

Knowledge tools for academics  
and professionals

**Module Series on Anti-Corruption**

Module 8  
Corruption and Gender



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UNODC Module Series on Anti-Corruption

# **MODULE 8**

# **CORRUPTION AND GENDER**

### Background information

The UNODC Module Series on Anti-Corruption offers 14 Modules focusing on a range of core anti-corruption issues. This includes corruption's varied definitions and devastating effects, responses to corruption, and linkages between corruption and different topics such as good governance, comparative politics, whistle-blowing, justice systems, human rights, gender, education, citizen participation, peace and security.

The Modules are designed for use by both academic institutions and professional academies across the world. They are built to help lecturers and trainers deliver anti-corruption education, including those who are not dedicated anti-corruption lecturers and trainers but would like to incorporate these components into their courses. Lecturers are encouraged to customize the Modules before integrating them into their classes and courses. The Modules include discussions of relevant issues, suggestions for class activities and exercises, recommended class structures, student assessments, reading lists (with an emphasis on open access materials), PowerPoint slides, video materials and other teaching tools. Each Module provides an outline for a three-hour class, as well as includes guidelines on how to develop it into a full course.

The Modules focus on universal values and problems and can easily be adapted to different local and cultural contexts, including a variety of degree programmes as they are multi-disciplinary. The Modules seek to enhance trainees and students' ethical awareness and commitment to acting with integrity and equip them with the necessary skills to apply and spread these norms in life, work and society. To increase their effectiveness, the Modules cover both theoretical and practical perspectives, and use interactive teaching methods such as experiential learning and group-based work. These methods keep students and trainees engaged and help them develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, all of which are important for ethics education.

The topics of the Modules were chosen following consultations with academics who participated in a meeting of experts convened by UNODC, in Vienna in March 2017. The experts emphasized the need for increased anti-corruption education globally and advised on core areas to be addressed through the Modules. They considered it paramount that the Modules prepare university students and trainees for value driven effective action, keep students engaged, lend themselves to adaptation to different regional and disciplinary contexts, and allow lecturers to incorporate them as anti-corruption components within existing university courses and disciplines.

To achieve these objectives, the experts recommended that the Modules have a range of characteristics, ultimately being able to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Connect theory to practice</li> <li>» Emphasize the importance of integrity and ethics to everyday life</li> <li>» Encourage critical thinking</li> <li>» Stress not only the importance of making ethical decisions but also demonstrate how to implement the decisions</li> <li>» Use innovative interactive teaching methods</li> <li>» Balance general ethics with applied ethics</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Draw on good practices from practitioners</li> <li>» Link integrity and ethics to other global issues and the SDGs</li> <li>» Adopt a multi-disciplinary and multi-level approach</li> <li>» Focus on global ethics and universal values while leaving room for diverse regional and cultural perspectives</li> <li>» Employ non-technical and clear terminology</li> <li>» Be user-friendly</li> </ul> |
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Drawing on these recommendations, UNODC worked for over a year with more than 70+ academic experts from over 30 countries to develop the 14 University Modules on Anti-Corruption. Each Module was drafted by a core team of academics and UNODC experts, and then peer-reviewed by a larger group of academics from different disciplines and regions to ensure a multi-disciplinary and universal coverage. The Modules passed through a meticulous clearance process at the UNODC headquarters before finally being edited and published on its website as open-source materials. In addition, it was agreed that the content of the Modules would be regularly updated to ensure that they are in line with contemporary studies and correspond to current needs of educators.

The present knowledge tool has been developed by the UNODC Corruption and Economic Crime Branch (CEB), as part of the Education for Justice initiative under the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration.

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## Introduction

Over the last two decades, a new field of research has sought to expand the discourse on corruption beyond the adverse effects on the rule of law, security and governance, and access to services and opportunities. One of these new focus areas is gender and corruption. This Module explores three main themes within the current field of gender and corruption: (1) the influence of gender in the occurrence of corrupt acts; (2) the gendered impacts of corruption; and (3) the relationship between gender mainstreaming and corruption mitigation in theory and practice. The Module draws on interactive class activities and a real-life case study as a means to apply concepts of gender in practice. Students are encouraged to critically analyse theories about corruption and gender and to identify processes of socialization and gendered opportunity structures, rather than merely to focus on innate sex differences. This perspective provides a backdrop to discuss institutional initiatives to address both corruption and gender inequalities, while also acknowledging that the relationships between gender, culture, context and corruption are complex. This Module is informed by the discussion on the gender dimensions of ethics in Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics.

## Learning outcomes

- Distinguish between sex and gender and recognize the benefits and shortcomings of sex-disaggregated data with respect to understanding gender and corruption
- Understand the theories that support or critique the notion that women are, on average, less corruptible than men
- Analyse the impact that gender might have on corruption in different contexts
- Evaluate the ways in which corruption can maintain and exacerbate gender inequalities
- Create ways of incorporating gender mainstreaming into programmes to fight corruption

## Key issues

Corruption is a complex phenomenon, without a uniform definition. An overview of the different forms and definitions of corruption, as well as its harmful effects across the globe, is available in Module 1 of the UNODC Module Series on Anti-Corruption. For present purposes, it should be noted that the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)<sup>1</sup> refrains from providing one overarching definition of "corruption". Rather, it defines various acts of corruption and classifies them as criminal offences, such as bribery and embezzlement (in both the public and private sectors); trading in influence; abuse of functions; and illicit enrichment (UNCAC arts. 15-22). With 189 States parties (as of November 2021), UNCAC has attracted nearly universal adherence, and the different acts of corruption as defined by the Convention can be considered internationally accepted. Module 4 and 5 of the UNODC Module Series on Anti-Corruption include more detailed discussions on how these various acts of corruption manifest in the public and private sectors, respectively.

Although discussions around corruption have historically been viewed through an economic lens, its impact cannot be reduced to economic considerations alone. Corruption increases inequality, undermines development and human rights, threatens public trust in government, and decreases public funds for public services. The complex links between corruption, inclusion, equality and justice underpin the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>2</sup> adopted by the United Nations in 2015. Given the impact of corruption on inclusion, equality and justice, the interplay between gender and corruption has increasingly become the focus of academics and practitioners, as well as United Nations agencies such as UNODC<sup>3</sup> and UNDP<sup>4</sup> for example.

The present Module introduces some of the main debates on the gender–corruption nexus. It starts by clarifying basic gender-related concepts, and moves on to discuss gender differences in corruption; theories that explain the gender–corruption nexus; the gendered impact of corruption; and gender mainstreaming as a way of addressing the differential impact of corruption on gender and, more generally, to prevent corruption. This Module is informed by the discussion on gender dimensions of ethics in Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics. As discussed in that Module, women and girls are overwhelmingly subjected to gender-based discrimination, with structural inequalities placing them at a disadvantage in terms of access to rights and opportunities. This is recognized by the SDGs, particularly Goal 5, which sets out to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Ending gender discrimination against women is also the aim of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>5</sup>, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1979 and includes 189 States parties (as of April 2020). Against this backdrop, the present Module focuses on the gendered impact of corruption on women. However, many of its insights can be applied to understand the impact of corruption on men, boys, and members of groups that could be marginalized on the basis of gender, such as the LGBTI community.

<sup>1</sup> Available from the corruption section of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime website ([www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)).

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.anti-corruption.org/themes/anti-corruption-in-sdgs-2/](http://www.anti-corruption.org/themes/anti-corruption-in-sdgs-2/).

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see [www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/what-we-do/anti-corruption/topics/22-addressing-the-interplay-between-gender-and-corruption.html](http://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/what-we-do/anti-corruption/topics/22-addressing-the-interplay-between-gender-and-corruption.html).

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see [www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/womens-empowerment/corruption-accountability-and-gender-understanding-the-connection/Corruption-accountability-and-gender.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/womens-empowerment/corruption-accountability-and-gender-understanding-the-connection/Corruption-accountability-and-gender.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/).

