Study of the Roots and Governance of Land Corruption in China from the Perspective of Behaviorism: Analysis Based on Four Typical Cases

Zuo Jinming
Beijing Normal University, Haidian District, Beijing

Abstract: In recent years, the issue of land corruption has become the focus of attention among the major media, but the research on land corruption is limited and confined to the forms of corruption and the study of problem countermeasures, which is lack of depth and systematic. Based on this situation, it is necessary for us to learn more about the actual situation of land corruption by analyzing its regular patterns or features and explore the institutional reasons behind its existence. During this process, the most important part is to construct the three-dimensional system of the subject, the link and the way of land corruption from the perspective of behavioral research through an empirical study of four typical cases.

Key Words: Land corruption; Case analysis; Behavior study; System design

1.1 Previous Accounts of Corruption

Nowadays, the well-accepted definition of corruption is behaviors of the civil servants seeking personal gains by way of taking advantage of their positions in the form of acting or non-acting\(^1\). Studies on corruption developed along with the public policy science which emerged after WWII and becomes more and more active as a result of the studies on Good Governance. Now fruits of studies on corruption is very abundant worldwide, covering many research areas such as economics, politics, sociology, psychology, etc.

The academic circle takes mainly the economics as a tool to study corruption. Institutional economists drew conclusions from the study on problems of the bureaucratic system in developing countries: corruption is derived from the fragility of the current system and they think that civil servants disobey the consensual norms in pursuit of personal interests; some scholars regard corruption as the transaction process on the “public power market” between the civil servants and customs; others analyze the impacts of corruption on market distortion and social welfare with the Principal-Agent framework, either analyzing the relevance of the private property right and the state-owned property right to the level of corruption in the perspective of property tights, or studying civil servants corruption with cost-interest framework from the perspective of utility and public need; Rent-Seeking Theory is also a popular economic tool in the study of corruption. Recent years have seen the recognition of various institutions on CPI complied by Transparency International which has made prominent contributions to studying corruption; The Institutional Economics of Corruption and Reform written by Lambso, leader of Transparency International, summarizes and compares the fruits and research methods of the studies on corruption by way of economics in an overall and objective way very systematically(2007).

Meanwhile, fruits of corruption studies from other disciplines are abundant as well. Some scholars

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\(^1\) The definition is referred from Building Good Conduct and Political Integrity and Fighting Corruption (《党风廉政建设和反腐败工作学习读本》), 2008.
believe that corruption activities demonstrate the deficiency of work ethic in public service, and they are the by-products of some particular social and cultural environments, administrative power or development period. From the perspective of public policy, the complicated administration system is also a cause of corruption. Some scholars even put forward that corruption is common in all societies and has a strong extension capability. The Folklore of Corruption is very common in the social network of some developing countries, and taking bribes becomes the only way to make a living for some low-income civil servants. Possibly, it becomes a social consensus widely accepted (Herzberg, Mausner & Snydeman, 1959). ‘Crowd Psychology’ and ‘Social Pressure’ in psychology can explain the formation of social consensus of this type as well. Some scholars even inferred the concepts of ‘Moral Cost’ and ‘Illusion of Risk’, which enriched the studies of corruption from the perspective of civil servant psychology and behaviors (Ding & Zhang, 2013). The introduction of psychology tools can not only analyze the thought-behavior logic in the process of personal decision-making but also explain the frequency of corruption and the occurrence and evolution of huge-sum corruption and group corruption.

1.2 Previous Studies on Land Corruption

Nowadays, in terms of contents, studies on land corruption cover its forms, causes, links, results, harms and control, etc. Besides, many scholars choose to study on some links easy to incur corruption such as land planning, land lease, land expropriation and land transfer. In terms of research methods, those scholars adopt Zero-Tolerance Theory, Rent-Seeking Theory, Game Theory, interpersonal relationship, Public Choice Theory, Institutional Economics, etc. (Cheng, 2014; Huang & Sun, 2013; Liu & Feng, 2014; Zhang & Ding, 2008; Wang, 2011; Wang & Huang, 2014).

