WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CORRUPTION: WHAT WORKS IN ENGAGING FEMALE POLITICIANS IN ANTICORRUPTION?

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The overarching aim of this project is to generate evidence to promote female politician’s leadership in the fight against corruption.

Rationale

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations’ High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These SDGs recognise that gender inequalities and corruption represent major obstacles to reaching many of the 17 SDGs goals and ending poverty, by hampering economic growth and increasing inequalities in terms of income, access to services, and resource distribution. While these issues cut across many of the SDGs, SDG 16 on sustainable governance, which obliges member states to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” as well as SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls are of particular relevance for anti-corruption and gender equality.

As part of its Ti 2020 strategy “together against corruption”, Transparency International is committed to creating demand for accountability and empowering citizens’ action against corruption. One of the Ti2020 key strategic priorities priority is to “work with a wide range of people to act to confront corruption, demand accountability and contribute to anti-corruption approaches that are systemic and sustainable”, particularly targeting target activists, young people, women and those engaged in social movements.

Women’s participation in anti-corruption is at the core of this commitment. There is evidence that corruption affects women and men differently and hits the poor and vulnerable groups the hardest, especially women, who represent a higher share of the world’s poor. But women are not only victims of corruption; they are also part of the solution. While evidence is inconclusive on whether women are less corrupt than men, greater women’s rights and participation in government and politics are consistently correlated with better governance and lower levels of corruption in many countries of the world. Empowering women and promoting their participation in political life is essential to fight corruption, address the gendered impact of corruption and eventually level the playing field and the gender power imbalances and inequalities between women and men (Transparency International 2016).

Within this framework, TI’s International Secretariat is committed to mainstream gender in the fight against corruption. As part of this commitment, TI has explored the linkages between gender and corruption in a number of publications such as a working paper on gender and corruption in service delivery (2010), a policy brief on gender, equality and corruption (2014), a topic guide on gender and corruption (2016) and two upcoming publications on gender, land and corruption. TI is also coordinating a number of projects around the world to address the gendered impact of corruption, working on sextortion in the Middle East, or on gender, access to land rights and corruption in Africa. In order to understand more the relationship between gender and corruption and the special challenges that corruption imposed to women in Latin America, TI is also developing a study with Eurosocial’s support, the EU programme to promote social cohesion in Latin America.

As part of its people’s engagement efforts, TI seeks to explore ways to promote women’s participation in political life raise their awareness and support their demand for transparency, accountability and integrity and engage female politicians in anti-corruption. For instance, TI is partnering with CSO specialised on gender in several Latin American
countries and regional and international women’s organisations such as UNWomen in Latin America to build on their gender expertise and network as a way to maximise the impact of this initiative.

Conceptual background

Why promote female political leadership in anti-corruption?

- Women as an anti-corruption force

From an anti-corruption perspective, empirical evidence consistently shows a strong correlation between greater female participation in political life and less corruption in many countries of the world (Wangnerud 2015; Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Swami et al 2001). This correlation holds true at sub-national levels, as reflected by a study looking at the relationship between numbers of women elected to municipal councils in Mexico and levels of corruption (Wangnerud 2012).

This has led to conceive women’s participation in public life as an anti-corruption tool and design anti-corruption initiative promoting the participation of women in public and political life. However, recent studies have suggested that this is a myth. While few studies reject this correlation, the direction of causality, the mechanisms at play and the factors likely to support or inhibit this correlation are less understood (Alexander and Bågenholm Forthcoming). There is also no conclusive evidence that substantiate the underlying assumption that women are less corrupt than men. As new comers in the political arena, they are less experienced with corrupt transactions and are often excluded from power and male patronage networks that sustain them, partly due to the way they are recruited (or not) to leadership positions in political parties or the existence of “old-boys networks” they are usually excluded from. There is no indication that once women overcome these barriers to political power, they would behave in a ways, which are less corrupt than men (Goetz 2007).

