

SOCIETAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND CORRUPTION IN CHINA

An sub-national quantitative analysis on the role of societal accountability in reducing corruption in China

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1. Introduction

Corruption as a phenomenon of abuse of power exists in every country. It is the vulnerability of political institutions compounded of a variety of complicated factors. Corruption affects adversely long-term economic growth, human development, social stability and so on in the countries which do not have effective government institutions and government system. Increasing numbers of countries pay great attention to curbing corruption for protecting the development of countries from corruption. The General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General designate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties on 31 October 2003. (un.org, 2016) As of 2014, already 139 countries on board. (Nie, 2014) This is perhaps a sufficient account of the great degree of attention paid to corruption by most of the world's nations. China as one of developing countries is also suffering from corruption. Recently, anti-corruption campaign has been strengthened since China's top leader Xi Jinping unveil the "Four Comprehensives", which is his new political theory. "Comprehensively strictly govern the Party" as one of the "Four Comprehensives" reflects the determinations and ambitions of President Xi to prosecute anti-corruption campaign. However, it is simply not enough to depend on the Chinese Communist Party itself to achieve the goal of reducing corruption. After all, regardless of the Chinese political system, it is generally known that eliminating corruption is a tricky challenge. Initially, there are many different determinants result in corruption. Anticorruption requires figuring these determinants out in a specific context. Moreover, these determinants relate to various aspects involve economic, institutional, and social factors. And these determinants themselves have inner relevance. Therefore, it is difficult to attribute the corruption to one determinant. In addition, precisely because of these complex relationships between these determinants, the characteristics of corruption are complex, dynamic, and multifaceted. It is impossible to resolve the issue in a simple method. Subsequently, the successful governing approaches in anticorruption actions in one country may not apply to other countries. Anticorruption in different contexts

requires appropriate strategies to comply with situations and conditions. Different institutional systems, the level of economic development and societal contexts determine the diversity of anti-corruption methods. The populous has varying levels of comprehension and tolerance about corruption and corrupt behaviors in different contexts. Moreover, the interests of the populous and rulers in a different context may result in varying opinions on how hard to push anticorruption institutions. Lastly, corruption is always hidden. Even if effective anti-corruption measures lead massive corruption cases to be exposed, corruption still occurs far too often. It is impossible to eliminate corruption completely. It means that combating corruption is not a short-term agenda. It requires long-term efforts to make corruption can be controlled at an ideal level for ensuring development in other aspects.

Certainly, even though resolving corruption is complex, some factors can still curb corruption. These factors may benefit Chinese government to achieve the aim of curbing corruption. Many corruption cases were disclosed through both traditional media and the Internet in recent years. The Chinese central government has shown active attitudes and indicated explicitly its willingness to support “network anti-corruption” and public participation in fighting corruption. Meanwhile, existing research has illustrated the active effects of civil society on corruption but with certain conditions. (Grimes, 2013) But it is not quite clear whether these theories can be applied in the Chinese case. Therefore, the paper speculates that civil society may curb corruption or even the effects had been made in China. This paper takes advantage of the rise of civil society and transparency about disclosure of corruption and to find a relationship between societal accountability and the level of corruption under China’s present situation and to explore how the rising transparency and societal accountability affect anti-corruption activities. Thus, the broad research question is: Does societal accountability reduce corruption in general in China and if so, how?

This paper is a quantitative research at the sub-national level. Previous quantitative studies on corruption mainly focus on the cross-national level analysis. Even though some Chinese scholars provide quantitative research in sub-national level, however, most research concentrates on corruption and economic efficiency. Less research investigates the relationship between corruption and civil society. This paper may be able to fill this gap. The paper is structured as follows. The following section introduces a discussion about corruption. It involves the concept of corruption, determinants of corruption in both China perspective and extensive perspective, and Chinese anti-corruption agencies and mechanisms. Section 3 introduces the concept of accountability and transparency, the rise of transparency and accountability in China and discusses the relationship between transparency, accountability, and corruption. Section 4 provides hypotheses. Section 5 focuses on data and model specification. Section 6 analyzes the results of regressions. The last section is the conclusion.

2. Theoretical Discussion

2.1 Concepts of corruption

This section provides a review about mainstreaming features and types of corruption. It assists in understanding the difficulties of defining corruption by one single theory. In addition, it benefits the paper and readers to comprehend the Chinese corruption on the base of this literature review later in the article.

Corruption is not a new phenomenon. It has gained a great deal of attention since the 1990s. Corruption has been defined by a lot of scholars and international organizations in many ways. Some scholars introduce the broad characteristics of corruption. For instance, “corruption is a cross-systemic, cross-temporal and cross-cultural phenomenon. It can exist in any country, at any time, and under any form of government”. (Farrales, 2005) “It is a complex, dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that can take a variety of forms”. “It is a collective challenge. It involves

a variety of interactions, dynamics, and linkages between multiple actors, organizations, and institutions at different levels”. (Menocal et al., 2015) The most widely used, classic and popular definition is “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”.(Svensson, 2005; Tanzi, 1998; Transparency International; World Bank, 1997) Although scholars have put forward a variety of theoretical and data evidence to assist people to comprehend corruption. However, not surprisingly, there is no single theory to describe corruption in its entirety. What can be termed “abuse” relates to legal standards, social perceptions of power abuse, historical legacies, institutional factors, and many other factors if only consider this widely used definition? Besides, the definitions are varied. It seems better to describe the corruption from the type of corruption for one certain country if we cannot describe what is corruption in detail by one single theory.

Heidenheimer, Johnston, Vine, and Levine (1989) were among the first scholars to provide a set of definition of corruption. (González, 2007) Most of “objective” definitions derived from their three classifications of definitions of corruption: public-office-centered, market-centered and public-interest-centered definitions. (González, 2007; Johnston, 1996) Nye (1967) provides a widely acceptable definition of the first kind: corruption is “behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence”. Market-centered definitions of corruption shift the emphasis from the public office to the market. Heidenheimer et al. (1989) introduce Van Klaveren’s definition for explaining market-centered kind of corruption as following: “A corrupt civil servant who regards his public office as a business, the income of which he will ... seek to maximize. The office then becomes a “maximizing unit”. The size of his income depends ... upon the market situation and his talents for finding the point of maximal gain on the public’s demand curve”. Carl Friedrich represents public-interest-centered position. He defines corruption: “the

pattern of corruption can be said to exist whenever a power holder who is charged with doing certain things, i.e., who is a responsible functionary of officeholder, is by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, induced to take actions which favor whoever provides the rewards and thereby does damage to the public and its interests". (Heidenheimer et al., 1989) Johnston (1996) summarizes these concepts of corruption as "behavior-classifying" definitions. He contends that behavior-classifying definitions have their advantages. "They do allow us to identify patterns of corruption, to consider institutional and political reforms, and to analyze the consequence of various corrupt action" . (Johnston, 1996) However, he claims these definitions are illusory and not precise. Nas, Price, and Weber (1986) raise a similar query on these definitions. They also believe that although these definitions contain descriptive advantages, but "they lack the generality essential for an analytically useful definition of corruption". According to Johnston (1996), there are several questions to reflect the deficits of Heidenheimer's definitions. Which norms should be applied as standards to decide whether a specific behavior is corrupt or not? What is considered private benefit? These doubts may due to the powers and limitations of official roles and their relationships with private interests varies continuously even in relatively settled political systems. (Johnston, 1996) Therefore, he develops these "behavior-classifying" definitions by adding "principal-agent-client" definitions. He suggests that researchers may require concentrating on the political conflicts shaping the idea of corruption, rather than searching for clearly-defined categories of corrupt behavior, especially in transitional or deeply divided societies.

Susan Rose-Ackerman first introduces Principal-Agent theory. But her definition is narrow. Robert E. Klitgaard provides broader one. Corrupt behavior occurs when the principals unable to monitor and oversight the agents effectively and the agents put their own interest ahead of the group's collective interest. (Klitgaard, 1988) This due to the agent creates so-called "information asymmetry" to make the principal difficult to supervise the agent to comply with their "appointments". (Klitgaard, 1988;

Rose-Ackerman, 1978) Therefore, corruption can be controlled if “the principal” are empowered enough to monitor “the agent”. (Rose-Ackerman, 1978; Stigler, 1974) Consequently, most of the current anti-corruption programs base on a principal-agent understanding of corruption than any alternative view. (Bauhr & Nasiritousi, 2011; Persson, Rothstein, & Teorell, 2013; Ugur & Dasgupta, 2011) Anti-corruption interventions from principal-agent perspective always focus on reducing the discretion of public servant, increasing monitoring mechanisms, promoting transparency in government and strengthening sanctions for improving the ability of principals to hold agent account. (Marquette & Peiffer, 2015) However, some scholars criticize this theory in terms of anti-corruption interventions. They believe that anti-corruption efforts are failed in some contexts due to designs of these anti-corruption interventions sometimes base on this inadequate theory. (Marquette & Peiffer, 2015) Rothstein (2011) believes that if corruption is really based on the "principal-agent" model, it is easy to eliminate corruption, simply by changing incentive policies and eliminating corruption. The principal needs to gradually increase the cost of fraud and corruption until the agent restrains their own greed and corruption due to fear of being arrested. Unfortunately, lacking “principled principals” in highly corrupt environments result in the invalidation of principal-agent anti-corruption programmes. (Menocal et al., 2015; Rothstein, 2011) Meanwhile, institutional settings determine the agent’s strategic environment. The agent expected gain from corruption bases on the number of other agents they expect to be corrupt. (Bardhan, 1997) The understanding of corruption will be biased and the agent collaborates with other agents to corruption and organizes corrupt groups in the context of a systemic corruption. Therefore, some scholars tend to support corruption should be viewed as a collective action problem rather than a principal-agent problem in some countries where corruption is systemic. (Bauhr & Nasiritousi, 2011; Marquette & Peiffer, 2015; Menocal et al., 2015; Persson et al., 2013; Rothstein, 2011) The paper provides development of the concept of corruption. However, The question concerning how to make a clear definition of corruption remains controversial. It is

hardly possible to provide a universal theory to conclude this crux. Fortunately, scholars provide chances to review this challenge in a different light.

