

News and Upcoming Events

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S POLICY UNIT (CEPU) VISITS
THE DIVISION OF PUBLIC POLICY PPOL**

FACULTY INSIGHT

PROGRAM ADMISSIONS



Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) visits The Division of Public Policy PPOL



The Chief Executive's Policy Unit (CEPU) recently visited the Division of Public Policy (PPOL) at HKUST, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between government and academia. During the visit, discussions revolved around innovative policy solutions and research initiatives aimed at addressing pressing societal challenges. Both parties explored potential partnerships to

leverage academic expertise in shaping effective governance and informed decision-making. The meeting highlighted the critical role of research in developing policies that respond to the evolving needs of society, aiming for a more responsive and adaptive public service. This engagement marks a significant step towards bridging the gap between theory and practice in public policy.

Faculty Insight

Professor Alex Jingwei He Receives the 2025 IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award

We are proud to announce that Professor Alex Jingwei He, Associate Professor at the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, has been awarded the prestigious IPPA Transition and Developing Economies Award 2025.

Professor He is the first Chinese scholar to receive this distinguished honor since the award's inception in 2021. He was recognized for his outstanding scholarly contributions in the fields of health policy, policy design and innovations, population aging, and social policy, with particular emphasis on advancing public policy research and practice in developing and transitional economies.

He will be officially presented with the award at the 7th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP7), to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, this July.

We extend our warmest congratulations to Professor He for this remarkable achievement and his continued dedication to impactful and globally relevant public policy research.



HKUST-Led International Research Team Publishes in Nature Human Behaviour

An international research team led by Dr. Fangxin Yi from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has published a significant study in Nature Human Behavior, examining the political and psychological effects of participatory approaches in centralized regimes. The three-year project focused on a large-scale intervention in Chengdu, China, involving nearly 8,000 participants.

Using a randomized controlled field experiment, the study assessed the impact of participatory budgeting on civic attitudes and political behaviors. Participants in the treatment group, who deliberated on local budget allocations, showed significantly higher civic engagement and satisfaction with the central government compared to the control group. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing insights into civic attitudes amid restrictions and uncertainty.

Remarkably, the study found that participatory mechanisms did not lead to political cynicism or dissatisfaction. Instead, the intervention enhanced perceptions of government responsiveness, civic pride, and regime legitimacy. These findings challenge the notion that democratic innovations are incompatible with centralized governance and suggest that structured participatory approaches can positively influence citizen attitudes.

The authors recommend that centralized regimes institutionalize participatory methods to improve governance responsiveness and strengthen citizen-state relations. By embedding these mechanisms within existing political structures, governments can foster civic empowerment, enhance public trust, and improve the legitimacy of their governance frameworks.



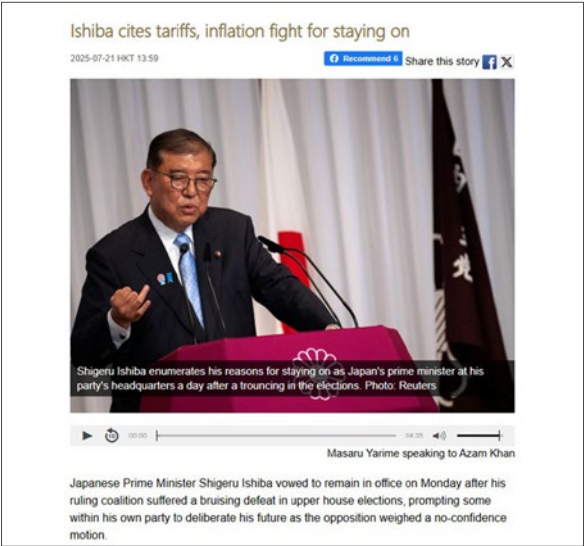
Ballots, Backlash, and Budget Woes – Prof. Masaru Yarime's view on Japan's Political Gridlock After Upper House Elections

Professor Masaru Yarime from the Division of Public Policy at HKUST provides critical insight into Japan's deepening political uncertainty following Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's election setback. In the wake of the ruling coalition's failure to secure a majority in the upper house, Yarime highlights how public dissatisfaction—especially with economic management—is reshaping Japan's political dynamics.

He notes that the government's current policies, particularly regarding inflation and fiscal responsibility, have alienated many voters, including younger generations. According to Professor Masaru Yarime, the election results reflect not only policy discontent but also a loss of faith in the administration's ability to navigate complex domestic and international pressures, such as tariff negotiations with the United States and debates over the sales tax rate.