Against this background, advocating for women’s political empowerment should be seen as an end in itself and not and anti-corruption strategy (Goetz 2007; Branisa and Ziegler 2011).

- Corruption as an obstacle to women political representation

At the same time, some studies have shown that corruption hinders women’s political representation and prevent them from accessing leadership positions in the political sphere. Women are less likely to enter corrupt political system because the political recruitment of women is more difficult in corrupt or clientelistic environment, where women are more likely to be excluded from male dominated election networks (Bjanegard 2013; Stockemer 2011). This is confirmed by a study of 18 European countries that finds that where corruption is high, number of elected women is low (Sundstrom and Wangnerud 2014). Therefore, in addition to its potential impact on anti-corruption, involving women in the fight against corruption can help address some of the barriers to their political empowerment.

- The impact of women’s political representation on public (and anti-corruption) policies

In terms of their potential to influence the political agenda, some studies have looked at the impact of women’s political leadership on policy decisions. While very few studies specifically investigate the effect of women participation on anti-corruption policies, a number of studies indicate that women’s representation tend to influence policy outcomes, with greater investments in traditionally women’s’ concerns such as child care, water provision, health and environment (Braga and Scervini 2016). Wangnerud (2009) also confirms that female representation in parliaments tends to strengthen women’s interests in the public sphere. In Scandinavian countries for example, (there are studies showing
that) where women participation in public life has been comparatively high (30%) for quite a period of time, public policies tend to give bigger scope to women’s interest and issues such as social, family or gender equality, resulting in increased responsiveness to their policy concerns (Wangnerud 2009).

In addition, some other authors argue that as women tend to be more dependant than men on a well-functioning state that provides key services such as child care, they tend to be more perceptive than men of corruption and bad governance as a major destructive force in society and as a result, are more likely than men to abstain from corruption (Wangnerud 2015). Although this could be investigated further, this could imply that women have greater stakes in the fight against corruption and incentives to engage.

What are the knowledge gaps on what works in engaging female politicians against corruption?

The literature on women’s political empowerment primarily looks at what affects women’s representation (in political parties or parliament) and the determinants of their participation. Obstacles to women’s political participation cover a wide range of factors, including a country’s progress in terms of equality of rights, the electoral system, the level of institutionalisation of political parties and their and transparency of decision making processes. Hostile reactions to women, working conditions incompatible with family responsibilities, deeply entrenched culture of masculinity in political institutions in terms of gender bias in personnel, policies and organisational culture and the existence of male dominated networks also hinder women’s political participation (OSCE 2014; Wangnerud 2009; Lovendusky 2005).

Studies on what works in promoting women’s participation primarily covers issues such as the introduction of quotas, party level reforms and measures aimed at promoting internal party democracy and transparency, gender sensitive candidate selection and outreach and decentralisation of party decision making processes. The corruption and anti-corruption angle is largely missing from this line of questioning.

There is no consensus on what effects to expect when the number of women in parliament, political parties or other political institutions increase and what women’s representation in parliament/political parties is likely to affect and how. New research could focus more on how women participations can influence levels of corruption, the effect of women participation on anti-corruption policies in terms of their adoption, contents, enforcement, impact. There is also a need to unpack the “black box” of the linkages between women’s participation and levels of corruption to better understand the mechanisms at play and factors supporting or inhibiting this correlation.

To contribute to answer these knowledge gaps, TI is planning to conduct a study in collaboration of UNWomen in Latin America which aims at exploring what works promoting female politicians’ leadership in anti-corruption in Latin America and the factors that are likely to support or prevent their anti-corruption engagement.

