Political Will and Government Anti-Corruption Efforts: What Does the Evidence Say?

Abstract

“Political will” is oft-cited as the major obstacle to government’s anti-corruption efforts. Notwithstanding there is remarkably little systematic analysis of the concept, with some scholars describing it as the “slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon”, while others are calling for its empirical relevance. This paper tries to unpack the “black box” of political will by making it an empirically relevant concept drawing on evidence from two Asian Countries; Singapore and Bangladesh. Four key indicators based on the works of earlier scholars including: origin of the initiative; comprehension and extent of analysis; credible sanctions; and resource dedication and sustenance are used. The paper also uses Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, World Bank’s World Governance Indicators (Control of Corruption, and Government Effectiveness), and Political, Economic and Risk Consultancy’s annual survey in Asia, as outcome measures. Based on the empirical evidence from the two countries, the paper shows that political will indeed has a positive influence on government’s anti-corruption efforts. Although political will may not be sufficient, it is a necessary condition to fighting corruption and that the difference between the positions of Singapore and Bangladesh on various global corruption league tables may be attributed to political will.

Keywords: Political Will, Public Policy, Anti-Corruption Reform, Asia

Introduction

The success of anti-corruption measures and efforts as well as development policies may depend on the ‘political will’ (see Ankamah, 2016; Brinkerhoff, 2000, p. 240; DFID, 2004, p. 1; Hammergren, 1998; Quah, 2010a, 2015a; Robinson, 1998, p. 10; Yeboah-Assiamah & Alesu-Dordzi, 2016) of government actors. In their paper “the Calculus of Corruption”, Yeboah-Assiamah and Alesu-Dordzi (2016) recommended the need for strong political will to fight corruption. Understanding government attitude towards anti-corruption measures is therefore crucial in holding power to account and to fight corruption (Schacter, 2005). When there is no firm support and strong leadership from bureaucratic and political elites with regards to matters concerning accountability and corruption, then there is a constraint on the effective functioning of accounting institutions (Schacter, 2005). Schedler for instance argues that ‘there is no way to ignore or bypass the centres of state power’, stating further that ‘unless they consent to institutionalize “self-restraint” the road to [anti-corruption] is blocked’ (Schedler, 1999, pp. 338-339).

Although political will being oft-cited as a major obstacle to good governance and anti-corruption efforts, it is surprisingly understudied, and when it is, demonstrates a poorly understood term. Indeed the remarkably little systematic analysis of political will and its determinants has been acknowledged in scholarship (see e.g. Malena, 2009a; Woocher,

2001). Hammergren (1998, p. 12) for instance describes political will as ‘the slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon’. Similarly, Evans (2000) concludes that the difficulty with most discussions of political will is that scholars and policy makers spend more time lamenting its absence than analysing what it means and how it can be enhanced to fight corruption. Consequently, McGee and Gaventa (2011, p. 25) advise that ‘the black box of ‘political will’ that so often bars way between [anti-corruption efforts] and their sought impacts requires empirical unpacking’. Thus a ‘pragmatic, systematic definitional approach focused on outcomes could be productive in making political will empirically useful and actionable concept’ (Post et al., 2010, p. 654).

Accordingly, this paper tries to answer two main questions: 1. what are the components of Political Will and how can it be empirically relevant? 2. To what extent does political will affect government anti-corruption outcomes?

Drawing on evidence from Singapore and Bangladesh this paper argues that political will for government anti-corruption efforts is comprised of a framework of four key components: Origin of the Initiative; Comprehension and Extent of Analysis; Credible Sanctions; and Resource Dedication and Sustenance. The paper further argues that political will is a necessary condition for successful anti-corruption outcomes although may not be sufficient. It is important to emphasise that the paper makes no claim that political will is the sole reason for successful anti-corruption outcomes, although it is by all means a necessary condition.

The paper is organised in six parts. In addition to the introduction, the other sections conceptualize political will, the research methodology, case studies, discussions and conclusion.

Conceptualising Political Will: A Focus on Anti-Corruption

Political will and the lack of it is the most widely cited reason for government success or failure (Carbonetti et al., 2014; Malena, 2009b; Persson & Sjöstedt, 2012; Piiparinen, 2006; Post et al., 2010; Quah, 2015a). Political will has not only been attributed to the explanation of success and failure and inactions of good governance and anti-corruption but in a wider scope including economic reforms (Hope, 2000), debt relief (Atkinson, 2000), terrorism (Burite & Gridneff, 2015), environmental protection (Ng, 2000; Rigg & Hmaidan, 2014), health reform (Brinkerhoff, 2015; Moore, 2000; NHS, 2015; Pagliccia & Pérez, 2012), education reform (Little, 2011; Marrin, 2000), conflict (Piiparinen, 2006; Woocher, 2001) and fisheries (Carbonetti et al., 2014). To this end, there is the need for government’s commitment and that the absence of political will at the top is the result of lack of commitment to law enforcement and to punish the corrupt (Brinkerhoff, 2000, p. 240; Hopkinson & Pelizzo, 2006).

Political will has been defined in different ways by various scholars. Brinkerhoff for instance defines it as ‘the commitment of [political actors/leaders] to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives and to sustain the cost of those actions over time’ (Brinkerhoff, 2000, p. 242; see also Malena, 2009a, p. 19). Others define political will as a situation where political

actors demonstrate a credible intention for the common good (see e.g. Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006; Stapenhurst et al., 2006; UNDP, 2008). This paper adapts the definition put forward by Post et al. (2010, p. 659), who puts forward that political will ‘is the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem’, and making the solution of such problem sustainable over time. Consequently, where efforts by political elites to fight corruption are short-lived then it can probably be said that there is lack/inadequate political will to fight corruption.

Although not its focus, the paper also acknowledges that there is some sort of vicious circle between political will and anti-corruption efforts, in that political will to fight corruption may diminish as a result of failed anti-corruption efforts. Holmes (2016) for instance argues that in addition to political will, there must as well be political capacity of the country leadership. He notes that some political leaders have often sought to address a serious problem such as corruption but are not able to garner the support in the form of control over the bureaucracy; only to discover that bureaucrats are hindering or blocking policy implementation. Holmes argues further that ‘unless leaderships can secure their staffs’ support for the policy, it is likely to remain mere rhetoric’ (2016, p. 145) and may consequently lead to diminished political will. This is further corroborated by Francesca Recanatini’s finding after studying the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts in 7 countries as part of a World Bank project. She reported that although strong political support from a country’s leadership is the most critical factor to the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts, it is not a sufficient condition; and that in order to promote change, there is the need for middle management and bureaucratic support (Recanatini, 2011).

Political will is a complex and multi-faceted concept whose meaning can be ambiguous and difficult to analyse. For instance Brinkerhoff (2010) asserts that in the bid to clarify political will, two interrelated challenges emerge. He attributes the first challenge to determining what to observe that can serve as a reliable basis for inferring the presence of political will. The second according to Brinkerhoff is to distinguish between will and capacity which Malena (2009a) conceptualises as “political can”. However we argue, as we will see later in the paper, that when there is ‘will’, there will be to a significant extent ‘can’ (resources) and that the excuse of incapacity in terms of financial resources, for instance, is an evidence of lack of will. The question then is what are the components of such a complex concept? Based on the works of other scholars and the purpose of this paper, we conceptualise political will for anti-corruption as a framework of four key components (see figure 1 below). These four components of political will for anti-corruption do not only focus on control or compliance measures to fighting corruption but also on public sector reforms in creating a working environment that helps prevent corruption in the first place.