On the whole, previous studies on land corruption couldn’t meet with the social concern. Besides, most studies stays on the introduction of land corruption phenomenon, analysis of causes and discussions of controlling policies, or dissect some links of land corruption, and seldom study it in an empirical way and grasp the features of land corruption comprehensively. To this end, referring to the definition of corruption, this study defines ‘land corruption’ as ‘behaviors of civil servants in the field of land management seeking personal gains by way of abusing public power of land resources and market management in the form of acting or non-acting’.

From the perspective of behavioral studies, this study constructs the three-dimensional system of corruption subject, link and approach, and analyzes the law and features of land corruption as well as explores the institutional causes behind it and puts forward rational suggestions of treatment policies.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND CASE SELECTION

This study holds that the difficulty of studying corruption lies on the comprehensiveness and authenticity of the collected information. It’s very hard for us to collect all the information about the actual corruption of a certain industry or area. All we could do is to find the law by analyzing and judging the already exposed or cleared cases, which is the best choice under the situation of lacking access to all the corruption data. Therefore, this study collects and studies on the corruption cases released by the China’s Supreme Peoples Procurate and the Supreme People’s Court, and the published cases on people.cn, xinhuanet.com, Procuratorate Daily, etc. and analyzes them from the key words extracted from different dimensions by way of case index analysis. Case index analysis makes detailed analysis on each case by building statistical indicator system, and could better demonstrate the features of the corruption. It is also one of the best approach to address the information asymmetry about corruption to this day, and the most effective tool to uncover the law of corruption happening so as to predict the tendency of corruption.

To improve the authenticity and representativeness, this study selects four typical cases with relatively detailed information which could reveal the land corruption in a relatively full scale. Meanwhile, the selected cases involve four administrative ranks, namely assisting roles of ministries or equivalents, assisting roles of departments or equivalents, assisting roles of divisions or equivalents and leading roles of sections or equivalents, which ensures the randomness of the sample. On the basis of these cases, this study builds the index system of case analysis according to the objective of this study and formulates 2 kinds of first-grade indexes and 19 kinds of second-grade indexes as well as makes analysis on the extracted key information in accordance to these indexes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corruption Subject(A)</th>
<th>A1-name</th>
<th>A2-date of birth</th>
<th>A3-sex</th>
<th>A4-level of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A5-age in time of the first corruption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A6-age in time of corruption disclosure</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A7-post in time of corruption disclosure</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A8-disclosure cause</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A9-rank in time of corruption disclosure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10-getting promoted while taking corruption, yes or no?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corruption Case Information(B)</th>
<th>B1-corruption nature</th>
<th>B2-corruption time</th>
<th>B3-disclosure time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B4-time span of corruption</td>
<td>B5-corruption link</td>
<td>B6-corruption form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B7-involved sum of money</td>
<td>B8-result</td>
<td>B9-guilty type</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart1. Analysis Indexes of Land Corruption Cases
III. CASE ANALYSIS

‘Behaviorism’, emerging at the beginning of 20th century, studies the administrative phenomenon through the standpoints and approaches of this school and aims at studying the motivation models and its effects of the actual behaviors of the subjects. From the perspective of behaviorism, a complete action can be depicted from six parts, namely subjects, objects, links, approaches, objective/motive and harm.

In ‘behaviorism’, land corruption can be studied from six dimensions, and the subjects, links and ways could best reflect the essence of it. Therefore, this thesis builds a three-dimensional framework constructed by subjects, links and approaches and concludes the findings by collecting the indexes and analyzing the contents.

