

Thank you for the opportunity to present on this topic, alongside such distinguished panelists.

I would also like to say that I am enormously encouraged that the topics of gender inequality and combating corruption are being considered together by this parliament.

Historically, international efforts to address them have developed largely separately.

Of course, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, are intended to be integrated.

With goal 5 seeking to end all discrimination against women and girls.

And indicators of goal 16—the promotion of peace, justice and strong institutions—including ‘substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms’.

But to see these two topics, being discussed together,
And a discussion of their connections, is heartwarming.

I'm going to share some 3 slides.

And emphasize 2 background points, before moving on to some measures to strengthen the gender dimension of anti-corruption.

1 min

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My first background point is that women in power sometimes, on average, cut corruption.

Now, I make this point carefully, because it is often assumed that women are less corrupt than men by nature, and so increasing the proportion of women in a group will necessarily reduce corruption.

We should not assume this.

It is simply untrue that women are intrinsically less corruptible than men.

I can quickly demonstrate this with the graphs on this slide.

Both show the proportion of women, increasing horizontally along the x axis, and countries' scores on a measure of control of corruption (on the y axis).

In the graph on the left, we see that as the higher the proportion of women in

parliament, the more control of corruption countries have.
These are European countries.

On the right, you can see that, for the very same group of countries, having more women in the public administration has no relationship with control of corruption.

If women were by nature less corruptible than men, both of these graphs would show a similar pattern.

So instead of intrinsic sex differences with respect to corruptibility, it is the social context that is different.

To get into parliament, women have to progress through political parties and succeed in elections - both arenas in which gender stereotypes are often pervasive and influence women's progress.

And among these stereotypes are commonly held expectations that women are and should be less corruptible than men.

On the other hand, bureaucracies are organizations that strive to ensure a culture of impartiality.

Public sector recruitment is often through meritocratic examinations, and many other procedures within these organisations are highly routinized.

These aspects of rule-bound, impartial bureaucracies inhibit the ways in which gender stereotypes and gender norms influence their operations.

So, **in** my original sentence - that women in power **sometimes**, on average, cut corruption, **sometimes** is the key word.

And it depends in part, on the strength of traditional gender stereotypes, and how these interact with, in particular, accountability mechanisms.

To further this point:

What is also empirically true, is that women in power, cognisant of women's subordinate socioeconomic status in most countries, often seek to substantively represent other women.

In doing so, they push for the state to better deliver public services that are especially important to women.

In other words, they tend to go further than men, on average, to cut corruption specifically in areas like healthcare, particularly maternal care, and children's education, which mothers are often responsible for ensuring.

4 mins

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My second background point is that causal relationships between gender and corruption flow in both directions.

I've just mentioned some ways in which women can sometimes cut corruption.

But corruption can also reinforce or exaggerate gender inequalities:

First, corruption is usually something that those who already have a lot of power in society gain from, and its negative impacts hit those with less power - hence, deepening pre-existing inequalities, including gender inequality.

Second, corruption can cause positions of power to be out of reach to women.

One way in which this happens is evident in corrupt organisations structured by patronage.

In these networks, typically, the attributes that are deemed qualifying for advancement – by those who hold power within it – are masculine attributes.

In-group trust is at a premium, and hyper masculine norms are used to cement trust relationships.

Third - importantly - bribery is not just about money. It is about other forms of private gains, too. And these include sexual favours, and even caring responsibilities.

sexual corruption, sometimes called sextortion.

often happens when a power dynamic in a corrupt interaction is extreme

the party providing sexual favours may completely lack monetary resources, and there may be few or no alternatives for that individual's progress or even survival.

Hence we see sexual corruption in the aid sector, in immigration and education.

It typically affects women, and involves heterosexual dynamics, but please note,

that this is not always the case.

Importantly - Existing laws may be inadequate or in practice ineffective to combat sexual corruption.

Frequently it falls between the cracks, beyond the scope of the prior application of sexual harassment laws

And of anti-corruption laws, which typically prosecute both the individual providing and receiving or demanding the bribe.

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Now there is optimism that can be drawn from these connections.

Because...

Policies that effectively improve gender equality may also, as a side effect, reduce certain kinds of corruption, by affecting the processes that facilitate them.

Similarly, cutting corruption can silently remove impediments to women's empowerment.

And there may be synergies by addressing both of these topics together.

Some additional points

Given the influence of traditional stereotypes on the gendered impacts and incentives set up by accountability mechanisms.

efforts to reshape or reduce stereotypes

And to limit their influence on procedures such as whistleblower mechanisms are crucial.

Policies should also take aim at gendered processes and at substantive outcomes, above descriptive outcomes.

For example, in procurement, you can create a rule stating that 30% of company management should be of minority sex.

That would be descriptive

A substantive policy would be give points to companies with good parental leave policies, including for men, and that demonstrate equal pay for men and women on staff.

To be able to monitor progress. Countries need to collect more sex-

disaggregated data,
But in interpreting it, we need to consider processes that lie behind and lead to the patterns revealed. Conduct interviews.

Lastly, given the graph of bureaucracies.
Policies to fight corruption should take aim at organisations, as well as individuals.

And should consider incentivising more than the absence of corruption - through the minimum standards of compliance -

We need to celebrate good performance in the public and private spheres, rather than simply punishing what is inadequate.

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Even if anti-corruption statutes are worded broadly enough to cover non-monetary bribery

These statutes are often applied in such a way that bribery is understood in merely monetary terms. And penalises the individual providing the bribe.

And often those in the justice system are unsure whether sexual favours are covered.

consequently doubts about judicial interpretation can deter prosecutors from pursuing sexual corruption cases.

On the other than, if sexual harassment laws are considered the coercion thresholds that have been established by effective and ineffective attempts at prosecution

Often imply that the degree of consent in quid pro quo arrangements renders sexual corruption unprosecutable.