2.2 Determinants of Corruption

There is an extensive literature on the determinants of corruption. Even though its shapes have all kinds of reasons, but they lie in the convergence of the institutional, and socio-cultural, historical, and economic dimensions. (Adserà, Boix, & Payne, 2003; Braun & Tella, 2004; Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Dollar, Fisman, & Gatti, 2001; Treisman, 2000) In the block of historical and socio-cultural factors, religious culture, education are two main factors may result in the occurrence of corruption. Porta (1999), Treisman (2000), Shleifer and Vishny (1993) show the significant effects of religion on corruption. Adserà, Boix, and Payne (2000), Melgar, Rossi, and Smith (2010) find no relationship between corruption and religious culture. Melgar et al. (2010) also reveal that the level of education has a close relation with the perception of corruption. “People who have completed, at least, secondary education are more likely to perceive a lower level of corruption”. In addition, “more educated people have more information about the current level of corruption and better capacities to process the information”. (Melgar et al., 2010) Treisman (2000), Porta (1999), Van Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) believe good education attainment can reduce corruption. Economic factors always are identified as the prime cause of corruption. (You & Khagram, 2005) Levels of economic growth, government wages, the structure of the economy and trade openness all have a close connection with corruption in the economic dimension. Melgar et al. (2010) and Paldam (2002) provide the discussion about the relationship between corruption and economic development. They reveal that economic development can reduce corruption. Van Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) explain the low level of salaries of civil servants may one important factor to result in serious corruption in developing countries. Le, De Haan, and Dietzenbacher (2013) and Veldhuizen (2013) provide the evidence to reveal the strong positive impact of increasing wages on refraining corruption. Economic freedom or trade openness is an additional element to affect corruption. Saha and Gounder (2011), Ades and Di Tella

(1997) show that stronger international trade lower government corruption. However, Brunetti and Weder (2003) and Treisman (2000)'s findings do not provide the evidence to show positive effects of economic freedom on reducing corruption. Institutional dimension is one last significant element discussed in this paper. The discussion includes political institutions and economic institutions. Political regime is discussed by many scholars when concerning determinants of corruption. They reveal that traditional democratic countries may have a lower incidence of corruption due to democracy promote anti-corruption activities. (Porta, 1999; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993) Meanwhile, federalism in a state leads to a higher level of corruption. Unitary states may bring clean governments. (Gerring & Thacker, 2004) In addition, the functioning of political systems may also affect the incidence of corruption. For instance, political instability produces more space for corruption. (Melgar et al., 2010) A Competitive electoral process contributes more clean government (Treisman, 2000) Fiscal or political decentralization leads to decision-making process closer to the people. However, the evidence about the impact of decentralization on reducing corruption is inconsistent. Some scholars indicate that the degree of decentralization determines to what extent can corruption be reduced. (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Fisman & Gatti, 2002; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993) But Treisman et al. (2002) reveal diametrically opposite opinions. The discussion about determinants of corruption above briefly provides most representative causes which lead to the incidence of corruption. However, these conclusions are not universal. These determinants of corruption will be discussed again for examining whether these determinants are suitable for Chinese situation, as the paper will argue in the following section. But before that, it is necessary to figure out why some determinants of corruption which deteriorate the quality of government do not necessarily work in other countries? Exploring the determinants of corruption requires basing on the context of one certain country, as same as defining concepts of corruption. Treisman (2000) argues that "the official can be construed as balancing the expected cost of a corrupt act ... against the expected benefit". It can be understood as the officialdom's

corrupt strategies base on their perception of risk of exposure and severity of punishment. The elements affect the officials' perception of the risk of exposure and severity of punishment can be regarded as determinants of corruption under one fixed situation. The political, economic, and societal situations vary from country to country. The determinants of corruptions may change based on the context. Hence, studying corruption requires understanding background associated with corruption of research objects.

2.3 Corruption in China

Basing on the literature review above, exploring the corruption under one fixed context requires to define corruption and understand corruption base on the specific background. Therefore, initially, following paper provides an introduction about determinants of Chinese corruption. This benefits both author and readers to find similarities and differences between Chinese corruption and universal concept of corruption. And then the forms of manifestation, the major characteristics of Chinese corruption and present China's anti-corruption activities will be provided.

2.3.1 What are the differences and similarities between China's corruption and corruption in other countries?

Initially, it is well to be reminded that political regime is not an essential absolute element leads to corruption before introducing Chinese corruption. People will think of China is a non-democratic country with serious corruption. And the level of corruption will continue to deteriorate if without democratic development. Previous studies on corruption find that political regime affects corruption. This may prove the speculation of people to Chinese corruption. However, the relationship between corruption and the political regime is non-linear, i.e. democracy cannot ensure the clean of government. Rose-Ackerman (2001) points out that a democratic regime does not ensure more clean government. Adserà, Boix, and Payne (2000) believe that although democratic regimes have proper constitutional mechanisms to ensure

politicians accountable to citizens, however, corruption and malfunctioning governments remain widespread phenomena. Charron and Lapuente (2010) find that there is a relatively clear curvilinear relationship between quality of government and democracy. Their literature review provides several different researches which reflects the relationship between quality of government and democracy. For instance, Bäck and Hadenius (2008) and Montinola and Jackman (2002) indicate the relationship between the integrity of government and democracy is non-linear. The democratic regime may have more corrupt government than the non-democratic system. Chang and Golden (2010) find that “personalistic and personalistic-hybrid regimes are more prone to corruption than single-party and military regimes and that rulers who expect to remain in power for longer are less corrupt”. Ades and Di Tella (1999)’s cross-country data also reveals that there is no significant correlation of corruption with the level of democracy. Only mature democracies are relatively free from corruption. (Treisman, 2000) In authoritarian regimes, precisely because of concerns about the legitimacy of political power, the rulers realized negative effects of corruption on it. They have to make strong actions on fighting corruption. Chinese government proves this point from the anti-corruption campaign in recent years. Controlling corruption is determined by the intention of China’s rulers, not dependent on the political regime. The determinants of corruption result from the defects and vulnerabilities of institutions, not from the non-democratic regime. The paper would not regard differently the studies in China from democratic countries by the aid of the understanding of the relationship between political regimes and corruption which is mentioned above. In addition, previous studies may explain why authoritarian regimes might combat corruption, but not how. The work of this paper attempts to explore whether authoritarian regimes can decrease the level of corruption as same as some democratic regimes did and how.

Secondly, unique political and economic system creates distinct corruption. China is making a transition from centrally planned economy to capitalist semi-market

economy, but political control remains centralized. (Knight, 2015) Defects and vulnerabilities of institutions appear gradually during the process of transition. The risk of corruption has a lot to do with rapid economic transition and centralization of power. This paper believes that perfection and development of accountability and supervision mechanism fall behind economic development to result in the deterioration of corruption in China. Knight concludes the origin of Chinese corruption from the view of transition: “the combination of economic decentralization and semi-market economic creates a problem of weak accountability and a breeding ground for rent seeking and corruption”. (Knight, 2015) Moreover, Most of the Chinese corruption occurs in state-owned enterprises and collective economies. It is closely related to the public economy (Nie, 2014) These two factors lead Chinese corruption fundamentally different from individual corruption in the western countries.

2.3.2 What are the determinants of Chinese corruption?

Literature review above mentioned that decentralization is one important factor which impacts on corrupt behavior. There are two inconsistent positions on this factor. One supports positive effects of decentralization on reducing corruption. Another one believes decentralization leads to serious corruption. The effects of decentralization on corruption still are debating. It is necessary to understand the background of decentralization, just as when investigating the causes of corruption, the backgrounds of different countries make the results different. It is not surprising that previous studies on the effects of decentralization on corruption had different results. This paper rethinking these discussion bases on the research which explore the relationship between corruption and decentralization in China. Decentralization is a good example to describe that how did a serious of defects and vulnerabilities of institutions that appear during the course of the economic and political transition deteriorate corruption. In other words, this paper believes decentralization is a crucial element leads to China’s corruption. Since the beginning of the economic reform in 1978,

decentralization provides chances for the individual and the collective to corrupt due to autonomy in making decision without accountability. In the above, the paper provides scholars debates about whether corruption is a principal-agent problem or a collective action dilemma. The paper argues that corruption is not only a principal-agent problem in China but also a collective action predicament. Decentralization is one of the main causes of these two problems. First of all, the author discusses the impact of decentralization on corruption from the perspective of a principal-agent problem. Decentralization empowers the local government to have a dual agent status. Local governments are entrusted by the central government to carry out regional governance in accordance with the central overall plan. Meanwhile, the local people delegate power to the local government through the National People's Congress. The reasons for the principal-agent problem are mention above: "information asymmetry" "lack of accountability and oversight mechanisms". These two factors occur in the relationship between the local government and the central government or local citizens. The central government delegates control of land and local economic development to local governments. Extensive administrative and economic discretion empowers the local government on "business licensing, resource distribution, administrative budgeting, local taxation, and trade and investment" aspects. (Ting Gong, 2006) Local governments and local businesses or individuals form a community of interests to avoid exposure to corruption while profiting. The central government is difficult to grasp the local governments' preferences and behavior which results in information asymmetry. Citizens and local governments also have information asymmetry. Local governments possess information on political, economic, and social aspects. Even if the Regulations on Open Government Information of the People's Republic of China was fully implemented. But Article 8 provides excuses for local government to refuse to share the information with the public. "The government information disclosed by administrative agencies may not endanger state security, public security, economic security and social stability". (Yale Law School, 2008) The local governments could use it to refuse to share unflattering

information to the public. The agent-principal link chain is secured by effective supervision mechanism under ideal conditions. However, the oversight and accountability are limited. Power supervision requires paying the cost. The gains from the supervision are shared by whole society. This would undoubtedly discourage participation for rational people. Decentralization contributed the Party Committee secretary or so-called “first hand” to become the most powerful person in local governments. The “first hand” have “the final authority in making all the major decision, including personnel decision affecting their officials and implementation of national economic polices”. (Quah, 2014) “The central government relies only on the CCP’s organization and discipline and specifically the local party secretary to ensure control of the county and township governments”. (Quah, 2014) This leads to supervision mechanism failure from subordinate units. Rational officials of subordinate governments are not daft enough to report corruption of higher levels of governments at risk of losing jobs. Party organs for discipline inspection at the same level have common interests with the local governments. They work together to avoid supervision. Therefore, the supervision implemented by the same level of the Party’s commissions for discipline inspection is disabled. In addition, huge bureaucracy means that consummate oversight mechanisms require spending huge amounts of money, manpower, and resources on running the Party disciplinary authorities. Compared to the huge expenditure against corruption, the budgets of Chinese governments and disciplinary inspection departments are very limited. In conclusion, decentralization provides discretionary power and control of resources to the local governments. The backward oversight and accountability institutions contribute to the outbreak of the corruption. Meanwhile, it reveals the challenges of inner-party oversight. It is with these thoughts in mind that the dilemma of the central government on supervising the governments on local levels inspires the paper to explore the impact of civil power on reducing corruption. Social accountability may conduce to guide the central government out of trouble.