The *first* component of political will emphasised in scholarship is *origin of the initiative* (Brinkerhoff, 2000, 2015; Brinkerhoff & Kulibaba, 1999; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006; Malena, 2009a). This indicator of political will examines whether advocates for change perceive this change as a major issue that requires attention or if it is an inducement or coercion from an external group (Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006). Alan Doig notes that in most developing countries where there is entrenched corruption, strong and effective anti-corruption bodies

‘appear to offer not just another layer of expensive control but one whose efforts may be negated by corrupt or political influence unless it is established within the necessary climate of political and judicial support’ (Doig, 1995, p. 160). Therefore, anti-corruption initiatives such as the establishment of anti-corruption agencies as a condition for donor support may not stand the test of time (Doig, 1995; Doig et al., 2007; Schütte, 2012). This according to Doig et al. (2007) is because such anti-corruption agencies are likely to face the same corrupt problems faced by other public departments. To this end, Doig et al. (2006, p. 163) propose two hypotheses, relevant for the analysis in this paper, including: ‘is there, paradoxically, an adverse impact on the development of ACCs [anti-corruption agencies] as a consequence of mounting pressure from donors for anti-corruption results’; and ‘whether better results may be achieved with sequenced or less donor involvement using ACCs’?

The *second* component of political will is the *comprehension and extent of analysis* of the problem to be solved (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006; Malena, 2009a; Post et al., 2010). A deeper understanding and consequences of actions and inactions of political leaders and bureaucrats alike of the problem to be tackled is crucial. Malena (2009a, p. 18) asserts that public officials ‘should actively seek to understand underlying problems and issues’ in relation to the reform to be undertaken. Comparably Post et al. (2010) contend that decision makers must have an agreement on the issue or condition, reaching a problem status that requires government actions and that for a problem to be effectively addressed on the agenda needs the understanding of the problem (see also Cobb et al., 1976). Accordingly, decision makers who propose actions that to a significant extent are insufficient to tackle the identified problem or to achieve the set objective ‘demonstrate shallow willingness to pursue change’ (Brinkerhoff, 2000, p. 242; see also Brinkerhoff & Kulibaba, 1999, p. 4). In his analysis of real cases of corruption, Klitgaard proposed for anti-corruption policies to carefully assess ‘the relative susceptibility of the various activities to feasible changes in policies and procedures’ (Klitgaard, 1984, p. 77). To this end, anti-corruption reforms should not only be about compliance and control mechanisms, such as the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, but should also focus on reducing the incentives to engage in corrupt practices by public officials. Accordingly, the promotion of ethical culture at the work place should as well be a priority (Doig, 2012; Webb, 2012). The Chapter II of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) for instance promotes the prevention of corruption and proposes reforms to include procedures for staff recruitment and promotion, salaries, codes of conduct and conditions of services; thereby discouraging patronage riddled public service (see also Blunt et al., 2012; Jacobs, 2009; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006). Of critical importance here is the need to have a ‘meritocratic system where candidates to the public bureaucracy are recruited and selected on the basis of achievement’ (Quah, 1995, p. 342).

A *third* component of political will is the application of *credible sanctions* (Brinkerhoff, 2000; Brinkerhoff & Kulibaba, 1999; Kpundeh, 1998; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006; Malena, 2009a). In a situation where there are mechanisms to hold public official accountable and these mechanisms are effectively enforced without fear or favour, then of course it can be said that there is political will to fight corruption. In Klitgaard’s famous formula – ‘corruption equals monopoly plus discretion, minus accountability’ (Klitgaard, 1988, p. 75),

accountability serves as an anti-corruption approach to fighting corruption. At the end of the accountability chain is the passing of judgement where the principal or forum is able to impose sanctions on the 'agent as part of the right of authoritative direction that lies at the heart of the accountability relationship' (Mulgan, 2003, p. 9). Such accountability forums must be independent and have the powers to investigate corruption where it lies without political interference (Doig et al., 2007; Gregory, 2015; Meagher, 2005; Pope & Vogl, 2000). In Indonesia for instance, Schütte (2012, p. 38) notes that the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission 'has brought previously untouchable high-profile perpetrators to jail, has recovered stolen assets, and enjoys a much higher degree of public trust'.

Resource dedication and sustenance is last and arguably one of the most important components of political will (see e.g. Brinkerhoff, 2000, 2015; Brinkerhoff & Kulibaba, 1999; Malena, 2009b; Quah, 2015a; Staphenurst et al., 2006). For governments to achieve the objectives of any reform initiative, there is the need for institutional and human resource capacity to make it a reality and to sustain it; and Post et al. (2010, p. 663) describes this as 'commitment to support'. An example is what Olowu (1993) identified in Nigeria as key decision makers only pay lip-service with anti-corruption issues without proper resourcing. Some scholars (see e.g. Brown & Head, 2005; Doig et al., 2007; Meagher, 2005) note that financial and human resource capacity of anti-corruption agencies are very critical to their success, meanwhile they are often denied adequate resources for their operations. Therefore where anti-corruption agencies are provided with enough resources to make them succeed, just like any other policy reform, then of course it can be said that there is probably a genuine will to fight corruption.

Figure 1 here

Research Methodology

Case Selection

In this paper we present two case studies from Asia: Singapore and Bangladesh, responding to corruption and the measures put in place to fight corruption in public office. The main intent of this article is to attempt to conceptualise political will as a researchable concept with country specific evidence. Accordingly the paper seeks to unpack the "black box" of political will with empirical evidence for the proposed framework based on the works of other scholars (e.g. Brinkerhoff, 2000; Brinkerhoff & Kulibaba, 1999; Kpundeh, 1998; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006; Malena, 2009a). It is however important to clarify that the paper does not intend to directly compare the two countries. Since most analysts agree that Singapore's anti-corruption success story is primarily a function of political will, examining political will in both countries will help explain how countries at the lower end of global corruption league tables like Bangladesh can learn from Singapore – a country that once had high levels of public sector corruption.

In the early 20th century, Singapore was considered as one of the most corrupt countries with society seeing corruption as a way of life.¹ Singapore's political commitment to fight corruption has a long history and as such Singapore is considered as one of the cleanest

countries in the world (CPIB, 2014). For instance Transparency International's (TI) 2016 Corruption Perception Index placed Singapore among the top ten clean countries.² According to some scholars (e.g. Quah, 2015c), Singapore's reputation as the least corrupt country especially in the Asian region can be attributed to commitment of the government in power. Moreover, since systems and services in place are more effective and efficient, the avenues for corruption have been reduced drastically (CPIB, 2014). As the main anti-corruption agency (ACA) in Singapore, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) has been given the mandate to investigate complaints of corrupt practices, investigate corrupt cases by public officials; minimise opportunities for corruption in the public service and ensure people with criminal backgrounds are not appointed into public service (Quah, 2015a, p. 147).

Like Singapore and many developing and transition countries, the origin of corruption runs deep in the history of Bangladesh. However, until late 1990s corruption was rarely discussed in the development discourse of Bangladesh. After Bangladesh was ranked at the bottom in a row for five successive years from 2001 to 2005 in TI's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), corruption became the most discussed issue in every forum (Das, 2013). Though the ranking of Bangladesh improved gradually from 2006, its score (25) remained well below global average (43) with a ranking (139th) of second worst in South Asia in 2015.³ The National Household Survey 2012 by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) showed that 63.7% of households had been the victim of corruption in different sectors of service delivery.⁴ Consequently, and as indicated earlier, this paper shows and explain how countries like Bangladesh can learn from Singapore as far as political will for anti-corruption efforts is concerned.

Method

Data gathered for this paper was predominantly from secondary sources including journal articles, newspaper articles, institutional reports, websites and other reports. The data gathering process was more purposive, as not much research or information is known about the subject. This allowed for a purposive review of these documents, with a specific emphasis on how issues appearing in the selected documents, provide evidence for analysing the framework outlined in figure 1. Like any assessment effort, indicators for the four components outlined are wide ranging. However, the paper adopted a similar approach to that of Brinkerhoff who argued that 'choices need to be filtered through the principles of what information is necessary and sufficient, but not exhaustive' (Brinkerhoff, 2015, p. 5).

