

## Three essential ways of anti-corruption

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### Abstract

Today anti-corruption has been the important common task for china and the world. The key method in China was to restrict power by morals in the history of anti-corruption, meanwhile the western countries was to restrict power by powers. The paper argues that three ways should be considered to restrict power in the contemporary times, that is, to restrict power by morals, by powers and by democracy.

**Keywords:** corruption, anti-corruption, morals, power, democracy, China

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## Introduction

Corruption refers to the abuse of a public authority for personal interest (Yang, X., 2007.). The phenomenon of corruption exists to different extent in various social systems all over the world. In long process towards mankind's political civilization, how to restrain corruption is always an important topic. Therefore, the study to find out how corruption is fought against in human society and explore the regularity process has profound significance both theoretically and practically.

This article holds that the regulation of corruption mainly lies in the concept that, to restrain the corruption, we must employ three essential ways concurrently to restrain and supervise the power of authority.

### To restrict power by morals

Morals are the total of behavioural regulations of adjusting the relationship among individuals and between individuals and society (Yan, 1997). Looking back in the history of human civilization, the concept of emphasizing political morals can be found occurring in ancient history (Yang, X., 2007). Both home and abroad, as well as today and yesterday, exerting the power of morals is always an important content of anti-corruption methods (Chen, 2005). Any competent government will always emphasize the importance of increasing officials' morals and leadership capabilities by education which may be said to a standard of universal leadership.

In the process of Western and China's political civilization, to restrict power by morals is, without exception, emphasized (Xu, 2006). For example, in the ancient West, Socrates long ago put forward that "morals are knowledge" (Zhu, 1996). He believed that to make man do good, one must have certain morals. Kant in modern times, however, believed that moral rules are universal and political behaviours cannot be deviated by those moral principles (Ye, 2004). He proposed the famous saying: Looking up to starry sky of the universe, you can feel the conscience in your heart (Zhu, 1996). But overall, China's political practice and culture mainly emphasizes the importance of morals in restraining corruption (Yan, 1997). In terms of the history of Chinese traditional political philosophy, the mainstream of Confucianism is that of ethics politics philosophy (Wang, 2001). This core of this ruling philosophy emphasizes the "practices of integrity, morals is the way to family harmonization, prosper nations therefore rule the world", which is tightly related to the individuals' morals with political issues (Tang, 2006: 53). This kind of ruling by morals is on one hand used by the feudal ruler; on the other hand, its essence is also a great drive for the formation and development of China's political civilization. In Chinese traditional political cultures, there were many important sayings. Confucius said that, "the ruling by morals is like Polaris which is surrounded by the rest of the stars" (Wang, 2001). Mencius also advocated governors should pay more attention to the moral learning (Wang, 2001). They should carry on the self-restraint with ethics morals and behaves in a moral way. In "*Yan Zi Chun Qiu*" it is indicated more explicitly that, "incorruptibility is the very base of

politics” (Wang, 2001: 323). In the history of Chinese tradition politic civilization, there were many honest and capable officials, for example *Bao Zheng*, *Hai Rui* and so on (Xu, 2006).

In the aspect of anti-corruption, we must connect the past with creativity. In treating Chinese traditional political civilization and experience, we must eliminate the bad things and take in the essence of great thoughts. Many facts in both Chinese and foreign history prove that the corruption of officials is the greatest corruption (Kong, 2007). In China, more and more people feel that the corruption greatly distorted the image of government (Yang, Y., 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to give special education in anti-corruption morals to our officials to strengthen their ability to fight against corruption. Moral education refers to the educational activities that strengthen morals. Moral view is the basic viewpoint in terms of moral conscience, moral relations and moral activities. Progressive moral education is helpful for the people to raise their moral conscience, influence the moral emotion, enhance moral will, strengthen the moral faith and establish moral ideals. To advance ‘ruling by morals’ plays an important role in restraining people’s behaviours, adjusting social relations and guaranteeing an honest political and social life.

#### **To restrict power by power**

In the human’s process of political civilization, it is not enough to depend only on morals; it is also needed to restrict power by power. The essence of this restriction is to restrict power mutually and this interconnects with the arrangement of political system.

In both Chinese and Western history, there were such thoughts and actions of power restrictions. But they are different in style. In many dynasties in Chinese history, supervisory systems were set up to supervise officials’ behaviours or distribute power among different officials to restrict mutually (Ma, 2005). The ultimate power belongs to the emperor. In Western history, power was restricted by power to restrict corruption and gradually connected with “ruling of law” (Tang, 2006: 52). Regarding ruling of law, Aristotle once said that there are two aspects for ruling of law: the established laws should be obeyed universally; the laws to obey should be well made (Li, 2004).

Ruling of law is the opposite political system to ruling by ruler. It excludes individual powers, and means that everyone is equal under the law. That’s to say not only the public should obey the laws, but also the officials. In the society which is governed by ruler, the public must obey the law, while the government need not obey the law. The implementation of laws varies by man, in the society which is governed by law, the public must obey the laws and so does the government. Everyone is equal before the law. The spirit of law means that all men and organizations must behave within the framework of laws and justice. Public, officials and organizations cannot break the law. As for the necessity of power restriction, British philosopher Acton asserts that power will lead to corruption (Yang, C., 1999). Absolute power will lead to absolute corruption (Chen, 2000). In addition, French enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu states that anyone with power is likely to abuse

their power (Li, 2004). From this point, he is the first to systematically prove the theory of separation and restriction of legislation, administration and judicature.