## › Defining sex, gender and gender mainstreaming

It is useful for students to understand the main differences between sex and gender, as these concepts are often conflated in discussions of gender and corruption. At its most basic: While “sex” is rooted in biological differences between men and women, such as genetic differences, and tends to be discussed in binary terms, “gender” involves the social meanings given to these biological differences. How gender is understood varies across and within societies and may relate, among other things, to an individual’s identity, social norms and expectations related to gender roles, context, and systems of power such as a patriarchal society or context<sup>6,7</sup>. Gender-related terms are also defined and discussed in Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics and in Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Another important concept within the gender and corruption discussion is “gender mainstreaming”. In 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)<sup>8</sup> defined gender mainstreaming as:

The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

The concept of gender mainstreaming has increasingly been considered as a means of deterring corruption and is discussed in more detail below. An example of how a United Nations organization approaches this area can be seen in UNODC's Guidance Note<sup>9</sup> on gender mainstreaming.

## › Gender differences in corruption

Before exploring the emerging literature on gender differences in corruption, a brief note is included on the need to think critically about some of the common assumptions in this field. Having this “caveat” in mind may contribute to a deeper understanding of the relevant literature.

### Avoid essentialist, reductive thinking

In exploring questions concerning the influence of gender on corrupt acts, it is important to avoid essentialist, reductive thinking. This means avoiding understanding a particular gender as defined by a set of necessary and sufficient features that all persons of that gender share. Any particular gender is better thought of as a “family resemblance concept”<sup>10</sup>, where all members share a number of features in common, but do not necessarily all share any one particular feature in common (Wittgenstein, 2001).

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<sup>6</sup> More comprehensive definitions of gender and sex from the World Health Organization (WHO) are available at [www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/gender/gender-definitions](http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/gender/gender-definitions).

<sup>7</sup> A related account of Goal 5 of the SDGs, focusing on gender equality, is available here [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/).

<sup>8</sup> Available at [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF).

<sup>9</sup> Available at [www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/docs/UNODC-GuidanceNote-GenderMainstreaming.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/docs/UNODC-GuidanceNote-GenderMainstreaming.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> For a further discussion on this term, see [www.philosophy-index.com/wittgenstein/family-resemblance/](http://www.philosophy-index.com/wittgenstein/family-resemblance/).

This indicates that apparent causal relationships between gender and certain outcomes will not hold for all members of that gender, given the vast differences between individuals within any gender. Individual personality matters, and so do contextual factors like class, race, vulnerability and poverty levels. In fact, the interaction of those contextual factors can lead to effects that go beyond the total sum of their individual effects. The analytical framework of intersectionality<sup>11</sup> is used to describe how other factors play into gender discrimination, particularly race, compounding its effects (Crenshaw, 1991). For a further discussion and a class exercise on intersectionality see Modules 5 and 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics, and Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Avoiding essentialist, reductive thinking also includes being aware that gender (or sex) will rarely be the sole or even primary determinant of a person's behaviour (Debski and others, 2018). Arguably, in most situations it simply correlates with other underlying explanations of differences between genders. Students should be encouraged to critically analyse and debate gender and corruption without resorting to essentialist, reductive thinking. For a related discussion on the issues associated with essentialism, see Dzubinski and Diehl (2018). Furthermore, caution should be exercised when considering evidence seeming to support claims such as that "women are less corrupt than men", "women are more adversely affected by corruption" or "women in public office will – by virtue of their gender – advance and prioritize women's rights or the rights of vulnerable groups". The role that gender can play in preventing corruption in the long term requires further research in numerous contexts.

Another matter to bear in mind when discussing gender and corruption is that much of the work on gender relies heavily on sex-related data. Breaking down data by gender (gender-disaggregation) is challenging because gender is difficult to measure and quantify, and because the value of distinguishing it from sex is sometimes neglected. Sex-disaggregated data are therefore often treated as a rough proxy for gender-disaggregated data (although some countries are starting to collect data on both gender and sex<sup>12</sup>). However, as demonstrated below, sex-disaggregated data can conceal nuanced gendered processes underlying corruption.

### The state of research on the link between gender and corruption

Research on gender, sex and corruption emerged in the early 2000s with two studies from the World Bank, which reported a correlation between low levels of corruption and more women in government. The first study, conducted by Dollar, Fisman and Gatti (1999), explored a large cross-section of countries and found that a higher proportion of women in parliaments were associated with lower levels of corruption. This relationship remained unchanged when various measures of corruption were used and after the influence of several variables related to both gender and corruption, such as civil liberties, income and education, were removed from the statistical analysis.

The second study, Swamy and others (2001), found a similar correlation. On examining different kinds of female participation more closely, the authors found that countries with more women in parliament, in ministerial posts and in the labour force, were less likely to experience corruption.

<sup>11</sup> Available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/#IntApp>.

<sup>12</sup> For examples, see [www.oecd.org/gender/governance/toolkit/government/assessment-of-gender-impact/disaggregated-data/](http://www.oecd.org/gender/governance/toolkit/government/assessment-of-gender-impact/disaggregated-data/).

The authors found further support for their findings through an analysis of micro-survey data of business firms in Georgia. In particular, they found that those companies owned or controlled by women were more likely to report that they had never paid a bribe, and that women tended to have a lower stated tolerance for corruption.

These two foundational studies demonstrated that gender differences in corrupt actions and attitudes towards corruption exist<sup>13</sup>.

More recent research, however, suggests that findings on the correlations between gender and corruption are mixed, and that the contexts in which women face corruption and the likelihood that they may engage in it are critical. Other scholars have also analysed correlations between higher female representation in government and reduced levels of corruption. Their studies question findings which suggest that gendered differences in corruption are innate rather than a product of the person's environment. Sung (2003, p. 718), for example, found that "although female participation in government may be correlated to lower levels of corruption under some circumstances, this association loses significance when the effects of constitutional liberalism are appropriately controlled for". Rheinbay and Chêne (2016, p. 4) pointed out that there are many variables which must be considered and that "correlation does not imply causation". Even Swamy and others (2001, p. 26) acknowledged that the gender differences they observed were possibly attributable to factors such as "socialization, or to differences in access to networks of corruption, or in knowledge of how to engage in corrupt practices, or to other factors". Isolating the effect of gender on corruption has proved to be difficult.

To summarize some of the research available on gender and corruption, Boehm (2015) focused on three specific issues:

- Gender differences in accepting bribes
- Gender differences in offering bribes
- Gender differences in attitudes toward corruption

Boehm summarized his research findings on gender differences in corrupt behaviour and attitudes in Table 1.

<b>Attitude towards corruption</b>	<b>Accepting bribes</b>	<b>Offering bribes</b>
Survey responses suggest a lower tolerance of women towards corrupt behaviours.	With some exceptions that seem to respond to contextual factors, there is no significant difference between women and men.	Men are more likely to offer bribes.
However, it seems that this is true only in democracies, but not in autocracies and environments where corruption is endemic and widely tolerated.	Women behave more opportunistically: they may accept the bribe, but do not reciprocate with a corrupt favour.	The value of bribes offered by men tends to be higher.
	Women are less likely to accept bribes than men when there is a perceived risk of sanctions.	Both men and women offer higher bribes to men than to women.

Source: Boehm (2015, p. 3).

<sup>13</sup> For more information related to gender and the work of the World Bank, see [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/overview](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/overview).

For a further discussion of the ways in which environment, psychology and situation can influence ethical decision-making, see Module 6 and Module 8 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics.

## › Theories explaining the gender-corruption nexus

explain the correlations that have been discovered between gender and corruption, various theories on the gender–corruption nexus have been proposed. To date, the main areas of discussion on the topic of gender and corruption include: 1) socialization; 2) risk-appetite; 3) opportunities for corruption; 4) gender quotas; 5) the role of women; 6) institutions; and 7) context. These explanations are crucial in the evolving debate on how gender influences corruption and why.

