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Sibling rivalry among anti-corruption agencies in Taiwan: Is redundancy doomed to fail?

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# Sibling rivalry among anti-corruption agencies in Taiwan

Sibling rivalry  
among ACAs  
in Taiwan

## Is redundancy doomed to fail?

101

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to provide insights into the multiple anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) in Taiwan and their conflict resolution. The birth of the Agency Against Corruption (AAC) in 2011 created the unintended consequence of sibling rivalry with the elder Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB).

**Design/methodology/approach** – A historical background of these agencies is discussed and followed by an analysis of the diversified conflicts among the prosecutor's office, the AAC and the MJIB. The empirical sources of this study include 17 in-depth interviews with government officials both at ministerial level and field level, scholars and NGO representatives.

**Findings** – The redundancy of ACAs in Taiwan is a fact, which is extremely difficult to change in the foreseeable future in the light of current political and fiscal constraints. This paper concludes that the conflicts among multiple ACAs and their operational weaknesses will not fade away after a mere directive from their superior, the Ministry of Justice, unless genuine cooperation is put into place in various individual cases.

**Practical implications** – This paper provides a road-map for decision makers to improve collective anti-corruption performance. Taiwan's AAC serves as the latest example testing the efficacy of the multiple specialized ACAs.

**Originality/value** – This pioneering study provides insights into Taiwan's anti-corruption policy and practices. More investigative studies should be conducted on the effectiveness of multiple ACAs in other countries.

**Keywords** Taiwan, Redundancy, Agency Against Corruption, Anti-corruption agencies, MJIB

**Paper type** Research paper

### Introduction: solution or problem?

Taiwan's transformation from single-party authoritarianism to multiparty democracy has been considered an exemplary case of third-wave democratization, but has this



A draft of this paper was presented at the Workshop on "Fighting Corruption in Asian Countries: What's Wrong and What Needs to be Done to Enhance their Anti-Corruption Measures?" at Shih Hsin University, in Taipei, Taiwan on Friday, June 27, 2014. The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to Professor Jon Quah and all workshop participants as well as Professor Peter Larmour of Australian National University for their invaluable comments and suggestions.

best-case democratization created a clean government? Does democracy breed integrity? According to the empirical data analyzed by Yu *et al.* (2008), the people of Taiwan have serious doubts about the integrity of their government, especially the elected officials and political appointees. In short, democracy does not necessarily breed integrity. Taiwan needs to exert greater effort to promote integrity, fight corruption and rebuild public trust in its government.

Among many reform proposals, the creation of a specialized anti-corruption agency (ACA) has aroused heated debates for about two decades in Taiwan. On July 20, 2011, President Ma Ying-jeou presided over the unveiling ceremony for the Agency Against Corruption (AAC), which signaled the introduction of a landmark reform, yet the debates over the ideal institutional design for an anti-corruption organization continue. This landmark institutional reform was a reluctant response to the public outcry about bribery scandals in the judiciary. In what was deemed “the worst graft scandal to involve the nation’s top judiciary in years” by the Taiwanese news media, a total of 13 accomplices, including three senior judges, in two separate cases were indicted in November 2011 (Chang, 2010).

This unprecedented indictment took the Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB), Taiwan’s oldest ACA established in 1956, three years of hard work to collect persuasive evidence. However, the legislative outcomes that created a brand new agency, the AAC, frustrated many MJIB employees, who claimed to be the innocent victims of the judges’ bribery scandals. When it comes to jurisdiction battles, the MJIB has generally shown a superiority complex toward competing agencies. For years it has taken pride in its history, investigative skills, experience and performance. Creating a new agency independent of the MJIB sent a humiliating and discrediting message to the MJIB’s field agents, who had relentlessly undertaken the bribery investigation into the accused judges.

While the creation of the AAC initially satisfied the general public’s expectations (Ministry of Justice, 2009, p. 63; 2010, p. 66), a new problem arose – rivalry between the AAC and the MJIB, which were both under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. On the one hand, the greenhorn AAC suffered from annual budget constraints and understaffing among its skilled investigative agents. The experienced MJIB, on the other hand, had to overcome its own psychological barriers of feeling “left-behind” and it had to get along with a new lack of intelligence sources when all the civil service ethics units/personnel were moved under the supervision of the AAC in 2011. In short, a lack of coordination, an overlapping of functions, competition for limited resources and the dilution of the country’s anti-corruption efforts seemed likely to plague the overall capacity and performance of the ACAs in Taiwan (Quah, 2013, p. 196).

The general public initially expected the creation of the AAC to lead to a cleaner style of government in Taiwan, but recent surveys suggest public expectations have turned in the opposite direction (Ministry of Justice, 2011, p. 66). Some scholars and practitioners have also argued that the birth of the AAC has created more problems than solutions in the fight against corruption, as has been evidenced by numerous studies in Taiwan analyzing the fierce competition between various ACAs and the impact of this on the overall anti-corruption performance of the government (Yang, 2012; Yu, 2012; Lin, 2013). Most of their conclusions challenge the current anti-corruption efficacy as being redundant in statutory power and mutually exclusive in competition (Yu, 2012; Lin 2013).

This paradox of institutional reform and the unexpected public perceptions of it has paved the foundations for this paper, which examines the sibling rivalry between the

AAC and MJIB and proposes some suggestions to make a difference to their relationship. This paper goes beyond the current literature by examining institutional designs as well as operational weaknesses in order to better understand the widening gap between the public's expectations and Taiwan's overall anti-corruption performance. Extensive in-depth interviews with seventeen informants, encompassing senior government officials, NGO representatives, scholars and elected officials, were conducted by the authors jointly between April 2013 and January 2014.

This paper is divided into five sections. Section 2 describes the institutional reforms in Taiwan followed by Section 3, which discusses data from global and domestic surveys. Section 4 presents the findings from in-depth interviews and Section 5 identifies problem areas and discusses the options for enhancing the performance of ACAs in Taiwan.

### **Institutional reforms**

The global trend since the 1990s has been to launch specialized ACAs at both the national and local levels as an innovative approach to tackle corruption. However, the results are mixed. Hong Kong and Singapore stand out as effective examples, but many other countries' efforts such as those in Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Thailand, Tanzania, Uganda and India bespeak "the difficulty of enacting meaningful policies" (Heilbrunn, 2004, p. 14).

Luis de Sousa (2010, pp. 13-18) has identified six common traits among ACAs internationally, defined as "public bodies of a durable nature to fight corruption." The six traits are independence, inter-institutional cooperation and networking, recruitment and specialization, wide competences and special powers, the role of research, and durability. The strength and durability of these traits decide the efficacy of ACAs. Generally speaking, setting up an ACA "is often the easiest [...] institutionalization process." In short, ensuring the effectiveness and durability of ACAs are the most challenging and difficult dimensions of the process, according to de Sousa (2010, p. 17).

