

## *Trust and Effectiveness in Corruption Prevention: Evidence from Hong Kong\**

Hanyu Xiao, Ian Scott, and Ting Gong

### *Abstract*

Positive public perceptions of trust and effectiveness are critically important for institutions engaged in corruption prevention. If these perceptions form an insulated mutually reinforcing virtuous circle, then the anti-corruption agency can benefit from solid community support in pursuit of its goals. These ideal conditions, however, are often disrupted by exogenous factors that may stem, for example, from declining trust in government as a whole or evident inability to deal with corruption in high places. In this article, using Hong Kong as an example, we examine how its Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) managed to build and retain trust in a turbulent environment but also how perceptions of its effectiveness were adversely affected by exogenous factors. The analysis is based on the ICAC's surveys of attitudes toward corruption and on our own survey, conducted in mid-2020, which focused directly on significant indicators of trust and effectiveness.

---

**Hanyu Xiao** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian and Policy Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong.

**Ian Scott** is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong.

**Ting Gong** is Chair Professor in the Institute for Global Public Policy and School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Fudan University, and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Public Policy, City University of Hong Kong. Correspondence should be sent to [tgong2@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:tgong2@cityu.edu.hk).

\* The work described in this article was supported by a grant (Project# HKIED 11603219) from the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China.