### Socialization

The first and most common explanation for the gender–corruption nexus focuses on the differences in gender role socialization (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Swamy and others, 2001). Proponents of gender role socialization focus on the ways in which girls tend to be more “other-regarding” and caring than boys, and thus, as women, are predisposed to supporting and engaging in more pro-social behaviour. Gilligan (1982) proposes that there are gendered differences as to whether empathy and compassion are prioritized versus notions of justice-based morality. For a related discussion on the ethics of care and feminism, see Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics. By extension of this concept, women tend to be less selfish, and more trustworthy, charitable, public-spirited and altruistic than men (Boehm, 2015). Furthermore, as mothers who typically take on more unpaid domestic work than men, women tend to be driven by values and norms rather than by material gain, and as a result can, overall, be less prone to dishonest behaviour and corruption. A version of this argument is advanced in Rheinbay and Chêne (2016) who highlight empirical evidence that explains the differences in the way “men and women perceive, experience and tolerate corruption”. These arguments follow a similar logic found in the discourse on women in leadership roles, which draws on empirical findings (albeit contested) to demonstrate the ways in which women can make more transformational, proactive, relational leaders than men (Eagly, and others, 2003). In the corruption debate, the implication of these empirical findings is that, as a result of socialization, women are often less prone to corruption than men.

### Risk appetite

The second explanation focuses on the differences between men and women in terms of risk aversion and reciprocal behaviour. Previous research has focused on gender as a variable to explain and predict women's involvement in crime relative to men (see Bennett, Farrington and Huesmann, 2005; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). In terms of the gender–corruption nexus, Croson and Gneezy (2009) suggest that women are on average more risk-averse than men (company managers being one exception).

Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that women seem to be more sensitive to social cues, less competitive and more inclined to cooperate, but that they are also generally less trusting, espouse more flexible ethical standards, and may more likely than men refrain from norm-breaking behaviour for fear of adverse consequences and punishment (Esarey and Chirillo, 2013; Esarey and

Schwindt-Bayer, 2018). Relatedly, Rheinbay and Chêne (2016, p. 5) have pointed out that women are punished more severely than men for their involvement in corruption cases. This inevitably influences the likelihood of women to engage in corruption.

In a field experiment in Burkina Faso, in which subjects did not know they were participating, Armantier and Boly (2011) found that women were more prone to accept a bribe when they did not fear detection. Consistent with the finding that women are more risk-averse than men, controls seem to have a greater deterrent effect on women. Schulze and Frank (2003) found that men and women were equally likely to accept a bribe when no controls were in place, but women were less likely to accept bribes in cases where controls were in place. Overall, it is suggested that women are less likely than men to engage in corrupt acts, particularly when the risk of exposure and punishment is high.

### Opportunities for corruption and networks

A third explanation is that women may have fewer opportunities for corruption than men. Many acts of corruption are committed in economic or political contexts to which women historically have had less access. Hossain, Musembi and Hughes (2010, p. 22) note that often corrupt activities thrive in networks that are predominantly male, and to which women have less access, particularly where the networks are established and there is no kin relationship between men in the network and women. Furthermore, corruption flourishes in networks where there is trust. As relative newcomers to corruption networks, women may therefore help to disrupt existing networks and possibly decrease corruption over the short term (Hossain, Musembi and Hughes, 2010, p. 22). For example, in his publication on land corruption in sub-Saharan Africa, Raab (2017) found that many women are excluded from land ownership, not through law but through social practice, norms and corruption. In the long run, however, it is important to consider whether women might eventually adopt the network's corrupt norms as they become better integrated (Boehm, 2015). As women's access to corrupt networks increases, they may not continue to have an inhibiting effect on corruption.

In keeping with this line of thought, there are examples of women engaging in corruption when they have opportunities to do so. A recent example is the college admissions scandal in the United States where several Hollywood actresses and their partners were accused of paying bribes and obtaining falsified test results to secure places for their children in prestigious universities<sup>14</sup>. This case challenges assumptions that women are less corrupt than men and provides an example of a case where women and their partners were accused of corruption. More research needs to consider cases in which women are involved in corruption and the opportunity structures or kin networks that may help facilitate these cases. Furthermore, when discussing opportunities to engage in corruption, it is important to consider the differing shaming mechanisms and punishments that women and men receive for corruption. As noted above, it has been shown that women are punished more severely than men for engaging in corruption. Such differences in social repercussions and deterrence mechanisms will assumedly influence the inclination of men and women to pursue opportunities for corruption.

In recent years, the field of gender and corruption has increasingly explored the idea that women are less involved in corrupt transactions than men, rather than altogether less corrupt (Esarey and

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/03/us/college-admissions-scam-court/index.html>.

Chirillo, 2013; Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer, 2017). Continuing to question the gendered opportunities and structures surrounding corruption may offer new insights into the gender–corruption nexus.

Lastly, when considering corrupt networks, several research studies suggest that even when opportunities for corruption exist, women may still be less reliable partners in corruption than men. This was confirmed by Lambsdorff and Frank (2011), who demonstrated that female public servants are less likely than men to respond to bribes with favours and thus are comparatively unappealing partners in corruption. Rivas (2013) conducted an experiment which found that women were significantly more likely to behave opportunistically, accepting bribes without providing a corresponding favour. This experiment also found that men were more likely than women to offer higher bribes (i.e. more money), and that both men and women offered higher bribes to public officials when the latter were male. The findings of these experiments suggest that increasing the participation of women in government and the labour force might help disrupt corrupt networks in the short term and possibly the long term.

### **Gender quotas and corruption**

Gender quotas which increase women's numerical representation in organizations, including and in public office, have been linked to lower levels of corruption. Raising the number of women in the public domain and leadership positions has been suggested as a means of improving accountability systems, positively influencing organizational culture, and reducing corruption or improving perceptions of trust in public office (Stensöta, Wängnerud and Svensson, 2015). Empirical findings drawing on data from 38 countries in Asia indicate that "an increase in women's participation in politics could reduce corruption levels in Asian countries" (Paweenawat, 2018, p. 27). It is unclear, however, whether women's participation in the public domain reduces corruption, or whether less corruption creates more opportunities for women to enter politics and business (Barnes and Beaulieu, 2014).

New research is increasingly considering the associations between better governance and lower levels of corruption, on the one hand, and women's rights and participation in public life on the other hand (Rheinbay and Chêne, 2016, p. 4). Accordingly, as discussed in further detail below, international organizations as well as scholars, practitioners and policymakers are supporting gender mainstreaming (particularly in senior, formal leadership positions) as a means to reduce and prevent corruption in organizations.

### **Role matters**

The roles that women play in society are increasingly being considered as the factor which affects the prevalence of corruption. Women politicians, for example, may have a greater effect on corruption compared to women in other roles. Women are a diverse group with differing attitudes towards corruption and rules. Consequently, their roles should be carefully considered as a variable in research studies on gender and corruption. For instance, female company managers are greater risk takers than the average woman. This suggests that role might intersect with gender in explaining gender differences in corruption research.

While the direction of causality between women in leadership roles and lower levels of corruption remains unclear, some studies suggest that women policymakers tend to be better equipped to drive

policies that redress gender inequality and advance the rights of vulnerable groups such as women and children (Jha and Sarangi, 2018). This is consistent with earlier findings that women in parliament can display more progressive values and be more supportive of diversity and gender equality than men (Gouws and Kotze, 2007). Similarly, women in public office in countries with greater gender equality may be better positioned to promote policies consistent with public goods (Bauhr, Charron and Wängnerud, 2018; Engelbert and Kubbe, 2018).

A study by Jha and Sarangi (2018), which aimed to analyse whether women in politics and decision-making positions influence the levels of corruption in society, found that women have the effect of systematically reducing levels of corruption "only if they are represented in parliaments, implying that the effect on corruption is possibly through policy making". Women in elected assemblies, however, are generally not a homogenous group and will not necessarily curb corruption or enhance (let alone understand) the experiences of all women just because they are women. Most women elected to public office are typically economically (and perhaps socially) better off than most of the society they represent. They may have no notion of the specific needs and experiences of women in poverty-stricken areas or women living with disabilities. Furthermore, women's participation in parliament will not eliminate or prevent the forming of networks within and outside parliament (see, e.g., Johnson, Einarsdóttir and Pétursdóttir, 2013).