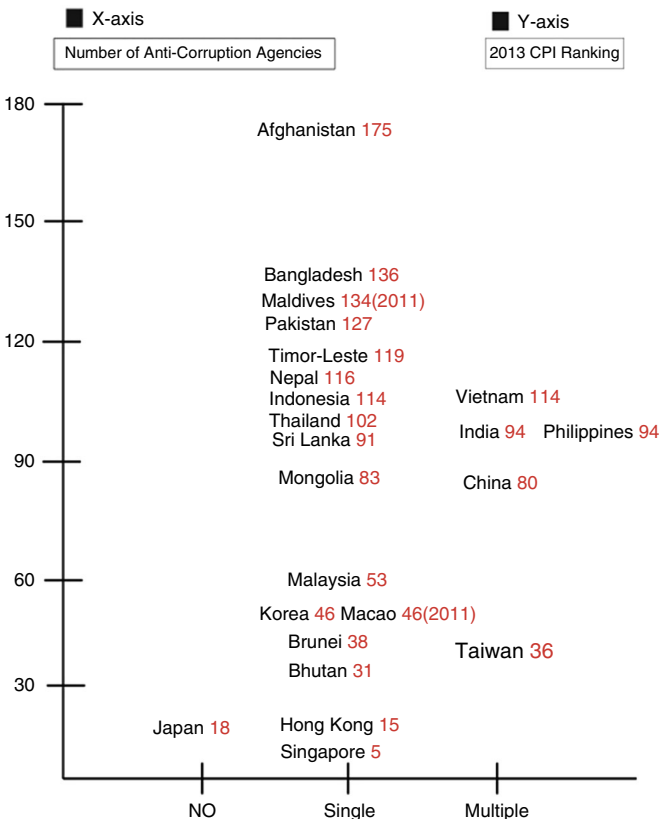
While the United Nations Convention Against Corruption provides a clause for all signatories to establish a specialized anti-corruption law enforcement agency, it does not stipulate the number nor the format which the ACA should take, which leaves the member states to decide and implement this clause in accordance with their individual situations. Generally speaking, bureaucratic redundancy is not welcome in most instances because it wastes taxpayers' money. This obvious reason cannot explain the existence of two or more competing or complementary agencies in the public sector in many countries, though. Landau (1969, p. 346) argues that redundancy in some instances is a rational choice when it serves the purpose of reliability and adaptability.

The redundancy of anti-corruption apparatuses is commonly practiced in many countries. Larry Diamond (2014, p. 9) strongly supports the idea of overlapping and interlocking ACAs because overlapping authority guarantees that "if one institutional actor fails to perform its duty to expose, question and punish (and thus ultimately, deter) corrupt behavior, another institutional actor may initiate the accountability process." Interlocking agencies ensure "complementary and reinforcing" horizontal accountability in anti-corruption endeavors (Diamond, 2014, p. 9).

Jon Quah (2013, pp. 24-29) has identified three patterns of corruption control in 24 Asian countries namely: no specialized agency, single agency and multiple agencies. The overwhelming majority of sovereign states or territories in Asia have established the single-ACA model according to Quah (2013). However, if the number of ACAs is cross-referenced by the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index

(CPI) of 2013, the efficacy of the single-ACA model is inconclusive in light of the diversified rankings for many countries. For example, Japan has no specialized ACA and its CPI was 18th in 2013 (Figure 1). Among the single-model countries, Singapore and Hong Kong are the fifth and the 15th respectively, while many other countries have trailed far behind. As a multiple-ACA-model country, Taiwan has been steadily ranked in 36th position in 2012 and 2013 consecutively.

Bearing this in mind, Taiwan’s parliament has been debating the creation of a specialized ACA responsible for overall anti-corruption affairs since as early as 1987 when 103 parliamentarians co-sponsored a legislative proposal to establish the Anti-corruption Bureau under the Executive Yuan (AAC, 2011). However, this call was not realized until 2011. While the general public and news media were expecting a specialized agency to tackle corruption, the MJIB was resisting this move behind the scenes. Whenever the Legislative Yuan (Taiwan’s Parliament) initiated a legislative proposal to consider the establishment of an ACA independent of the MJIB, the latter



**Figure 1.**  
Correlations between  
ACAs and CPI  
rankings

**Note:** 23 Asian countries’ rankings are based on 2013’s CPI, except those of Macau and the Maldives, whose latest available rankings are for 2011

**Sources:** Quah (2013, pp. 448-453) and  
[www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results](http://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results)

would mobilize its field agents to discourage the legislators in their home districts from supporting the bill. The MJIB's leverages of discouragement have included lobbying, the trade of electoral intelligence and the tacit intimidation of criminal investigations.

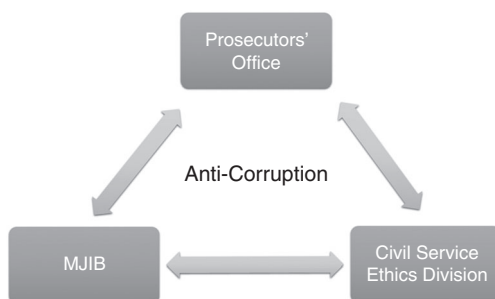
### *The traditional anti-corruption triangle*

Multiple ACAs have coexisted in Taiwan for more than half a century, but none of them has been specialized or single-task-oriented. The traditional triangular relationship prior to the birth of the AAC was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, namely the Prosecutors' Office, the MJIB, and the Civil Service Ethics Division, which administered civil service ethics units and officers nationwide (Figure 2).

As the Taiwanese legal system is modeled after Germany's and Japan's, the prosecutors are the main body in criminal investigations and indictments. Traditionally there are multiple actors in charge of investigating corruption cases under Taiwanese law. All government employees with judicial police status, such as the police, military police, coast guards, immigration officers and agents of the MJIB, are legally authorized to investigate criminal corruption. These judicial police are subject to the prosecutor's command and control according to Taiwan's Criminal Procedural Code. However, in practice all government agents empowered with judicial policy status, except the MJIB agents, shy away from undertaking corruption investigations for self-constraining reasons. Therefore, for over half a century, the MJIB played a pivotal role in anti-corruption before the birth of the AAC in 2011.

Civil Service Ethics Officers are also unique in the light of their historical transformation and tasks. This office was established as early as 1953 for counter-intelligence purposes during Taiwan's martial law era. Over the years, their official titles have changed from Security Officers (1953) to Counter-intelligence Officers (1963) to Personnel Officers II (1972) to Civil Service Ethics Officers (1992). Their tasks have also been transformed incrementally in the context of Taiwan's democratization from counter-intelligence operations to anti-corruption activities.

Although these Civil Service Ethics Officers do not enjoy the statutory power of criminal investigation but only wield administrative investigative powers, they are the front-line officers allocated at all levels of government as well as in state-owned enterprises in Taiwan. Their hands-on sources of intelligence and information constitute a crucial and comprehensive network of information under the direct jurisdiction of the Civil Service Ethics Division of the Ministry of Justice. While the MJIB has no jurisdiction over the Civil Service Ethics Officers, the former used to



**Figure 2.**  
Traditional  
anti-corruption  
triangle before 2011

take over case evidence and intelligence from the latter as a customary practice. This custom was discontinued after the birth of the AAC, which annexed the Civil Service Ethics Division into its own internal divisions.

