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TRANSNATIONAL TRENDS IN COMBATING CORRUPTION AND THE CHINESE MODEL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING SYSTEM[1]

At the end of the 20th century, the international community recognised that corruption had acquired a distinctly transnational character and was increasingly undermining economic development, security, and institutional stability, particularly in developing states. In the context of financial market liberalisation and heightened capital mobility, traditional national anti-corruption mechanisms proved insufficient, while the existing international regulatory landscape remained fragmented: regional instruments – such as the 1997 OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials, Council of Europe conventions, and OAS documents – addressed individual aspects of the problem without forming a coherent global regime.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) was adopted – the first universal instrument to integrate prevention, criminalisation, institutional strengthening, international coope-ration, and asset recovery into a single comprehensive framework [1]. The Convention marked a conceptual shift in the international anti-corruption regime, which, by analogy with the anti-money-laundering (AML) system [2, p. 4], can be broadly divided into preventive and enforcement components: prevention of corruption risks and promotion of good governance on the one hand, and criminal prosecution, punishment, and confiscation of illicit assets on the other.

Alongside legal and institutional mechanisms, so-called "soft" forms of influence play an increasingly important role in shaping anti-corruption

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dynamics – global indices, conditionalities attached to international assistance, investigative journalism, and civil society oversight. These instruments generate additional incentives for reform, to which states respond based on their economic interests, political configurations, and security considerations [3, p. 1].

Within this broader context, the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) Forty Recommendations embed corruption-related risks into the architecture of global AML/CFT standards, recognising corruption as one of the key predicate offences for money laundering. The agreed international AML norms constitute an internally consistent system of obligations that states must implement in ways compatible with their institutional capacities, governance systems, and political regimes [4, p. 7].

China represents a salient example of a state that combines deep integration into global economic structures with a politically centralised, party-controlled anti-corruption system. The Chinese model has been shaped by the interaction of global regulatory expectations, domestic political priorities, and the strategic objectives of economic modernisation.

China's Anti-Corruption System in the Early 2000s [5, p. 3–20]**.** At the beginning of the 2000s, China faced substantial internal structural constraints and increasing external pressures associated with preparations for accession to the WTO, as well as recognition of the significant macro-economic losses generated by corruption. Expert assessments suggested that «13–16 per cent of GDP, and estimated that 15–20 per cent of public project funds 'leak' into private hands. up to 20 per cent of state investment resources were diverted from their intended purposes» [5, p.11].

The government's declared "war on corruption" was accompanied by high-profile investigations and prosecutions, but also by severely repressive measures, including the use of the death penalty – a practice that drew considerable criticism from a human rights perspective. The sharp rise in investigations (over 45,000 cases in 2000) illustrated both the scale of the problem and the political imperative to demonstrate a resolute response [5, p. 11].

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the Chinese Communist Party remained the central institutional actor, combining disciplinary functions with quasi-investigative powers. Its lack of institutional independence and limited transparency differentiated the Chinese system from the parallel trend towards the establishment of autonomous anti-corruption agencies in the Asia-Pacific region. Limited administrative reforms – including procedural simplification and the introduction of tenders for major public projects – only partially mitigated corruption risks, while civil society remained weak and closely monitored.

By 2001, China's anti-corruption architecture represented a system characterised by political centralisation, high levels of repression, and selective administrative modernisation. Its primary function was the maintenance of internal stability and the legitimacy of the ruling party, rather than the development of an autonomous, accountable, and rule-of-law-based anti-corruption framework.

Evolution and Effectiveness According to FATF Assessments (Until 2019). China's continued economic expansion and growing integration into global financial flows led to a gradual shift in anti-corruption priorities towards mechanisms of financial control and legal regulation. According to the FATF mutual evaluation, corruption became one of the major predicate offences, alongside illegal fundraising, tax crimes, fraud, illegal gambling, and drug trafficking. Between 2013 and 2016, over 2.6 million individuals were convicted of predicate offences, reflecting the tightening of criminal policy in sectors generating substantial illicit profits [6, p. 72].