Since it is difficult to measure political will and lack of a valid theory that can help predict the chance that rhetoric by various political leaders will always become reality, we use absence of reform as a lack of political will whereas successful outcomes serve as a proof of political will. This assessment approach has earlier been used by some scholars (see e.g. Persson & Sjöstedt, 2012, p. 620). Thus rhetorical context alone cannot really tell us much about government anti-corruption efforts. Consequently we use four existing collations of

indicators that provide some options for the measurement of these four components over a six year period (2011-2016):

- *Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perception Index (CPI)*: TI's corruption perception index is most common measure of corruption in different countries in the world. It is an annual index that scores more than 160 countries and territories on a scale of 0-100. The ranking captures experts' views on how corrupt the public sector of a country is perceived to be.. The higher the score, the cleaner the country is in terms of corruption and vice versa.⁵
- *Political, Economic and Risk Consultancy's (PERC) annual survey on corruption*: the PERC survey produces a range of risk reports more especially on Asian countries, and pays particular attention to crucial socio-cultural variables such as corruption. Much attention with its corruption variable focuses on how locals and expatriates perceive corruption in a particular country. It uses grades from 0-10 where 0 is the lowest score a country can get for being clean in terms of corruption and vice versa.⁶
- *Worldwide Governance Indicator (WGI-Control of Corruption)*: Control of Corruption is one of six world governance indicators developed by the World Bank. Control of Corruption particularly measures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests.⁷ It scores countries up to a 100 percentile (i.e. the highest). The higher the score the less corrupt the country.
- *Worldwide Governance Indicator (Government Effectiveness)*: The Government Effectiveness indicator captures the extent to which society perceives the quality of public services and the degree of the public sector's independence from any form of political influence.⁸ This indicator also scores countries up to 100 percentile. The higher the score, the more effective the government is.

Although all the above listed indicators were developed for different purposes and may vary in categories of data, methods of collection and may as well have validity issues, refining them for political will is beyond the scope of this research. In this paper we make no claim that our evidence is comprehensive and that the analysis is suggestive rather than definitive. Moreover, as indicated earlier, the paper makes no claim that political will is the only condition for successful anti-corruption outcomes; although the paper maintains and agrees with other scholars that it is by all means a necessary condition.

Analysis of Evidence: Singapore and Bangladesh

Singapore

Origin of the Initiative

...from the very beginning we gave special attention to the areas where discretionary powers had been exploited for personal gain and sharpened the instruments that could prevent, detect or deter such practices (Lee, 2000, p. 184).

The fight against corruption in Singapore was heightened after the Opium Hijacking Scandal which discovered high level police corruption in 1951 leading to the establishment of the CPIB by the British colonial government (Tan, 1999). The establishment of the CPIB was considered as the breakthrough needed to fight the menace in society (Quah, 2015c). Before the 1959 general election, the People's Action Party (PAP) led by Lee Kuan Yew exhibited commitment to fight corruption in Singapore, particularly when they exposed the minister of Education for accepting S\$700,000 from American donors (Quah, 2010b). Effective corruption control was one of the main components of Lee Kuan Yew's legacy of good governance as noted by Quah:

As corruption was a way of life in Singapore when the PAP leaders assumed office, they learned from the mistakes made by the British colonial government in curbing corruption and demonstrated their political will by enacting the [Prevention of Corruption Act] POCA on 17 June 1960 to replace the ineffective Prevention of Corruption Ordinance (POCO) and to strengthen the CPIB by providing it with more legal powers (Quah, 2015b, p. 381).

Mr. Lee was of the opinion that corruption control and prevention rested on the laws against corruption found in the POCA (Parliament of Singapore, 1987). In later days of his life on earth, Lee made a touching statement which signifies the need for political will to be exhibited by the government in power and its leader to fight corruption in government:

"In the end, my greatest satisfaction in life comes from the fact that I have spent years gathering support, mustering the will to make this place meritocratic, corruption-free and equal for all races – and that it will endure beyond me, as it has" (Lee, 2013, p. 300).

Comprehension and Extent of Analysis

Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party (PAP) really had a fair comprehension and appreciated the extent and impact of corruption on the economy. Consequently, strategies proposed by the government were critical in fighting corruption and making Singapore one of the least corrupt countries in the world today. The PAP government mapped three key strategies in tackling corruption in Singapore. *First* was the introduction of the Prevention of Corruption Act in 1960. Lee was 'sickened by the greed, corruption and decadence of many Asian leaders' (Lee, 2000, p. 182). The new Act granted the CPIB many legal powers to fight corruption. For instance, the power of arrest under section 15, powers of investigation under section 17 and the power of search and seizure under section 22.⁹ In its 2014 annual report, the CPIB concluded that it has a strong mandate from the government in power to fight

corruption holistically (CPIB, 2014). Consequently, 'the CPIB remains relentless to its mission to combat corruption through swift and sure, firm but fair action and to uphold the highest level of incorruptibility' (CPIB, 2014, p. 16).

Second was the introduction and enforcement of meritocracy¹⁰ in the public service by the Lee PAP government. The introduction of meritocracy in the Singapore public service according to some scholars (e.g. Bellows, 2009) has been institutionalised to the extent that it is still being practiced after the resignation of Lee. For instance in 1992, the prime minister, Goh Chok Tong at the time stressed that the key to Singapore's success was the fact that Singapore was a meritocratic state and it is this practice that has made Singapore to excel as a nation (Goh, 1992, p. 15).

The third and last was the introduction of competitive salaries to public sector workers by Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP government (Quah, 2015b). Quah emphasises that Lee did this by 'matching public sector salaries with private sector salaries' and this was to 'reinforce the government's commitment to meritocracy' and to 'minimise corruption in the public sector' (2015b, pp. 383-384). Lee believed that 'Singapore will remain clean and honest only if honest, able men are willing to fight elections and assume office' and that 'they must be paid a wage commensurate with what men of their ability and integrity are earning' elsewhere (Lee, 2000, p. 192). Consequently, in 1973, senior civil servants received a substantial increase in their salaries in the bid to bridge the gap with the private sector (Quah, 2010b).

Credible Sanctions

In Singapore, the CPIB is the only government agency tasked to fighting corruption as stated earlier. On its website, it is stated clearly that the CPIB does not 'hesitate to bring whoever is corrupt to court, irrespective of his status, creed or rank' and that anybody 'who offers, accepts or obtains a bribe can be fined up to \$100000 or imprisoned up to five years or both'.¹¹ In fact the number of years is even extended if the corruption involves government contracts and members of parliament (CPIB, 2014, p. 10). This has enhanced the deterrent effect of the POCA. Consequently the CPIB adopts a 'total approach to enforcement' and deals with both 'big and small cases' as well as 'both giver and receiver of bribes' (Soh, 2008, p. 1). All complaints are 'deliberated upon in the same manner regardless of the nature or amount of the gratification' (CPIB, 2014, p. 6). The CPIB is independent and its fight against corruption targets all irrespective of political affiliation or position in society unlike other countries (Quah, 2015c). For instance in his book, "Understanding China", Starr made the contention that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) 'anti-corruption campaigns often have as much to do with settling intra-party rivalries as they do with reasserting public probity' (2010, pp. 80-81). Similarly Quah (2015c, p. 79) stated that:

Indeed, senior CCP leaders like Chen Xitong, Chen Liangyu, and Bo Xilai were prosecuted for corruption not only because they were guilty of corrupt offenses, but more importantly, because they had threatened the consolidation of power of political leaders like Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, respectively.

As an indication of exhibiting impartiality and enhancing its credibility in the public domain as far as prosecutions and sanctions are concerned, the CPIB in 2013 handed one of its deputy directors, Edwin Yeo Seow Hiong, to the Commercial Affairs Department of the Singapore Police force for investigation and prosecution for misappropriating S\$1.7 million.¹² The CPIB has therefore enforced the POCA impartially without any form of political interference in its operations including the indictment of some members of the PAP government by the CPIB for various corrupt acts (see table 1 below).¹³ In his submission to the 2016 anti-corruption summit in London the prime minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong, stated that: ‘...corruption is driven by human nature and greed. However strict the rules and tight the system, some individuals will sometimes still be tempted to transgress. When they do, we make sure they are caught and severely dealt with’.¹⁴

In its 2014 annual report, the CPIB reported that conviction rates charged by the bureau have been above 95% three years in a row (CPIB, 2014, p. 10). As such corruption is perceived by the public as a high risk but low reward venture in Singapore. Quality enforcement mechanism is very critical in inducing changes in peoples’ perceptions to desist from acting corruptly when they are aware that anti-corruption agencies make the cost of corruption very high (Choi, 2009).