*The reluctant birth of the AAC*

Crucial events often transform a routine problem into a public outcry or a cause for discontent, which in turn triggers policy changes or reforms (Quah, 2010, p. 26). As previously mentioned, a new ACA was not originally included as part of the policy platform for President Ma's election campaign in 2008. His change of heart was due to the abrupt occurrence in 2010 of a bribery scandal that involved three high court judges. While the ideal solution would have been to establish a specialized, independent and monopolistic ACA in charge of all the civil servants' ethics and anti-corruption responsibilities, the status quo of the government structure and a heavy undercurrent of dissatisfaction emanating from the MJIB undermined the institutional redesign. A final compromise was reached by allowing the coexistence of the MJIB and the AAC. Therefore, the AAC became a specialized ACA, but not a monopolistic agency. Table I summarizes the major features of these two sibling ACAs.

The AAC assumes anti-corruption responsibilities in three spheres, namely education, prevention and investigation. It is the first government agency in charge of overall anti-corruption affairs. The AAC was created not just to undertake overall responsibility for anti-corruption affairs in Taiwan but also to supervise 2,817 Civil Service Ethics Officers in 1,129 units at all levels of the government, including the state-owned enterprises.

This specialized mandate puts the AAC under enormous pressure to keep friendly relations with the news media and civil society organizations at both the domestic and international levels. Its investigative power is limited to government employees' corrupt practices, excluding business corruption, which was defined as embezzlement rather than bribery according to the ROC Criminal Code. This limited scope of judicial jurisdiction enables the AAC to concentrate simply on government employees' crimes of corruption. On the other hand, business anti-corruption rests solely under the jurisdiction of the MJIB, which formally established a business anti-corruption unit on July 16, 2014, overseen by its Economic Crime Division. This division of labor between government employees' corruption and business corruption leaves a complex gray area in which the AAC and the MJIB need to collaborate in order to tackle business-government related corruption crimes.

While acknowledging the importance of independence and freedom from political interference, Quah (2010, p. 40) identifies political will as the most distinctive feature separating effective ACAs in Singapore (Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB)) and Hong Kong (Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)) from less effective ones in South Korea (KICAC) and Thailand (NCCC). There is little doubt about President Ma's personal integrity and his political will to tackle corruption, but his political commitment has not necessarily translated into action. Although Ma's political party, the Kuomintang (KMT), remains the ruling party in the Taiwanese parliament, the AAC has been understaffed and underfunded since its inception in 2011. Table I compares the human and capital resources of the MJIB and the AAC. Obviously the AAC is lagging behind the MJIB in terms of staff numbers and budget size, not to mention its young age and the relatively inexperienced investigative skills of its personnel.

	Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB)	Agency Against Corruption (AAC)
Direct supervisor	Ministry of Justice	
Year of birth	1928 (moved to the oversight of the Ministry of Justice from the Ministry of Interior in 1956)	2011
Major task(s)	Multiple tasks, including intelligence-gathering, national security, major economic crime, and investigation of corruption cases, including business corruption	Specialized in anti-corruption, including prevention, education and investigation (limited to civil servants only, excluding business corruption)
Public sector corruption	Yes	Yes
Business corruption <sup>b</sup>	Yes	No
Political party corruption <sup>b</sup>	Yes	No
Head of the agency	Career professionals or political appointees	All from the ranks of senior prosecutors as of June 2014
Staff/agents	A total of 2,390 agents (all agents with statutory judicial police power) in 2014	A total of 198 staff within the AAC (including 118 agents with statutory judicial police power)
Subordinators	None	In charge of 2,817 civil service ethics personnel from 1,129 units at all levels of the government
Agents directly in charge of corruption investigation	A total of 300 + under the anti-corruption division	A total of 118 under investigation division and northern, central and southern investigation offices
In-house prosecutors	No	Yes. Ten in-house prosecutors borrowed from various local prosecutors' offices (but the investigative cases still have to be submitted to local prosecutors' offices for official indictment)
Pay scale	All MJIB agents enjoy monthly judicial allowance in addition to regular civil servant salary	Only a dozen of the in-house prosecutors and 118 anti-corruption sections' civil service ethics officers enjoy a monthly judicial allowance
Sources of criminal information	Mostly from field agents' intelligence/reports	Mostly from 2,817 civil service ethics officers at all levels of the government

(continued)

Table I.  
Taiwan's  
anti-corruption  
agencies<sup>a</sup>

Sibling rivalry  
among ACAs  
in Taiwan



Table I.

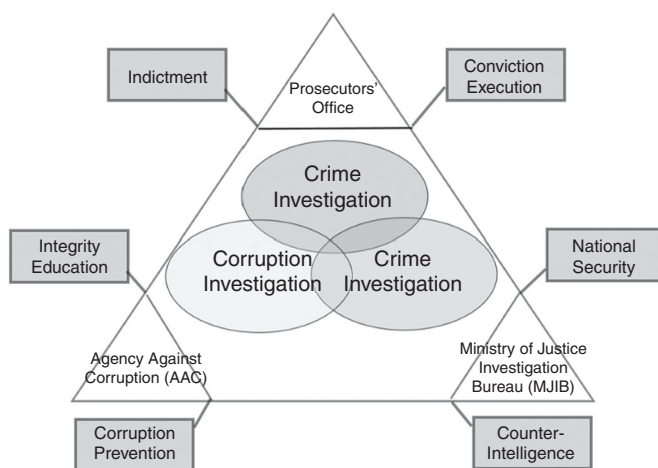
	Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB)	Agency Against Corruption (AAC)
Annual budget	NTD5,323,688,000 in 2014 (about USD177,456,267)	NTD434,368,000 in 2014 (about USD14,479,000) <sup>c</sup>
Strength	Investigative skills and extensive experience	Abundant sources of information from the civil service ethics units/personnel at all levels of government (6,000 + cases' information at hand)
Weakness	Lack of intelligence and cooperation from the civil service ethics officers who used to submit cases to the MJIB before the birth of AAC in 2011	Lack of budget and adequately trained human resources to investigate 6,000 + cases at hand
<b>Notes:</b> <sup>a</sup> The Prosecutor's Office is also one of the multiple ACAs in Taiwan. However, the prosecutors, generally speaking, do not engage in <i>de facto</i> criminal investigations although they are <i>de jure</i> the main agency responsible for criminal investigation according to the ROC Criminal Code of Procedure. Therefore, this table compares only the MJIB and the AAC; <sup>b</sup> in Taiwan, corruption, by law, refers specifically to the bribery-related crimes of "government employees," Business corruption and political party corruption, by law, are punished as the crime of embezzlement according to the ROC Criminal Code; <sup>c</sup> the AAC's budget does not include civil ethics units whose annual budgets are governed by their residing agencies or state-owned enterprises, respectively		
<b>Sources:</b> In-depth interviews by the authors; Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB) (2014); and Agency Against Corruption (AAC) (2011)		

### *New anti-corruption triangle*

After the reluctant birth of the AAC, the current ACAs in Taiwan can be characterized using the following triad (Figure 3). While the prosecutors are the main body for investigating and indicting criminal corruption offenses, the AAC and the MJIB are equally empowered by law to investigate corruption cases. In theory, these three actors are supposed to construct networks of “interlocking fire” against criminal corruption (Office of the President, Republic of China, 2011). However, the current outcome suggests that this has not happened for reasons of psychological deprivation and due to the structure’s inadequate merit system.