Nowadays, the pattern of individual corruption has shifted toward collective corruption. Decentralization remains a crucial cause of corruption from collective action dilemma perspective. Tax-sharing system put a great deal of pressure on local governments. Most of the taxes were turned over to the central government. It compelled local governments and local officials to rely on creating off-budgetary funds to expand their financial resources for cover local expenditures. (Quah, 2014) As mentioned above, fiscal decentralization provides discretion and the eminent domain without check and balance to the officials at the local level. The extra- and off-budgetary revenues are not subject to oversight. Therefore, the huge economic interests attract local governments officials and civil servants to form holistic interests' groups opposed to the central government. This leads to collective action dilemma as Olson argued. The larger the group, the less likely it will be for an individual in the group to provide an optimal level of collective goods, especially without coercive or external incentive. (Olson, 1965) Local governments are not precluded from predicting that corrupt practices will lead to the collapse of the entire bureaucracy and the loss of collective goods. Large interest groups result in that officials at the local level do not defend the legitimacy of the regime in the first place. This is because they can enjoy the benefits provided by the group even if they do not contribute to the group through rational calculation. The expansion of the autonomy of local governments provides power to play with the central government. The previous pattern of defusing and regulating the conflicts between local governments and central government does not seem to contribute corruption out of the dilemma of collective action. Non-governmental forces outside the system may be able to change this situation.

The above explains why decentralization causes corruption in China. Beyond that, low probability of detection and punishment of corrupt offenders also affect China's corruption. Whether or not the officials choose to corrupt boils down to trade-offs. (Treisman, 2000) Participating in corruption is a rational decision for many officials

in China due to China's corruption has high profits and low risks. (T. Gong & Scott, 2016; Quah, 2014; Tian, 2014) Quah (2014) provides numbers of corrupt offenders and numbers of these people were punished. For instance, only 9.3 percent of corrupt offenders were imprisoned and 0.04 percent were executed during the first corruption campaign from 1951 to 1952. Only 6.6 percent of corrupt officials were sentenced between 1993 and 1998. Pei (2007a) also prove this opinion by providing the statistical data. His findings reveal that only a small proportion of officials are punished: "the odds of a corrupt official going to jail are less than 3 out of 100". Most of them only received a warning or are expelled from the CCP. Jianhong, Leling, and Steven F. (2001) provide three factors that explain what result in a low probability of detection and punishment. Initially, the officials abuse their power to search for profit with impunity due to lack of the public's supervision and monitor. Secondly, the CCP avoid exposures of the officials' corrupt behavior as much as possible for political legitimacy and social harmony. Lastly, traditional corrupt culture reduces expectations of the risk of being caught and punished.

The reasons for the dramatic rise corruption phenomenon are various in China. The above provides two main factors, but that are most significant. The excessive concentration of power and the lack of effective checks and oversight at the local level may conclude the crux of the problem. The following introduces changing forms of corruption after the reform in 1978. Guo (2013) introduces briefly the development and changes in China's corruption after economic reform since 1978 from the accusation of corruption perspective. He believes that the charges of corruption have undergone two restructuring. The first was from embezzlement to bribery. The second was from bribery to conflicts of interests. The most common corruption cases of corruption were to embezzlement by the staff of banks or financial officers of government in the 80s and the early 90s stage. Due to strengthened regulations on management of funds, this behavior rarely occurs now. Subsequently, in the market economy establishment initial period, there is a great room for officials to exchange

interests due to lacking oversight and regulation. Corruption occurred in the form of bribery at that time. In the present cases of corruption crime point of view, the type of corruption crime concentrates in the area of conflict of interests. Guo (2013) describes several common forms of conflict of interests. For instance, bribers subsidize money to officials for supporting officials' children to study abroad for exchanging interests. Or officials are promised to be hired with a high salary after retirement. Or officials use their power of influence to do business in relatives' names. In addition, the transformation from personal corruption to collective corruption is another development trend in China's corruption.

2.3.3 China's network and measures against corruption

Supervision over administration is carried out through several channels. China has four major Anti-Corruption Agencies. Lead one is the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). It is the highest discipline authority under the Party Central Committee and its main functions are to maintain party discipline and to combat corruption for promoting a clean system of China Communist Party (CCP). (Wescott, Bowornwathana, & Jones, 2009) CCDI sent the central inspection groups to the major and municipalities and autonomous regions to promote in-depth anti-corruption struggle and to build a fine party culture and keep its clean organizations every year. Another agency is the Ministry of Supervision (MOS) which was established by the 1954 constitution. The MOS is responsible for maintaining an efficient, disciplined, clean and honest government. Unlike CCDI focuses on CCP, MOS mainly focus on managing public servants about their duty and discipline. (Quah, 2014) The third one is the Supreme People's Procuratorate. It has specific anti-corruption and bribery sector for registering and investigating state functionaries' corruption, bribery, embezzlement and other crimes. The fourth one is the National Corruption Prevention Bureau (NCPB). It is an agency under the direct administration of the State Council. It is a specific organization for preventing nationwide corruption. Its major function is to coordinate and scheme the work for

anti-corruption in the national level. Meanwhile, the bureau also seeks cooperation on corruption prevention at the multilateral level. It provides guidance to social corporates and groups for preventing corruption. Moreover, it also participates in international cooperation on corruption. (Chinadaily, 2014) However, NCPB has no right to seek into the individual cases. Although, these agencies have defined the role in fighting against corruption. But as a senior fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Science in Beijing argued, “corruption is rotting the establishment of a rule of law”, anti-corruption laws, policies, and agencies are dysfunctional. (Quah, 2014) Low conviction rates for corruption cases reveal the situation of the ineffective implementation of more than 1200 laws, rules and directives against corruption. (Pei, 2007b; Quah, 2014) The absence of judicial independence and operational autonomy of these agencies from the CCP in China are two significant reasons for explaining the invalidation of China’s anti-corruption laws and rules. The inefficient anti-corruption system will not change in the short term, despite the fact that China is reforming its judicial system for effective judicature. Perhaps the CCP needs to bring in constructive forces of Chinese civil society to remedy the defects of present political institutions.

Anti-corruption campaign and power supervision as the public goods are provided by the state to society. This is a state-centrism anti-corruption strategy. China’s present corruption control is dominated fundamentally by the Party and the government. No matter how the leaders stress their will and determination of fighting corruption or stress the coerciveness of anti-corruption agencies or policies, these all emphasize the core effects of the state on corruption. Nevertheless, it does not mean that China locks out of the public to participate anti-corruption movement. Instead, the government welcomes the public to participate. The disadvantage is that the social participation is state-led. There is growing evidence of Chinese central government calls for fighting corruption through the public. The communique issued after the fifth plenary session of the 18th CCDI of CCP stresses the present top task is to stop the spread of

corruption. It also has called for more public participation in combating corruption. (XINHUANET, 2015) CCP stated clearly that it is important to broaden channels for the masses to participate in anti-corruption work, and strengthen collecting analyzing and disposing of the network information of public opinion on anti-corruption work and actively respond to social concerns in the communique of the fifth plenary meeting of 17th CCDI of CCP. (CCDI, 2010) 2013-2017 Anti-corruption Plan also stresses to strengthen construction and management of anti-corruption network culture. It also advocates guiding the public to fight against corruption online. This is the first time the government brings network into anti-corruption work in institutional level. It reflects the rulers' affirmation with fighting corruption through the network. (The CPC Central Committee, 2013) In fact, both of CCDI and MOS provide telephone and Internet reporting method for the public. From 2008 to 2012, MOS answered 443 thousand reporting telephone. Among them, there are 59 thousand accusations and delations. CCDI and MOS operate a website to enable the public to report their suspicions on government officials in 2013. The public can leave their suggestion and proposals and ask questions about corruption on the forum. In the first month after the launch of the website, CCDI received over 24800 reports. (The CPC Central Committee, 2013)

3 Accountability and Transparency

3.1 Horizontal accountability, Vertical accountability, and Societal accountability

The concept of accountability in political science refers to a mechanism to keep individuals or agencies to account for their decisions and actions. Accountability is a process with three stages. Initially, the individuals or agencies provide information about their actions and decisions to supervisors. Subsequently, actors discuss the information with supervisors to check whether their duties and commitments are met or not. Lastly, it is the sanction stage. If the duties and commitments are not met, the actors may be punished. "The concept of accountability can be classified according to the type of accountability exercised and/or the person, group or institution the public

official answer to". (World Bank) There are three main accountabilities: horizontal, vertical, and societal accountability.

UNDP provides the definition of horizontal accountability. This accountability is "imposed by governments internally through institutional mechanisms for oversight and checks and balance, and refers to the capacity of state institutions to check abuses by other public agencies and branches of government, or the requirement for agencies to report sideways" (UNDP, 2010). In corruption terms, Diamond (1999) introduces several institutions of accountability: the law, anti-corruption bodies, ombudsman's office, public audits, the judicial system, and parliament. If governments expect a good performance of accountability, the information transfer process is extremely important. This is because that supervisor requires the fact of actors' actions to judge supervisees' performance. However, corrupt officials or agencies always attempt to hide the crime for escaping punishment. If the actions and decisions of actors are open and transparent, there is nowhere to hide the bad performance among institutions. Therefore, transparency is a significant factor for improving the effectiveness of mechanisms of horizontal accountability.

Vertical accountability imposed externally on governments through election or informally by citizens and civil society or mass media. The election is the most common mechanism for the exercise of vertical accountability. (O'Donnell, 1998; UNDP, 2010) A free press plays an important role in the electoral process from corruption perspective. And both of free press and election requires to work in coordination with control corruption according to Kalenborn and Lessmann (2013)'s research: "on the one hand, without a free press, the voters do not have unbiased information on corruption activities by politicians and bureaucrats, therefore the accountability enhancing effect of democratic elections is questionable. On the other hand, just having a free press is also not a sufficient instrument of controlling corruption as people need free elections in order to punish revealed corrupt behavior."

Hence, for vertical accountability, it also requires making the information as open and transparent as possible. Voters and civil society all rely on the transparent information to ensure individuals or agencies to hold accountable for their behaviors and to pressure authorities to penalize violators if results and commitments are not met.