In her study on women engaged in illicit cross-border trading in Senegal, Howson (2012, p. 421) demonstrates the ways in which gender and class affect access to corrupt networks, including "geographic and socio-economic affinity with customs officers, state representatives and well-connected transporters". Thus, it is important to recognize that women overall will have varying attitudes towards corruption and rules, as well as different opportunity structures, and therefore their role in society must be considered.

Research on the influence of the role of women largely converges on the conclusion that the advancement of women to public leadership positions could result in policies that are more conducive to corruption mitigation. Researchers of corruption and gender are increasingly recognizing the importance of studying the intersections of gender with different dimensions such as sexuality and identity, educational backgrounds, socioeconomic class, as well as culture and context (see e.g. Sim and others, 2017).

It should further be noted that empowering women in a variety of roles (not omitting that of motherhood) has proved to be vital in furthering good governance. Motivated by the contribution they are making, many women, both urban and rural, who are given opportunities for education and spaces for voicing their views, choose to make economic sacrifices so that they can continue to support the development of their communities. These more silent yet impactful contributions shape the attitudes and values of the next generation of women and men who might then go on to occupy governance and other influential roles<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> For more information, see [www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/status\\_of\\_women\\_final.pdf](http://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/status_of_women_final.pdf).

## Institutions matter

The institutional structures surrounding gender and corruption should also be considered. Sung (2003) argued that the association of gender equality and lower levels of corruption might be caused by other unaccounted for variables such as the rule of law, freedom of the press, level of democracy and changes in women's participation over time. However, he found no significant relationship between gender and corruption when controlling for these variables.

The nature and structure of an institution (in this case a government) can mediate the relationship between gender and corruption (Stensöta, Wängnerud and Svensson, 2015). Studies focusing on the differences within and between democracies tend to show that the link between gender and corruption appears in some settings but not in others. Esarey and Chirillo (2013, p. 362), for example, found that increasing the number of women in public office had variable effects on the prevalence of corruption, but that democratic institutions "activate the relationship between gender and corruption" in a way that autocratic institutions do not.

A key finding of Stensöta, Wängnerud and Svensson (2015, p. 494) was the following:

The relationship between gender and corruption varies within countries depending on whether the institutional arena of the legislative or the institution of the bureaucratic administration is examined ... the curbing effect of women representatives on corruption is greater in the electoral than in the bureaucracy arena.

The implication of such research is that it is important to distinguish between institutions and contextual factors when making general claims about the relationship between gender and corruption.

## New explanations: Context matters

More recent and nuanced research illustrates the complex relationship between corruption, gender and other variables such as culture, institutions, and the nature of the political system (Debski and others, 2018; Stensöta, Wängnerud and Svenssons, 2015; Sung, 2003). This line of research stems from a concern that even if there is a correlation between gender and corruption, there are other variables at play which need to be explored to understand whether gender can mitigate corruption – and, if so, why and how.

In many cases, contextual social factors appear to be the main cause of the differences in corrupt behaviour and are more important than the gender of the participants. That said, it is important to exercise caution when generalizing empirical findings, as it is unlikely that women surveyed are truly representative. For example, empirical research on corruption and women in rural, poverty-stricken areas is extremely rare (Hossain, Musembi and Hughes, 2010, p. 8). As the research on the gender–corruption nexus continues to evolve, it must explore numerous contexts and a multiplicity of topics. Moreover, contextual factors such as institutions and the role of women should be accounted for in future studies that investigate correlations between gender and corruption.

## › **Gendered impacts of corruption**

### **Ways in which corruption can affect men and women differently**

Corruption tends to affect people differently relative to a range of factors, including gender, context, race, socioeconomic status, power relations and vulnerability. In many contexts, it is suspected that corruption can affect women more adversely than it does men. This is because vulnerable groups are more susceptible to corruption, and women are often more vulnerable than men (discrimination and oppression on the basis of sex and gender is a case in point – see more on this issue in Module 9 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics). Furthermore, insofar as some groups of women are more vulnerable than others, it follows that more vulnerable women are likely to be more adversely affected by corruption than those that are less vulnerable.

The evidence generally shows that the gendered impact of corruption is related to societal gender roles, social inequality and discrimination. Thus, women's disadvantages in many areas of life result in greater vulnerability to corruption compared to men, who enjoy more power and protection, and better access to countervailing strategies, including the justice system. Corruption severely influences the extent to which women's rights are ensured and protected. For example, law enforcement institutions and processes may rely only on anecdotal evidence, which leaves room for discretion by officials and therefore corruption such as bribe-seeking and extortion (Hossain, Musembi and Hughes, 2010). However, Sierra and Boehm (2015) acknowledge that there are many challenges in developing reliable quantitative data on exactly how corruption affects women. To better understand the impact of corruption on women, it is useful to distinguish between direct and indirect acts of corruption.

### **Women as direct victims of corruption**

Both men and women are affected by corruption in its various forms. However, in cases where women find themselves in a social, political, organizational or cultural context where they are more disempowered relative to men, and they are direct victims of corruption, their experiences of corruption can be more acute, and their avenues to respond to it more limited. For example, in cases where women are pressured to pay bribes, they are often less able to afford bribes than men or have less power and authority to resist the pressure. Corrupt criminal justice institutions can further exacerbate the problem, rendering women unable to report cases of bribery or to seek help for victimization. In such cases, women may be directly excluded from crucial services such as health care and education because they do not have the funds to pay bribes.

One of the key risks of corruption that directly affect women and girls is sexual corruption. According to Lindberg and Stensöta (2018), sexual corruption entails using sex and the human body as the currency of corruption. This concept is consistent with UNCAC's characterization of different forms of corruption, discussed at the beginning of the Module. When UNCAC requests States parties to criminalize bribery, abuse of functions and other forms of corruption, the Convention refers to the benefits involved in the corrupt transaction as "undue advantage". Undue advantage is intended to apply as broadly as possible, including in cases where intangible items or non-pecuniary benefits (such as sexual favours) are offered insofar as they create or may create a sense of obligation among the involved parts.

When sexual corruption is coercive, it is sometimes called sexual extortion<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, the International Association of Women Judges<sup>17</sup> refers to sexual corruption as sextortion. But the term sextortion has also been used differently in different contexts. For example, as noted in Module 12 of the UNODC Module Series on Cybercrime, sextortion can be associated with a form of cyberharassment which occurs when a "perpetrator threatens to disseminate sexually explicit ...[images and/or videos] of the victim unless sexual demands are met and/or sexually explicit images or videos are sent to the perpetrator" (Maras, 2016, p. 255).

Owing to corruption in many different contexts, women are often forced to secure access to services through the exchange of sexual services. For example, in Canada, a male immigration adjudicator responsible for deciding whether a South Korean woman would receive refugee status threatened the woman that he will deny her application unless she does "things on the side". In an example from Tanzania, a male court employee forced his female subordinates to sleep with him in order to earn overtime pay. Upon investigation, it was found that the HIV-infected supervisor had spread the infection to all his female employees<sup>18,19</sup>. Differentiating data on men's and women's experiences of corruption is difficult, but it is important to acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities of women and how these vulnerabilities may affect their experience of corruption.

In fragile and post-conflict States with weak governments and rule of law, corruption can exacerbate gross abuses of women's human rights in the form of rape, violence and forced displacement. Examples of gender-based discrimination and corruption can exist in many areas of society, including law enforcement, where women may be less able to present complaints without having to pay bribes or to have their complaints treated seriously. More extreme cases also have a direct impact on women, such as corrupt police forces and customs officers or politicians facilitating human trafficking, which often affects women and girls (UNODC, 2017). Sexual corruption targeting women can also occur during conflict and post-conflict peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts. An example of direct corruption is evident in the sex-for-food scandals where peacekeeping forces and aid workers supplied food and other resources on condition of sexual favours from women and children (Hossain, Musembi and Hughes, 2010).