The conflicts between the AAC and the MJIB can be traced to the AAC’s inception in the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan’s parliament. The MJIB was one of the oldest intelligence-gathering and law enforcement agencies of the Republic of China, being founded as early as 1928. Over the years, the MJIB had been the most prominent, if not the monopolistic, corruption investigation agency in Taiwan. Things began to shift subtly as the MJIB’s role was quietly debated during President Chen Shui-bian’s administration between 2000 and 2008. The then Justice Minister Chen Ding-nan was determined to take its statutory anti-corruption responsibilities away from the MJIB by creating a new monopolistic agency directly under the Ministry of Justice (Wang and Hsiao, 2007). The unswerving Mr Chen’s idea encountered fierce resistance from the then MJIB Director, Wang Guang-Yu, and an overwhelming number of its field agents, who successfully maneuvered the members of the Legislative Yuan into blocking the proposal (Xiam, 2003).

The change of government as a result of the presidential election in 2008 gave the reformers a new momentum to initiate fresh debates about establishing a specialized ACA in Taiwan. However, the situation only changed decisively with the convergence of the sensational judges’ corruption scandals with President Ma’s political will. The establishment of a new institution such as the AAC was going to send out a strong message which discredited the MJIB’s long-standing reputation generally, and put in particular doubt the merit of having allowed it to investigate the three judges’ collective bribery cases in 2010.



**Source:** Adapted from information provided by the AAC

**Figure 3.**  
New anti-corruption  
triangle Since 2011

The competition between the AAC and the MJIB continued after the inception of the AAC on July 20, 2011. Due to the lack of an agreed merit-sharing mechanism, these two agencies shared little intelligence, if any, with each other. While the MJIB was proud to be the “big brother” in terms of investigative skills and its extensive experience, the AAC now controlled most of the evidence and case information that was formerly submitted to the MJIB before 2011 by the nationwide network of Civil Service Ethics Officers. Although their direct supervisor, the Ministry of Justice, was aware of the inherent conflict and thus pushed for a formal consensus to share information and to increase collaboration, these two sibling organizations have still yet to work hand in hand on investigations.

### Performance and public perceptions

The general public had initially expected a cleaner style of government in Taiwan with the creation of a specialized ACA. However, recent surveys suggest that the public has become disappointed. It seems that the AAC’s birth has created more problems than solutions for those guiding anti-corruption endeavors in Taiwan. The paradox that the progressive institutional reform has been accompanied by increasingly negative public perceptions has provided the foundation for this paper to examine the agency-based conflicts and to explore the reasons for the sibling rivalry between the AAC and the MJIB.

The task of measuring the level of corruption and the performance of anti-corruption is difficult, but this does not mean that it cannot be done. There are objective and subjective approaches for benchmarking corruption levels in both cross-country and cross-sector endeavors. Kaufmann *et al.* (2006) highlighted six myths about measuring corruption and they rebutted the myth that “subjective data is highly unreliable” by exploring the stakeholders’ views, tracing the institution in question, and designing the research in a more comprehensive manner. In short, the authors believed that objective and subjective approaches can complement each other in corruption studies.

Objective data provide solid, if not comprehensive, evidence for comparison year by year. According to the Ministry of Justice’s (2013, pp. 25-26) statistics, the incidences of bribery in Taiwan were reduced to 19.5 cases per 10,000 (0.195 percent) indictments overall between May and December 2013 compared with 26.7 cases per 10,000 indictments (0.267 percent) in 2008. The number of prosecutions was also reduced from 65.2 persons per 10,000 cases (0.652 percent) between May and December 2008 to 44.5 persons per 10,000 cases (0.445 percent) in 2013. While the bribery crime rate reduced, the conviction rate increased from 59.6 to 69.3 percent (Ministry of Justice, 2013, p. 38).

Taiwan’s global ranking in Transparency International’s annual CPI has been consistently at the upper-middle level over the past decade (Table II). This popular global survey corresponds to the Taiwan government’s objective data as described in the previous paragraph. The implication is that both the global subjective expert survey and Taiwan’s objective data confirm the overall performance of the government’s anti-corruption efforts in Taiwan. However, the findings of domestic subjective surveys indicate that the respondents do not appreciate the government’s anti-corruption endeavors, including the establishment of the AAC.

The inception of the AAC in 2011 was aimed at eradicating corruption. However, the government survey in 2013 showed that the general public had expressed their discontent about increasing levels of corruption in Taiwan. Nearly 60 percent of the respondents indicated that Taiwan’s corruption level increased in the previous two

Year	Taiwan	Japan	South Korea	China	Hong Kong	Singapore
2004	35 (5.6)	24 (6.9)	47 (4.5)	71 (3.4)	16 (8.0)	5 (9.3)
2005	32 (5.9)	21 (7.3)	40 (5.0)	78 (3.2)	15 (8.3)	5 (9.4)
2006	34 (5.9)	17 (7.6)	42 (5.1)	70 (3.3)	15 (8.3)	5 (9.4)
2007	34 (5.7)	17 (7.5)	43 (5.1)	72 (3.5)	14 (8.3)	4 (9.3)
2008	39 (5.7)	18 (7.3)	40 (5.6)	72 (3.6)	12 (8.1)	4 (9.2)
2009	37 (5.6)	17 (7.7)	39 (5.5)	79 (3.6)	12 (8.2)	3 (9.2)
2010	33 (5.8)	17 (7.8)	39 (5.4)	78 (3.5)	13 (8.4)	1 (9.3)
2011	32 (6.1)	14 (8.0)	43 (5.4)	75 (3.6)	12 (8.4)	5 (9.2)
2012	37 (6.1)	17 (7.4)	45 (5.6)	80 (3.9)	14 (7.7)	5 (8.7)
2013	36 (6.1)	18 (7.4)	46 (5.5)	80 (4.0)	15 (7.5)	5 (8.6)
Source: Transparency International, <a href="http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview">www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview</a>						

**Table II.**  
Performance of  
selected East Asian  
countries on the  
corruption  
perceptions index,  
2004-2013

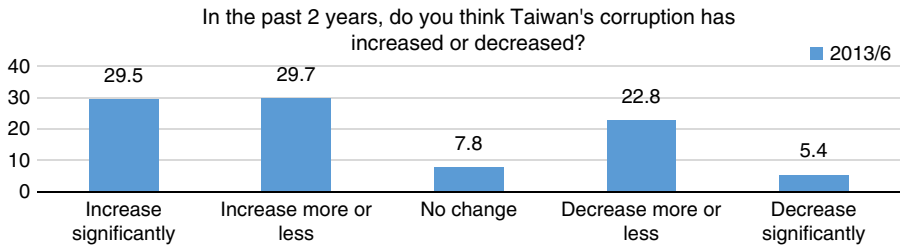
years (Figure 4). On the other hand, only 28.2 percent of the respondents believed that corruption had decreased.