“Societal accountability is a non-electoral, yet vertical mechanism of control that rests on the actions of multiple arrays of citizens’ associations and movement and on the media, actions that aim at exposing governmental wrongdoing, bringing new issues onto the public agenda, or activating the operation of horizontal agencies”. (Smulovitz & Peruzzotti, 2000) Societal accountability can be regarded as a branch of vertical accountability. However, it is more informal and less restricted compared with previous two types of accountability. Civil society organization and citizens are the main actors to hold the state to account. (Smulovitz & Peruzzotti, 2000) There are two important prerequisites for operating strong societal accountability through civil society. Media visibility is an essential prerequisite for operating societal accountability effectively. Media acts as a mechanism of social accountability. (Smulovitz & Peruzzotti, 2000) The major function of the media in societal accountability is to provide a forum for debate to establish the following questions: “who should be held accountable, what they should be held accountable for and how they should be held accountable”. (Bonner, 2009) It benefits the civil society to keep the government in check. Societal accountability is unable to put pressure on the states without media. Nowadays, the rise of information and communication technology provides more approaches for civil-society led anti-corruption activities. The internet enables citizens to request public information from the government. Citizens can report corruption and express grievances on the Internet. (Asian Development Bank, 2013) The advent of the Internet has transformed traditional top-down information flow. It empowers civil society to ask for disclosure of information on corruption from bottom to top. It provides an effective complement to existing approaches for civil society to participate in corruption and to intervene in

government behavior. Education can also be the key component of curbing corruption. Initially, bottom-up anti-corruption activities need citizens to have fundamental ability to know the policies of the government in order to figure out what information is required for oversight behavior of government. Secondly, citizens require the capacity to comprehend effectively the information given and then take appropriate actions. A stronger level of education may benefit civil society to make full use of societal accountability. The discussion about the effects of accountability on corruption above reveals the significance of information and transparency. The paper unfolds discussion on transparency in the following paragraph.

The transparency initiatives have gain momentum since last decade. (Bauhr and Grimes, 2012) Although, transparency has received insufficient rigorous theoretical attention and therefore results in its conceptual ambiguity. (Bauhr and Grimes, 2012) However, at present, scholars and international organizations have confirmed the effectiveness of transparency on promoting accountability and governance. Transparency benefits to increased state or institutional responsiveness, decrease the level of corruption, provide spaces for citizen engagement, empowerment of local voices, enhancing democracy and accountability, bettering environmental preservation and better services delivery. (Johnsøn et al., 2012, Bauhr and Grimes, 2012) Transparency is an essential condition for assisting some anti-corruption measures to achieve the goal of eliminating corruption. Grimes (2013) find that government transparency is required in terms of fighting corruption through societal accountability. Lindstedt and Naurin stress the important role of transparency in curbing corruption. (Lindstedt and Naurin, 2006) Kolstad and Wiig (2009) believe that transparency is increasingly regarded as a core to stop corruption and other dysfunctions. It is worth noting that scholars also believe transparency alone is insufficient in terms of fighting corruption. (Kolstad and Wiig, 2009, Lindstedt and Naurin, 2010) They think that previous research misunderstood the significance of transparency for corruption. Transparency is only one, albeit important, the criterion

for reducing corruption effectively. It always requires working with other measures to fight against corruption. They believe that “Just making information available will not prevent corruption if such conditions for publicity and accountability as education, media circulation and free and fair elections are weak”(Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010).

For instance, Menocal et al. (2015) suggest that transparency works best when combined with oversight and monitoring. Bauhr and Grimes (2014) believe that transparency is predicted to deter corruption in part. It depends on strengthening public or societal accountability for citizens or citizens’ associations to monitor and act to control officials to account. Therefore, transparency is an assistive tool to endow both citizens and rulers with capacity through accountability to against corruption. Transparency made great efforts on fighting corruption as the paper mentioned above. However, these functions and advocates of transparency often take effect in the democratic environment. Democracy and transparency are two intimately connected and possibly inseparable-concepts as Tan believes. (Tan, 2014) In addition, there is little literature to show how transparency works in the political environment which lack of democracy. Tan’s paper believes that China has transparency, but works in different situations. “... transparency policies are driven by technocratic objectives, implemented under conditions of bureaucratic fragmentation, and governed within a system of single party rule” (Tan, 2014). The following section will provide the rise of accountability and transparency in China.

3.2 The rise of social accountability and transparency in China

People like to associate accountability, transparency, and clean government with democracy. These elements are significant for combating corruption as Grimes (2013) argues. Some countries are under the conditions of lacking transparency and accountability in non-democratic settings. Whether these authoritarian regimes have the capacity to combat corruption is questionable. Can China fight corruption rely on social accountability? Can transparency provide chances for both civil society and

central government to fight corruption at the local level?

Let's start with transparency. The Chinese government has strong control on spreading information. Mainstream media such as television, newspapers, radio and press are under control of the government. The information released by these channels will come under extraordinary scrutiny. According to Brown (2012)'s words, transparency policies in China are driven by technocratic objectives. It is implemented under conditions of bureaucratic fragmentation and governed within a system of single party rule. However, it does not tell what information will be controlled by the government. For instance, local government and central government hold different attitude on open information policies. It shows the chances for developing transparency in China. The devolution of central power leads the local government to have more and more power on policy-making and fiscal spending since the great reform and opening in 1979. Local officials can interpret the central government's policies according to their own interests. (Brown, 2012) It results in the deviation between the implementation of policies and actual purpose of the central government. Therefore, the central government desperate to obtain exact and comprehensive information of local governments in order to supervise them and to hold them accountable for society. In contrast, a local government attempt to avoid responsibility. This leads to two different attitudes to open exchange of information. As the paper mentioned above, although, the Chinese government has strictly control the release of information. But the central government supports the spread of information about officials who abuse power. (Brown, 2012)

The drivers of enhancing transparency by the central government promote the development of transparency. It is precise because the purpose of supervising local officials' power abuse benefits the paper to believe the rise of transparency in China and it may help to combat corruption in China. As a matter of fact, carrying out open government affairs has experienced a long process. Open government affairs promote

gradually from bottom to top. It began from the 80s. Central government require village committees to open administrative system, results of administration and to be subject to public scrutiny. There is 24 local government stipulated to keep the public informed of the financial affairs. (Zhu, 2013) Central government continuously strengthened open government affairs in countryside basic-level organization in the 90s. Meanwhile, the process of open government affairs shifted to township level. Due to the outbreak of SARS , transparent government affairs has become an important part of Chinese administrative reform. And open government affairs started to shift to information disclosure. The central government expanded work of the information disclosure to the city level. (Zhu, 2013) There are 28 local governments formulated administrative regulations and provisions. It promoted effectively work of information disclosure. (Zhu. 2013) In 2008, Chinese government promulgates “People’s Republic of China’s Government Information Disclosure Regulation”(GIDR). GIDR applies to all government agencies at and above the county level (including cities). It marks the openness of Chinese government to enter into the phase of rapid, normative and institutional development. It establishes primarily an institutional system of open government. The regulation endows Chinese citizens’ right to know and provides public oversight. (Liu,2015) It consists of 38 articles spread over five chapters; General Principles, Scope of Disclosure, Methods of and Procedures for Disclosure, Supervision and Safeguards, and Supplementary Regulations. Chapter three and four of the GIDR provides clear regulations about responsibility and authorization of executive branch, the procedure of government agencies and administrative supervision. It ensures the power be exercised in the sunshine. Meanwhile, it strengthens social supervision. It empowered administrative proceedings’ rights of the public. It broadened the channels for the public to participate power supervision. The implementation of GIDR offers an institutional platform for corruption prevention and combating corruption.

The paper comes to talk about the rise of social accountability in China. China is a non-democratic country according to the definition of democracy in western countries. Smulovitz and Peruzzotti (2000) indicates that “political competition, press freedom, and government transparency ... are obviously strongly associated with democracy and imply that societal accountability is unlikely to be successful in an authoritarian setting like China”, however, this does not affect the existence of accountability in China. Accountability has different forms from democratic settings. For instance, officials in China are held accountable through the cadre responsibility system. (Heberer & Trappel, 2013) This is a unique accountability under China’s current institutional arrangements. The functions of the cadre responsibility system are as same as political accountability in the countries with competitive elections. The cadre responsibility system holds officials accountable for their mistakes. It allows the central government to have an accurate picture of political attitudes and ideological stands of its bureaucratic organization at the local level. (Chen, 1999) In addition, a petition system can be considered as another accountability. Under this system, aggrieved people may expose cases of unlawful behavior to petition offices. (Chen, 1999) In terms of fighting corruption, this mechanism seems work quite well. (Chen, 1999) However, there is a flaw of petition system in China as Chen (1999) argues: “ petition office could, and other does, return the complaint to the bureau against which the complaint was field”. Consequently, it frequently led to reprisals against the complainants”. Local governments often step forward and stop legitimate petitioning activities for exposing the governments’ dereliction of duty to central government.

As stated above accountability exists in China but in different forms. Accountability has played an increasingly important role since the economic reform and openness. The changes in state and economy encroach social autonomy. The situation of abuse of power was rampant due to lack of election competition and weak checks on the government in the 80s and 90s. Invasion of citizenship rights and corruption was especially prevalent at that time. The Central government has to constrain the power

of the officials. Traditional accountability mechanism such as party discipline and ideological inculcation shifted to new forms of accountability. (Ma, 2012) Horizontal accountability started to emerge. The People's Congress legislature strengthened its supervision over the government in lawmaking and budgeting. Top-down bureaucratic accountability also has been refined. (Ma, 2012) However, lacking citizens' participation still cannot ensure the officials were accountable to society. Moreover, due to the wealthy and the powerful are allied. It leads the society to protect itself relying on individual citizens, social groups, and the media to constrain the misuses of power by the officials. (Ma, 2012) Increasing economic freedom and education level provide capacity for Chinese individuals to supervise the government and to fight for their rights and interests. (Ma, 2012) This may be the motivation and stimulation of rising of societal accountability in China.

Civil society as the main force of societal accountability, its status of development determines the development of societal accountability under present Chinese political context. It is often said China does not have a civil society, or current center of the debate is whether civil society exists or not in China. Dickson (2016)'s understanding of the realms of civil society includes two dimensions. Civil society organization is labeled as non-critical or critical ones. Dickson (2016) points out that "if civil society refers to autonomous groups that are critical of political leaders and their policies, and even opposed to the regime", then the opinions think China does not have a civil society which is largely true. It means critical civil society organizations are nonexistent in current political context, at least in legal conditions. However, the concept of civil society includes other aspects. "If the notion of civil society is expanded to include the kinds of groups that make up civil society in democratic regimes-neighborhood groups, social organization, philanthropic and faith-based organization, etc.-then civil society is blooming" (Dickson, 2016) Even though, these organizations are non-critical which do not form to criticize the government and only focus on the economic and cultural interests of their members. But these non-critical

groups are seen as the key to democratic politics due to they “produce organizational and communication skills, norms of participation, interpersonal trust, and ultimately improved governance” (Dickson, 2016). In fact, these social-serviced civil society organizations and civil society are changing gradually. Present Chinese civil society has following characteristics according to Li (2011) ’s paper: 1. Although, the degree of organization of society is low, but freedom of association has been made. 2. Society can organize some immature but occasionally effective social movement and achieve a social purpose. 3. Society can express critical comments to the government. In what ways can social organizations express their comments to the government? Or how does social accountability work in China?

