



From Mao to Xi, Bureaucratic Network Structure in China

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Abstract. In China, the orientation of human relations society motivates the specific type of corruption: personal networks structure inside bureaucratic systems. As a form of corruption, its existence strongly relates to the inner structure of governance. The author tries to explore the double direction connection between political leaders and people in the new built China under the leadership of President Mao Zedong and the current China led by President XI Jinping. Differences in social and political factors in the two periods are studied in the paper. During the current period, because of the decline of double direction connection between political leaders and people, corruption has occurred more, thus the anti-corruption campaign is of great significance.

Keywords: Chinese Politics, Corruption, Personal Network, Bureaucracy.

1 Introduction

In China, both the political officials and the masses were troubled by non-transparent exposure and less civil engagement of anti-corruption activities. Instead, the human relations society pushed the development of personal network structure inside the Chinese bureaucratic system.

To maintain the legitimacy of power, states must achieve top-down connection with people and down-top recognition of political ideology, i.e double direction connection between political leaders and people. In this paper, the author tries to re-define the Chinese regime and a new concept of “network structure” will be elaborated. Then two periods of Chinese modern politics: The beginning of People’s Republic of China (PRC) President Mao Zedong’s era and President Xi Jinping’s current office terms will be compared and analyzed to present the difference of personal network structure, a kind of bureaucratic structure defined by the author. From the two mentioned aspects, the paper tries to study the reason why Mao’s socialism China had less network structure in bureaucracy compared with the post-reform era and why during Xi’s terms appear more. It will also explain the necessity of an anti-corruption campaign from the aspect of double direction connection between political leaders and people.

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2 Definition

2.1 Corruption and Personal Network Structure

Corruption is defined as the use of public power to pursue private gains. In China, the definitions of people enjoy public power not only includes the traditional sense of civil servants, but a wide range of employees and staffs who have strong connections with the Chinese Communists Party (CCP) itself and Chinese Government, such as leaders of state-owned enterprises, members of the National Committee of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Committee or even officials' family members ^[1]. Generally, for the great expansion of involved subjects, corruption was more intended to be defined as improper behavior by either state officials, party members or any state functionaries who are engaged in state's organs ^[2].

Scholar HE Zengke, divided the corruption in China into three types. The first type is black corruption with the aim of increasing personal wealth, which includes embezzlement, extortion and bribery etc. The second type is named as gray corruption that abused public power to gain additional revenue for the official's own institution, such as manipulating the stock market or illegal engagement of business activities. The final type is concluded as white corruption. It mainly contributes to the construction of personal networks with the form of nepotism and favoritism in personal recruitment and promotion. Officials put investment for further cultivation with senior officials and higher political leaders to form a systematic benefit network in order to get valuable information resources and promote chances ^[3].

In this paper, the concept of the white corruption will be specialized and polished as the personal relation network between Chinese government officials instead of any connection with Chinese bureaucrats positively established by merchants whose aim is achieving profit exchange ^[4]. This personal relation of systematic belongings inside the Chinese bureaucracy system will be named as the personal network structure that refers to the network based on the common interests among bureaucrats. When one part of the net is broken, other parts will quickly conduct repair to avoid any exposure of joint crimes made inside the small system. Therefore, officials divide themselves into factions and develop a network required for promotion and protection. It becomes common that officials fail to build strong relations with other stakeholders, their political careers will come to the end by being excluded and persecuted by other members inside this network. Gift-giving, banquets and nepotism becomes a serious problem in such an atmosphere ^[5].

2.2 Double Directions between People and Leaders

Therefore, for the sake of prosperity and stable governance, centralization of administrative power requires vertical leadership between political leaders and people. On the one hand, political leaders must establish positive connections with people in order to achieve superficial democracy. On the other hand, people should repay their recognition towards the political ideology transmitted by the leadership board, which seems like an invisible contract between political leaders and people. Leaders use power to

solve apparent difficulties while people show their recognition and trust. Once the balance is broken, there will be serious problems with politics.