Overall objective of the exercise

The main objective of this study is to promote female politicians leadership in the fight against corruption. The study will help address the knowledge gaps identified in the literature on how and the extent to which female politicians can influence the anti-corruption agenda in a given institution or country, the mechanisms at play and the factors that are likely to support or inhibit their leadership in anti-corruption. Exploring what works in engaging female politicians in anti-corruption in Latin America will generate knowledge that can be used by both anti-corruption practitioners and women rights advocates in the region for designing interventions that support female politicians’ political empowerment and commitment against corruption. More specifically, the objectives of this study are:
• To address some of the knowledge gaps on the linkages between women political empowerment, participation and anti-corruption
• To raise awareness on the potential of engaging female politicians in anti-corruption
• To promote female politicians’ leadership and engagement in anti-corruption
• To inform the design of anti-corruption interventions aimed at supporting female politicians’ anti-corruption commitment
• To advocate for mainstreaming anti-corruption in women political empowerment programmes

PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

Research objectives

The overarching research goal of this project/study is to identify what works (or does not work) in specific contexts to engage female politicians in the fight against corruption, with the view to generating concrete and practical information that can be used by practitioners to design interventions aimed at supporting female politicians’ efforts against corruption. More specifically, the research objectives of this exercise include:

• Develop a diagnostic methodology/tool that could be adapted and used in different countries or regions to identify and address factors that prevent female politicians to engage in anti-corruption;
• Identify whether and under which circumstances female politicians are likely to support and engage in the fight against corruption;
• Identify the factors that are likely to support or inhibit female politicians’ engagement in anti-corruption;
• Generate actionable knowledge to inform the design of interventions aimed at promoting female politicians’ leadership in the fight against corruption.

Research questions & Assumptions

Hypotheses

Based on an initial scoping exercise conducted by TI (available on demand), there are a number of underlying assumptions that will need to be tested and validated by this study. The first set of hypotheses relates to the correlation between greater female participation in political life and less corruption, which implies that there are benefits in engaging female politicians in the fight against corruption.

The second set of hypotheses relate to the contextual factors that may promote or hinder women’s political leadership in anti-corruption.

Finally, the last set of assumptions relates to the inter-linkages between women’s’ political empowerment and corruption. There is a perceived need to mainstream anti-corruption in women’s political empowerment programmes to address corruption as a barrier to women political empowerment. This may help avoid that women, when they access political power, develop similar patterns as their male counterparts (clientelistic, collusive and corrupt networks).

• Hypothesis 1. Female politicians are a still largely untapped positive anti-corruption force within their parties or political activities. Female politicians can influence the political agenda such as public policies (whether at political
party level, in government or in parliaments). When accessing political power, women can have an influence on anti-corruption policies: their adoption, contents, enforcement (or lack of thereof).

- **Hypothesis 2.** There are certain factors that support or inhibit female politicians’ engagement in anti-corruption. This can include the organisational culture of the party/institution, the level of anti-corruption awareness, level of power of women/access to leadership roles, their capacity and skills, traditional female portfolios and political agendas.

- **Hypothesis 3.** The barriers to women’s political empowerment (such as corruption, access to leadership positions, strategic portfolios) can prevent women to engage in anti-corruption. There are benefits in integrating an anti-corruption dimension to women political empowerment programmes.

**Research questions**

To validate these hypotheses, the research will need to collect quantitative and qualitative data and information to help answer three sets of research questions, covering 1) female politicians’ perception, attitude and behaviours regarding corruption and anti-corruption; 2) the potential impact of female politicians’ anti-corruption commitment and 3) what works for promoting women’s political leadership in anti-corruption. To address these issues, the current study targets (a population of) female politicians (parliamentarians or in political parties, TBD) and focus on a number of questions that will guide all stages of the data collection and analysis:

**Female politicians’ stance against corruption**

- What are female politicians’ attitude and tolerance and awareness of AC issues and its impact on society?
- What are the incentives for female politicians to engage in anti-corruption?
- How high is anti-corruption on the political agenda of female politicians and how engaged are they in ethical issues?
- Are women exposed to some types of violence for being at the forefront of the fight against corruption, or an anti-corruption agenda? Which ones?