Chart 2. Basic Information of the 4 Land Corruption Cases

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>A10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>director</td>
<td>leading</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Interrelated case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yapin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Polytechnic School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>general of Land Resources Bureau of Fushun, Liaoning</td>
<td>roles of sections or equivalents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Deputy director-general of Jiangxi Provincial Department of Land Resources</td>
<td>Accusations by superiors</td>
<td>assisti</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jianghua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Sannxia Reserve Center of Land and Resources Bureau</td>
<td></td>
<td>roles of departments or equivalents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Public tip-offs</td>
<td>Public tip-offs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuejin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy director of Land Resources Bureau of Hainan province</td>
<td>Public tip-offs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meng</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Junior College</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Vice-governor of Hainan province</td>
<td>Public tip-offs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qingping</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 2. Basic Information of the 4 Land Corruption Cases**

- **A1**: Luo Yapin
- **A2**: 1960
- **A3**: Female
- **A4**: High Polytechnic School
- **A5**: 28
- **A6**: 48
- **A7**: Director general of Land Resources Bureau of Fushun, Liaoning
- **A8**: Public tip-offs
- **A9**: Leading roles of sections or equivalents
- **A10**: Yes
- **B1**: Interrelated case
- **B2**: 1988
- **B3**: 2008
- **B4**: 20
- **B5**: Examining and approving during land acquisition/land transfer
- **B6**: Embezzlement compensation funds of land acquisition and land transfer fees
- **B7**: 6000
- **B8**: Bribery, crime of corruption, crime of huge unidentified property

- **A11**: Li Jianghua
- **A12**: 1963
- **A13**: Male
- **A14**: Master Degree
- **A15**: 37
- **A16**: 46
- **A17**: Deputy director-general of Jiangxi Provincial Department of Land Resources
- **A18**: Accusations by superiors
- **A19**: Assisting roles of departments or equivalents
- **A20**: Yes
- **B11**: Group corruption
- **B12**: 2000
- **B13**: 2009
- **B14**: 9
- **B15**: Utilization and management of land
- **B16**: Illegal demolition and illegal land acquisition, issuing documents illegally
- **B17**: 574.4
- **B18**: Bribery, crime

- **A19**: Dai Yuejin
- **A20**: 1957
- **A21**: Male
- **A22**: Undergraduate
- **A23**: 46
- **A24**: 50
- **A25**: Deputy director of Land Resources Bureau of Hainan province
- **A26**: Public tip-offs
- **A27**: Public tip-offs
- **A28**: Assisting roles of divisions or equivalents
- **A29**: Yes
- **B20**: Group corruption
- **B21**: 2003
- **B22**: 2007
- **B23**: 4
- **B24**: Land development and reserve
- **B25**: Illegal utilizing of land use right transfer, unauthorized use of public road tolls
- **B26**: 144
- **B27**: 12 years' imprisonment
- **B28**: Bribery, crime

- **A27**: Meng Qingping
- **A28**: 1937
- **A29**: Male
- **A30**: Junior College
- **A31**: 52
- **A32**: 61
- **A33**: Vice-governor of Hainan province
- **A34**: Public tip-offs
- **A35**: Public tip-offs
- **A36**: Assisting roles of ministries or equivalents
- **A37**: Yes
- **B29**: Individual case
- **B30**: 1989
- **B31**: 1998
- **B32**: 9
- **B33**: Approval for land use
- **B34**: Illegal approval of post-registration land expropriation proceedings
- **B35**: 25
- **B36**: 10 years' imprisonment
- **B37**: Bribery, crime
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3.1 Subject of Land Corruption
From the definition of land corruption, the subjects of land corruption are the administrative power holders or influencers of the management of land resources and market. Following are the case analysis on the corruption subjects.

3.1.1 The Concentration of the Corruption Subjects’ Age
The four corruption cases reveal that the crime committing age mainly falls onto 40-50 and the age in time of corruption disclosure falls onto 50-60. Generally, the corruption subjects between 40 and 60 years old have higher power, are in the peak of their career and have a high tendency to commit corruption.