Table 1 here

Resource Dedication and Sustenance

Upon its establishment in 1952, the CPIB had just 13 workers working to fight corruption in Singapore (Quah, 2015b, 2015c). However, the PAP government not wanting to repeat the mistakes of the British colonial government provided the needed human and financial resource to the CPIB to make it effective on a sustainable basis (Quah, 2015c). Today, the CPIB can boast of a significant improvement in terms of numbers and skills in its workforce (Quah, 2010a, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Republic of Singapore, 2014) which is crucial in ensuring the success of the bureau in fighting corruption. Analysing the tremendous improvement in the CPIB’s resource capacity since its establishment, in his article “Lee Kuan Yew’s enduring legacy of good governance in Singapore”, Quah (2015b) stated:

The CPIB’s personnel have grown 17 times from 13 officers in 1952 to 222 officers in 2014. Similarly, the CPIB’s budget has increased 30 times from US\$1.02 million in 1978 to US\$31.1 million in 2014. The PAP government’s political will to curb corruption is reflected in the improvement of the CPIB’s staff-population ratio and per capita expenditure from 2005 to 2014... The number of personnel has expanded by nearly three times from 81 to 222 during 2005-2014. The CPIB’s budget has also grown four times from US\$7.7 million to US\$31.1 million during the same period. Consequently, the CPIB’s staff: population ratio has improved from 1:53,086 in 2005 to 1:24638 in 2014. The CPIB’s per capita expenditure has also increased by more than three times from US\$1.79 to US\$5.69 during 2005-2014. In short, the CPIB has been provided with adequate financial and human resources by the PAP government to perform its functions effectively (pp. 381-382).

This significant improvement in the resource capacity has translated into enhanced work rate of the bureau's investigations. Consequently there has been a 'stable yearly clearance rate for the CPIB in the last three years' (CPIB, 2014, p. 8). In the 2014 operational year for instance, 77% of all cases the CPIB investigated were completed (p. 8).

Bangladesh

Origin of the Initiative

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) was the only responsible anti-corruption agency in Bangladesh since independence in 1971. However, BAC gradually became ineffective over the years in dealing with corruption due to bad performance with corrupt officials at all levels and political interference (Parnini, 2011). Donors and the International community expressed serious concerns over widespread corruption in Bangladesh due to its continued lowest ranking in the CPI for a consecutive five year period from 2001 to 2005. Parnini further emphasised that foreign assistance was often aligned to the effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures taken by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) (2011). For instance some donors periodically suspended their support on grounds of corruption (Wickberg, 2012). In this context, the Anti-Corruption Commission Act was enacted in 2004 and consequently the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) was established to replace the BAC. In the early years of the commission, it was effective to the extent that it went as far as filing cases against some top political leaders (Hechler, 2011; Wickberg, 2012). However, government was reluctant in providing the necessary legal, administrative and financial support to make it continuously effective, which was reflected in the ineffective performance of ACC in subsequent years. Besides, the government did not have any empirical research or political commitment in policy transfer regarding the ACC establishment (Das, 2013). The ineffectiveness of the ACC was emphasised by one of the former Chairmen of ACC, Ghulam Rahman who compared the ACC to a 'toothless tiger' on his last day in office, resonating the common perception about ACC in Bangladesh.¹⁵

Comprehension and Extent of Analysis

Maintaining a competitive patron-client relationship is the hallmark of Bangladesh politics (Khan, 2010). Since independence, all the effective rulers grant political and financial benefits to their associates. Political clientelism is so entrenched in the Bangladeshi public sector that it hinders good governance (Sarker, 2008). Almost all of the top leaders came into state power expressing their strong commitment against corruption. In contrast they acted reversely by institutionalizing and decentralizing corruption at different levels (Khan, n.d). For instance Islam found that political clientelism has really expanded in Bangladesh and that it takes two major forms: horizontal and vertical clientelism:

In its vertical forms the political leaders, especially of the ruling class produce, maintain or reproduce ties with the bureaucracy. In horizontal ties the patron becomes connected to a client for electoral...support... One particular aspect of horizontal patron-clientelism is the link between the ruling party, politicians, and public administration. The party rewards the loyal civil

servant by quicker promotions and profitable postings and with important positions within party after his retirement (Islam, 2006, pp. 18-19).

It is more like a patrimonial system in which recruitment, postings and promotions are guided by consideration of political loyalty rather than technical competence (Islam, 2006). This according to Khan et al. (1996) normally takes the form of factionalism and may sometimes even ignite factional conflicts. It promotes rent seeking and leads to what Maiz and Requejo (2001) call “dark social capital” which increases corruption as a result. In a World Bank report, it was revealed that 37% of civil servants in Bangladesh indicated political connection including nepotism were critical factors for promotion (World Bank, 2002).

Credible Sanctions

The ACC has failed to show its political neutrality for its partial behaviour in handling corruption cases. Although the commission is independent and impartial by law, it is subjected to political influence on systemic basis, making the implementation of anti-corruption policies very weak (Ehsan, 2006; Global Integrity, 2010). Some of its actions create a negative impression of its intention about making some influential people untouchable. For instance, the chairman of a private bank managed to escape from the charge sheet in spite of having enough evidence from the Central Bank.¹⁶ The discretionary power of the ACC commissioners in taking decisions about filing corruption cases creates the chances of influence or favouritism. In one case against a government owned company, ACC excluded the name of the Chairman, in spite clear evidence of his involvement. There are even allegations that, at times Commissioners gave directives to the panel lawyers to delay progress of some cases (TIB, 2016).

There are also a series of allegations that the ACC is used by the government as a weapon to harass political and ideological opponents. There is a common perception that the ACC often gives clean sheets to governing party faithfuls in excuse of not having adequate evidence of corruption, whereas the opponents are given charge sheets.¹⁷ A good number of cases were withdrawn on political grounds which raised questions about its intentions to curb corruption neutrally (Ehsan, 2006). However in recent times, efforts are being made to ensure that the law is applied no matter the political affiliation of the victim. For instance the Appellate Division recently sustained the punishment by the lower court against a cabinet Minister on a corruption case.¹⁸

Resource Dedication and Sustenance

The proportion of ACC's budget to total government budget over the last few years has been around 0.025% with its continuous decline; although there has been some gains in absolute monetary terms (TIB, 2016). For instance in the financial years 2010, 2011 and 2012, the ACC's budget allocation was Euros 2.98 million, 3.21million and 3.46 million respectively (Das, 2013). This revenue base is relatively far below the budget of an anti- corruption commission mandated to investigate and expose corruption nationally in a country as populous (over 150 million people) as Bangladesh. Moreover, the ACC is restricted in terms of its financial management in that it always has to seek permission from the minister to use

any of its surplus budgets from one department to another. Meanwhile the ACC, according to law is supposed to be independent. Consequently, the ACC often depends on national and international donor agencies for funding to meet the needs for training and capacity building among others.

The main challenge is that the allocation is given according to the existing human resource, which is inadequate. Key informants from both within and outside ACC are of the opinion that the absence of ACC offices with necessary human and other resources in most of the districts jeopardizes the anti-corruption activities on many fronts (TIB, 2016). For instance, staffs within the investigation wing face huge workloads, which eventually decrease their efficiency and effectiveness. However, a new organogram was proposed to the concerned ministry in September 2015, and is currently awaiting approval from the government (TIB, 2016).