Figure 5 shows that public perceptions are further reinforced by their dissatisfaction about the government's effectiveness in curbing corruption. The general public in Taiwan tends to be critical when it comes to government performance in general and its anti-corruption efficacy in particular. In the same survey in 2013, 70.7 percent of respondents viewed the government's anti-corruption efforts as ineffective. Only 23.8 percent had expressed optimistic views.

By examining the multiple-year surveys, as can be seen in Figure 6, the public respondents' positive answer to "your expectations on government's integrity in the next 12 months" are shown as a downward slope over the years assessed from 58.2 percent in 2008 to 25.2 percent in 2013 while the proportion of pessimistic respondents rose significantly from 31.4 percent in 2008 to 63.2 percent in 2013. It is worth taking note of the years 2010 and 2011, respectively. The year 2010 was a watershed because of the exposure of the three senior judges' scandal by the Taiwanese news media. From that point forward, the general public's attitude toward the government's integrity shifted increasingly to anticipate pessimistic outcomes rather than optimistic ones. Even though the new AAC was mandated in 2011 by the Legislative Yuan and blessed by President Ma's personal political will, the gap between negative and positive public expectations on future government anti-corruption performance began widening over subsequent years.

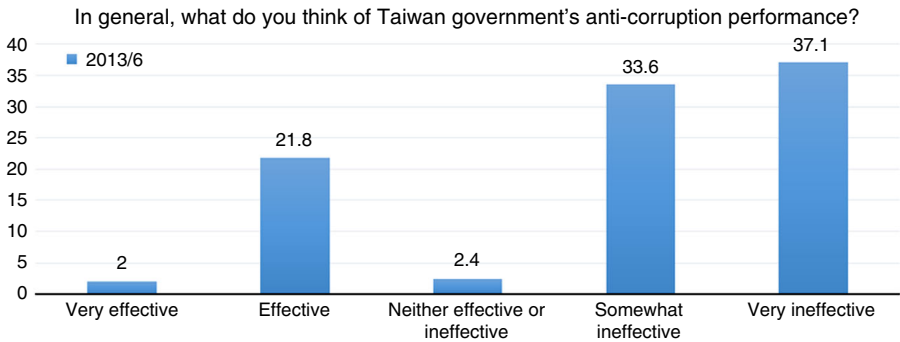
The other key survey, the Taiwan Public Governance Index (TPGI), which was sponsored by the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Taiwan

**Figure 4.**  
Public perceptions  
on corruption levels

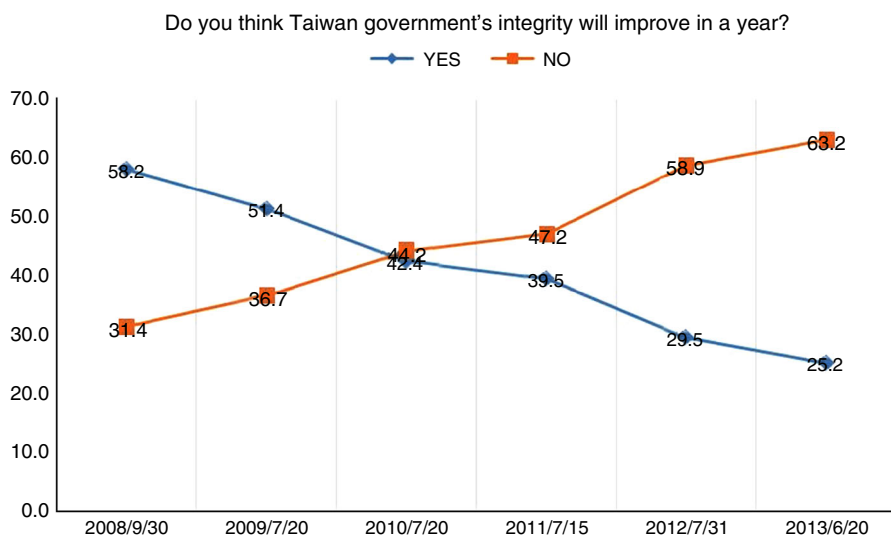


Source: Ministry of Justice (2013)

**Figure 5.**  
Public perceptions  
of anti-corruption  
performance



Source: Ministry of Justice (2013)



Sources: Ministry of Justice (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011) and AAC (2012, 2013)

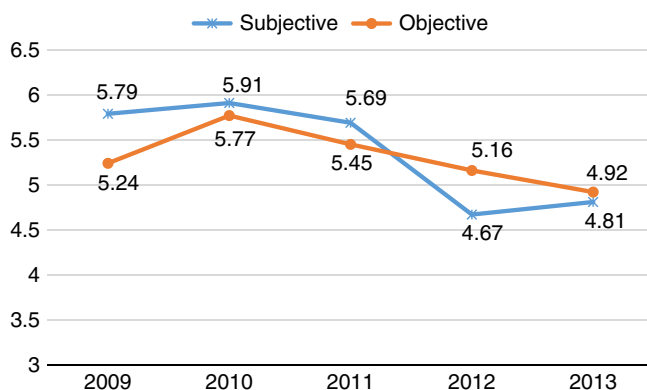
## Sibling rivalry among ACAs in Taiwan

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**Figure 6.**  
Public expectations  
of the Taiwan  
government's  
integrity in the future

government, provided further evidence of negative public attitudes concerning the government's anti-corruption performance. The TPPI is an annual composite index of seven dimensions, including anti-corruption, based on objective data from government statistics as well as subjective data, which comes from the responses of experts from government, academia, industry and civil society. The score ranges from 0 to 10, with a higher score indicating a better anti-corruption performance by the government.

Figure 7 shows that both the subjective and objective scores of the TPPI have declined steadily during the past five years. The subjective score of 5.79 in 2009 has gradually decreased to 4.81 in 2013. Similarly, the objective scores have also declined from 5.24 in 2009 to 4.92 in 2013. These synchronized downward slopes illustrate the lack of public confidence in the government's overall anti-corruption performance. Through in-depth interviews with informants, the following section of this paper



Sources: Liao and Wu (2013, p. 172) and Juang *et al.* (2013, p. 15)

**Figure 7.**  
Subjective and  
objective trends  
of corruption  
prevention on the  
Taiwan Public  
Governance  
Index (TPGI)

### In-depth evaluation

In total, 17 interviewees were coded officially for this paper (see Appendix 1). They were not ordinary interviewees, but informants who are insiders or experts on anti-corruption affairs in Taiwan. The pool of selection from anti-corruption officials, elected officials, news media, NGOs and scholars was based on the three authors' long-term research networks for their corruption studies. These interviewees have been coded from I-1 to I-17 for the purpose of privacy and anonymity. Their insights can be classified into three categories: institutional contradictions, operational conflicts and performance paradoxes.

#### *Institutional contradictions*

The widely acknowledged weakness of this institutional reform is the AAC's relatively low level within the hierarchy. In the overall executive branch of the Taiwan government, the Executive Yuan forms the top level of government, followed by the cabinet level of ministries, including the Ministry of Justice. The AAC is one of many sub-cabinet agencies under the Ministry of Justice. In other words, the AAC has multiple superiors who are political appointees. There are inherent risks of interference with the AAC's independence under the current institutional design.