Professor Masaru Yarime warns that the fragmented parliamentary landscape will make it increasingly difficult for the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner Komeito to push forward any coherent agenda. The lack of majority in both chambers, he argues, heightens the risk of policy paralysis just as Japan faces mounting socio-economic challenges.

Professor Yarime's analysis suggests that without a strategic policy reset and genuine public engagement—especially on economic reform and intergenerational equity—Japan's leadership could struggle to regain stability or deliver effective governance.



Cheap Drones, Big Threats: How Small Tech Is Reshaping Global Security – Prof Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin's view

Professor Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin from the Division of Public Policy at HKUST offers a timely and thought-provoking analysis in his recent op-ed, highlighting how Ukraine's dramatic drone assault on Russian strategic bombers has redefined modern warfare. The operation—code-named "Spider's Web"—involved dozens of low-cost, first-person-view drones penetrating deep into Russian territory, striking at nuclear-capable aircraft across multiple airbases.

He argues that this unprecedented attack illustrates a turning point in global security. No longer confined to powerful states, the ability to damage nuclear deterrence infrastructures can now be achieved by actors using commercially available, AI-assisted drones costing less than US\$1,000 each.

His commentary warns that such asymmetric capabilities threaten the fragile balance of strategic stability. As drones become more accessible to both smaller states and non-state actors, the risks of accidental escalation—including nuclear conflict—grow alarmingly real.

Professor Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin calls for urgent international cooperation to regulate drone technology, likening the need for control over existing frameworks for small arms. Without decisive action, the unchecked spread of cheap drones could undermine decades of global arms control efforts and heighten the danger of future crises.

Ukrainian attack on Russian bombers shows how cheap drones could upset global security
By Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin | June 5, 2025



Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin
Julien de Troullioud de Lanversin is an assistant professor in the Division of Public Policy at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology... [Read more](#)



Orbits, Networks, and the Future of War
Virtual program | July 22, 2025, 12:00 p.m. CDT
[Save your seat](#)

On Sunday, social media started broadcasting videos of airfields shrouded with columns of smoke and parked airplanes on fire. These were not common airplanes but Russian strategic bombers capable of delivering nuclear weapons virtually anywhere on the globe. Behind these attacks were small drones, like those used to capture scenic social media videos, remotely operated by Ukrainian pilots.

The day after, some Russian media and influential figures called for retaliation with nuclear strikes. On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly said in a phone call with President Donald Trump that he planned to retaliate against Ukraine for its surprise attack. According to a reading of the Russian nuclear doctrine, the Ukrainian attacks could technically prompt a nuclear retaliation by Russia.

VVA Catalyst To Restructure The Economy –Prof Donald Low's View

Professor Donald Low, a respected academic in public policy, emphasizes the importance of strategic economic reforms for Hong Kong's future. The budget for the financial year 2025-26, presented by Financial Secretary Paul Chan, highlights significant shortcomings in addressing structural economic challenges. Focused on cost-cutting to reduce the persistent budget deficit, this approach is inadequate given the city's lackluster recovery post-COVID-19, where growth has lagged behind regional competitors like Singapore.

With external pressures such as trade tensions and inflation, expectations for a rapid economic turnaround are unrealistic. Rising health and social expenditures will likely exceed any savings from austerity measures, underscoring the need for a comprehensive reevaluation of Hong Kong's revenue system.

The government must shift from reliance on land sales to a diversified tax base, potentially including a Goods and Services Tax (GST) and wealth taxes. Viewing the current budget crisis as an opportunity, Hong Kong can undertake necessary reforms to foster a more resilient and equitable economy, ensuring sustainable growth in the years to come.

Hong Kong This Week in Asia / Opinion

Donald Low

Asian Angle | How Hong Kong's budget deficits can be a catalyst to restructure the economy

Authorities can look to tax restructuring among other reforms to restore Hong Kong's fiscal health and put the economy on a sounder footing

Reading Time: 4 minutes



Donald Low
Published: 3:00pm, 1 Mar 2025

Hong Kong's budget for financial year 2025-26, unveiled earlier this week by Financial Secretary Paul Chan, was notable for the paucity of measures that might address the structural challenges facing the city's economy. It was mainly focused on cost-cutting and belt-tightening to narrow the budget deficit, which the government has run in all but one of the last six financial years.