In general, there are two major forms of social accountability in China. One is state-led societal accountability. Another one is society-led societal accountability. Public hearing is one of the most typical and important state-led societal accountability. China has established a procedure for public hearing in 1996. This is followed by many related legislations during last decade. (Ma, 2012) However, those hearings have great limitation. Whether citizens’ participation has an influence on policymaking is doubtful. The public hearing grew up as a form of social accountability since Xiamen (Chinese coastal cities) Paraxylene Project in 2007. Xiamen Paraxylene Project is the first time the government listened to views of citizens in hearing after the intense conflict between citizens and government. It represents a shift of administrative decision-making. Over the next few years, public hearings for different purposes were held in different cities. Despite these public hearings benefit the government to communicate with the public to solve the conflicts. This form of social accountability is still weak due to the process of selecting participants is controlled by the government. (Ma, 2012) Second forms of state-led social accountability are democratic administration. Some cities practice public involvement to evaluate government performance by surveys. Public involvement forces the government to provide feedback to needs of the public. It not only benefits

the public to supervise whether the government fulfill their commitments, but also provide chances to participate in policymaking. It is a form of developing democracy construction in China. The third one is Online Governance. Nowadays, increasing numbers of governmental department utilize the Internet as communicating instrument with citizens. Most of the website of departments operated "Secretary Mailbox". People can submit their opinions or questions to the secretary. They can get feedback in a very short time. The public is increasingly turning to social media to supervise on public servants and to bring down the high-level officials. This is society-led accountability. New media Chinese Twitter "Weibo" played a significant role. Increasing numbers of corruption of street-level bureaucracies and high-level officials are exposed on social media by the public. These exposures are concerned by nationwide netizens. Under the nationwide social pressure, these officials are investigated and sentenced quickly. However, the attention on these incidents fades away as quickly as they are concerned. Netizens did not follow the entire process of the sentence. And this social supervision lacks institutionalization, whether these officials have been punished accordingly is not transparent. Another form of society-led social accountability is a demonstration. There are many cases to present how the public protests their own interests through demonstrations. These "walk" are organized by grass root groups. They utilize silence and peaceful protest to express their requirement and dissatisfaction. However, the government always takes demonstrations without a declaration as illegal behavior. In fact, there are few demonstrations to be approved in China. The organizers were arrested by authority. Utilizing demonstrations to present demands are limited by the government.

Civil society organization supervises government through the methods mentioned above. The process of oversight and accountability always challenged by the government. Central government or local government showed control-oriented and limit-oriented attitude on managing civil society organization for maintaining political stability. Although the numbers of civil society organization are increasing year by

year, these numbers only reflect how many organizations registered with Ministry of Civil Affairs. And there are lots of organizations cannot make themselves to become “legal” organizations due to strict requirements for registration. Only those organizations called “government-organized nongovernmental organizations” which have common interests with the government are allowed to plan activities. Therefore, the numbers of civil society organization which provided by official statistics can only reflect the rough scale of social organization in China.

Despite the strict control on social organization development in the big picture, not all government agencies reject social organization with critical opinion due to the difference between goals of the central and local leadership or the difference between missions of government agencies. For instance, the operation of environmental NGOs is a good example to show the different attitude between the central government and local government to NGOs. Central government advocates the provincial government to develop a green economy. Local NGOs stand in a better position to monitor local government than central government due to the limitation of labor power of the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The Ministry of Environmental Protection favors the growth of environmental NGOs. The operation of environmental NGOs helps the central leadership to monitor the behavior of the local government in order to ensure their actions do not de-legitimize the regime. (Dickson, 2016) However, in China, economic growth dominates local government performance evaluation. Local leaders often regard these organizations as obstacles to achieving their goal of economic growth and then influence their performance evaluation. (Dickson, 2016) Therefore, not surprisingly, local and central governments have different attitudes on the development of environmental NGOs. Likewise, activities in the field of fighting corruption can gain support from central government or relative anti-corruption agencies. Hence, anti-corruption activities which are carried out by civil society may be allowed even if local governments have strong control on civil society. In addition, present researches do not provide information about how much and in which methods

civil society could contribute to combating corruption in present political context. The paper attempts to comprehend these aspects.

In summary, the paper introduces the development of accountability and transparency in China. China has accountability as same as democratic regimes and it is effective oversight of the behavior of officials to ensure that they do not abuse their power. The cadre responsibility system is main horizontal accountability in China. Moreover, the paper introduces the development of social accountability in China. Allied the powerful and the rich results in Chinese society has to protect itself. Social accountability emerged in this background. Increasing economic freedom and level of education provide capabilities for the public to develop civil society. More and more individual citizens and social organization enhance social oversight capability to supervise whether their rights are stolen away by the officials. Although the Chinese government has strict control on the activities of civil society. But this does not influence the positive effects of civil society on corruption. This is due to the central government always support citizens' participation on fighting corruption. State builds actively channels for citizens to receive and report information of corruption. There is no evidence to show that Chinese citizens are threatened when they participate in anti-corruption activities. Likewise, the level of transparency is increasing in China, at least in terms of transparency on corruption. China exercises strict regulatory control on information dissemination. However, as the paper mentioned above, the central government requires the citizens' participation on supervising the local government. Hence, the information disclosure of corruption and civil society-led anti-corruption activities seems acquiescent for now.

4 Hypotheses

There have been studies showing that authoritarian regimes can combat corruption. However, how the authoritarian regimes combat corruption has been little investigated. The rise of societal accountability and transparency provides a chance to research the

relationship between corruption and societal accountability in China. The main research question is: Does societal accountability benefits Chinese government to reduce corruption, if so, how? Moreover, the paper, in the light of previous related literature , finds that the degree of government transparency, people's level of education and Internet penetration not only affect directly to the level of corruption, but may also spur corruption indirectly through promoting the development of civil society. Therefore, investigating these three factors and their interactions with a density of civil society may benefit the paper to understand the effects of societal accountability on corruption under the influence of these conditions. The broad research question is extended to the following questions.

1. Will the level of transparency of the provincial and municipal governments affect the role of civil society in the fight against corruption?
2. Will the education level of the public affect the role of civil society in the fight against corruption?
3. Will the Internet penetration of residents affect the role of civil society in the fight against corruption?
4. Is it possible for civil society to play an anti-corruption role only in areas with a high degree of transparency?
5. Is it possible for civil society to play an anti-corruption role only in areas with a high degree of education?
6. Is it possible for civil society to play an anti-corruption role only in areas with a high degree of Internet penetration?

Following hypotheses are based on the research questions above.

1. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of people in all the provinces have same schooling years in the absence of other factors.
2. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of all the local governments have same level of

transparency in the absence of other factors.

3. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of all the provinces have same level of Internet penetration in the absence of other factors.
4. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of a government with a higher degree of transparency.
5. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of people with longer schooling years.
6. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of a province with higher Internet penetration.
7. The transparency of the government and the degree of corruption is negatively related only when a province has a high density of civil society.
8. The level of education and the degree of corruption is negatively related only when a province has a high density of civil society.
9. The level of Internet penetration and the degree of corruption is negatively related only when a province has a high density of civil society.

5 Data and Model Specification

This paper employs secondary data for statistical analysis base on ordinary least squares regression (OLS). The following section introduces the data and model applied in this analyses. It involves sources of the data, reasons for applying them in analyses and advantages and weakness. The determinant of corruption, the concept of societal accountability mentioned above is the main foundation for selecting data.

5.1 Dependent Variable: Measurement of level of corruption

Initially, the author introduces dependent variables. Due to the purpose of this research is to explore the effect of rising societal accountability on the level of corruption in provincial level in China. Hence, the dependent variable in this paper indicates the level of corruption in the local level. The concept of corruption is

controversial and varied. There are many ways to measure corruption. According to the previous literature about corruption, measuring methods can be split into two categories: objective and subjective measurement. Objective measurement mainly relies on statistical information of corruption cases from disciplinary or judicial organs. Subjective measurement mainly depends on investigating people's subjective assessment to the level of corruption. This paper focuses on the corruption at the sub-national level. But the subjective measurement seems blank at the sub-national level. In addition, Zhou and Tao (2009) argue that the advantage of objective measurements of corruption can reduce the deviation of quantitative analysis due to the consistency of internal political institution and legal structure, relatively smaller gap of social, economic and cultural development and relatively less unobservable elements. Therefore, the paper utilizes objective measurement of corruption. Most of the Chinese scholars agree to use the numbers of filed and investigated officials by region or number of annual registered cases on corruption in the procurator's office by region to reflect the situation of corruption in the regional level. (Dong & Torgler, 2013; Fan, 2013; Wu, 2008; Zhou & Tao, 2009) Their data sets are derived from China Procuratorial Yearbooks. The numbers of filed and investigated officials or the numbers of annual registered cases of corruption are always divided by the populations or the numbers of civil servants of every province in order to eliminate size effect. The results present the situation of corruption in the regional level. However, there are many scholars questioned these data. The numbers can also indicate the anti-corruption efforts rather than the level of corruption. (Zhang, Gao, Fu, & Zhang, 2007) Nie (2014) believe that these data reflect the level of corruption and he provides his explanation. The numbers of annual registered cases or people on corruption should have a positive relationship with the expenditure on fighting corruption of Public Security Bureau, Procuratorate and Court if the numbers indicate the efforts of combating corruption. Nevertheless, the relationship is negative. Therefore, the paper believes the Nie's opinion.