3.1.2 Large Amounts of Money and Large Areas of Land Involved, Huge Impacts
The scarcity and non-renewability determines the huge sum of money in the management corruption of land resources in essence. Just as the four cases present, the minimum is 250,000RMB, and the maximum is 60,000,000RMB, fully demonstrating the hugeness of the involved sum. In addition, from the cases of individual corruption such as Dai Yuejin and Li Jianghua, the sum falls onto 1,000,000RMB to 6,000,000RMB. While the case of Luo Yaping, leading role of sections, known as “Land Mistress”, involves more than 60,000,000RMB, making her a “arch corrupt official”, through approaches such as embezzling compensatory funds of land through fake documents and reselling land resources by taking full advantage of her power on land acquisition and approval, which brought about a huge social unease and had tremendous on the society.

3.1.3 High Frequency of Group & Interrelated Corruption and Long Latency
As land management links are interrelated, it’s very difficult for an individual to commit duty crime. Additionally, due to the decentralization of management power and the restriction of the law and regulations, group & interrelated corruption becomes more and more severe. The corrupt officials develop individual crime into group corruption, exclude and attack honest and upright officials by taking advantage of their positions, forming clique to pursue selfish interest, which creates a political environment of “bad money drives out good”. In terms of the four cases above, the case of Li Jianghua involved 13 corrupted officials, 3 of leading or assistant roles of departments or equivalents and 10 of leading or assistant roles of divisions or equivalents. The case of Dai Yuejin involved 6 officials in the land department of municipal and provincial level, and they embezzled over 1.4million RMB by abusing their power, forming an interrelated corruption network. The links of the group corruption are extremely complex and the ways to commit corruption are more and more covert, making this kind of cases hard to investigate, which is why they tend to have long latency. The average latency of the four cases is 10.5 years, the longest one of 20 years, shortest one of 4 years and three cases of over 7 years.

3.2 Land Corruption Links
3.2.1 Analysis of Land Corruption Links and Corruption Links of High Frequency
Land management can be concluded mainly as the following seven aspects: formulation of land policies and regulations, management of cadastre, land supply and market management, land planning and land use control, cultivated land protection and land reclamation, farmland transference and land acquisition and expropriation, and land law enforcement and supervision. Some scholars point out that there is an industry of land resources, and there is power-for-money deal. Power-for-money cases and collusion between government officials and businessmen take place in every link from paying land grant fee, adjusting floor area ratio and land usage to registration of property right, and from the examination and approval of the project to project site selection. Every link such as land purchasing, land demolition, land consolidation, land survey and land planning of land resources department exists much power rent-seeking space. This thesis extracts keywords from the four cases with index analysis approach, and finds the main corruption links and risk points after classifying the data.

3.2.1.1 Cadastral Management
Cadastral management is a significant part of land management, and is the basis of land management of the urban, rural and national level, providing information and legal ground for land utilization. Previous studies on cadastral management mainly focus on its informatization, and seldom pay special attention on the corruption during its management. Li Jianghua case and Meng Qingping case above are both related to cadastral management. As a result, this thesis intends to find out the corruption links during cadastral management from the keywords extracted through the analysis of indexes. The two cases reveal that the main risk points of corruption in cadastral management lie on illegal issuing of documents, changing the management of cadastral archives, coordinating land use relations, and so on. Cadastral management concerns huge economic benefits and will cause great economic loss once corruption comes. Li Jianghua, deputy director-general of Jiangxi Provincial Department of Land Resources, approved over 10 cases illegally, involving more than 100,000 m²...
land, which caused over 10 million RMB loss of land-transferring fees, taxes and dues. Meng Qingping, vice-governor of Hainan province, helped twice in his term of office individual businessman Zhuang make fake documents and dates in post-registering land-acquisition documents illegally so that Zhuang could buy the land of Pobo village of Haikou, did business with others and had a huge profit of more than 250,000 RMB.