Results and Discussions

We discuss in this section how political will of political society actors in Singapore and Bangladesh has impacted their anti-corruption efforts. We do this as indicated earlier by referring to the scores of the two countries in four major international corruption league tables including TI's CPI, WGI Control of Corruption, WGI Government Effectiveness; and one Asian indicator – PERC. Table 2 below depicts how Singapore and Bangladesh are ranked in terms of corruption according to the above mentioned indicators.

Table 2 here

The outcomes on table 2 above show clearly that Singapore's political will on anti-corruption efforts has in fact yielded significant positive results. In contrast, lack of political will to fight corruption in Bangladesh as shown in the analysis has resulted in systemic corruption in the country. Ehsan (2006, p. 51) for instance argues that political will is the most critical success factor for implementing any policy decision and that since 'the establishment of [Bangladesh's] ACC is not a result of "home grown" decision and the government did not have any positive will, the decision failed at the implementation stage'. Ehsan further notes that this lack of will by political society actors to fight corruption is mainly an issue of political culture which makes political leaders reluctant in curbing corruption in Bangladesh as it blocks their chance of staying on to power. He emphasised that policy actors are involved in corruption themselves; politicians protect the interest of civil servants to gain favour during elections; and taking actions against top officials in government makes them unpopular among such top officials which consequently reduce their chance of getting support from them during elections.

Data in all four components portray Singapore's sustained political will in fighting corruption than Bangladesh. For instance in Singapore the initiative to fight corruption was a local one championed by the former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Lee's commitment to fighting corruption was exhibited as early as in the lead up to the 1959 elections when he exposed the then minister of education for accepting S\$700000 from American donors as already stated. To this end, the PAP reinforced the CPIB, granting it the necessary legal, independence and

capacity to be effective. In contrast, Bangladesh's commitment to fight corruption was not until when the TI CPI had consistently ranked Bangladesh among the most corrupt countries in the world. This led to donors and other funding bodies suspend their support to Bangladesh before the ACC was established by the ACC Act 2004. Consequently the government of Bangladesh has been reluctant to provide the necessary legal, administrative and financial resource capacity to the agency to be effective.

These findings provide empirical substantiation to Doig's assertion that unless anti-corruption efforts are 'established within the necessary climate of political' support, they may not be successful. The findings also support the hypotheses put forward by Doig et al. (2006) that where there is mounting pressure on a country by donors to establish anti-corruption agencies for favourable anti-corruption results, such initiatives are bound to fail; and that where there are less donor involvement in the establishment of anti-corruption agencies, better results may be achieved (Doig et al., 2006; Schütte, 2012). Thus the success and failure of CPIB and ACC respectively may be attributed to less donor involvement in the establishment of CPIB and excessive donor involvement on the part of ACC. In Indonesia, Schütte (2012) noted that although donor attention was highly focused on other anti-corruption efforts such as an investigation team under the attorney general's department, national Ombudsman and Audit Commission, they ultimately failed. Schutte further noted that the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission is more successful than the other agencies because of its "local ownership". This finding also supports that of Marcelo (2005) who concluded that the Office of the Ombudsman in the Philippines is only designed to fail since it is crippled with lack of resources making it powerless to deal with corrupt officials, probably because it lacks genuine political will in the form of 'local ownership'.

However some scholars (e.g. Brinkerhoff, 2010; Malena, 2009a) assert that political will may be different from "political can" and that some governments may have the "will" but not the "can" as indicated earlier. Notwithstanding, the paper argues from the case analysis that the two countries studied both had entrenched histories of corruption and Singapore was also once upon a time a developing country. It took political commitment by the PAP government to clean up and promote integrity within the public service, which has today resulted in a "Developed Singapore". We however do not turn blind eyes on the incapacity of some countries in providing funds to government departments, but what we argue is that genuine political will of the country leadership to fight corruption in government must not resort to financial incapacity as the reason for the failure of such agencies.

Furthermore the CPIB in Singapore has the independence to investigate and sanction any public official found to have committed corrupt conduct without fear or favour. Accordingly some top political leaders in Singapore's PAP government have been charged and sanctioned (see table 1 above). In 1996 for instance when rumours spread that Lee Quan Yew and Lee Hsien Loong had received improper discounts on property purchases, the then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong ordered a full investigation into the matter. The investigations found that there was nothing improper and in a statement, Lee Kuan Yew expressed his satisfaction that no one is indeed above the law in Singapore.¹⁹ In contrast the analysis suggests that ACC in Bangladesh has been regarded as a toothless tiger with consistent influence of top

government officials in its activities. This shows that genuine political will to fight corruption would provide the necessary legal and investigation independence to anti-corruption agencies to investigate corruption where it lies without political interference (Doig et al., 2007; Gregory, 2015; Meagher, 2005; Pope & Vogl, 2000) as depicted in the case of Singapore. Therefore the power to investigate and sanction corrupt officials as part of accountability (Mulgan, 2003) without recourse to political affiliation (Schütte, 2012) exhibits genuine political will in government's anti-corruption efforts. Enacting laws to make anti-corruption agencies independent especially in their investigations is not enough but the practical application of the law as far as the independence and impartiality of investigations are concerned is paramount.

The findings from both cases again show that, genuine political will to fight corruption makes effort to understand the problem including the causes and manifestation of it. Consequently anti-corruption efforts cannot only be successful with control or compliance strategies, but must also include public sector reforms geared at improving the conditions of service, such as recruitment and promotion procedures, competitive salaries (Blunt et al., 2012; Jacobs, 2009; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006), and in effect create an ethical culture to prevent corruption (Doig, 2012; Webb, 2012). In Singapore genuine efforts were made to improve the quality of service in the public sector by improving salaries, having laid down procedures for promotions and staff selection thereby nurturing and instituting the culture of meritocracy in the Singapore civil service (Bellows, 2009; Quah, 1995). In contrast Bangladesh does not follow such reform procedures in practice. This is consistent with Jacob's notion that though promotions are supposed to be based on competence in performance, it is in practice based on seniority (Jacobs, 2009) and political connection (World Bank, 2002).

The effects of the efforts of the two countries studied are reflected on various global corruption league tables as shown on table 2 above. For instance Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index has consistently ranked Singapore among the top 10 clean countries in the world and the cleanest country in the Asian region²⁰, scoring an average of 86 in the last six years. On the other hand Bangladesh has been consistently ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world with an average score of 26 over the same period. Similarly, the World Governance Indicator's Control of Corruption has also consistently scored Singapore above 96% in the past six years – again the highest in the Asian region. For example in the 2013 ranking, the only country that came close to Singapore was Japan, with 92.8 percentile rank. In the latest 2016 ranking for instance, Singapore's percentile ranking was 97.1. Bangladesh on the other hand has consistently been ranked among the worst countries in the world and the Asian region by the same indicator. Unlike Singapore, Bangladesh was ranked as low as among the 14.2 percentile rank in 2011 before improving to 22.1 in 2015 and again declined to 21.2 percentile in the latest 2016 rankings. Moreover the PERC has also constantly ranked Singapore as the least corrupt country in the whole of the Asian region with a score of 0.37 and 1.67 in 2011 and 2016 respectively. In the 2015 assessment survey for example, the only country that came close to Singapore was Japan with a score of 1.55 with others such as China, India, Malaysia, and South Korea scoring 6.98,

8.01, 4.96 and 6.28 respectively (see Asian Intelligence, 2015, p. 5). Unfortunately Bangladesh is not covered in this assessment.

It is therefore not surprising that the World Bank's World Governance Indicator (Government Effectiveness) has in the last six years ranked Singapore over 99 percentile. In fact in the last three percentile rankings, the World Bank ranked Singapore's government effectiveness a whopping 100 percentile rank – the highest any country can hope to achieve. Bangladesh's position on the World Bank's Government Effectiveness assessment, in contrast, is among the least effective governments, scoring 24.6 percentile in 2011 and even dropping to 24 in 2015 before rising slightly to 25.5 percentile in 2016 (see table 2 above).