To treat the theory of Western power restriction, one should eliminate the bad and take in the good. On the one hand, based on the national situation, in China we cannot totally copy Western political systems. But on the one other hand, we should borrow the sensible parts concerning power restriction, and systematically arrange power restriction. We can see the complex reasons for the disintegration of Soviet Union and the great changes in Eastern Europe, but the over-concentration of authority by original communist party leaders lead to corruption and deviation from the public (Liu, 2000). We should make use of the experience and lessons and provide education regarding law and anti-corruption to leaders and officials.

Education of law refers to conducting educational activities in the proper perspective of law. Proper legal perspective can be seen as the essential viewpoints concerning law system in a given society. The progressive education of laws can enhance officials' knowledge of law and behaviour according to laws and regulations, therefore conduct the work by laws to maintain good social orders and the normal function of social life. At present the main contents of legal education are: We should improve the legal system, realize the social transformation to the 'rule of law' from the 'rule by ruler', and conduct the construction of country under the rules of law. We must insist that we have the law to depend on, we must obey laws, the law enforcement must be strictly legal, and anyone that breaks the law must be punished. We should align the approaches so that everybody is equal before the law. The legal system must be seen by the entire society as fair and justice. We must improve all the people's legal conscience, especially by strengthening the officials' concept of legal concept and capabilities to legally handle all matters. The leaders should become role models by obeying the constitution and laws. They must take the process of policy construction more seriously, and emphasize 'the procedure of justice'. It is necessary to gradually impose the implementation of public power restrictions to ensure that this kind of system will not change because of the change of individuals or any leaders' personal views. This is essential to thoroughly implement legal rule to govern and improve the governance capabilities in China.

### **To restrict power by rights**

To restrict power by morals will mainly focus on individuals' self-disciplines. To restrict power by power is mainly connected with the mutual restriction of power among the internal departments of government. To thoroughly restrain the corruption, we need to restrict their power by societal means. That is to say, we must carry out democracy; the citizen should positively participate in governance and widely implement the supervision of government. Its essence is to restrict their authority by citizen's rights and human rights. This has basic significance for anti-corruption.

Democracy is a powerful tool for anti-corruption. Democracy is a word originating from the ancient Greek democratic leader Pericles 2000 years ago which is the reason why our social

system is called “the democratic politics is that the authority is in the hands of public rather than individuals” (Yang, Y., 2007). In the course of mankind’s pursuing political stability, democracy is the essential goal. Democracy is the opposite of the tyranny. In the course of power restriction, restriction by social agents plays a highly important role. If there is no restriction by social agents, there would not be any mutual restriction of public powers. In recent years, the mechanics of the problem concerning societal power restriction has gained more attention internationally (Xu, 2006).

The public is the body of social supervision. We should set up the conception of power by the public, and improve the public’s democratic abilities. Whether we can make it possible concerns a deep issue, which is how we envision people. This is related with the question that whether we envision people as the basis or the official or objects or money. To take man as the basis means the person is the goal, rather than the tool. We should see a person as a person rather than an object. The people’s comprehensive development as individuals is the goal. We should embark from people’s basic interest to seek the development and to satisfy the increasing people’s requirements for rights and interests and benefit all people. In the practice, leaders should be motivated by to taking ‘responsibility for the people’ and to understand ‘responsibility by the people’. This is the prerequisite for counter-corruption.

To realize the supervision by the public the first key factor is the system design, including feasible channels for the public’s participation in government affairs. For example, the citizens must have true voting rights, interpellation power, the right to criticise, and the right of accusation, impeachment power, and publicity of administration. Second, we must cultivate the rights of citizens and the human rights, and develop democracy at the basic level, and construct the society based on citizens. We must make the citizens good at maintaining their own legal benefits and resist the pains incurred from the illegal authority. Third, we must thoroughly carry on political system reform. At present, the Chinese cadre personnel system is not perfect in recruiting and promotion. We should take the democratic discipline of equal rights and opportunity for competition. We should not only conduct the restriction and supervision of the power conduct, but also the authorization of that power.

## Conclusion

We may see that within our civilizations, man has undertaken a persistent fight against corruption and explored some regulation. This is mainly presented as follows. First is to restrict power by morals. Although China and the West all pay attention to improvement of officials’ moral quality to restrain corruption, the Chinese tradition of honest government culture is embedded in cultural beliefs (i.e. Confucianism). Second is to restrict power by power. This is most typical in the Western democratic political states. Third is to restrict the power by the rights. The public supervision of the government and restriction of national power by civil rights and human rights has become the main trends. In the process of the current Chinese anti-corruption campaign, we must borrow and take in all the good results created by mankind and consistently realize and master the historic stability. We should

realize that to restrict power by the three ways, lays down an environment where officials are not likely, not able to and do not dare to be corrupt.

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