In this structure, the neutral competence and the "speaking-truth-to-power" mentality of the head of the AAC are essential for the AAC to be able to maintain its *bona fide* independence and for it to perform to its expected outcomes. Thus, the nomination of the Director General of the AAC is important, yet it seems not to have been particularly prioritized according to many observers. As a convention, the candidates for the head role at the AAC have been drawn wholly from the ranks of senior prosecutors. It is obvious that the AAC is under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice, where traditionally key positions are dominated by prosecutors, who consider themselves to be the elite class among civil servants in the judiciary. This unwritten rule of appointment practice has not just confined the pool of potential candidates to a narrow bureaucratic clique, but it has also predetermined the sought-after characteristics of the AAC's head, which has created a potential threat to the AAC's *bona fide* independence. Many Civil Service Ethics Officers have expressed their discontent with the leadership of the heads, who coincidentally and subconsciously express their sense of superiority over the civil service ethics officials. More importantly, the head of the AAC might consider this position merely as a stepping stone toward the next office (I-15). This "pragmatic" approach, which uses the AAC as a means to achieving other ends, might compromise its performance.

The other institutional contradiction within the AAC is the discrimination of its pay scale. The professional allowance is a regular monthly supplement paid on top of base salaries and is based on the employee's ranking from Grade 3-14 (see Appendix 2). It can be divided into two categories, the general allowance for non-judicial civil servants and the judicial allowance for judicial officials. Generally speaking, the judicial allowance is twice the amount of the general allowance. For example, a Grade 6 (entrance level of college graduates) non-judicial civil servant receives the general allowance of NTD20,790 compared with a NTD52,305 judicial allowance paid to the same level of judicial official. As they advance in seniority, the gap in allowances

between judicial and non-judicial employees increases accordingly. The widest gap exists at Grade 10 when the general allowance is NTD29,925 compared with the judicial allowance of NTD66,620.

While all the employees of the MJIB receive judicial allowances, only 12 in-house prosecutors at the AAC enjoy this privilege. These prosecutors along with 118 of the anti-corruption sections' Civil Service Ethics Officers within the AAC enjoy monthly judicial allowances in addition to their salaries while the rest of the Civil Service Ethics Officers (more than 60 people) within the AAC do not have this benefit. This is not even to mention the 2,817 Civil Service Ethics Officers at all levels of the government who are paid less than their judicial appointee counterparts. During the in-depth interviews, at least three senior officials acknowledged that the differentiation in pay scales separated the "haves" from the "have-nots," who labeled themselves, therefore, as "second-class players" in their workplaces (I-1, I-13, I-14).

### *Operational conflicts*

The tension between the senior officials and the Civil Service Ethics Officers exists not only at the institutional design level, but it also affects their day-to-day operations. Since most of the key senior positions, including the Director General, Deputy Director General and the Secretary General are appointed from the shallow pool of senior prosecutors, the vast majority of the AAC's employees, who are Civil Service Ethics Officers feel a sense of disrespect and alienation. A senior Civil Service Ethics Officer, in his interview, expressed frustration over the prosecutors' domination of the AAC: "Hopefully leaders of the AAC can be the genuine backup of all Civil Service Ethics Officers [...]. We hope there is [a] place called home" (I-13). In short, the lack of a genuine *esprit de corps* between the AAC's leadership and its subordinate Civil Service Ethics Officers undermines the output of this innovative ACA in Taiwan.

Operational conflicts also exist between the three agencies. The triangular relationship between the Prosecutors' Office, the AAC and the MJIB mentioned above is an institutional design limited by the *status quo* but embraced with great expectations. In his press conference on July 20, 2010, announcing his determination to establish the AAC in the following year, President Ma expressed his high hopes of "cross-fire and collaboration" among all the relevant ACAs. He rebutted the doubts about "overlapping and conflicts" between the existing MJIB and the new AAC by asserting that "both of these two agencies are under the command of the prosecutors." "In [the] case of [an] overlapping investigation, the prosecutor-in-charge has to ensure the division of labor and cooperation" (Office of the President, Republic of China, 2010). Our in-depth interviews coincidentally indicate that the actual experience of ACA workers is at odds with President Ma's expectations.

Some field agents of the MJIB (I-10) and local Civil Service Ethics Officers of the AAC (I-7) expressed their distrust toward each other in day-to-day investigation affairs. The most frequent complaints from the MJIB were about the loss of local information and intelligence from the Civil Service Ethics Officers, who were transferred from the MJIB to the AAC after July 20, 2011. On the other hand, the Civil Service Ethics Officers were upset with the MJIB, which, in the past, controlled or withheld intelligence from Civil Service Ethics Officers for the purpose of other investigations or, in some cases, for political reasons.

The merit mechanism was also thought to serve as a disincentive for cooperation between the AAC and the MJIB. Although the heads of both agencies meet with each other on various occasions to showcase their willingness to cooperate on



anti-corruption investigations, there are few incentives, if any, for the field officers on both sides to work together. Merits and rewards are in the sole power of the heads of the AAC and the MJIB, respectively (I-12). More than two MJIB agents (I-10, I-11) complained that the AAC is good at news publicity but actually the MJIB, which has traditionally kept a low profile, has done more and is better in terms of corruption investigations. On the other hand, it was said that due to a lack of adequate human and budgetary resources, the AAC is incapable of handling the abundant intelligence that is reported to it from the nationwide network of Civil Service Ethics Officers (I-1, I-14, I-16).

As of June 2014, there were more than 6,000 case clues waiting to be investigated by a meager 100 or so AAC agents. This embarrassing backlog would not be easy to solve without adequate resources. The Ministry of Justice stepped in to try to ease the feelings of sibling rivalry by promulgating an internal directive known as the "Anti-Corruption Coordination Guidelines between the AAC and the MJIB" on August 1, 2013. It was intended to regulate intelligence-sharing between the two agencies, though many field agents in both agencies have indicated that it is merely a document which lacks both merit incentives and high-level mutual trust (I-1, I-6, I-13). The leaders of both the AAC and MJIB need to build individual cases to set precedents for cross-agency cooperation.

In addition to the interlocking conflicts between the AAC and the MJIB, there is a subtle competition between the AAC's in-house prosecutors and their colleagues in local prosecutors' offices. Some local prosecutors prefer to work with the MJIB than with the AAC because the media reports have given credit to the AAC at the expense of the local prosecutors. Although all of the in-house prosecutors are "borrowed" temporarily from the various prosecutors' offices across Taiwan, they are the *de facto* quality-controller of criminal corruption cases in the AAC. However, they have to submit their cases to the local prosecutors' offices subject to official indictment according to the Criminal Procedural Code. It is not unusual for a junior local prosecutor to "ask" the senior AAC in-house prosecutor to supply additional evidence. The sense of resentment is further reinforced when chief prosecutors reward or promote local prosecutors rather than the AAC's in-house prosecutors (I-16). Therefore, the morale among the AAC's in-house prosecutors has declined consistently as time has gone on (I-14, I-16).

### *Performance paradox*

There were high hopes expressed at the birth of the AAC by both the Head of State and the general public in Taiwan. The general public expected the AAC's performance to be as good as its international peers', such as the ICAC in Hong Kong and the CPIB in Singapore. However, with the passage of time, public dissatisfaction with the organization steadily increased during 2012-2013. The paradox is reflected in the international and domestic perceptions of the AAC as well as in subjective and objective surveys.

