

City University of Hong Kong

Department of Public Policy

Research Student Seminar

**The Influence of Individual Values on
Attitudes to Corruption: What
Undermine Formal Anti-corruption
Effectiveness**

Paper presented at "IIAS-Lien 2019 Conference: Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Governance" on 17-21 June in Singapore

by

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Abstract:

The causes of corruption are often researched by scholars from the macroscopic perspective of institutions and culture. Neglected is scholarship on the relationship between individual values and corruption. People's

definition and attitudes towards corruption are largely determined by personal values. However, scarce attention has been paid on what and how value factors exert influence on their attitudes to corruption and how values moderate the effects of formal institutions on people's propensity to engage in anti-corruption. Drawing on original survey data collected among Chinese civil servants, this research explores the impact of civil servants' values on their tolerance towards corruption and propensities to engage in anti-corruption. Adopting Gert Hofstede's four values (power distance, collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity), this study reveals that values are closely related to people's attitudes towards corruption. More specifically, respondents high on collectivism or masculinity have higher corruption tolerance and lower willingness to participate in actions against corruption, while uncertainty avoidance imposes negative impacts on corruption tolerance and positive influences on propensity to engage in anti-corruption. The values also serve as moderating roles in the relationship between formal anti-corruption effects and civil servants' propensities to engage in combating corruption. Collectivism and masculinity dilute the positive impact of the government's anti-corruption efficacy on anti-corruption willingness.