3.2.1.2 Land Supply and Market Management

The land sale revenue totaled 128.6 billion RMB in 2001, 4,1266 trillion RMB in 2013—exceeding 4 trillion for the first time, and 4.26 trillion RMB in 2014, increasing over 30 times during the 14 years. The gross aggregate reached over 20 trillion RMB. According to the statistics collected in 2007, 2009 and 2011 by the audit office of Ministry of Finance, 11 cities in 2008 embezzled 8.37 billion land-transferring fees; 11 cities in 2010 decreased land sale fees by 1.961 billion RMB in covert forms; 67.481 billion RMB land sale fees were not legally managed and put in budgetary control in 11 cities, taking a percentage of 20.1% of the total land sale revenue; and in 11 cities, the land sale fees of 5.691 billion RMB were changed into other uses. In 2012, 9.719 billion RMB land sale fees in 11 cities and counties weren’t put in budgetary control, and 1.542 billion RMB land sale fees were embezzled in 12 cities and counties. Beside, according to Ministry of Territory, the default of land sale fees in 46 cities reached 49.2 billion RMB in 2013, numerous corruption cases hide behind these staggering data, so it is of key importance to eradicate land supply corruption by finding out the links and risk points in land transferring corruption. By analyzing the 4 cases above, this thesis finds that land supply and market management concentrate on links such as land reservation, land supply, land-use right transfer, illegal demolition and land acquisition, among which land supply is hit most seriously by corruption, almost all corruption cases happening in this link. The main risk points of land supply are the determination of land supply methods, bid audition and listing and land compensation. In China, land leasing methods are mainly allocation, bid inviting, auction and handing out shingles, among which allocation has the lowest cost, and as a result, many government officials play with the laws and regulations and surpass procedures of bid audition and listing through all kinds of approaches to get the land illegally. Besides, much manipulation space exists in bid audition and listing, such as setting exclusive criteria to limit the competition, leaking land leasing information, covert deals, cheating in the contract, and other most popular and indiscernible approaches such as returning, abating, embezzling or deferring the payment of land transferring fees and various taxes and dues. The case of Dai Yuejin, director of Sanmenxia Reserve Center of Land and Resources Bureau, is one of such cases. He transferred land-use rights of over 40,000m², and exempted over 1.5 million RMB public roads use fees by abusing his power, bringing a huge loss of land resources. In addition, land compensation also breeds corruption easily. Luo Yaping, director general of Land Resources Bureau of Fushun, Liaoning, embezzled over 17 million RMB by swindling relocation house compensation and reselling relocation houses in the name of others through fake compensation and various compensation.

3.2.2 Land Corruption Means

The study on land corruption means can help grasp the corruption process so as to prevent and control corruption effectively. Present means of corruption are various, specialized and more and more covert.

Firstly, modus operandi is covert. The corrupted officials illegally issue land-use right certification by making fake land acquisition documents and backdating time, and make fine adjustment of floor area ratio which is hard to detect by making fake invoices, fake certifications and fake receipts and applying relatively professional means of land planning.

Secondly, corruption approaches are covert. In avoid of being discovered, many corrupted officials apply various approaches to hide their corrupted activities such as writing false receipt of IOU, buying house with borrowed money, borrowing money in the name of official car modification, reselling houses for personal gain, and investing in the real estate agency. And they also take corruption activities in an excuse of important festivals, overseas training, children’ weddings and hospitalization, etc. For example, to hide the source of family property, Luo Yaping bought 22 houses in the name of her relatives.

Thirdly, corrupted behaviors are in various forms and could be classified into two types, namely direct form and indirect form. Direct form is such that corrupted officials participate in the process directly, mainly in the area of cadastral management, land transferring and examination and approval of land etc., by issuing documents illegally, leaking audition information, instructing in person, stamping etc. Meng Qingping, vice-governor of Hainan province, helped twice in his term of office individual business owner-Zhuang make fake documents and dates in post-registering land-acquisition documents illegally so that Zhuang could buy the land of Pobo village of Haikou, did business with others and had a huge profit. Indirect form is such that officials corrupt by giving implication, inspiration, coordination, direction, pressure, etc. mainly in the business of granting land-use right, examination and approval, etc.

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2 From The China Land and Resources Statistical Yearbook.
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IV. FURTHER DISCUSSION

4.1 Causes of Land Corruption
Institutional problems are the main causes of corruption. Land corruption in China not only reveals problems in design and content of present land systems, but also exposes problems in the operation and implementation of these systems.