3 Personal Network Structure Under Mao's Socialism China

After the establishment of PRC, MAO Zedong became both the president of China and the general secretary of CCP and his role was summarized as the central leader of China. With the fixed system of one party ruling, CCP and MAO Zedong didn't have any opposition party or restriction of administrative power. However, under such conditions, MAO's Socialism China didn't have many phenomena of personal network structure between senior officials. Despite the case of LIU Qingshan and ZHANG Zishan was executed by great economic corruption, there were rarely other senior officials who were engaged into factionalism to attract different lower bureaucrats to join their personal network circle and be punished ^[6]. This part will analyze the reason for two aspects of the new built regime and explain the roles of Chinese bureaucrats between political leaders and people.

3.1 Double Directions Between People and Leaders in New China

For top-down political connections from leaders, President Mao used his personal charisma to indicate the leading position. Born in the traditional peasant family, Mao was cultivated with conservative attitudes and values to establish positive connections with Chinese peasants, who were regarded as the main forces of Chinese revolution. This connection that crossed the normal bureaucracy elites was named as the mass line principle for Maoism governance. One of the specific characteristics that let Mao and Chinese peasants recognize each other is the bold and innovative decision-making style ^[7]. In 1927, after the surprising decision to abandon the traditional Marxist-Lenists revolutionary model, Mao decided to use peasants' power to occupy countries as the revolutionary basis of CCP. Fitting with peasants' fully trust towards their political leader, President Mao successfully used his personal charisma to build a "great father" image to the people, which symbolizes the prosperity of this country and proposed the prosperity of this country ^[8].

For the down-top ideological recognition from people, it mainly reflected that Chinese peasant always implemented Mao's policy into real practice. Referring to Mao's emotional mobilization, his life-like political slogans not only reflects the internal recognition from bottom people to find a reliable and powerful subject that shares common experiences and bonds with them but encourage audience to give useful practice as the attempt to become as great as Mao ^[9]. Taking the example of Daqing oil battle as the example, when PRC faced serious block down on oil import, Daqing, the northern part of China has discovered plentiful oil reserves. Mao raised the slogan that "Concentrating all resources on the Chinese oil system and fight a great battle with the spirit of annihilation war" ^[10]. Therefore, facing the serious natural conditions such as short supply of food and water, workers in Daqing unified together and overcame difficulties to successfully produce oil ^[11]. While exploring the reason why Mao's simple political

slogan could be transformed into the real efforts of Chinese workers in such a Daqing case, it relates to the mentality of Chinese people after being suppressed by Western and Japanese imperialism forces. After Mao's position was strengthened by his important roles in the Chinese revolution, Chinese people were attracted and persuaded by Socialism ideology which was fully represented by Mao's personal image.

3.2 The Roles of Chinese Bureaucrats

Both of these two aspects had achieved the vertical leadership of Mao's China from top to bottom so that the roles of bureaucrats became vaguer. From the top-down aspect, the power strength of leadership in Chinese society came from the assistance of Socialism and traditional Confucian ideology, which both formed the spiritual world of Chinese people. Therefore, Chinese bureaucrats were portrayed as the typical leading roles of good-virtual promotion instead of any independent power practitioners. According to Prof. Drechsler, Chinese bureaucrats become the civil servants who were expected to inherit perfect personality and be supervised by the mandate of heaven (tianming) [12]. From the history of Ancient China, the monopoly of power was regarded as the necessary crimes of "man's ruling" in traditional Chinese regimes. After the establishment of PRC, as a modern country with formal regulations, Chinese officials were expected to conduct paternalistic governance to take care of people. During the 1950s, Chinese officials were educated to obey the "Three can't and Eight can" Principle that required them to know every detailed needs of citizens and be ready to sacrifice themselves for people's difficulties [13]. Despite the willingness of bureaucrats themselves, they should share the similar interests instead of any other potential values of building personal networks with any other colleague to form their own faction. When PRC is built, bureaucrats must act based on the benefits of them to offer strong evidence to the above declaration and use its own efforts to counteract the risk for the new-built country. Because any choice other than practicing leaders' willingness of good virtual governance would threaten the stability of the regime.