Lastly, it has been suggested that women are more likely than men to be asked to pay bribes when seeking public services. Given their greater involvement in ensuring the family's education and health, including reproductive health, women are more likely to seek these public services and therefore to be asked to pay bribes associated with seeking those services (Sierra and Boehm, 2015). Experiential corruption surveys<sup>20</sup> carried out by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in a number of countries, however, caution that women's experiences with bribery are complex and context-dependent.

<sup>16</sup> For more information about this term, see [www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-link-between-corruption-and-gender-inequality-heavy-burden-for-development-and](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-link-between-corruption-and-gender-inequality-heavy-burden-for-development-and).

<sup>17</sup> Available at [www.iawj.org/programs/corruption-and-sextortion/](http://www.iawj.org/programs/corruption-and-sextortion/).

<sup>18</sup> For a further discussion of these two cases, and other examples of sexual abuse and corruption, see [www.unodc.org/documents/ji/knowledge\\_products/gender\\_paper.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/ji/knowledge_products/gender_paper.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> For a related discussion by the World Bank on how corruption affects vulnerable and impoverished communities, see here [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption).

<sup>20</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/corruption.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/corruption.html).

Surveys carried out in Afghanistan, the western Balkans and Nigeria examined the experiences of men and women in relation to bribery by different governmental authorities. In Afghanistan<sup>21</sup> and the western Balkans<sup>22</sup>, women reported a higher risk of paying bribes when in contact with health care professionals, but this trend was not identified in Nigeria<sup>23</sup>.

The differences in the results of these surveys underline the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data to better understand the experiences of men and women in relation to corruption and thus to be able to better target and tailor the responses. To do this, surveys designed to examine corruption and gender need to be carefully developed and carried out throughout the world. Furthermore, policies formulated based on survey data need to be nuanced and responsive to the complex relationship between corruption, gender, culture, country and context. For more information see Manual on Corruption Surveys<sup>24</sup> (UNODC, UNDP and UNODC-INEGI, 2018, pp. 42-44).

### **Women as indirect victims of corruption**

Even though corruption does not always have a direct impact, women often suffer from the indirect effects of corruption, for at least three reasons. First, corruption undermines economic development and perpetuates or aggravates poverty. Findings of the World Bank<sup>25</sup> demonstrate that corruption reinforces and can worsen existing inequalities. Corruption disproportionately affects the most vulnerable by increasing costs associated with and barriers to basic goods and services such as health care and education. According to data from the United Nations, most of the poor are women and children (UNDP, 2018). Hence, it is plausible that women suffer more than men when corruption hinders development. In particular, in fragile and post-conflict states that suffer from extreme poverty and corruption, women are affected because they are likely to be excluded from the labour force or credit markets, either by law or in social practice. Thus, corruption can prohibit access to basic rights like food, clothes, housing, medical care and education, and compromises economic opportunities and well-being (Stensöta and Wängnerud, 2018).

Second, women – and particularly poor women – are more dependent than men on public services, which are often depleted by corruption. Corruption in public procurement and contracting, particularly for resources earmarked for marginalized groups, usually results in either higher prices for services or lower quality services (Goetz and Jenkins, 2005). Since women often have lower incomes and fewer alternatives to acquire services such as health care and sanitation, the relative impact of higher-priced services is greater for them than for men. Consider, for example, individual women or groups of women in poverty-stricken areas in countries with political conflict and instability. These women are far less likely than men, or women in developed countries, to be able to access high-priced health services. This is consistent with evidence that corruption is associated with higher female mortality rates and death in childbirth (Téllez, n.y.)<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Afghanistan/Afghanistan-corruption-survey2010-Eng.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Afghanistan/Afghanistan-corruption-survey2010-Eng.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/corruption/Western\\_balkans\\_corruption\\_report\\_2011\\_web.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/corruption/Western_balkans_corruption_report_2011_web.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/publications\\_nigeria\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/publications_nigeria_assessment.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Crime-statistics/CorruptionManual\\_2018\\_web.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Crime-statistics/CorruptionManual_2018_web.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> See note 19.

<sup>26</sup> For more information on this topic, see [www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/policy\\_position\\_01\\_2014](http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/policy_position_01_2014)

Third, corruption in political systems perpetuates gender inequalities such as discrimination against women with respect to resources, participation in politics and access to high-level positions in public administration. Large-scale corruption can also undermine and threaten women's rights overall. With data from European countries, Sundström and Wängnerud (2014) show that the level of corruption and government ineffectiveness has a significant and negative effect on how many women get elected as local councillors. Male-dominated decision-making bodies can perpetuate a cycle in which fewer resources are allocated to government policies and programmes that benefit women or allow their participation in government.

Module 8 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics includes a discussion of the ways in which a person's context can influence his or her behaviour. This is relevant to the discussion above about direct and indirect forms of corruption and their impact on women.

## › Anti-corruption and gender mainstreaming

Women and sexual minorities are typically affected most by corruption because they are more vulnerable, enjoy fewer protections, and lack the opportunities to create policies that can counter their disadvantages. The differential impacts of corruption on individuals of different genders may be found in all areas of public life and can only be addressed by taking a holistic approach, which involves creating gender equality throughout society. Moreover, as the discussion suggests, gender equality should go beyond reducing the differential impacts of corruption and promote the fight against corruption more generally.

This implies that gender mainstreaming<sup>27</sup> can be a useful method for fighting and preventing corruption. Gender mainstreaming is an umbrella term for identifying unequal treatment based on gender and taking concrete actions to correct this and to ensure that all genders benefit equally. It aims to integrate a gendered perspective into every stage of the policy process, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender mainstreaming seeks to assess how policies affect the life and position of both women and men and to address imbalances to promote gender equality.

### **Addressing differential impact through social policies**

The role of women in traditional or patriarchal societies often causes them to interact less often than men with public and private organizations and to lack knowledge about their rights and protections. Therefore, social policies that bring women into the public arena and make information about public services widely available can be critical in reducing the differential impacts of corruption on women. Some examples of concrete gender-specific policies that could help in this regard are:

- Conducting door-to-door information campaigns that deliver information directly to women (e.g. Raskin postcards in Indonesia<sup>28</sup>; initiatives for health in Roma communities<sup>29</sup> in Romania;

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[gender\\_equality\\_and\\_corruption\\_what\\_are\\_the\\_linkage](#).

<sup>27</sup> Available at [www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/gender-mainstreaming](http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/gender-mainstreaming).

<sup>28</sup> Available at <https://nextbigwhat.com/indonesia-raskin-postcards/>.

<sup>29</sup> Available at [www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/roma-health/news/news/2018/4/toolkit-on-social-participation-informs-public-health-strategies-in-romania](http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/roma-health/news/news/2018/4/toolkit-on-social-participation-informs-public-health-strategies-in-romania).

education programmes in Cambodia<sup>30)</sup>

- Improving the quality and delivery of public goods and services that are regularly used by women (especially in areas such as health care and childcare)
- Promoting women's active involvement in improving public services (e.g. community monitoring programmes, such as parents' involvement in school management committees in many countries. See Duflo, Dupas and Kremer, 2015)
- Creating, more generally, social policies with a view to empowering women to achieve their potential, for instance through creating labour market opportunities

Differential victimization might also be addressed through legal channels. Some examples of legal structures that address differential victimization include:

- Establishing legal aid centres that offer advice for women, especially those from minorities and marginalized groups, whose rights have been negatively affected by corruption
- Establishing specialist legal support for women and girls who are directly affected by extreme forms of corruption such as sextortion
- Providing confidential information about existing legal and psychological support for victims of abuse in service delivery venues (e.g. local clinics)
- Promoting legal frameworks that support women's participation in political life (including women from minorities and marginalized groups)

### **Increasing gender equality to prevent corruption**

A correlation exists between high numbers of women in organizations and low levels of corruption. In this light, many policymakers have focused on gender mainstreaming and increasing gender equality in organizations as a key mechanism to combat corruption (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 2001; Jha and Sarangi, 2018). Particularly in areas such as government and politics, studies have shown that promoting women to positions as decision makers might help to decrease corruption. A study by Eggers, Vivyan and Wagner (2018) found that women in public office, especially politicians, are more averse to misconduct. As a result of these findings, gender mainstreaming has been increasingly discussed as a tool to curb corruption.