Person of Cases Registered under Direct Investigation by People's Procuratorate, Occupational Crimes (Persons)

Beijing	505	Shanghai	486	Hubei	2897
Tianjin	397	Jiangsu	2110	Hunan	1794
Hebei	3030	Zhejiang	2065	Guangdong	3443
Shanxi	1991	Anhui	2219	Guangxi	1819
Inner Mongolia	1619	Fujian	1567	Hainan	354
Liaoning	2568	Jiangxi	1712	Chongqing	906
Jilin	2433	Shandong	3563	Sichuan	2457
Heilongjiang	2777	Henan	4523	Guizhou	1295
Yunnan	1688	Shannxi	1702	Gansu	1241
Qinghai	251	Ningxia	430		

The paper collects the numbers of filed and investigated officials and to divide the numbers of the population between the same year and same province to get the values of the rate of corruption. The data comes from Procuratorial Yearbook of China and Work Reports of Provincial Procuratorates. Mainland China contains 22 provinces, 4 municipalities, 5 autonomous regions. The actual research objects are 28 in analyses due to some provinces did not provide data. Following table provides the person of cases registered under direct investigation by People's Procuratorate due to occupational crimes. Occupational crimes include the crimes of corruption bribes and the crimes of dereliction of duty. Moreover, there is one advantage of using the data above as measurement for corruption. The statistic of the Supreme people's Procuratorate shown that 70 to 80% of clues for investigating corruption crimes came from the populous. (CRI Online, 2008; News of the Communist Party of China, 2008; SOHU, 2014) This benefits the paper to believe the effect of civil society on fighting corruption. In addition, the paper applies averaged rate of corruption between 2003 and 2007 as control variable. It benefits to provide a more robust examination of the issue of causality and to provide an estimate of the effect of the independent variables

on changes in levels of corruption. (Grimes, 2013)

5.2 Density of Civil Society

The density of civil society organization density is measured as the number of social organizations and groups per 10000 inhabitants. Data on social organizations and groups derives from National Bureau of statistics of the People's Republic of China. (NBS) There are many indicators can be regarded as civil society organization in statistics of NBS. There are three kinds of civil organizations according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China. Martins provides a brief introduction to these three kinds of civil organization: “1) *Social associations (shehui tuanti)*, which are non-profit and voluntary, constituted by Chinese citizens and from four types including academic groups, commercial and industrial organizations, professional organizations and federations; 2) *Private non-commercial entities (minban feiqiye danwei)*, which are social organizations without state financing and are organized by companies, institutions, social forces or individual citizens with social non-profit objectives; 3) *Foundations (jijinhui)*, which are legally constituted and non-profit, dedicated to common good” (Martins, 2014). Therefore, this paper utilizes the indicator: Number of Enterprises of Social Organization (Unit) in 2011 as the main data for measuring the density of civil society in China in 2011. It reflects the sum of the three kinds of civil organizations above. It is important to note that the most studies about Chinese civil societies reflect the fact that actual numbers of groups of civil society are far more than the numbers in the official statistics. However, it is impossible to know the correct amount. Therefore, the paper can only utilize the official estimates for analyzing. To emphasize another important point, the paper does not choose the social organizations which mainly focus on fighting corruption due to no clear explanation of the structure of the data by official statistics. Moreover, there is little data to show how many special anti-corruption social organizations or groups in China. No academic studies in China provide relevant data. In addition, Grimes (2012) explains that organizations support social accountability can be any kinds of

organizations if the organizations seeking to secure entitlement for their community or for marginalized communities. Therefore, this paper does not apply numbers of anti-corruption social groups or organizations as a measurement of civil society. The table below presents the number of enterprises of social organization.

Number of Every 10000 People have Enterprises of Social Organization (Units) in 2011

Beijing	3.76	Shanghai	4.42	Hubei	4.05
Tianjin	3.09	Jiangsu	4.64	Hunan	2.59
Hebei	2.19	Zhejiang	5.39	Guangdong	2.92
Shanxi	2.96	Anhui	2.83	Guangxi	2.88
Inner Mongolia	3.55	Fujian	4.57	Hainan	3.66
Liaoning	4.29	Jiangxi	2.53	Chongqing	3.48
Jilin	3.14	Shandong	4.27	Sichuan	3.76
Heilongjiang	3.39	Henan	2.14	Guizhou	2.06
Yunnan	2.92	Shannxi	4.05	Gansu	3.89
Qinghai	4.75	Ningxia	6.71		

5.3 Transparency

The paper utilizes Information Disclosure Index in the provincial government website performance evaluation in 2010 for measuring the level of transparency in different provinces. The evaluation is commissioned by Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and carried out by China Software Testing Center. The first assessment commenced in 2002. Main evaluation objects are official websites of central ministries or departments, provincial governments, and sub-provincial cities. The main purpose of the assessment aims to lead the government to expand and strengthen the depth and width of information sharing. It also aims at promoting the ability to handle affairs and the ability to service the requirements of the publics. The assessment evaluates 10 fields, such as education, employment, healthcare, and

housing, etc. The details and contents of the assessment may adjust each year accordingly. The evaluation of Information Disclosure in 2010 focuses on the hot issues of common concern. These hot issues concern situations of the appointment and removal, recruiting civil servant, disclosure of financial information (financial budget, administrative charge and government procurement), key construction project, policies and regulations and normative documents, government planning, the government executive meeting, etc. The score of this indicator depends on whether the government will fully disclose the above information to the public. Although the paper cannot determine if the results of the evaluation reflect accurately the level of transparency. But the paper believes the results show the gaps across provinces in the transparency area at least. The scores are between 0 and 1. Greater scores indicate higher transparency. Following table shows the transparency scores for each province.

The Score of Information Disclosure Index for each Province

Beijing	0.80	Shanghai	0.78	Hubei	0.52
Tianjin	0.58	Jiangsu	0.57	Hunan	0.70
Hebei	0.60	Zhejiang	0.59	Guangdong	0.83
Shanxi	0.48	Anhui	0.49	Guangxi	0.33
Inner Mongolia	0.30	Fujian	0.58	Hainan	0.68
Liaoning	0.51	Jiangxi	0.57	Chongqing	0.43
Jilin	0.39	Shandong	0.26	Sichuan	0.84
Heilongjiang	0.65	Henan	0.42	Guizhou	0.37
Yunnan	0.44	Shannxi	0.79	Gansu	0.25
Qinghai	0.34	Ningxia	0.32		

5.4 Education

Education is an important variable for researching corruption. As the paper mentioned above, education is one significant condition for strengthening the capacity of civil society to fight corruption. In addition, in general speaking, in most all studies of the determinants of corruption at both national or sub-national level have shown that better-educated countries or regions lead to lower levels of corruption. (Charron, 2009; Montinola & Jackman, 2002; Treisman, 2000) The education in this paper is indicated by average schooling years. The paper collects numbers of the population in a different level of education for each province in 2011: illiteracy (0 years), primary school (6 years), junior high school (3 years), senior high school (3 years) and post-secondary school (12 years). Then the author calculates a number of schooling years for the people in each province. Lastly, the results divided by the populations to get the value of average schooling years. Following table shows the detailed information.

Number of Average Schooling Years

Beijing	11.45	Shanghai	10.56	Hubei	9.37
Tianjin	9.89	Jiangsu	9.44	Hunan	8.95
Hebei	8.83	Zhejiang	9.05	Guangdong	9.61
Shanxi	9.42	Anhui	8.49	Guangxi	8.75
Inner Mongolia	9.47	Fujian	9.08	Hainan	9.00
Liaoning	9.73	Jiangxi	8.89	Chongqing	8.91
Jilin	9.38	Shandong	8.86	Sichuan	8.44
Heilongjiang	9.41	Henan	8.98	Guizhou	7.73
Yunnan	7.91	Shannxi	9.31	Gansu	8.45

Qinghai	7.88	Ningxia	8.52
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5.5 Internet Penetration

The Internet has great effects on improving the capacity of civil society for curbing corruption as the discussion mentioned in the beginning of the paper. In addition, there are plenty of evidence to show the positive effects of Internet and information technology on reducing corruption in a certain country or around the world. Lio, Liu, and Ou (2011) use a panel consisting of 70 countries covering the period from 1998 to 2005 to attempts to estimate the effects of Internet adoption on reducing corruption. Their discoveries recommend that the Internet has demonstrated a capacity for reducing corruption, however, its potential has not been fully demonstrated. Andersen, Bentzen, Dalgaard, and Selaya (2011) believe the development of the Internet has served to decrease the degree of corruption across both U.S. state and the world. Garcia-Murillo (2010) studies a cross section of 170 countries to estimate the effects of Internet access on the level of government corruption. The result indicates that the Internet is having a positive effect on reducing corruption around the world. Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes (2010) suggest that information technology and social media create an atmosphere of openness for stemming corrupt behavior. These research believe the Internet has tremendous potentials for reducing corruption and fighting corruption cannot rely on its own. The Internet needs to be combined with other anti-corruption mechanisms to fight corruption effectively.

This paper utilizes Internet penetration as the indicator of “Internet variable”. Internet penetration is derived from the proportion of the population using the Internet in the provinces, i.e., the number of people using the Internet divided by the population. Data were collected at the official website of the National Bureau of Statistics. Following table provides the data used in this paper.

Internet Penetration

Beijing	0.68	Shanghai	0.65	Hubei	0.37
Tianjin	0.53	Jiangsu	0.47	Hunan	0.29
Hebei	0.36	Zhejiang	0.56	Guangdong	0.60
Shanxi	0.39	Anhui	0.27	Guangxi	0.29
Inner Mongolia	0.34	Fujian	0.57	Hainan	0.39
Liaoning	0.48	Jiangxi	0.24	Chongqing	0.37
Jilin	0.35	Shandong	0.38	Sichuan	0.28
Heilongjiang	0.31	Henan	0.28	Guizhou	0.24
Yunnan	0.25	Shannxi	0.38	Gansu	0.27
Qinghai	0.37	Ningxia	0.32		

5.5 Model Specification

Following sets of regression equations are the models for analyses in this paper for answering research questions.

Set 1: This set of equations shows basic multivariate models.

1. $Corruption_{2014i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Education_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i$
2. $Corruption_{2014i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Education_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Ave.Corruption_i$

Set 2: This set of regression equations presents factors will be employed in the analysis. “Low Transparency”, “Low Internet” and “Low Education” are dichotomized and recoded variables. Education is dichotomous and coded as one equals the average schooling years is lower than average level. It can be regarded as lower education. Transparency is dichotomized and coded as the same pattern as Education. Zero equals the level of transparency is higher than average level. One in Low Internet variable indicates a lower level of Internet penetration than average level. The regressions attempt to present the relationship between one conditional variable, interaction variable and dependent variable (see specification equation 1,3,5) and with control variable (see specification equation 2,4,6). The results of these regressions may reveal the effects of CSOs density on the level of corruption in different

conditions. In other words, these regressions may show that how different level of education, transparency and Internet openness can contribute civil society to reduce the level of corruption. The text in parentheses explains the hypotheses that each equation may examine.

1. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 LowTransparency_i + \alpha_3 LowTransparency_i * CSOs_i$
2. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 LowTransparency_i + \alpha_3 LowTransparency_i * CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Ave.Corrption_i$ (The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of a government with higher degree of transparency.)
3. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 LowTransparency_i + \alpha_3 LowEducation_i * CSOs_i$
4. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 LowTransparency_i + \alpha_3 LowEducation_i * CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Ave.Corrption_i$ (The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of people with longer schooling years.)
5. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 LowInternet_i * CSOs_i + \alpha_3 LowInternet_i$
6. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CSOs_i + \alpha_2 LowInternet_i * CSOs_i + \alpha_3 LowInternet_i + \alpha_4 Ave.Corrption_i$ (The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of a province with higher Internet penetration.)