**Impact of female politician’s engagement against corruption**

- Does the presence of women in parliament and/or political parties affect the behaviours, cultures and internal policies of these institutions? Are women in politics likely to engage and champion anti-corruption issues more than men? Why or why not?
- Do female politicians and women participation in political parties/parliaments have an effect on anti-corruption policies? Does it affect anti-corruption policies and policy outcomes? What effect can be expected of women political participation on anti-corruption policies, their adoption, contents, enforcement (or lack of thereof)?
- Do women in power more actively fight corruption/engage and champion anti-corruption? Do they have an impact on the number of anti-corruption legislation, commitments, pledges, etc?
- Does women’s political representation improve citizen’s confidence in government and/or political party?

**What works in engaging female politicians against corruption?**
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- What are the factors that support or inhibit women’s engagement in anti-corruption? These could relate to forms of political participation - in political parties, in executive positions, in parliament; organisational culture of the party/institution, AC awareness, level of power of women/access to leadership roles, capacity and skills, female traditional “political” portfolios and committees, etc;
- What are the obstacles that need to be addressed? How can they best be addressed?
- Is corruption/ lack of transparency/ informality of party procedures and functioning likely to affect women’s stance against corruption?

Proposed methodology

Scope of the research

The aim of the research is to pilot a study of female politicians’ engagement in anti-corruption within political parties in one to three pilot countries in Latin America (depending on available resources).

Conducting the study in different countries will allow to generate comparable data and identify the extent to which the country context matters in female politician’s engagement in anti-corruption and the contextual factors that can support or inhibit female politicians’ leadership in anti-corruption. The selection and number or countries where the study will be conducted will be defined at a later stage based on a number of criteria (TI national chapter interest, local political context, country characteristics, available resources, etc).

As most studies investigating the link between women political participation and corruption look at representation of women in national parliaments, it is suggested to explore other forms of corruption and focus on women’s representation in political parties. Indeed, political parties play an important role as the gatekeepers for representation by selecting candidates to stand for election and should be central to the analysis of women’s political representation (Müller-Rommel, Kubbe and Vercesi 2014). Yet, there are a few studies that look at political parties from a gender perspective (Bjanejanegard 2009).

In each country where the study will be conducted, two or three political parties will be selected (depending on the local political context).

Data collection

One of the objectives of this exercise is to develop a research methodology that can be adapted to different contexts and countries interested to explore the potential of engaging female politicians in anti-corruption and design interventions to promote their anti-corruption commitment and address the factors that support or inhibit their engagement. The researcher will propose a research methodology that could entail a mix of data collection methods (depending on available resources):

- A content analysis/literature review on the linkages between women political participation and corruption as a basis to develop the conceptual framework of the study. As a starting point, TI will share with the consultant an initial scoping document that was compiled to identify the knowledge gaps this research should address.
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- **Desk research** on women’s representation in political parties: numbers, access to leadership positions, representation in thematic committees, etc.

- **A survey** of female politicians of targeted institutions as well as male politicians as a counterfactual group. The main focus of this survey would be on women’s awareness, perception, attitudes, behaviours and experiences of corruption as well as their willingness to engage in anti-corruption/the extent to which they think they can make a change and obstacles to engaging in anti-corruption in their political party.

- **Interviews** with key informants within the targeted institutions as well as external stakeholders such as women’s groups and organisations, anti-corruption groups and activists, etc. The consultant will be provided access to TI national chapters in the region who will support and facilitate the identification of relevant informants and stakeholders at the national level. In-depth narrative interviews could also be conducted with a small number of female politicians.

- **Focus group discussions (FGD)** with female politicians that explore more in-depth certain trends and issues picked by the document review and by the surveys. It could be envisaged to conduct FGDs with male politicians as a counterfactual.

- **Validation workshop with key stakeholders** (if resources allow)

**DELIVERABLES/RESEARCH OUTPUTS**

**Key deliverables**

The expected outputs from this study are:

- The design of a methodology that can be used for other countries and institutions including a mix of data collection methods (s, survey, Focus Group Discussions, interviews with key informants, etc.)