An obvious paradox is found in the coexistence of the low public expectation rate and the AAC's anti-corruption endeavors. President Ma has identified the two major goals of the AAC as lowering the corruption-related crime rate and also raising its conviction rate. While the former goal stresses the importance of crime prevention tasks, the latter represents the successful performance of investigative functions. In practice, these two goals are inherently conflicting because effective prevention might mitigate or even reduce the number of criminal investigation cases from which convictions may be had. Conversely, when the AAC announces that it is investigating a criminal corruption case, it casts serious doubt in the public's eyes over whether the AAC has any efficacy in preventing corruption.

Five interviewees (I-1, I-2, I-11, I-14, I-15) have expressed their concern over the widening gap between public expectations and the AAC's resource constraints. Most people are unaware of the AAC's limited annual budget, but they expect it to play its role in "catching the tigers." As a matter of fact, in the light of the AAC's human and budgetary constraints, it should focus instead on corruption prevention/education and leave the investigation work to the MJIB (I-2). This common view is shared by many senior MJIB officials and even some AAC officials (I-11). However, such practical wishful thinking contradicts public expectations.

One of the AAC's central tasks is the criminal investigation of corruption cases, including bribery and benefit-seeking crimes. While the bribery cases that are relatively easy to convict involve civil servants, the conviction rate for benefit-seeking crimes is as low as 10 percent of all indictments (I-3). Article 131 of the ROC Criminal Code provides that "A public official who directly or indirectly seeks to gain illegal benefits from a function under his control or supervision for himself or others and gains benefits shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not less than one year but not more than seven years." The most difficult part of securing convictions, however, resides in providing the proof of a subjective intention to seek illegal benefits. Most offenders argue that their cases are simply ones of negligence and, by thus doing, they easily escape conviction for seeking benefits. The low conviction rate of benefit-seeking crimes has put immense pressure on the AAC and increased questions about its performance. An interviewee (I-3) has suggested that it should give up responsibility for criminal punishment on benefit-seeking crimes to the Control Yuan, one of the five embodiments of the separation of powers in Taiwan's central government that is in charge of the ombudsman's duties.

### Conclusions and policy recommendations

As a specialized law enforcement agency in charge of corruption prevention, education and investigation in Taiwan, the AAC is in its infant stages, searching for its own historical legacy. In its latest bribery probe in May 2014, the AAC raided and seized NT\$18.12 million in cash from the home and office of Taoyuan County Deputy Commissioner, Yeh Shih-wen. The AAC has won wide public recognition and news media applause for this in Taiwan (Shih, 2014). An NGO opinion leader has described this action as the "late score card of the AAC" (Ko, 2014). Perhaps it is too early to assess the AAC's long-term performance as well as the new anti-corruption triangle. However, one thing is sure: in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of anti-corruption activity in Taiwan, the following institutional and operational weaknesses and remedial policy recommendations deserve serious attention.

#### *Underfunded agency*

It was a lofty goal for Taiwan's government to create a brand-new specialized agency, namely the AAC, in response to the major bribery corruption scandals of three senior judges in 2010. Since its inception in 2011, the AAC has been a glamorous warrior wielding a weak sword and shield in its fight against corruption. The AAC is significantly underfunded and understaffed due to its lack of congressional support. President Ma's political will has never been realized via adequate human and budgetary support for the AAC.

Giving its underfunded situation, the unequal distribution of resources has undermined the staff's morale at the AAC. The current number of agents is under 200, of which only

100 agents (including all ten in-house prosecutors and some Civil Service Ethics Officers) are empowered with statutory police powers and awarded judicial allowances. This pay scale discrimination within the AAC has created bureaucratic discontent.

Civil Service Ethics Officers are a group of special civil servants, who are found at all levels of government and state-owned enterprises in Taiwan to handle corruption prevention, administrative investigation and the implementation of sunshine laws, such as assets declaration. Based on the condition of anonymity, many Civil Service Ethics Officers have expressed their frustration over the monopoly of the AAC's leadership positions by senior prosecutors. The AAC supervises 2,817 Civil Service Ethics Officers at all levels of government in Taiwan but the previous and incumbent heads of the AAC are selected solely from the pool of prosecutors. The unfavorable promotional opportunities for senior Civil Service Ethics Officers together with the lower pay scale within the AAC have resulted in an undermining of its overall anti-corruption performance.

#### *Multiple layers of conflicts*

There are multiple conflicts between and within the anti-corruption triangle constituted by the Prosecutors' Office, the MJIB and the AAC. All of these agencies are under the direct jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, but turf battles between them continue on various fronts.

The most serious conflict which has occurred consistently since the inception of the AAC is the hostility felt toward the infant AAC by the experienced MJIB, which feels that it has been left out in the cold. The AAC holds abundant case intelligence, which is submitted by the Civil Service Ethics Officers while the MJIB has agents who are the most experienced and skillful in combating corruption in Taiwan. The lack of genuine cooperation between the AAC and the MJIB undermines the effectiveness of the triangular anti-corruption scheme that the Taiwanese government has established.

However, the MJIB's latest effort to establish a new business anti-corruption unit, made in July 2014, illustrates its awareness that it needs to improve its performance in order not to be overshadowed by the AAC following the most recent public recognitions of its anti-corruption efficacy. When there are two or more competing agencies, benign peer pressure might lead to better performance for all parties. In short, the redundancy in this case could possibly "increase both reliability and adaptability" (Landau, 1969, p. 356).

While the sibling rivalry between the AAC and the MJIB has been widely discussed by the local media, the subtle competition between the local prosecutors and the AAC's in-house prosecutors is less well known to outsiders. According to our in-depth interviews, several interviewees have expressed their concerns over the negative impact on anti-corruption investigations that exists due to peer competition between the local prosecutors and the AAC's in-house prosecutors. The AAC's domestic harmony is also in jeopardy. The leadership of the AAC is customarily monopolized by the pool of senior prosecutors. The lack of bonding between the senior officials and the vast majority of Civil Service Ethics Officers beneath them is undermining the morale of this brand new agency.

#### *Policy recommendations*

The successful experiences in curbing corruption of the CPIB of Singapore and ICAC of Hong Kong have led to the proliferation of ACAs in many Asian countries. As shown in

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Figure 1, these Asian countries have relied on three major patterns of corruption control: Sibling rivalry among ACAs in Taiwan

- (1) no ACA (e.g. Japan);
- (2) multiple ACAs (e.g. Taiwan); and
- (3) a single ACA (e.g. Singapore and Hong Kong).

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Quah (2013, pp. 456-460) has argued that the third pattern of a single ACA is more effective than the other two patterns if there is political will and a favorable policy context. The evaluation of ACAs in Taiwan confirms this observation. In the long run, it would be desirable to consider the establishment of a single and specialized ACA to avoid sibling rivalry among the ACA system created by political expediency in Taiwan.

