rivals?

Political leaders in India do not want to punish their enemies because they must protect their political allies. Although the Central Bureau of Investigation is under their control, they cannot perfectly control the media. If they selectively investigate their political rivals, those rivals might reveal the political leaders' scandals. The situation will become complicated if the media broadcasts corruption cases related to political leaders and their allies. Thus, punishing enemies is not risk-free. If political leaders retaliate against their rivals, they cannot protect their friends.

## V. Conclusion

This essay introduces an alternative definition of political will: the demonstrated commitment of a political leader to adopt and implement a specific policy. The cases of China and India demonstrate how this alternative definition can help us understand the different choices of political leaders. Xi Jinping uses an investigative agency to fight



corruption because he wants to retaliate against his political enemies. He does not adopt democratic measures that would cause his party to lose power even though these policies would positively reduce corruption. Narendra Modi has introduced a radical currency reform to fight corruption because it is a highly visible political action. He does not want to establish a powerful anti-corruption agency that might attack his political allies. Both leaders have introduced a specific policy that positively affects their interests and abilities to stay in power.

This paper, however, does not argue that political will to fight corruption is not a helpful idea. Some political leaders have shown a strong political will to fight corruption. Their political will to combat corruption is not in question. Furthermore, it is not deniable that a lack of political will hurts reducing corruption. Some cases can be explained simply with the idea of the political will to fight corruption.

Nevertheless, we need an alternative idea of political will because the conventional concept of political will to fight corruption has some limitations. First, it is usually treated as a one-dimensional concept. A substantial body of literature understands political will as "a binary or a continuous concept" (Post et al., 2010). The current concept recognizes different degrees of political will, but there is no recognition of the different types.

Second, political will is a normatively loaded idea (Min, 2018). If the lack of political will to fight corruption is the leading cause of the failure of anti-corruption policies, then we can criticize political leaders due to the failure. Political leaders may then be stigmatized due to their absence of a political will. Anti-corruption reformers can use the concept of political will to use political leaders as scapegoats for the failure of a campaign against corruption. However, moral judgment cannot help us find the reality of decision-making behind implementing anti-corruption policies.

Finally, the discussion of political will to combat corruption in current anti-corruption studies neglects the fact that political leaders are self-interested. Many social scientists who believe in the usefulness of political will to control corruption assume that political leaders should be altruists. For them, political leaders fight corruption because it is suitable and desirable. However, it is not plausible that political leaders work only for the public interest. It is more acceptable that such leaders fight corruption for their interests because they are power maximizers.

These pitfalls come partly from insufficiently complex definitions of political will. The alternative definition of political will to adopt a specific policy helps us overcome these

obstacles and gain a more sophisticated understanding of decisions surrounding anti-corruption policies. Using the lens of this new definition, we can recognize how political will varies by type, not just degree. By investigating more cases, we will further understand the different choices of political leaders in their selection and implementation of anti-corruption policies.

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<Abstract>

## A Study of Political Will to Understand Anti-Corruption Policy Selection

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The current literature argues that the failure of anti-corruption policies is closely related to a lack of political will. However, the political will to fight corruption cannot explain why different political leaders adopt different anti-corruption policies. How can the concept of political will explain the variation in the implementation of anti-corruption policies? To answer this research question, this paper suggests a modified definition of political will: the demonstrated commitment of a political leader to adopt and implement a specific policy. To test the usability of this definition, this article uses the comparative-historical method in an exploration involving two countries: China and India. These case studies show that the alternative definition helps us better understand the different choices of political leaders.

Key words: China's Anti-Corruption Policies, Failure of Anti-Corruption Policies,  
India's Anti-Corruption Policies, Political Leader, Political Will