Set 3: This set of equations has a similar pattern as set 2. But the only density of civil society is dichotomized. One indicates that the density of civil society is greater than average level of civil society density. This set of regression equations may benefit the paper to examines the effects of density of civil society from another perspective. It reveals the performance of these conditions on anti-corruption independently in active or inactive civil society.

1. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Transparency_i * HighCSOs_i$
2. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Transparency_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_4 Ave.Corrption_i$ (The transparency of the government and the degree of corruption is negatively related only when a province has a high density of civil society.)

3. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Education_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_3 Education_i$
4. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Education_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_3 Education_i + \alpha_4 Ave.Corrption_i$ (The level of education and the degree of corruption is negatively related only when a province has a high density of civil society.)
5. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Internet_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_3 Internet_i$
6. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Internet_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_3 Internet_i + \alpha_4 Ave.Corrption_i$ (The level of Internet penetration and the degree of corruption is negatively related only when a province has a high density of civil society.)

The fourth set of equations based on the set 3. The models include all the factors that may affect both levels of corruption and the dynamic of civil society. These models may reveal the how one certain factor can contribute civil society to change the levels of corruption under the influences of other factors which can also influence levels of corruption and strength of civil society.

1. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Transparency_i * High CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i$
2. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Transparency_i * High CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i + \alpha_6 Ave.Corrption_i$
3. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Education_i * High CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i$
4. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Education_i * High CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i + \alpha_6 Ave.Corrption_i$
5. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Internet_i * High CSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i$
6. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Internet_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i + \alpha_6 Ave.Corrption_i$

7. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Transparency_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i + \alpha_6 Ave.Corruption_i + \alpha_7 InGDP_i$
8. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Education_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i + \alpha_6 Ave.Corruption_i + \alpha_7 InGDP_i$
9. $Corruption_{2014_i} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 HighCSOs_i + \alpha_2 Transparency_i + \alpha_3 Internet_i * HighCSOs_i + \alpha_4 Internet_i + \alpha_5 Education_i + \alpha_6 Ave.Corruption_i + \alpha_7 InGDP_i$

6. Analysis and Result

Previous research find empirical evidence to explain why authoritarian regimes can combat corruption as democratic regimes do, and the research show the non-linear relationship between corruption and democracy, but the research do not show how the authoritarian regimes curb corruption. Existing research has shown the effectiveness of societal accountability to ensure officials hold accountable for their behavior in democratic regimes. This analysis attempts to explore whether societal accountability impact on the anti-corruption campaign in authoritarian regimes. Due to the rise of societal accountability and transparency in China, therefore, it is interesting to explore how societal accountability and transparency affect anti-corruption activities in the context of Chinese political regimes. It is necessary to emphasize that even though China is regarded as a non-democratic country, but this does not mean this country is

without societal accountability and conditions for curbing corruption. As the paper mentioned above, Chinese central government supports to enhance societal accountability and to encourage the sub-national government to disclose information to the public. This is significant to maintain legitimacy and rationality of power. This paper takes advantage of the rise of societal accountability and all other components which facilitate societal accountability to improve the quality of government and investigates if societal accountability has had an effect on curbing corruption among the sub-national governments with different conditions.

The analyses are based on the model specifications above. The models in Table 1, 2, 3 and 4 correspond to the equations in set 1, 2, 3, and 4. Initially, the paper presents two multivariate models in Table 1. One includes all the main effects but without the average of level of corruption between 2003 and 2007. The other model contains this variable. Subsequently, the analyses consider examining how different level of education, transparency and Internet openness can contribute civil society to reduce the level of corruption. Table 2 includes six models. The models examine the interaction effects between the civil society density and one certain contextual condition on levels of corruption. Model 1, 3, 5 does not include the previous levels of corruption as a control variable. Table 3 shows the models that examine the impact of these conditions on anti-corruption in the absence of civil society or in a dynamic civil society context. Model 1,3, 5 does not include the average levels of corruption between 2003 and 2007 as same as in Table 2. Table 4 present the estimated effects of varying density of civil society on levels of corruption under conditions of transparency, education, and Internet penetration respectively.

Table 1. 1 Multivariate Models

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-.322 (.439)	-.376 (.386)
Early Corruption		.572 (.202) ***

CSOs Density	.043 (.029)	.057 (.026) **
Transparency	-.311 (.178) *	-.237 (.159)
Education	.120 (.056) **	.093 (.050) *
Internet	-.875 (.377) **	-.808 (.332) **
N	29	29
R ² _{adj}	.238	.411

In this multivariate model, the density of civil society shows no systematic relationship with the dependent variable. However, it shows a systematic relationship with the dependent variable when the average rate of corruption crime between 2003 and 2007 is entered the regression. The effects of Transparency and Education and Internet Penetration are systematic to show statistical significance. Transparency and Internet have a negative relationship with corruption even including control variable. The effects of them on corruption are slightly weakened when including the incidence of early corruption as a control variable. In addition, the effects of density of civil society are weaker than all three explanatory factors in two regressions. And the effects are too weak to show the relationship with corruption in general. Therefore, the paper attempts to provides more regression analyses to show the relationships to answer research questions. The models below examines individual contribution of CSO variable to variation in corruption level. Unfortunately, CSOs variables have positive effect on dependent variable in all the models. All of three hypotheses are rejected: “ 1. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of people in all the provinces have same schooling years in the absence of other factors. 2. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of all the local governments have same level of transparency in the absence of other factors. 3. The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of all the provinces have same level of Internet penetration in the absence of other factors”.

Table 1.2 The estimated effects of civil society density on level of corruption

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Constant	.577 (.367)	.397 (.326)	.577*** (.134)	.299* (.152)	.483*** (.115)	.206 (.130)
Early Corruption		.694*** (.230)		.614*** (.212)		.676*** (.207)
CSO	.018 (.029)	.036 (.026)	.012 (.027)	.028 (.024)	.040 (.029)	.057** (.025)
Transparency			-.369** (.156)	-.327** (.139)		
Education	-.024 (.040)	-.036 (.035)				
Internet					-.519** (.239)	-.530** (.204)
N	29	29	29	29	29	29
R ² _{adj}	-.050	.199	.124	.317	.100	.343

*p<0.1 **p<0.05 ***p<0.01 Standard error within parentheses.

The models in Table 2 examines how societal accountability might affect corruption when three conditions are weaker or absent in different provinces. The analyses employ three interaction variables including 29 provinces. All the conditional variables are dichotomized as two level, high and low as the paper mentioned above. Education is dichotomized and coded as zero equals the higher level of education. Transparency is dichotomized and coded as same as education. Zero equals the better level of transparency. Zero in the Internet indicates higher Internet penetration. The first model explores the relationship between density of civil society, transparency, and the interaction of these two terms on the level of corruption. Although the result indicates that the effect of CSOs in provinces with a high level of transparency on corruption is -.005. However, the effect of CSOs on corruption become positive when the previous level of corruption is controlled for, as the effect of civil society is .012. Therefore, the hypothesis: *"The degrees of the dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of a government with a higher degree of*

transparency" does not get support in this model. The third model explores the relationship between CSOs density, education, and their interaction term on the level of corruption. The main effect of CSOs density on corruption in provinces with a low level of education is .035, in provinces with a high level of education is -.122. The fourth model reflects the same result as the third model. Vibrant civil society decrease the level of corruption in the provinces with a high level of education, despite the correlation is weaker (b=-.037). *Therefore, the hypothesis: "The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of people with longer schooling years" can be supported.* Model 5 and 6 explores the relationship between CSOs density, Internet penetration and their interaction term on the level of corruption. Civil society density has no correlation with the level of corruption when the provinces with a high level of Internet penetration. The effect of CSOs density in provinces with a low level of Internet penetration is positive (.043). The effect of CSOs density on corruption are positive when the levels of corruption in earlier period controlled for in the provinces with the high or low level of Internet penetration (b=.061 or b=.52). *Therefore, the hypotheses: "The degree of dynamism of civil society is negatively related to the degree of corruption in the case of a province with higher Internet penetration" does not get support.*

Table 2 The estimated effect of civil society density on corruption under one certain condition (OLS)

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Constant	.373*** (.099)	.138 (.127)	.919*** (.278)	.425 (.378)	.400 (.249)	-.130 (.258)
Early Corruption		.569** (.219)		.510* (.278)		.761*** (.220)
CSO	-.005 (.028)	.012 (.026)	-.122 (.075)	-.037 (.085)	-.008 (.061)	.061 (.055)
Low Transparency	-.063 (.079)	-.025 (.073)				
CSO * Low Transparency	.046** (.0188)	.036** (.016)				
Low Education			-.649** (.299)	-.319 (.338)		

			.157*	.075		
CSO * Low Education			(.080)	(.089)		
					-.083	.174
Low Internet					(.275)	(.241)
					.051	-.009
CSO * Low Internet					(.070)	(.061)

N 29 29 29 29 29 29

R²_{adj} .152 .310 .092 .171 .041 .333

*p<0.1 **p<0.05 ***p<0.01 Standard error within parentheses. Low Education is dichotomous and coded as zero equals longer schooling years. Low Transparency is dichotomous as zero equals to a better level of transparency. Low Internet is dichotomous and coded as zero equals to high Internet penetration.

The third set of analyses has a similar pattern as set 2, but the only density of civil society is dichotomized. One equals to a high level of civil society density. These analyses benefit the paper to explore how the vitality of civil society assists these three conditional factors associated with anti-corruption to combat corruption. First and second models investigate the effect of CSOs density, transparency, and the interaction term of these two variables on the level of corruption with or without the level of corruption between 2003 and 2007 as a control variable. The effects of interaction term are positive. And their absolute values are smaller than the absolute values of effects of transparency. The effects of transparency are -.359 in the first model and -.345 in the second in provinces with strong civil society. The effects become stronger which are -.375 and -.351 in the provinces with weak civil society. Therefore, the results suggest that the less the vitality of civil society, the greater the effect of transparency on corruption. *This rejects the hypothesis: The greater the vitality of civil society, the greater the effect of transparency on corruption.*

Table 3 The estimated effect of dichotomized civil society density on corruption under varying conditions (OLS)

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Constant	.636*** (.141)	.418 (.154)	-.376 (.606)	-.160 (.577)	.515** (.142)	.325** (.147)

		.576**		.529**		.617**
Early Corruption		(.226)		(.251)		(.234)
	-.034	.011	1.405*	.999	.115	.127
Low CSO	(.185)	(.168)	(.741)	(.721)	(.206)	(.187)
	-.375	-.351				
Transparency	(.269)	(.244)				
	.019	.006				
Low CSO * Transparency	(.336)	(.304)				
			.092	.047		
Education			(.067)	(.067)		
			-.160*	-.110		
Low CSO * Education			(.082)	(.080)		
					-.202	-.288
Internet					(.400)	(.361)
					-.316	-.229
Low CSO * Internet					(.517)	(.466)
N	29	29	29	29	29	29
R ² _{adj}	.088	.253	.055	.169	.011	.201

*p<0.1 **p<0.05 ***p<0.01 Standard error within parentheses. "Low CSO" is dichotomous and coded such that one equals to powerful civil society.