Unlike the early 2000s – when corruption was viewed primarily as a threat to political stability – by the 2010s it had been incorporated into a broader framework of combating income-generating crime, with an increased emphasis on asset recovery.

A major institutional innovation was the creation of an asset-recovery infrastructure: between 2014 and 2016, approximately 8.64 billion yuan was repatriated from more than 90 jurisdictions [6, p. 7]. This stood in stark contrast to the early 2000s, when transnational corruption and asset flight received limited policy attention. FATF experts nevertheless identified persistent structural challenges, including underground banking, misuse of legal entities, and insufficient transparency in beneficial ownership.

Asset Confiscation as an Indicator of Effectiveness. FATF data for 2013–2017 underscore the scale and sophistication of China's confiscation policy. The use of three categories of confiscation – instrumentalities, direct proceeds, and equivalent value – enabled the establishment of a comprehensive asset-seizure framework. In corruption-related cases, authorities executed 11,058 confiscations of instrumentalities (2.1 million yuan), 43,568 confiscations of criminal proceeds (over 20 billion yuan), and 27,591 cases involving equivalent value (approximately 9.048 billion yuan), totalling 82,217 procedures across 71,048 proceedings [6, pp. 83–85]. Overall, more than 29 billion yuan in assets were confiscated – a result that illustrates a systemic shift from a predominantly repressive to a financial and institutionally grounded model of counteraction.

According to China's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection reporting for 2024, 360 cross-border corruption cases were investigated within special operations, 32.2 billion yuan in losses were recovered,

1,597 fugitives were repatriated, and 18.28 billion yuan in illicit assets were returned [7].

FATF evaluators emphasise that although corruption remains among the most serious crimes in China, it does not negatively affect the overall effectiveness of the AML system – a notable contrast to the situation at the beginning of the 2000s, when corruption posed systemic risks to political stability. Gradual institutionalisation and the expansion of financial-investigative tools have contributed to a more structured and less campaign-driven approach.

Conclusions. A comparative analysis of China's anti-corruption system in 2001 and 2019 reveals a profound transformation: from a politically controlled, predominantly repressive model to a financially oriented system capable of large-scale asset recovery and deeply integrated into the global AML regime. At the same time, the Chinese model remains asymmetrical: strong internal performance coexists with party-centralised control, limited transparency, and selective international cooperation. These features ensure effective protection of state interests but raise questions concerning compliance with the principles of the rule of law and the global public interest in anti-corruption governance.

Against this background, China's extensive experience in the persistent prosecution of corrupt officials, large-scale confiscation of illicit assets, and repatriation of both individuals and unlawfully exported funds offers significant practical value for Ukraine. Most notably, it demonstrates the institutional capacity to trace financial flows, sustain transnational cooperation, employ financial-investigative methodologies, and build long-term asset-recovery mechanisms. Nevertheless, any adaptation of the Chinese experience in Ukraine must be firmly grounded in democratic oversight, procedural transparency, and robust guarantees of the rule of law.

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РОЛЬ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ЕЛІТИ У СТАНОВЛЕННІ РЕСПУБЛІКИ КОРЕЯ

Республіка Корея (РК) – держава утворена на рунах війни 1950–1953 рр. на Корейському півострові сьогодні є однією з найпрогресивніших країн цивілізованого світу. Це стосується як її економіки, так і суспільно-політичного ладу, що сформувалися багато в чому в результаті діяльності президента Пак Чон Хі (Park Chung Hee) зокрема, так і нової загальнонаціональної південнокорейської еліти загалом. Симбіоз авторитарного лідерства та національної відданості стали ключовими факторами подолання економічної стагнації, корупції, неефективного управління, залежності від зовнішньої допомоги та перетворення країни на одного із «східноазійських тигрів».