However, when considering the impact that gender mainstreaming may have on corruption, it is important to appreciate the complex interrelationships between gender and corruption in political and cultural contexts. Unqualified claims which overemphasize the role of gender quotas in decreasing corruption can be highly problematic. The following sections outline some of the debates on how gender mainstreaming could decrease corruption.

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<sup>30</sup> Available at [www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-development/PISA-D national report for Cambodia.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-development/PISA-D%20national%20report%20for%20Cambodia.pdf).

Cross-national data analysis suggests that the greater the number of women in elected assemblies, the lower a country's level of corruption is likely to be. An inverse relationship, however, is also possible. That is, in an organization where corruption is low, more women are likely to apply for a job. Stensöta and Wängnerud (2018, p. 8) demonstrate a link between the number of women in government and the levels of corruption in democracies. These authors argue that increased participation of women in elected office can reduce corruption, not only because women are more risk-averse, but also because of their different political agenda, namely, they prioritize the advancement of inclusive delivery of public goods and services. Female politicians often seek to improve the delivery of services that benefit women, such as health care and education. By promoting inclusive public services, female representatives could effectively reduce the justification for petty corruption. This phenomenon is called "the women's interest explanation". However, it is important to note that even though women may have more progressive and "pro-social" values overall, it does not necessarily imply that women in public office will – by virtue of their gender – always advance and prioritize women's rights or the rights of vulnerable groups.

A study of 20 European Union countries by Bauhr, Charron and Wängnerud (2018) provides evidence that the inclusion of women in locally elected assemblies reduced corruption. As the number of women in locally elected councils increased, the level of both grand and petty corruption decreased. For example, in the regions where the local council had more than 30 per cent of women representatives, less than ten per cent of the population experienced petty corruption. The effects, however, did vary across different public sectors. While female representation decreased the level of corruption in the health and education sectors, it had no effect on bribes paid to law enforcement agencies. Similarly, while both men and women experienced less bribery as the proportion of elected women increased, the rate of bribes paid decreased most among women. Bauhr, Charron and Wängnerud (2018) concluded that a woman was approximately 3.5 times more likely to pay a bribe in the education sector when the proportion of female representation was at its lowest compared to when it was at its highest.

Bauhr, Charron and Wängnerud (2018) coined the term "exclusion explanation" to explain why including women in locally elected assemblies will reduce corruption. These authors observed that it is more difficult for women to gain access to privileges that stem from corruption because they are excluded from inner circles of power and high-level decision-making processes. Therefore, it is in the individual interest of female politicians to break the corrupt networks and structures that are detrimental to their own political careers and to decrease gender inequality overall.

Generally, women who attain public office seek to further two separate political agenda: The improvement of public service delivery and the disruption of male-dominated networks. One important barrier to women's participation in politics is the norm of group and family voting, which is still present in many societies. This occurs when men influence the votes of women in their families or fill in the voting ballot for them. This form of gender inequality perpetuates corruption by keeping corrupt politicians in power and barring women from challenging them (Stockemer, 2018).

There is no doubt that gender equality is a vital part of the human rights agenda. For a full discussion on the ways in which corruption can have an impact on human rights, including women's rights, see Module 7 of the UNODC Module Series on Anti-Corruption. Increasing the inclusion of female representatives in elected assemblies is an equitable and therefore desirable policy in itself and a valuable by-product may be the reduction of corruption in society. Numerous sources presented throughout this Module suggest that gender mainstreaming could play an effective role in decreasing corruption and improving perceptions of trust in government (Eggers, Vivyan and Wagner, 2018). Many aspects of gender mainstreaming, however, still require greater consideration. We need to better understand the role of women as politicians and how women work to advance an agenda that often includes improving public services and dismantling corrupt, male-dominated networks (Bauhr, Charron and Wängnerud, 2018; Merkle, 2018). We need to analyse how gender quotas and policies, which increase the proportion of women in parliament, might reduce corruption levels in certain contexts (Paweenawat, 2018).

Anti-corruption programmes should consider differences in gender exposure and vulnerability to corruption, while gender equality programmes would benefit from an anti-corruption lens. Gender-sensitive anti-corruption programming can address unresolved issues, such as reducing women's exposure to corruption. Thus far, most gender-sensitive anti-corruption initiatives have been initiated by civil society organizations, communities, and individual women at both grassroots level and in senior government positions (Merkle, 2018). Approaches to tackle the direct and indirect gendered impacts of corruption may be found in UNODC Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2018–2020<sup>31</sup>.

## > Conclusion

The Module aimed to unpack the notion that women are less corruptible than men, to help us understand how corruption can maintain and exacerbate gender inequalities, and to stress the importance of gender mainstreaming for fighting corruption. The discussions also sought to demonstrate that while women can act as catalysts for change and challenge corrupt networks, it is equally important to think critically about why gender quotas and gender mainstreaming might help to dismantle corruption. What could be far more significant than gender itself, is the role of diversity as a tool in preventing corruption. Disrupting corrupt networks through the introduction of a wide array of actors from different cultural backgrounds and with different genders may be a far greater and long-lasting deterrent to corruption than simply focusing on the positive influence of women alone. Introducing diversity by employing women as a means of breaking up corrupt networks may prove effective, but it should be recognized that women are not the only group that might achieve this goal. Indeed, as discussed in further detail in Module 5 of the UNODC Module Series on Integrity and Ethics, diversity is important not only in the context of fairness to individuals and marginalized groups, but also as a means to improve society as a whole. Against this background, consideration should be given to how diversity overall can be used as a tool to combat corruption and what role women can play in this larger strategy.

<sup>31</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/UNOV-UNODC\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_and\\_the\\_Empowerment\\_of\\_Women\\_2018-2021\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/UNOV-UNODC_Strategy_for_Gender_Equality_and_the_Empowerment_of_Women_2018-2021_FINAL.pdf).

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## Exercises

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This section contains suggestions for in-class and pre-class educational exercises, while a post-class assignment for assessing student understanding of the Module is suggested in a separate section.

The exercises in this section are most appropriate for classes of up to 50 students, where students can be easily organized into small groups in which they discuss cases or conduct activities before group representatives provide feedback to the entire class. Although it is possible to have the same small group structure in large classes comprising a few hundred students, it is more challenging and the lecturer might wish to adapt techniques to ensure sufficient time for group discussions as well as providing feedback to the entire class. The easiest way to develop a small group discussion within a large class is to ask students to discuss the issues with the four or five students sitting closest to them. Given time limitations, not all groups will be able to provide feedback in each exercise. It is recommended that the lecturer makes random selections and tries to ensure that all groups get the opportunity to provide feedback at least once during the session. If time permits, the lecturer could facilitate a discussion in plenary after each group has provided feedback.

All exercises in this section are appropriate for both graduate and undergraduate students. However, as students' prior knowledge and exposure to these issues may vary widely, decisions about the appropriateness of exercises should be based on their educational and social context. The lecturer is encouraged to relate and connect each exercise to the key issues of the Module.

It is recommended that lecturers build a conducive and sympathetic environment at the start of class and before conducting the very first exercise. This can be done by breaking the ice in a supportive way, by respectfully examining students' starting orientations to corruption and gender, and by demonstrating genuine interest in their perspectives. Once students come to see the lecturer as respectful, genuinely interested in their orientation to the material, and consistent in regulating any snide or unsupportive comments by class members, that safe environment will enable effective learning and development.