4.1.1 Imbalance of Power Brought by the Institutional Deficiency
Cause analysis of the widespread land corruption should be focused on China’s particular land system and land regulatory system. First of all, according to Chinese Constitution, under the present urban-rural land system, urban land belongs to the nation, while rural land to the collective, which means that the new demand generated by the urbanization and industrialization must be satisfied through state land acquisition, specifically, through local government, for the reason that only state-owned land can be transferred and the collective-owned land mustn’t be transferred until it becomes state-owned land. Besides, the present land law also formulates that local government can take the agricultural land over for public interest. But what is “public interest” hasn’t been made clearly, which, to some extent, gives legal protection to the local corrupt officials. Together with the irrational standards of land acquisition compensation, land acquisition becomes a business of low cost but huge profit. The local government can make huge profits though land acquisition and supply. Therefore, the present law and regulations of government monopolizing land supply provide institutional convenience for the corrupt officials to gain profits from land.

More importantly, government plays a dual role of referee and player in land management. According to the present law, one the one hand, as the representative of public interest, government formulates policies and has examination and approval authority, playing referee; on the other hand, the local government manages vast areas of land and can take the land over as well as sell the land through participating in the economic activities, playing as a player. That is to say, with the dual role, the local government monopolizes the examination and approval right of infrastructure, industry, real estate, etc. and the land demanded can only become legal through government. And after the land acquisition, the pricing of land is also make by government. The enterprises have to seek renting from the government officials for land. The chain of profit comes into being.

4.1.2 Influences of Financial Decentralization on Economic Activities of Local Government
According to the tax system of 1994, taxes from urban land use, real estate, stamp, land value increment, and paid use of state-owned land belong to local government, which means that the main fiscal revenue of local government comes from taxes from land-use right transferring (Cheng, 2014). And land becomes another approach of making profits after developing township enterprises.

As a result, local governments make profits by utilizing the deficiencies of China’s present land system. According to the current Law of the People's Republic of China on Land Administration, only local government has the right to grant land-use right, and the agricultural land can’t be transferred until it becomes state-owned land. As a result, the local officials abuse the examination and approval authority and sell the state-owned land at a low price in the name of “inviting investment”, and some even undersell the land in such a disguised form of signing land-transferring contract first according to the law and then returning the land granting fees or giving financial subsidy, regardless of the underselling land prohibition of the state council, which not only brings about the benefit tunneling between government officials and the enterprises, but also gives rise to illegal land enclosure, land trafficking and corruption problems.

4.1.3 Promotion Enhances the Benefits of the Local Government Officials and the Competition among Them
Financial decentralization of China itself, to some extent, might intensify the local government officials’ land-selling impulse and treat land selling as a knack of making money. Besides, the examination mechanism of the central government on local government officials’ economic behavior also has huge influences. So to speak, the promotion mechanism under the financial decentralization intensifies the problem of land corruption in a way.

The current examination mechanism on the local officials is target-oriented. Indexes such as growth rate of GDP, family planning and stability maintenance are one-vote veto (Zhang, Wang & Xu, 2011). Under the mechanism oriented at GDP growth rate, the local official compete to promote the GDP growth, which in a way explains the pendent confusion why local officials have such strong motivation to promote economic development and transfer land. Land is an important capital stock of the local government to attract investment, and the low-price and vast land, land at a good location and other strategies are all baits for the investors. Under such complicated conditions, the motivation of the local officials become extremely complex, and their corrupted behaviors aren’t limited to money but fame and higher positions.