Conversely, from the down-top aspect, some power acceptance from top-level would be necessary for people to show trust to political leaders by taking massive action. So, Chinese officials were face with the situation that they should cooperate with normal citizens to achieve political goals, without clear power redistribution inside the bureaucratic system. Without absolute power suppressions, Chinese bureaucrats had to form a tacit balance among Chinese people and even suffer from the outcome of disturbing their original power. When serious bilharziasis happened in the 1950s, without any local experiences, officials in Anhui Province obeyed the instructions from special leading groups formed by peasants and central senior officials [14]. Unlike the modern Western bureaucracy system, this apparently reflected those Chinese bureaucrats, mostly as peasants, didn't distribute power and responsibility according to the specialization of the profession. Because once officials used those talents to pursue the initiative in the decision-making process, it would promote elitism and let people lose the chance to participate as what the modern politics advocated [15]. Therefore, officials sometimes must place themselves under the influence of people modestly and cultivate comradie emotion with them. Ultimately, without the obvious hierarchy and obtainable power,

Chinese bureaucrats always obtained high passion to finish the political goals set by leaders with people, which indicated their restrictions on forming their own goals and benefit for themselves or other colleagues. Because strong comradery would eliminate any thoughts of selfish greed but only the practice with current power.

4 Bureaucratic Network Structure Under Xi's Modern China

In the opinion of some scholars, China's economic transformation has taken place altogether with increasing opportunities and motives for corruption of Chinese officials^[16]. For President Xi's governance, China has entered a deeper era of the original policy in the 1980s. The reform and opening up policy have greatly promoted the shift between ideology and power distribution, and the corresponding change in the role of Chinese bureaucrats has caused the decline of two-way connection between the leadership and the Chinese people.

4.1 The Decline of Double Connection

When it comes to President Xi's governance, the reform and open policies makes Chinese style personal network structure absorb into different areas in China, including finance, business, construction and even journalism or education^[17]. So, in the last ten years, President Xi has raised a serious and dramatically large-scale anti-corruption battle for fighting against factionalism and internal corruption. This part argues that with the decline of both connections between political leaders and people, Xi's anti-corruption reform takes advantages of to the original model of Mao of maintaining the ruling stability after the period of reform and open policy.

First, direct positive connection established by political leaders to interact with people has been different from Mao's era and was even lost in some fields, here the author describes such situation as "Decline of double connection". The reform and open period have made Chinese officials lose the superiority of treating themselves as elitism groups so that many of them have a strong sense of unevenness^[18]. During the reform period, in order to boost the economy, Deng Xiaoping raised the slogan that some people would prosper first and others later", then it has become a doubt who would become the first to prosper. Ancient Chinese political philosophy believes that bourgeois mentality was the orientation of all crimes, such as hedonism, elitism, and also different forms of corruption, especially the period before the open and reform policy. However, when it came to the reform period, many officials lost the confidence of proletarian revolution and the notion that everyone should be equal without any conditions, which led to the indistinct division between legal and illegal behaviors^[19]. Besides, when many merchants used the official privilege to be awarded as the lucky groups to prosper first, they jumped into the business sea and earned a number of moneys which made them become the envy for all including governmental officials, who always insist on the Social Equal principle^[20]. Therefore, with the double suffering of moral decay and profits attraction, some Chinese bureaucrats started to use their personal power to establish closed networks with others and protect the welfare gains of themselves. LI Chuncheng, former

vice secretary of Sichuan Provincial Party Committee, was accused of whoring and accepting illegal profits of nearly 2.7 billion for his brother and other closed officials [21]. Generally, if more and more accessible tunnels to achieve fair competition are restricted, then people need to find other illegal ways. Then what matters is pursuing privilege in the current hierarchy. Officials like LI Chuncheng, even if they have enough wages to spend, were eager to emphasize social status and power by making alliances with other colleagues. They resist the conservative ideology that officials must sacrifice for people but intended to prosper and to maintain their privilege [22].