These findings corroborate that of Quah (2015a) who found that Singapore's CPIB is the most effective ACA in the Asian region making major global corruption league tables to rank Singapore as the cleanest country in Asia, in his analysis of ACAs in five countries including Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, China and Philippines. The findings in this paper also support the conceptual framework of political will informed by the works of famous scholars (e.g. Brinkerhoff, 2000, 2015; Brinkerhoff & Kulibaba, 1999; Kpundeh & Dininio, 2006; Malena, 2009a). Furthermore, this paper also supports the conclusion drawn by Yeboah-Assiamah and Alesu-Dordzi (2016) that political will is the most critical success factor for government anti-corruption efforts in their research about the calculus of corruption with evidence from Ghana. The paper therefore suggests that political will in the forms established in this paper indeed has a positive impact in fighting corruption. However we do acknowledge again, as stated earlier, that political will in these forms alone, *although necessary*, may not be sufficient in positive anti-corruption outcomes, and that other contextual, institutional and socio-economic factors, beyond the scope of this research, may as well inform the success and failure of Singapore and Bangladesh's anti-corruption efforts and outcomes respectively.

Conclusion

Political will is the oft-cited reason for government's success or failure especially in the fight against corruption. This paper has shed light on how political will is a necessary condition in a government/country's anti-corruption efforts although may not be sufficient. The findings confirm the empirical relevance of the framework presented in this paper and shows that the origin of anti-corruption initiatives; credible sanctions; resource dedication and sustenance; and comprehension and extent of analysis are important components if a country wants to exhibit political will for successful anti-corruption outcomes. This paper has contributed to the political will literature by adding to the preliminary evidence seeking to "unpack the black box" of political will as a concept that can be substantiated with empirical evidence. The evidence presented in this paper has depicted that the above mentioned components of political will are key components of the concept although may not be comprehensive. For instance the understanding and analysis of the extent of corruption in Singapore made the PAP government first led by Lee Kuan Yew to promote and enforce meritocracy in the Singapore public service, meanwhile favouritism, patronage and nepotism are identified as the hallmarks of the Bangladesh's public service. The PAP government did this by employing

the brightest and most capable into the public service and made sure that the gap in salaries between the public service and the private sector were bridged.

So what can Bangladesh and other developing countries with serious problems of corruption learn from Singapore as far as political will is concerned? The paper proposes that political leaders in countries like Bangladesh should make conscious effort to create their political will by changing their political culture and not putting their selfish interest of holding on to power at the expense of the wellbeing of their citizens. This will give anti-corruption agencies, for instance, a ‘high *de facto* political independence with high operational impartiality’ (Quah, 2015a, p. 157) to pursue and sanction the corrupt where they lie. The paper proposes that political leaders can generate their will by creating local ownership of anti-corruption reforms. Consequently, conscious efforts should be made to comprehensively understand, through stakeholder consultations, the contextual and socio-economic and institutional factors that may hinder the successful implementation of anti-corruption policies and reforms. Accordingly, anti-corruption reform policies will not be a practice of *isomorphism* or “transplantation” of international best practice models that may not be applicable in the context of Bangladesh; but one tailored to fit the socio-economic context of Bangladesh. The paper suggests that in this way, political capacity and command over the bureaucracy will be built over time to enhance the successful implementation of anti-corruption policies for successful outcomes.

As earlier indicated, the paper makes no claim that the analysis is comprehensive and that it is suggestive rather than definitive. Future research in this area should adopt this framework for empirical scrutiny in other countries for substantiation. It is through this means that there can be a ‘systematic definitional approach focused on outcomes...in making political will empirically useful and actionable concept’ as suggested by Post et al. (2010, p. 654). Moreover, through this approach, countries and governments hoping to improve their political will in the form of policy reform initiatives to fight corruption can adopt/adapt the framework to fit their specific country context for successful anti-corruption outcomes. Furthermore, future researches that hope to contribute to the initial discussions in this area may consider the extent to which genuine political will may diminish due to lack or inadequate political capacity of the leadership.

Acknowledgement

This paper is part of a PhD research funded by Griffith University. The corresponding author also received funding from the Australian Political Studies Association to present the paper at the 2016 annual conference in UNSW, Sydney. The Corresponding author is also thankful to the Centre for Governance and Public Policy, Griffith for allowing the corresponding author to present the paper during one of its Friday seminars. Many thanks also go to Professor Jason Sharman, Professor A J Brown and the journal editor for their constructive comments on the earlier versions of this paper. Finally the authors are grateful to the reviewers for their constructive comments that helped to improve the quality of the paper.

List of references

- Ankamah, S. S. (2016). Toward a framework of improving horizontal and social accountability mechanisms: case studies in Asia. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 5(3), 288-304.
- Asian Intelligence. (2015). Perceptions of Corruption in Asia, the US and Australia *An Independent Fortnightly Report on Asian Business and Politics*, No 920 (pp. 1-5): PERC.
- Atkinson, M. (2000, 28 December). Political Will Puts Relief. *The Guardian*. London, p. 15.
- Bellows, T. J. (2009). Meritocracy and the Singapore Political System. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 17(1), 24-44.
- Blunt, P., et al. (2012). Patronage's progress in post-Soeharto Indonesia. *Public Administration and Development*, 32(1), 64-81.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. (2000). Assessing political will for anti-corruption efforts: an analytic framework. *Public Administration & Development*, 20(3), 239.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. (2010). Unpacking the concept of political will to confront corruption. Retrieved 8th June, 2016, from <http://www.u4.no/publications/unpacking-the-concept-of-political-will-to-confront-corruption/>
- Brinkerhoff, D. W. (2015). Building political will for HIV response: an operational model and strategy options. *The International journal of health planning and management*.
- Brinkerhoff, D. W., & Kulibaba, N. P. (1999). Identifying and Assessing Political Will or Anti-Corruption Efforts *Implementing Policy Change Project*, USAID Center for Democracy and Governance Working Paper No. 13. Washington, DC: USAID.
- Brown, A. J., & Head, B. (2005). Institutional Capacity and Choice in Australia's Integrity Systems. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 64(2), 84-95. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8500.2005.00444.x
- Burite, J., & Gridneff, I. (2015, April 7). Corruption, lack of political will for reform weaken Kenya's ability to fight terrorists. *Mail and Gardian Africa*. Retrieved from <http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-04-07-corruption-lack-of-political-will-for-reform-weaken-kenyas-ability-to-fight-terrorists>
- Carbonetti, B., et al. (2014). Overcoming the lack of political will in small scale fisheries. *Marine Policy*, 44(0), 295-301. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2013.09.020>
- Choi, J.-W. (2009). Institutional Structures and Effectiveness of Anticorruption Agencies: A Comparative Analysis of South Korea and Hong Kong. *Asian Journal of Political Science*, 17(2), 195-214. doi: 10.1080/02185370903077485
- Chong, E. (2014, 1 May). Ex-STTA chief cleared of remaining charges. *Straits Times*, p. A2.
- Cobb, R., et al. (1976). Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process. *The American political science review*, 70(1), 126-138.
- CPIB. (2003). *Swift and Sure Action: Four Decades of Anti-Corruption Work*. Singapore: CPIB.
- CPIB. (2014). *Annual Report 2014*. Singapore: Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau.
- Das, S. K. (2013). *Anti-Corruption Commission of Bangladesh: Diagnosis of a Fading Hope*. (Master of Arts), Insitute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands.
- DFID. (2004). Appendix 3: Understanding 'Political Will'. Retrieved July 1, 2015, from http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/Mis_SPC/R8236Appendix3.pdf
- Doig, A. (1995). Good government and sustainable anti-corruption strategies: A role for independent anti-corruption agencies? *Public Administration and Development*, 15(2), 151-165.
- Doig, A. (2012). Conclusion To The Special Issue: Time To Consider Prevention As Well As Retribution? *Public Administration and Development*, 32(1), 129-135.
- Doig, A., et al. (2006). Hands-on or hands-off? Anti-corruption agencies in action, donor expectations, and a good enough reality. *Public Administration and Development*, 26(2), 163-172.
- Doig, A., et al. (2007). Why do developing country anti-corruption commissions fail to deal with corruption? Understanding the three dilemmas of organisational development, performance