- The publication of a research report in TI’s website and partners’ websites.

- The sharing and dissemination of the findings to a community of several experts and practitioners and to the international and national media in relevant fora.

- An expert one day regional workshop to discuss the findings and consider ways of moving forward in this field of work with key stakeholders.

- A set of recommendations to strengthen future TI projects that intend to engage female politicians in the fight against corruption.

**Guidance and quality insurance**

There are a number of key guidance and recommendations that the consultant will need to discuss in the proposal and consider in compiling the final report:

- **Referencing.** The consultant is expected to reference all sources backing statements and avoid un-sourced information to allow for tracing of the source of a statistic or quote. The consultant will also be expected to submit all the background sources needed in a format to be specified in the proposal - electronic access, field notes and recordings, survey data or photocopies of web pages, etc.

- **Libel.** Guidance to avoid libel will be provided if needed.
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- **Style guide.** The consultant is expected to adhere to the TI style guide, to be provided by TI.
- **Gender mainstreaming.** TI is committed to mainstream gender issues in all its activities. The consultant should mainstream gender to the extent possible through data disaggregation and providing a gender lenses on the findings/analysis when relevant and possible.
- **Ethical research.** The consultant is expected to commit to conducting ethical research. He/she should consider TI’s ethical values and principles and is expected to adhere to key guiding principles to the extent possible, including fundamental principles of transparency, cost-effectiveness, collaboration with beneficiaries, hiring of local consultants, involvement of local agencies, and practices such as confidentiality of data, anonymity of responses, making data publicly available in a usable.
- **Risk mitigation.** The consultant should state any risks that might arise during or as a result of the research and suggest a process for mitigating them (or indicate that this must be discussed further once the TOR is agreed).

**TIMELINE**

To be determined at a later stage

Indicative and realistic time line with specific dates for expected intermediary and final deliverables and outputs will be provided by the consultant in collaboration with TI. This may include the production of initial notes, first drafts, final drafts, supplementary notes, data analysis, consultations, presentations, etc. The timeline needs to provide for sufficient time for TI staff and partners to read and comment on drafts (two weeks is usually realistic). The timetable must be checked and revised once the TOR is actually approved and research has begun.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

The researcher should have the following qualifications:

1. Profile of the researcher
   - Relevant experience in anti-corruption, development, SDG related areas of expertise and/or gender expertise
   - Must have experience in Gender Studies and violence against women.
   - Fluent oral and written English communication skills.
   - Knowledge of Spanish.

2. Track record of having conducted similar research
3. Quality of the methodology and approach to the assignment
4. Value for money of the proposal

**STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

The following documents and information that should be included in the submission:

- A detailed methodological approach, including expected data collection and analysis methods, availability of relevant data, the process for verifying/validating findings with key stakeholders, etc.
- A list of possible challenges, risks and mitigation strategies.
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- A detailed timeframe.
- The team members and respective CVs, functions and role in relation to the assignment.
- An indicative budget
- A sample of previous similar work.
- Two contacts of two people willing to be contacted for their reference.
- Completed VAT Form for Tenders/Vendor Form:

RENUMERATION AND COSTS

The Consultant should provide a detailed breakdown, before any VAT or other charges, of all their estimated costs, including but not limited to; total fee as a lump sum or standard daily or hourly rates, (if applicable) international travel, local transport, accommodation, work materials.

Transparency International e.V. (Secretariat), (TI-S) is registered as a Business Entity in Germany with VAT identification number DE273612486. In order to determine the Value Added Tax (VAT) implications of this tender, we kindly request that the Consultants fill out the VAT form for tenders (instructions inside the form) and submit the completed and duly signed form along with their email application.

Please indicate “Women’s political participation and corruption in Latin America” in the subject line of your email application. Applications should be sent in English by email to genderstudy@transparency.org by close of business of 25/06/2018.

Please note that only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

REFERENCES


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