## > Exercise 1: Icebreaker

This is a good exercise for the start of the Module. Upon completing the exercise begin the lecture and discussion and then return to this exercise again at the end of class to discuss if students feel any different about the original findings.

The lecturer hands out pieces of paper to all students in the class and gives the following instructions: Do not write your name on the paper. I would like you instead to write the numbers 1, 2 and 3, and next to each number, a tick (for yes) or a cross (for no) as a response to the following questions. You do not need to worry about what you write because your answers will be anonymous.

- 1) In your opinion, are male politicians more likely than female politicians to embezzle public funds in your country?
- 2) Imagine that a female traffic cop pulls over a motorist for breaking the law. Do you think that she is more likely to be offered a bribe by the motorist than a male traffic cop would be in the same situation?
- 3) In your opinion, if a famous woman in your country was found to be corrupt, and a famous man in your country had a year ago been found to have done exactly the same thing, would society react in the same way in both instances? (Consider Rheinbay and Chêne, 2016, 5)

A student is assigned to collect, shuffle and hand out the papers at random. The lecturer then asks the students to unfold the paper they received (containing the answers of another student). Next, the lecturer reads out loud again the questions one at a time and instructs students to put their hand up if the paper in front of them says 'yes' in response to a particular question.

### Lecturer guidelines:

The design of this exercise is intended to avoid social desirability bias, whereby students might not give honest answers because they are worried about what others might think of them. To preserve anonymity, it is best to discourage curiosity about 'whose paper might I have?'. It may also help to ensure at the beginning that all students write their ticks and crosses using pens of the same colour.

The lecturer should sum up after each show of hands whether hardly anyone, a few, most people, or almost everyone said yes to each question, and to tie each question to the broader point that it demonstrates:

- Descriptive gender stereotypes towards corruptibility.
- Perceived sex-differentiated variation in opportunity for corruption.
- Injunctive gender stereotypes towards corruption.
- Social responses and shaming mechanisms surrounding gender and corruption.

Following the session on the findings of the exercise, a discussion should be encouraged among students on the results. Provide students with a few minutes to reflect on the social context of the answers that they provided as a whole. A discussion should consider how students in other contexts may have answered questions differently or what factors in the questions may have changed their answers.

In large classes (50+ students), this exercise can be entirely carried out with an online immediate response software (Internet and facilities permitting).

## › Exercise 2: Addressing corruption and gendered networks

Each individual (or group) writes a short paragraph about a hypothetical case where single-gendered networks foster/promote corrupt behaviours. To ensure diversity among the scenarios that the class develops, the lecturer might wish to assign each group a dedicated area: private sector, political sphere, education, healthcare, for example, within which they should locate their hypothetical case. The paragraphs are then swapped in the class.

When receiving a paragraph that others have written, students should list all the stakeholders that are implicated/hurt in the situation as well as the consequential effects (that may not have been explicitly mentioned in the paragraph they received but could reasonably be assumed to exist). Then, students should brainstorm realistic options of how to tackle the formation and consequential effects of such networks keeping in mind 'gender' as a tool. Following this, students could consider the potential policies or mechanisms available to rectify these consequences to each of the stakeholders, as well as note the pressures associated with these courses of action. If no promising options are available, the student could think about what institutional mechanisms might make it easier to report existing situations and the preventive mechanisms in the long run.

The lecturer should then ask a few students to give a two-minute summary of the situation their group discussed, and what they considered to be the most promising ways of addressing the problem. After that, the lecturer opens the discussion to the whole class.

### Lecturer guidelines:

The lecturer must make it clear to the class that the hypothetical case to be developed should be comprehensive in nature comprising a substantial background leading to actions and consequences that involve multiple stakeholders within a clearly defined organisational structure.

The lecturer must also highlight the operable dimensions of 'gender' in the fight against corruption and should focus on the preventive measures and mechanisms that can be engendered.

## › Exercise 3: Case study: Understanding unequal representation in law enforcement

Either before they come to class, or for five minutes during class time, ask the students to read the CHRI Study Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in South Asia<sup>32</sup> as a case study. Then open a discussion around the following questions:

- Why were women not joining the police forces in India in the proportion stipulated in the federal government's guidelines?
- What kind of crimes tend to go unreported as a result of the shortage of female police officers?
- What acts of corruption, therefore, are more likely to go unpunished?
- Can you think of any policies that could be introduced to increase the numbers of women applying to become police officers?
- Can you think of any policies that could be introduced to reduce incentives for women to be judged as "poor copies' of male policemen"?
- Discuss possible barriers to women joining other public institutions that were not mentioned in the article.

### Lecturer guidelines:

Develop a discussion and encourage debate among students. After some questions relating to the study and the article, the lecturer may wish to turn the discussion towards public institutions, such as the police in his or her own country.

For large classes (50+ students), the lecturer may want to introduce an web-based joint work document (Google Docs or Padlet). The lecturer may split the class in teams without loss of anonymity, each of which is tasked with leading the online discussions on a particular question of the list above. The lecturer can then collect, display and summarize the main points.

## › Exercise 4: Gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption

Prior to coming to class, students are asked to identify a short section of the IDB document 'Gender Mainstreaming in the Transparency Fund'<sup>33</sup> that could be applied to their own country, and then to prepare a short presentation (five minutes) about how that might be done. Although the document is about a transparency policy, the questions and topics raised can be applied to other anti-corruption policies. Students would be expected to conduct their own research in addition to reading relevant sections of the IDB document. Videos and other materials by EIGE, available in the Additional teaching tools section of this module, may be helpful in this respect.

<sup>32</sup> Available at [www.humanrightsinitiative.org/download/1449728344rough-roads-to-equalitywomen-police-in-south-asia-august-2015.pdf](http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/download/1449728344rough-roads-to-equalitywomen-police-in-south-asia-august-2015.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> Available at <https://publications.iadb.org/en/publication/gender-mainstreaming-transparency-fund>.

**Lecturer guidelines:**

Instead of letting students choose for themselves, the lecturer may, prior to the class, wish to ask students to consider what gender mainstreaming would mean for a specific anti-corruption policy in their country, dividing the questions in List A (below) among the class. For this, the lecturer should point students towards Chapter 3 of the IDB document, available in the Module's Advanced reading list, and instruct them to read the relevant short section (usually less than one page in length) relating to their question.

Alternatively, the lecturer may prefer to ask the class to select from List B first (also below), and then have the students identify a policy related to corruption that could plausibly be introduced or improved in their own country whilst keeping their List B item in mind. Again, students should be pointed toward reading the relevant short section from the IDB document, in this case from Chapter 4.

**List A:**

- Do women and men benefit equally from the policy or project and how do we know that?
- Are women providing and accessing the information (as much as men are)?
- Do women have a substantive voice (or have they had a substantive voice) in decision-making?
- Are there opportunities for engaging women's organizations to reflect on or to formally assess the anti-corruption policy?
- Does the policy present gender-based risks?
- Does the policy reach women across social, economic and ethnic/racial identities?

**List B:**

- Gender equality audits.
- Gender-responsive complaint systems.
- Gender-smart contract negotiations.
- Gender-responsive budgeting.
- Levelling the procurement playing field.

**> Exercise 5: Class review**

During the last few minutes of the class, students are asked what the key points from the session were, and what queries they still have about the topic. The lecturer could open up student questions to the rest of the class, offering other students the opportunity to answer.

**Lecturer guidelines:**

Depending on the answers, the lecturer should take time to clarify all misunderstandings, and point students towards specific texts in the Module's Advanced reading list that will address further queries. For large classes (50+ students), the lecturer should replace this with a reflective exercise where they ask students to write individually the three key points they found novel in the lecture, and how they have changed their awareness of gendered differences in corruption and corruptibility. The lecturer can then summarize on the screen the key take-away points of the session.

# Possible class structure

This section contains recommendations for a teaching sequence and timing intended to achieve learning outcomes through a three-hour class. The lecturer may wish to disregard or shorten some of the segments below in order to give more time to other elements, including introduction, icebreakers, conclusion or short breaks. The structure could also be adapted for shorter or longer classes, given that the class durations vary across countries.