- expectation, and donor and government cycles. *Public Administration and Development*, 27(3), 251-259.
- Ehsan, M. (2006). When Implementation Fails: The Case of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and Corruption Control in Bangladesh'. *Asian affairs*, 28(3), 40-63.
- Evans, G. (2000). *Preventing and Containing Violent Conflict: Mobilizing Political Will. Introductory Statement to Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. International Semina on Preventing Violent Conflict: The Search for Political Will, Strategies and Effective Tools. . Krusenberg, Sweden.
- Global Integrity. (2010). Global Integrity Report, 2010: Global Integrity.
- Goh, C. T. (1992). My urgent mission. *Petir*, 11-12, 10-19.
- Gregory, R. (2015). Political independence, operational impartiality, and the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 4(1), 125-142.
- Hammergren, L. (1998). 'Political Will' Constituency Building, and Public Support in Rule of Law Programs. *Center for Democracy and Governance*. Retrieved 1 July, 2015, from <http://issat.dcaf.ch/content/download/2200/19056/file/Hammergren%20Political%20Will.pdf>
- Hechler, H. (2011). A political economy analysis of UNCAC implementation in Bangladesh: Can UNCAC address grand corruption? , from <http://www.u4.no/publications/can-uncac-address-grandcorruption/>
- Holmes, L. (2016). *Advanced introduction to organised crime*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Hope, K. (2000, 15 November). Small Steps Towards Telecoms Liberalisation. *Financial Times*. London, p. 18.
- Hopkinson, N., & Pelizzo, R. (2006). The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption in Central and Eastern Europe. In F. Staphenurst, N. Johnston & R. Pelizzo (Eds.), *The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption* (pp. 251-263). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Islam, S. A. (2006). The predicament of democratic consolidation in Bangladesh. *Bangladesh E-journal of Sociology*, 3(2), 4-31.
- Jacobs, C. (2009). How to bring about change in the Bangladesh civil service? Attempts to change mindsets, behaviours and practice. *Public Administration and Development*, 29(3), 218-227.
- Khan, M. (2010). Bangladesh: Partitions, Nationalisms and Legacies for State-Building.
- Khan, M. M. (n.d). Political and administrative corruption: concepts, comparative experiences and Bangladesh case: Transparency International Bangladesh
- Khan, S. I., et al. (1996). *Political culture, political parties and the democratic transition in Bangladesh*: Academic Publishers.
- Klitgaard, R. (1984). Managing the fight against corruption: a case study. *Public Administration and Development*, 4(1), 77-98.
- Klitgaard, R. E. (1988). *Controlling Corruption*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press.
- Kpundeh, S. (1998). Political will in fighting corruption. In S. Kpundeh & I. Hors (Eds.), *Corruption and Integrity Improvement Initiatives in Developing Countries*. New York, NY: UNDP/OECD.
- Kpundeh, S., & Dininio, P. (2006). Political Will. In F. Staphenurst, N. Johnston & R. Pellizo (Eds.), *The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption* (pp. 41-48). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Lee, K. Y. (2000). *From Third World to First*. Singapore: Times Media.
- Lee, K. Y. (2013). *One man's view of the world*: Straits Times Press Singapore.
- Little, A. W. (2011). Education policy reform in Sri Lanka: the double-edged sword of political will. *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(4), 499-512. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2011.555005
- Maiz, R., & Requejo, R. (2001). *Clientelism as a Political Incentive Structure for Corruption*. Paper presented at the trabajo presentado en la Conferencia de Primavera del European Consortium for Political Research, Grenoble.
- Malena, C. (2009a). Building Political Will for Participatory Governance: An Introduction. In C. Malena (Ed.), *From Political Won't to Political Will: Building Support for Participatory Governance* (pp. 3-30). Serling, VA: Kumarian Press.

- Malena, C. (2009b). *From political won't to political will: Building support for participatory governance*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- Marcelo, S. V. (2005). Combating corruption in the Philippines: status, challenges and prospects', in combating corruption in the Philippines: are we plundering our chances or doing it better? *Working Paper Series No. 2* (pp. 1-26). Quezon City: National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines.
- Marrin, M. (2000, 11 February). Labour's Schools Policy is Just Window-Dressing. *The Daily Telegraph*. London, p. 30.
- McGee, R., & Gaventa, J. (2011). Shifting Power? Assessing the Impact of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives *IDS Working Paper 383*. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies.
- Meagher, P. (2005). Anti-corruption agencies: Rhetoric Versus reality. *The Journal of Policy Reform*, 8(1), 69-103. doi: 10.1080/1384128042000328950
- Moore, R. T. (2000, 19 March). Political Will Need to Take Action on Health-Care System. *The Boston Herald*. Boston, p. 28.
- Mulgan, R. (2003). *Holding power to account: accountability in modern democracies*: Palgrave Macmillan Basingstoke.
- Ng, V. (2000). Johor Strait Clean-Up Exercise can Work with Political Will, Commitment. *New Straits Times*. Malaysia, p. 2.
- NHS. (2015). NHS calls for political will from new Government. Retrieved 2 July, 2015, from <http://nhsconfed.org/news/2015/05/nhs-calls-for-political-will-from-new-government>
- Olowu, D. (1993). Corruption in Nigeria: Causes, Consequences and Remedies. In S. Rasheed & D. Olowu (Eds.), *Ethics and Accountability in African Public Services*. Nairobi: African Association for Public Administration and Management.
- Pagliccia, N., & Pérez, A. Á. (2012). The Cuban Experience in Public Health: Does Political Will Have a Role? *International Journal of Health Services*, 42(1), 77-94. doi: 10.2190/HS.42.1.h
- Parliament of Singapore. (1987). Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Investigations Concerning the Late Mr Teh Cheang Wan Singapore: Singapore National Printers.
- Parnini, S. N. (2011). Governance Reforms and Anti-Corruption Commission in Bangladesh. *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, 11(1), 50.
- Persson, A., & Sjöstedt, M. (2012). Responsive and Responsible Leaders: A Matter of Political Will? *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(03), 617-632. doi: doi:10.1017/S1537592712001648
- Piiparinen, T. (2006). Beyond the mystery of the Rwanda 'black box': Political will and early warning. *International Peacekeeping*, 13(3), 334-349. doi: 10.1080/13533310600824033
- Pope, J., & Vogl, F. (2000). Making anticorruption agencies more effective. *Finance and Development*, 37(2), 6-9.
- Post, L. A., et al. (2010). Defining political will. *Politics & Policy*, 38(4), 653-676.
- Quah, J. S. (1995). Sustaining quality in the Singapore civil service. *Public Administration and Development*, 15(3), 335-343.
- Quah, J. S. T. (2010a). Defying institutional failure: learning from the experiences of anti-corruption agencies in four Asian countries. *Crime, law, and social change*, 53(1), 23-54.
- Quah, J. S. T. (2010b). *Public Administration Singapore-Style*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Quah, J. S. T. (2015a). Evaluating the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies in five Asian countries: A comparative analysis. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 4(1), 143-159.
- Quah, J. S. T. (2015b). Lee Kuan Yew's enduring legacy of good governance in Singapore, 1959-2015. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 4(4), 374-393.
- Quah, J. S. T. (2015c). "Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau". *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 4(1), 76-100.
- Recanatini, F. (2011). Anti-corruption authorities: an effective tool to curb corruption? In S. Rose-Ackerman & T. Søreide (Eds.), *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption* (Vol. Two, pp. 528-570). Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar.