However, this desirable policy recommendation might not be feasible in the short run. The reorganization of the Executive Yuan in Taiwan has been a controversial issue of government reform for many years that has only recently been negotiated and finalized. The reluctant birth of the AAC is a small part of this major reform. Accordingly, it is unlikely that another round of ACA reorganization will be initiated in the foreseeable future. In addition, Taiwan's government is undertaking a program of downsizing in the ranks of its civil servants and the scales of its budgets in light of the sluggish economic growth of the past decade. There is little hope that it will upgrade the AAC's bureaucratic hierarchy to or above the cabinet level while it shrinks the state back elsewhere. Neither is it feasible for the Legislative Yuan to appropriate bigger budgets or greater human resources for the AAC.

Although the institutional constraints are inevitable for the time being, the performance of the AAC, as well as the new triangle, is not necessarily doomed to fail if operational practices can be adjusted in accordance with the following policy recommendations, which are proposed based on the findings of this research and the six dimensions introduced by de Sousa (2010):

- (1) *Independence: institutionalizing the terms of the Director General of the AAC:* as at October 15, 2014, there have been three senior prosecutors appointed to the office of the Director General of the AAC. Their average term of appointment has only been 13 months. This office should be appointed for a minimum of three years to avoid the constant changing of the guards experienced until now. Also the search for candidates for the role should be broadened to include senior public servants or external experts familiar with anti-corruption practices.
- (2) *Inter-institutional cooperation and networking:* improving the current performance evaluation system of the MJIB and the AAC should provide incentives for facilitating coordination and cooperation between the agencies.
- (3) *Recruitment and specialization:* eliminating the pay discrimination in the AAC and providing joint training programs for both the MJIB and AAC employees should improve morale.
- (4) *Wide competences and special powers:* integrating the policy initiative power of the AAC and the implementation experience of the MJIB; providing Civil Service Ethics Officers with adequate authorities to perform corruption prevention and integrity education at all levels of the government will combat workers' frustrations.

- (5) *Research capacity*: strengthening the research capability of the AAC through cooperation with international and domestic academic institutions will make up for its lack of native resources.
- (6) *Sustainability*: conducting systematic evaluation of the operations and performance of all the ACAs regularly will refine their modes of interaction.

As for the redundancy problem, the collaboration in action among the various law-enforcement agencies is not without precedent in Taiwan. For example, narcotics investigations serve as a role model, where the police, coast guards, and the MJIB agents share intelligence from time to time and take coordinated action in dealing with cross-country drug shipping cases. Recognizing the seriousness of the sibling rivalry between the AAC and the MJIB, an administrative directive was promulgated by the Ministry of Justice on September 1, 2013. Our in-depth interviews with senior officials from both agencies indicated that there was a common wish to work together. However, their wishful thinking needs greater support, better strategies and more action to be realized.

The general public cares less about the credit deserved by specific government agencies and more about their perceptions of overall government integrity and transparency. Therefore, it is the policy-makers' responsibility to push for the agencies in the anti-corruption triangle to work together genuinely. The political will from a higher authority will facilitate intelligence-sharing and merit-sharing among prosecutors, the AAC and the MJIB. To ensure cross-agency cooperation at the working level, it would also be useful to take innovative approaches to exchange senior officials between the AAC and the MJIB for the purposes of implementing genuine information-sharing and intelligence exchange.

It is particularly important for the AAC to build benign networking between government agencies as well as within civil society organizations both domestically and internationally. Friendly networks in various government agencies would enable the AAC to maximize the use of "the resources of friends" to supplement its own underfunded budget and understaffed agents. Civil society is a crucial support for validating the AAC's performance. Public support is the ultimate criterion for evaluating the Taiwan government's anti-corruption performance.

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### Further reading

Transparency International (2011), *Bribe Payers' Index 2011*, Transparency International, Berlin.

### Appendix 1

Series number	Profession of interviewee <sup>a</sup>	Date of interview	Anonymous coding
1	Anti-corruption practitioner <sup>b</sup>	2013.06.18	I_01
2	Academia/NGO	2013.07.16	I_02
3	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.08.04	I_03
4	Government official/academia	2013.08.09	I_04
5	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.08.10	I_05
6	Government official/academia	2013.08.15	I_06
7	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.08.27	I_07
8	Elected official/NGO	2013.09.05	I_08
9	Government official/academia	2013.09.20	I_09
10	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.10.22	I_10
11	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.11.06	I_11
12	News reporter/NGO	2013.11.07	I_12
13	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.11.22	I_13
14	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.11.25	I_14
15	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.11.27	I_15
16	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.12.09	I_16
17	Anti-corruption practitioner	2013.12.10	I_17

**Notes:** <sup>a</sup>In principle, each interview was limited to one person at a time. However, on two occasions, there were two and eight interviewees, respectively, based on the interviewees' request. These two interviews are actually focus group discussions; <sup>b</sup>anti-corruption practitioner refers to the government official who works for one of the following ACAs in Taiwan, including the Prosecutor's Office, the AAC and the MJIB

**Source:** All the in-depth interviews were conducted by the authors between June and December 2013 in Taipei, Taiwan

**Table AI.**  
Coding of in-depth  
interviews

Appendix 2

Level	Grade	Monthly judicial allowance (anti-corruption official)	Monthly general allowance (general official)	Difference
Senior	14	68,945	40,630	28,315
	13	68,345	37,840	30,505
	12	68,040	36,690	31,350
	11	67,220	32,650	34,570
	10	66,625	29,960	36,665
Junior	9	55,915	25,770	30,145
	8	55,620	24,700	30,920
	7	52,570	21,710	30,860
	6	52,305	20,790	31,515
Entry	5	36,380	18,910	17,470
	4	36,165	18,060	18,105
	3	35,940	17,830	18,110
	2		17,770	
	1		17,710	
Applicable to	The following personnel of the Agency Against Corruption, Ministry of Justice: Director General, Deputy Director General, Chief Secretary, Chiefs, Deputies, Senior Specialists, Section Chiefs, Anti-corruption Specialists, Anti-corruption Agents, and Staff (who <i>de facto</i> execute bribery-related crimes pursuant to Paragraph 3, Section 1, Article 2 of the AAC Organizational Law) of the Anti-corruption Division and North, Central and South Investigation Divisions			

**Notes:** This table is promulgated according to Article 13 of the Civil Servants Allowance Directive; this table took effect starting July 20, 2011  
**Source:** Directorate General or Personnel Administration, Executive Yuan, Taiwan, [www.dgpa.gov.tw/p.asp?ctNode=1359&ctUnit=155&BaseDSD=7&mp=10](http://www.dgpa.gov.tw/p.asp?ctNode=1359&ctUnit=155&BaseDSD=7&mp=10)

**Table AII.**  
Amended  
professional  
allowance schedule  
for personnel of  
Taiwan's Agency  
Against Corruption  
(in NT Dollar)



### About the authors

Ernie Ko, previously a seasoned journalist based in Washington, DC, is an Associate Professor at the National Taiwan University and the Vice Executive Director of the Transparency International-Taiwan (TI-Taiwan). His research interests are global anti-corruption movement and service learning. He continuously leads international voluntary service teams to serve burns survivors in rural China and underprivileged children in Ulaanbataar, Mongolia. Associate Professor Ernie Ko is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: scholar@ntua.edu.tw

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