Then instead of giving power directly to people, the reform and open period compensated the imbalance of political power transformation for bureaucrats' session in Mao's Period and let them obtain the actual power, which provided opportunities for those ambitious Chinese senior officials who were eager to engage in political promotion. Instead, people's power was declined and the chance to above down-top connection with leaders' boards is reduced. In some cases of corruption there will be such phenomenon that the former leaders may continue to influence local political operations by its personal network which distracts the current leaders from commanding issues effectively [23]. Therefore, for the sake of boosting economy, Chinese central government had to release the power to the senior officials in different provinces especially those poor areas to give more autonomy for provincial governors to make the best decisions to make profits, including giving the authority of tax collection and tax expenditures to maintain financial independence [24]. In this condition, the serious abuse of power to establish personal networks with the forms of selling office positions or giving subsidies to lower junior officials to get loyalty became serious. SuRong, former secretary of Jiangxi Provincial party committee, took advantage of his power to violate the organizational rules of CCP to sell important office positions to his relatives and subordinates, especially during his governance in Jilin Province and Gansu Province. While many officials and people in Jiangxi Province accepted the subsidy from SuRong's personal network. Otherwise, they rarely in order to get chances to be promoted [25]. Therefore, when the power can't reach to people directly to express recognition, it will be abused by Chinese officials to build their personal network and accumulate capital in their political promotion career and form a roadblock of communication. Such theory is accepted in both eastern and western civilization: when the power can't reach to people directly. In the case of Su Rong, because the actual power of promotion was grasped on the hand of political leaders and if people lose the power to interact with top leadership, their expression tunnel would be blocked by the medium power of bureaucrats to stop leaders from knowing about the actual situation [26].

4.2 Anti-Corruption

From the first term of 2012, President Xi, who described corruption as the biggest cancer of the party itself, has caused dramatic shock in fighting against the current personal network structure, especially for the senior officials. Starting in 2013, the number of anti-corruption investigations into officials rose sharply totaling near 2.7 million in the first five years. And for senior officials, 70 senior executives, 63 military generals and many different provincial governors were punished during Xi'terms [27]. However,

Chinese politics is absorbed into a difficult dilemma to deal with both decline of control in power and ideology. Under the influence of Chinese tradition of humanity and the necessity to maintain operation in the Chinese bureaucracy system, and in order to maintain the trust of people, measures should be taken.

After the decline of direct connection with bottomed people, it becomes a problem to balance the smooth operation of the bureaucracy system and to maintain the trust and recognition of people. On the one hand, the ubiquitous practice of human relations and favors has integrated into daily operations. Since ancient times it has been a default rule that if all actors in social and political roles are involved in it, there will be no transgression to the rule ^[28]. Once all law-breaking officials are punished, there is a risk that the whole bureaucracy system will be crushed. On the other hand, officials inside the bureaucracy system committed many illegal acts from their own factions which seriously harmed the authority of CCP itself and the Chinese government ^[29]. The anti-corruption campaign does gain particular effects and even some senior officials have been arrested and judged, which is welcomed by the Chinese masses. However, the anti-corruption policies couldn't escape to be the product of the East Asian and Confucian value system ^[30]. Although the benevolent idea of Confucianism taught leaders to be tough towards internal personal networks and factionalism, However, it still can't get rid of the influence of Chinese tradition to construct human relations, which left more room for future leaders to put more effort.

Generally, after the reform and open-up, during the presidency of Xi, under the decline of both connections between political leadership and people, anti-corruption reform should be regarded as the necessary intervention to keep the high moral status and authority of the Chinese government while the Chinese political system is kept smooth operation.

5 Conclusion

Personal network structure inside the bureaucracy system, as the tradition followed by power centralization and vertical leadership in ancient China, is the important factor in the Chinese regime. For President Mao's governance, there were not so many factional networks due to the special roles of officials in the new built country. However, President Xi must face the challenge of the changing roles and more important roles for Chinese bureaucrats caused by reform and open policy. Losing such advantages, the anti-corruption policy can be regarded as another way to maintain the authority of the government.

The research is oriented from the traditional and historical fact that Chinese society is maintained by personal networks and thus officials in ancient dynasties would always protect each other to reduce unnecessary conflicts. Therefore, it's meaningful to apply this rule into pre-modern and modern China to examine its adaptation. However, this article successfully proves that with the centralization of power, personal network structure in bureaucratic system and people's trust and recognition are attached to each other closely.

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