- Republic of Singapore. (2014). Singapore Budget 2014: Annex to the Expenditure Estimates. Singapore: Budget Division, Ministry of Finance.
- Rigg, K., & Hmaidan, W. (2014, 2 April). Seeking the political will to secure a carbon-free future *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/apr/02/ipcc-report-climate-change-carbon>
- Robinson, M. (1998). Corruption and development: An introduction. *European journal of development research*, 10(1), 1-14.
- Sarker, A. E. (2008). Patron-client politics and its implications for good governance in Bangladesh. *Intl Journal of Public Administration*, 31(12), 1416-1440.
- Schacter, M. (2005). A framework for evaluating institutions of accountability. In A. Shah (Ed.), *Fiscal management* (pp. 229-245). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Schedler, A. (1999). Restraining the State: Conflicts and Agents of Accountability. In A. Schedler, L. Diamond & M. F. Plattner (Eds.), *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies* (pp. 333-350). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Schütte, S. A. (2012). Against The Odds: Anti-Corruption Reform In Indonesia. *Public Administration and Development*, 32(1), 38-48.
- Sim, F. (2011). Former MP charged with corruption". *Singapore Scene* 8 December. Retrieved 19 August 2014, from <http://sg.news.yahoo.com/blogs/singaporescene/former-mp-charged-corruption-062745727.html>
- Soh, K. H. (2008). *Corruption enforcement*. Paper presented at the Second Seminar of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Associations, Chongqing.
- Stapenhurst, R., et al. (2006). *The Role of Parliament in Curbing Corruption*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.
- Starr, J. B. (2010). *Understanding China: A Guide to China's Economy, History, and Political Culture* (Vol. 3rd ed). New York, NY: Hill and Wang.
- Tan, A. L. (1999). The experience of Singapore in combating corruption. In R. Stapenhurst & S. J. Kpundeh (Eds.), *Curbing Corruption: Towards a Model for Building National Integrity* (pp. 59-66). Washington, DC: World Bank.
- TIB. (2016). *Strengthening Anti-Corruption Agencies: Bangladesh Report*.
- UNDP. (2008). Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives: Accelerating Human Development in Asia and the Pacific. Colombo: UNDP Human Development Report Unit.
- Webb, W. N. (2012). Ethical Culture And The Value-Based Approach To Integrity Management: A Case Study Of The Department Of Correctional Services. *Public Administration and Development*, 32(1), 96-108.
- Wickberg, S. (2012). Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Bangladesh. Retrieved 20th June, 2016, from <http://www.u4.no/publications/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-bangladesh/>
- Woocher, L. (2001). Deconstructing Political Will: Explaining the Failure to Prevent Deadly Conflict and Mass Atrocities. *Princeton Journal of Public and International Affairs*, 12(Spring), 179-206.
- World Bank. (2002). Improving Governance for Reducing Poverty. Dhaka: World Bank.
- Yeboah-Assiamah, E., & Alesu-Dordzi, S. (2016). The calculus of corruption: a paradox of 'strong' corruption amidst 'strong' systems and institutions in developing administrative systems. *Journal of public affairs*, 16(2), 203-216.

Notes

-
- ¹ See <https://www.cpiib.gov.sg/about-us/our-history>. (Accessed on 10/2/2016)
- ² See https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016. (Accessed on 28/9/2017)
- ³ <https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/beta3/index.php/en/activities/4870-bangladesh-retains-last-year-s-score-slips-one-position-from-bottom-tib-calls-for-challenging-impunity-and-bring-the-corrupt-to-justice>. (Last accessed on May 16, 2016)
- ⁴ <http://www.ti-bangladesh.org/files/HHSurvey-ExecSum-Eng-fin.pdf>. (Last accessed on May 15, 2016)
- ⁵ <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi>. (Accessed on 29/8/2016)
- ⁶ <http://www.asiarisk.com/>. (Accessed on 29/8/2016)
- ⁷ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#doc>. (Accessed on 29/08/2016)
- ⁸ Above n 7
- ⁹ See <https://www.cpiib.gov.sg/legislation/powers-investigation>. (Accessed on 10/2/2016)
- ¹⁰ Meritocracy refers to a situation where public servants are given jobs based on their capacity rather than patronage etc.
- ¹¹ <https://www.cpiib.gov.sg/legislation/introduction>. (Accessed on 15/2/2016)
- ¹² <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/cpiib-assistant-director-charged-fraud-s17m>. (Accessed on 15/2/2016)
- ¹³ On 22 January 2016 for instance, Phey Yew Kok, a former fugitive was convicted and sentenced for 60 months after pleading guilty to 12 charges. See <https://www.cpiib.gov.sg/news/media-releases>. (Accessed on 16/2/2016)
- ¹⁴ <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/fight-against-corruption-singapores-experience>. (Accessed on 16/06/2016)
- ¹⁵ <http://www.thedailystar.net/news/acc-chief-refutes-wb-report>. (Last accessed on May 16, 2016)
- ¹⁶ <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/acc-sues-bankers-borrowers-147007>; <http://newagebd.net/160093/basic-bank-scam-18-cases-filed-against-154-people/> (Accessed on 28/5/2016)
- ¹⁷ See for instance, 'The ACC does not find corruption information against pro-government people', *Prothom Alo*, 9 December 2015; 'ACC sets record in giving clean chits', *The Daily Star*, 1 January 2016
- ¹⁸ Daily AmaderShomoy.com: http://www.amadershomoy.com/newsite/2016/04/10/566748.htm#.VxxqzDFq_IV (accessed on 24/4/2016)
- ¹⁹ Above n 11
- ²⁰ Transparency International, above n 2

Table 1: CPIB's Investigation of PAP Leaders in Singapore, 1966-2014

Name and designation	Details of offence	Results of investigation
Tan Kia Gan (Minister for National Development)	Accused in August 1966 of assisting his friend in the sale of Boeing aircraft to Malaysian Airways	Tan was not convicted as the witnesses did not give evidence against him but he was stripped of all his public appointments in November 1966
Wee Toon Boon (Minister of State for Environment)	Accused in April 1975 of accepting bribes from a property developer	Wee was found guilty and sentenced to four and a half years of imprisonment and ordered to pay a penalty of S\$7,023. His jail sentence was reduced to 18 months on successful appeal against one of the five charges
Phey Yew Kok (MP for Boon Teck constituency and President of National Trades Union Congress)	Accused in May 1979 of criminal breach of trust involving S\$101,000	Phey jumped bail on January 7, 1980 and fled abroad and remains a fugitive today
Teh Cheang Wan (Minister for National Development)	Accused in November 1986 of accepting S\$1 million in bribes from two property developers	Teh committed suicide in December 1986 before he could be charged in court
Choo Wee Kiang (MP from 1988-1999, and President of Singapore Table Tennis Association)	Accused in 1999 of cheating. In December 2011, he was charged with three counts of corruption and one count of criminal breach of trust	Choo resigned from his position and the PAP in 1999 before pleading guilty. He was sentenced to two weeks' jail and fined S\$10,000. He was acquitted in July 2013 of criminal breach of trust, and in April 2014 of the three corruption charges

Source: Quah (2015c, p. 80) compiled from CPIB (2003, pp. 6.45-46.47); Sim (2011); and Chong (2014, p. A2)

Table 2: Anti-corruption Outcomes: Singapore and Bangladesh

Year	CPI		Control of Corruption		PERC		Government Effectiveness	
	SNG	BNG	SNG	BNG	SNG	BNG	SNG	BNG
2011	92	27	96.7 pr	14.2pr	0.37	-	99.5 pr	24.6pr
2012	87	26	97.2 pr	21.3pr	0.67	-	99.5 pr	24.2pr
2013	86	27	96.7 pr	20.9pr	0.74	-	99.5 pr	23.7pr
2014	84	25	96.2 pr	19.2pr	1.60	-	100 pr	22.6pr
2015	85	25	96.6 pr	21.1pr	1.33	-	100 pr	24pr
2016	84	26	97.1 pr	21.2pr	1.67		100 pr	25.5pr

Source: Author's Construct; NB: Data for Bangladesh on PERC is not available; Pr = percentile rank

Figure 1: A Framework of Components for Understanding “Political Will”

Source: Authors' construct