Model 3 indicates that the effects of education on corruption are positive for provinces with weak civil society (b=.092). Education shows a positive effect on reducing corruption when provinces with vibrant civil society (b=-.068). The results in model 4 show same findings: with weak civil society b=.047 and with strong civil society b=-.063. *Therefore, the hypothesis: "the greater the vitality of civil society, the greater the effect of education on reducing corruption" can be accepted.* Fifth and sixth models explore the effects of Internet penetration, CSOs density, and their interaction terms on corruption. The effect is greater for provinces with a higher density of civil society (-.518) as opposed to provinces with a lower level of Internet penetration (-.202). The effects are correspondingly (-.517) and (-.288). *Hence, the hypothesis the greater the vitality of civil society, the greater the effect of Internet penetration on reducing corruption gains support.*

Table 4 bases on the models in Table 3, the other two conditional variables are added

to the regressions as control variables. Model 1 and 2 explore the effects of transparency on corruption for provinces with or without strong civil society. The results indicate the inverse findings as Table 3 shown. The effects of transparency on corruption increase for provinces have powerful civil society even if other two conditional variables are entered, i.e. the effects change from -.359 to -.431 and from -.345 to -.376 when corruption between 2003 and 2007 is controlled for. In addition, the effect for provinces with active civil society is stronger than the effect for provinces with weak civil society. *Therefore, the hypothesis: "The greater the vitality of civil society, the greater the effect of transparency on corruption" gets support.* Powerful civil society can contribute transparency to reduce corruption more effectively. Model 3 and 4 reveal the effects of education on corruption for provinces with or without powerful civil society. However, regardless of whether civil society is viable, the results of the regression do not show that education has a positive impact on the fight against corruption, i.e. all the effects of education on corruption (.206 and .159) or when add up the effects with the interaction terms (.055 and .047) are positive. The results are opposite to the findings in table 3. Therefore, the hypothesis: the greater the vitality of civil society, the greater the effect of education on reducing corruption that was rejected in this table instead accepted when including two more conditional variables. Fifth and sixth models explore the effects of Internet penetration, CSOs density, and their interaction terms on corruption with other two conditional variables and control variable.

Table 4 The estimated effect of dichotomized civil society density on corruption including two other conditional variables as control variables (OLS)

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Constant	-.150 (.481)	-.156 (.439)	-.998 (.596)	-.768 (.576)	-.236 (.457)	-.213 (.420)	-.455 (1.203)	-.257 (1.134)	-.350 (1.18)
Early Corruption		.533*** (.226)		.433* (.225)		.514** (.225)	.547** (.237)	.384 (.247)	.522** (.237)
InGDP							.038 (.146)	-.083 (.158)	.018 (.147)

	.089	.113	1.386**	1.056	.201	.191	.112	1.246	.187
Low CSO	(.191)	(.175)	(.655)	(.643)	(.195)	(.179)	(.179)	(.747)	(.186)
	-.291	-.255	-.344*	-.314*	-.387**	-.339*	-.239	-.349*	-.330*
Transparency	(.279)	(.256)	(.169)	(.160)	(.180)	(.166)	(.268)	(.176)	(.184)
Low CSO *	-.140	-.121					-.117		
Transparency	(.337)	(.308)					(.315)		
	.108*	.083	.206**	.159**	.113*	.087	.073	.196*	.082
Education	(.061)	(.057)	(.074)	(.074)	(.059)	(.055)	(.069)	(.103)	(.068)
Low CSO *			-.151**	-.112				-.133	
Education			(.072)	(.071)				(.083)	
	-.667	-.605	-.672	-.615*	-.390	-.390	-.689	-.444	-.435
Internet	(.392)	(.359)	(.352)	(.334)	(.445)	(.409)	(.480)	(.471)	(.555)
Low CSO *					-.485	-.375			-.363
Internet					(.481)	(.445)			(.465)
N	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
R ² _{adj}	.140	.282	.273	.350	.170	.300	.250	.328	.267

*p<0.1 **p<0.05 ***p<0.01 Standard error within parentheses. “Low CSO” is dichotomous and coded such that one equals to powerful civil society. GDP per capita in 2011 derived from National Statistical Bureau. The paper takes the logarithm of GDP per capita.

The effects of Internet penetration and interaction terms are negative. The results indicate that Internet has a positive impact on reducing corruption no matter the density of civil society. The finding presented here evinces the same pattern as shown in the previous table when transparency and education are not added. This validates the hypothesis again. It supports that the greater the density of civil society, the greater the effect of Internet penetration on reducing corruption. Moreover, Model 7,8, and 9 add GDP per capita as control variable, respectively based Mode 2, 4, and 6, for further testing whether the significant results in previous 6 models are real or due to the effects of some important omitted variables. The results of these three models reflect that the significant results in previous models are true and believable. Transparency and early level of corruption remains significant.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

The political and economic reform in China results in the endogenous vulnerability of institutions. While decentralization provides discretion for local government, it

increases tensions between central government and local governments. The traditional system of intra-Party oversight and capacity of self-healing constantly dysfunctional. This is the main factor to result in gradually deteriorate corruption in China. Fortunately, the rise of societal accountability and government's supports on combating corruption by the public may elevate the role of civil society in fighting corruption. In the context of such environment, this paper came into being. The paper aims to discuss the role of societal accountability in fighting China's systemic corruption. Hence, the paper not only explores whether societal accountability in China can promote potential active conditions as previous literature proposed for combating corruption, but also investigate whether these conditions contributes societal accountability to reduce corruption. The determinants of China's corruption and the characteristics of societal accountability mechanisms determine most relevant three conditions which are applied in the study: education, transparency, and Internet penetration.

The results of the study are as follows. Table 2 examines how societal accountability might affect corruption when three conditions are weaker or absent in different provinces. Table 3 and 4 examine how weaker or stronger societal accountability might affect three conditions on reducing corruption. The findings from Table 2 reveals that if a high level of education in place, a stronger civil society means lower corruption. Other two conditions do not show any active contribution against corruption. The finding suggests that education is the foundation of civil society to fight corruption. After all civil society density has no correlation with the level of corruption at the lower level of education. It demonstrates the findings of previous research in the Chinese context. The population of receiving higher education determines whether social groups can gain information about corrupt behavior and process the information to choose appropriate methods to report corruption. The results derived from Table 3 indicate that if stronger civil society in place, education and the Internet can reduce independently corruption, i.e. powerful civil society

improves the ability of Internet and education on reducing corruption without other influences. The results changed when brings all the conditions into regressions in the models in Table 4. Stronger civil society can only benefit transparency and the Internet to fight against corruption. The changes reflect education may cannot assist in reducing corruption under the influence of Internet and Transparency. This does not negate the importance of education for fighting corruption. This means education affects little on corruption in this paper. Certainly, data selecting and processing of education may have defects. Multicollinearity may explain the result. Internet penetration plays an important role in fighting corruption as expected. Disagreements between the central government and local governments result in central governments in encountering difficulties of assessing information. Central government encourages people to report graft via the Internet. The Internet gets through the crux passway between the public and central government. The results, in term of Internet Penetration, show that if strong associational life available, the Internet can lower the level of corruption in both independent or collaborated situation. It should be noted that although the Internet itself may reduce corruption without civil society. But the finding suggests that the greater the density of civil society, the greater the effect of Internet penetration on reducing corruption. With the help of societal accountability, the Internet can combat corruption more effective. Transparency also shows positive effect against corruption. However, it cannot abate corruption individually. This is in line with the conclusion in the literature review, as the paper mentioned above, "just making information available will not prevent corruption if such conditions for publicity and accountability as education, media circulation and free and fair elections are weak". (Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010) In addition, it is worth noting that the "transparency" variable has a negative correlation with the dependent variable in all the models. And it shows a strong significance in four models in Table 4. The interaction terms of CSOs density and transparency also has a negative correlation with the level of corruption. These findings may reveal the positive effects of transparency on abating the probability of corruption. In addition, "Transparency"

variable is derived from “Information Disclosure Index” in the provincial government website performance evaluation. This data is not used in previous research in this field. This may inspire further research to consider the value of this data when conducting related research.

To sum up, the research of thesis is only a preliminary attempt to study the role of societal accountability in combating corruption under Chinese unique political and economic system. This thesis may contribute future research to rethink the role of societal accountability in authoritarian regimes. There must be some deficiencies involve selecting and processing data due to the constraints of time and capacity. The sample size is small, only 29 samples, due to the thesis bases on the provincial level. This may result in the insignificant results of some models. Further research might expand the research to the municipal level. The increase of the sample size may resolve the challenge in this paper. Moreover, there are no other control variables available in this paper like other articles in the same field. This is because of the paper attempt to make the results of the empirical analyses significant to the greatest extent. The paper considered adding some control variables, such as the average income of civil servants and fiscal revenue of local governments. But the regression results show completely insignificant. Therefore, the paper leaves out these variables and focus on the main variables. The result shows that the change has good practicability and validity. Some variables are significant at least. Overall, societal accountability may play an important role in fighting corruption in China. Chinese people and government should realize fully the active effect of societal accountability on fighting corruption, especially under the fact that the overriding pursuit of economic development results in the neglect of development of accountability mechanism. To go by appearances, perhaps it is difficult for people or governments to imagine the direct association between societal accountability and anti-corruption mechanism. In fact, although not all civil society density variables show direct positive effects on reducing level of corruption in this paper, but strong civil society enhances the

capacity of transparency and the Internet on fighting corruption, i.e. transparency and rate of Internet penetration have greater effects on the level of corruption with high density of social organizations. Societal accountability as a branch of bottom-up vertical accountability is what the Chinese central government needs for resolving defects of political institutions and resolving the conflicts with the local governments when traditional top-down accountability is out of order, in terms of combating corruption. To reinforce the linkage on fighting corruption may be a wise investment between societal accountability and transparency for China.

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