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4.2 Anti-land Corruption Measures

4.2.1 Strengthening Power Constraint through Land System Restructuring

Firstly, break local governments’ monopoly of construction land supply, legalize the marketplace of rural construction land which accords with the construction planning standards and the non-agricultural circulation of the planned land, increase the supply sides of construction land, and open up the second market of land supply. Secondly, establish unified and transparent trading market and improve “bidding, audition and listing” system of commercial land. In the land grant process, the information and deal are not transparent and the regulations concerned are not regular, which help lower the corruption cost and intensify the corruption issue. Therefore, we should regulate the “bidding, audition and listing” system, specify land-transferring regulations, improve market operation environment, nourish the land market to establish a visible one, and build up a land corruption control and prevention system. Thirdly, improve land examination and approval system. Land corruption is closely related to the administrative examination and approval process. Corruption will emerge once the examination and approval power is out of supervision and restriction. Hence, we should strictly regulate the examination and approval process and establish a sound restriction and regulation system. To do it well, we must make public the standards, procedures, dates and duties, etc. The public should have access to the construction land information, land price, land restriction materials, etc.; besides, we should also strengthen the balance of power and establish and improve the collective-decision system. Important issues in land asset management such as the examination and approval of construction land, land asset deposition and land price fixing should be examined and approved strictly step by step through collective decision. Finally, reinforce the supervision of land rent-seeking and improve the supervision system. In lack of supervision, many local officials take corrupted activities, which makes it necessary to strengthen the prevention of land rent-seeking and bring in supervisory and balancing mechanism.

4.2.2 Dividing the Financial and Authority Power Rationally

Firstly, reform the current tax distribution system, redistribute the proportions of shared tax, and improve moderately the local government’s shared proportions of taxes(i.e. added-value tax); empower the local government to have policy making right and issuing territorial bonds, allow the local government to create new items of taxes and tax funds so that they could afford to provide more public goods. Secondly, improve local government’s management of extrabudgetary funds, under the current tax system, most of the tax revenue belongs to the state treasury, which leads to the inflation of extrabudgetary funds of the local government and the dependence on land finance to develop local economy. For this, we must strengthen the management of extrabudgetary funds and strictly control the use of these funds so as to curb land corruption at root. Finally, improve the intergovernmental transfer payment system. At present, to finish the assigned tasks from the central government, the local government has to rely on the transfer payment of the central government, especially in the central and west regions. While taking tax system reform, we should increase not only the vertical but also the horizontal transfer payment, lower the proportions of the current special funds of the grant, and raise the proportions of the general subsidies. In this way, we could change the benefit situation ultimately and match the the financial and authority power with the central government and local government accordingly so as to eliminate the driving force of the local government to make a fortune through land corruption.

4.2.3 Establish A Scientific Government Performance Examination System and Improve the System of Selection and Appointment of Government Officials

Under the GDP-oriented system, the local officials care nothing but how to develop the local economy through land and ignore the expenses on people’s livelihood. To tackle this, we should reform the current incentive mechanism and create new ones. Hopefully, the local officials can both carry on their duty and promote the well-being of the local people under the new mechanism. At the same time, decrease the proportion of GDP growth and the related indexes in the examination system, and add indexes related to people’s livelihood and sustainable development into the government performance examination system. People’s opinions and the public service level can help free the officials from governance competition and change the motivation of the local officials so as to prevent the vicious competition among the local governments. In addition, we should provide more accesses to the public opinions and give them more right of speech, so that the local officials could be restricted by the public, changing the situation where the local officials care about only their superiors but the local people. By making adjustment in the deep level of institution, we may curb the root of land corruption and decrease land corruption crimes.

V. CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

Recent years have witnessed the outbreak of land corruption. To make clear of land corruption, this thesis studies land corruption from the perspective of corrupted subjects, behavior links and corruption methods on the basis of different cases and finds out the features and regulations of land management, which helps us to
understand the real condition of land management. Though case analysis, this thesis finds out that the ages of corrupted subjects in the area of land management are concentrated. Group corruption and collapsing corruption are very conspicuous. In terms of the links of corruption, land management has numerous links and worst hit by corruption especially in the areas of cadastral management, land supply and land market management. And the corrupted activities are in various forms, specialized, with high technologies and in better concealment.

While as the cases of this study are very limited, the findings might be different when cases change. Although the findings can’t reflect all the regulations and features of corruption, they could still help us understand land corruption to some extent and promote the growing scholarship in this regard.

REFERENCES

Appendix:
Administrative classification in China