

Corruption appears to be a “normal” phenomenon in the world today judging from its perceived extent among the 176 countries included in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in 2016. However, some countries have succeeded in spite of their circumstances to minimise corruption, as shown in their rankings and scores on the CPI in 2016 in Table I. New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR are three of the least corrupt countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Botswana is the least corrupt country in Africa and Rwanda has also made improvements in curbing corruption in spite of its legacy of genocide and weak governance.

The purpose of this *Asian Education and Development Studies (AEDES)* special issue is twofold: first, to explain why these five countries have succeeded in curbing corruption in spite of their difficult circumstances; and second, to identify relevant lessons for policy makers to adopt in those countries which suffer from widespread corruption. The authors of the five country studies were requested by the Guest Editor to provide a brief literature review of corruption research in each country and an analysis of whether the country’s policy context promotes or hinders the implementation of the anti-corruption laws before explaining the country’s success in combating corruption and identifying the lessons for policy makers in other countries.

Among the five countries, New Zealand does not have an anti-corruption agency (ACA) to enforce the anti-corruption laws as it relies instead on the Serious Fraud Office, the Ombudsman, the Police and the Controller and Auditor-General to maintain good governance in the country. There are two types of ACAs, depending on the scope of their functions: Type A: those dedicated ACAs that perform only anti-corruption functions; and Type B: those diffused ACAs that perform both anti-corruption and non-corruption-related functions. Singapore pioneered the reliance on a single Type A ACA with the establishment of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) in October 1952 to replace the ineffective Anti-Corruption Branch of the Singapore Police Force’s Criminal Investigation Department. Similarly, Hong Kong followed suit by replacing the ineffective Anti-Corruption Office of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force with the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), also a Type A ACA, in February 1974. In Botswana, the government responded to the corruption scandals in the early 1990s by forming the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) as a Type A ACA in September 1994. Finally, the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) was created as a Type B ACA by the Rwandan government in 2003 to curb corruption.

Following this Guest editorial is the paper by David Seth Jones, who explains why the DCEC has succeeded in minimising corruption in Botswana and identifies the challenges to its anti-corruption efforts and the lessons for policy makers in other countries. Ian Scott’s article focusses on the factors responsible for the ICAC’s success in combating corruption in Hong Kong SAR as well as the challenges faced to sustain its success. In his paper, Daniel Zirker attributes New Zealand’s effectiveness in corruption control to its geographical isolation, egalitarian socio-economic and cultural traditions, legal and cultural affinity with Britain, and its regulatory civil service. However, he cautions that New Zealand needs to update its archaic anti-corruption legislation to meet the problems of growing inequality, increasing wealth gap and global change. In the case of Rwanda, Eiji Oyamada contends that its success in curbing corruption is the result of the political will of the political leadership, the OMB’s active role, and effective governance reforms. The fifth article is written by Jon S.T. Quah, who has attributed Singapore’s success in combating corruption



to the People's Action Party government's political will and the CPIB's effectiveness in investigating all corruption cases and enforcing the anti-corruption laws impartially.

Unlike the previous articles explaining how the five countries are effective in minimising corruption, the sixth article by Jon S.T. Quah provides a comparative analysis of their major findings. After analysing the contextual differences in the five countries, it is found that, on the basis of six indicators, New Zealand has the lowest perceived extent of corruption, followed in descending order, by Singapore, Hong Kong SAR, Rwanda and Botswana. Unlike New Zealand, which has curbed corruption without an ACA, the other four countries rely on the CPIB in Singapore, the ICAC in Hong Kong SAR, the DCEC in Botswana and the OMB in Rwanda to enforce the anti-corruption laws effectively. However, policy makers in other countries should realise that relying on a single Type A or Type B ACA does not guarantee success if the government does not provide it with the necessary legal powers, budget, personnel and operational independence to perform its functions as a watchdog and not as an attack dog against its political opponents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the contributors for accepting my invitation to write the five country articles for this *AEDS* special issue. I am grateful to them for meeting the deadlines for submitting their first drafts and for revising their papers according to the feedback provided by the peer-reviewers and myself. Needless to say, the quality of the six articles in this *AEDS* special issue has been enhanced considerably by the comprehensive and constructive feedback provided by these ten peer-reviewers:

- (1) Gerald E. Caiden, Emeritus Professor of Public Administration, Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA.
- (2) Wilfredo B. Carada, Professor of Public Policy, University of the Philippines, Los Banos, Philippines.
- (3) Jin-Wook Choi, Professor of Public Administration, Korea University, Seoul, South Korea.
- (4) Ting Gong, Professor of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR.
- (5) Robert Gregory, Emeritus Professor of Politics, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- (6) David Seth Jones, Retired Associate Professor of Public Administration, University of Brunei Darussalam, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam.
- (7) Hirotune Kimura, Emeritus Professor of Law, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan.
- (8) Michael Macaulay, Associate Professor and Director, Institute for Governance and Policy Studies, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.
- (9) David Sebudubudu, Professor of Political Science and Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana.
- (10) Chilik Yu, Professor of Public Policy and Management, Shih Hsin University, Taipei, Taiwan.

Country	Rank (1-176)	Score (0-100)
New Zealand	1st	90
Singapore	7th	84
Hong Kong SAR	15th	77
Botswana	35th	60
Rwanda	50th	54

Source: Transparency International (2017)

Table I.
Performance of five
countries on the
CPI in 2016

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Last, but not least, I wish to thank Professor Sonny Lo, the Managing Editor of the *AEDS*, for inviting me to guest-edit this special issue on “Success stories in combating corruption: lessons for policy makers”. I am also grateful to Zhou Minxing and Sophie Barr for their assistance in the publication of this *AEDS* special issue.

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Reference

Transparency International (2017), “Corruption Perceptions Index 2016”, Berlin, available at: www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016 (accessed 25 January 2017).