## Introduction (15 mins)

- Introduce the topic and provide a roadmap for the class. Emphasize at the outset the distinction between gender and sex.
- Discussion 1: Discuss gender inequalities from data about men and women (sex-disaggregated data).

## Perceptions versus reality (35 mins)

- Conduct Exercise 1, the icebreaker, by deliberately selecting students who were less involved in Discussion 1 to hand out the paper and pens, and collect them. Sum up as per the exercise instructions.
- Discussion 2: What are the different reasons why women are frequently perceived to be less corruptible than men? To what extent are these perceptions based on reality?

## The gendered impacts of corruption (60 mins)

- Discussion 3 (allow 20 mins): Why might corruption have gendered impacts? And what forms might these take? Conduct Exercise 2 (allow 20 mins), followed by Exercise 3 (allow 20 mins).

## Possible solutions (60 mins)

- Exercise 4 leads into the topic of gender mainstreaming. Introduce that topic more comprehensively here and move into the student presentations in Exercise 4. Depending on the number of students, they could present alone or in groups. Allow for questions and reflection from the other students after each presentation.

## Summary (10 mins)

- Conduct Exercise 5.



## Core reading

This section provides a list of (mostly) open access materials that the lecturer could ask the students to read before taking a class based on this Module.

Barnes, Tiffany, and others (2018). Restoring trust in the police: Why female officers reduce suspicions of corruption. *Governance*, vol. 31, issue 1 (January), pp.143–161.

» Available from [www.researchgate.net/publication/315635216\\_Restoring\\_Trust\\_in\\_the\\_Police\\_Why\\_Female\\_Officers\\_Reduce\\_Suspicions\\_of\\_Corruption](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315635216_Restoring_Trust_in_the_Police_Why_Female_Officers_Reduce_Suspicions_of_Corruption).

Boehm, Frédéric, and Erika Sierra (2015). The gendered impact of corruption: Who suffers more – men or women? U4 Brief, no. 9. Bergen, Norway: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute.

» Available from [www.u4.no/publications/the-gendered-impact-of-corruption-who-suffers-more-men-or-women](https://www.u4.no/publications/the-gendered-impact-of-corruption-who-suffers-more-men-or-women).

Goetz, Anne Marie (2007). Political Cleaners: Women as the New Anti Corruption Force? *Development and Change*, vol. 38, issue 1 (January), pp. 87–105.

Ismajli, Rrita, and Miranda Loli (2018). Add women and stir? Exploring the gendered dimension of corruption. *Public Administration Review*, 22 October.

» Available from [www.publicadministrationreview.com/2018/10/22/651/](https://www.publicadministrationreview.com/2018/10/22/651/).

Sim, Bérengère, and others (2017). Gender and Corruption: A Toolkit to Address the 'Add Women and Stir' Myth. OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum.

» Available from [www.researchgate.net/publication/317234027\\_Gender\\_and\\_corruption\\_A\\_toolkit\\_to\\_address\\_the'\\_add\\_women\\_and\\_stir'\\_myth](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317234027_Gender_and_corruption_A_toolkit_to_address_the'_add_women_and_stir'_myth).

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» Available from [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf).

## Advanced reading

The following readings are recommended for students interested in exploring the topics of this Module in more detail, and for lecturers teaching the Module:

Alatas, Vivi, and others (2009). Gender, Culture, and Corruption: Insights from an Experimental Analysis. *Southern Economic Journal*, vol. 75, no. 3 (January), pp. 663-680.

» Available from [www.researchgate.net/publication/23780047\\_Gender\\_Culture\\_and\\_Corruption\\_Insights\\_from\\_an\\_Experimental\\_Analysis](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/23780047_Gender_Culture_and_Corruption_Insights_from_an_Experimental_Analysis).

Bauhr, Monika, Nicholas Charron, and Lena Wängnerud (2018). Close the political gender gap to reduce corruption. U4 Brief, no. 3. Bergen, Norway: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute.

» Available from [www.u4.no/publications/close-the-political-gender-gap-to-reduce-corruption](http://www.u4.no/publications/close-the-political-gender-gap-to-reduce-corruption).

Bauhr, Monika, Nicholas Charron, and Lena Wängnerud (2018). Exclusion or interests? Why females in elected office reduce petty and grand corruption. *European Journal of Political Research* (July).

» Available from <https://ejpr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1475-6765.12300>.

Bjarnegård, Erin (2018). Focusing on Masculinity and Male-Dominated Networks in Corruption. In *Gender and Corruption: Historical Roots and New Avenues for Research*, Stensöta H., Wängnerud L., eds. Palgrave Macmillan.

Chêne, Marie, and Janna Rheinbay (2016). Gender and Corruption: Topic Guide. Berlin: Transparency International.

» Available from [www.transparency.org/whatwedo/answer/topic\\_guide\\_on\\_gender\\_and\\_corruption](http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/answer/topic_guide_on_gender_and_corruption).

Chin, Keric (2017). The Power of Procurement: How to Source from Women-Owned Businesses. UN Women.

» Available from [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/the-power-of-procurement](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/3/the-power-of-procurement).

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2015). Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in South Asia.

» Available from [www.humanrightsinitiative.org/download/1449728344rough-roads-to-equalitywomen-police-in-south-asia-august-2015.pdf](http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/download/1449728344rough-roads-to-equalitywomen-police-in-south-asia-august-2015.pdf).

Thomson Reuters Foundation, and others (2015). Combating Sextortion: A Comparative Study of Laws to Prosecute Corruption Involving Sexual Exploitation.

» Available from [www.trust.org/publications/i/?id=588013e6-2f99-4d54-8dd8-9a65ae2e0802](http://www.trust.org/publications/i/?id=588013e6-2f99-4d54-8dd8-9a65ae2e0802).

Combaz, Emilie (2018). Models of Gender-sensitive Procurement Used by International Aid Entities. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, United Kingdom: Institute of Development Studies.

» Available from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b697fe5274a6ffac66ac3/Gender\\_sensitive\\_procurmnt.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b3b697fe5274a6ffac66ac3/Gender_sensitive_procurmnt.pdf).

European Institute for Gender Equality (2016). Gender Equality Training: Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

» Available from <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-training-gender-mainstreaming-toolkit>.

Merkle, Ortrun. (2018). Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights in Anti-corruption Programming. U4 Helpdesk Answer no. 8. Bergen, Norway: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute.

» Available from [www.u4.no/publications/mainstreaming-gender-and-human-rights-in-anti-corruption-programming](http://www.u4.no/publications/mainstreaming-gender-and-human-rights-in-anti-corruption-programming).

Purushothaman, Sangeetha, and others (2012). Seeing Beyond the State: Grassroots Women's Perspectives on Corruption and Anti-corruption. New York: UNDP.

» Available from [www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2012/10/grassroots-womens-perspectives-on-corruption](http://www.unwomen.org/en/docs/2012/10/grassroots-womens-perspectives-on-corruption).

Rimmer, Susan Harris, ed. (2017). Gender-smart Procurement: Policies for Driving Change. Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs.

» Available from [www.chathamhouse.org/publication/gender-smart-procurement-policies-driving-change](http://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/gender-smart-procurement-policies-driving-change).

Sample, Kristen (2018). Gender Mainstreaming in the Transparency Fund. Washington, D.C.: Inter-American Development Bank.

» Available from <https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/8883>.

Sida (2015). Gender Toolbox Brief: Gender and Corruption.

» Available from [www.sida.se/contentassets/165672c0e28845f79c8a803382e32270/gender-and-corruption.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/165672c0e28845f79c8a803382e32270/gender-and-corruption.pdf).

Stensöta, Helena, Richard Svensson, and Lena Wängnerud (2015). Gender and Corruption: the mediating power of institutional logics. *Governance: An international Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, vol. 28, no. 4 (September), pp. 475-496.

Swamy, Anand, and others (2001). Gender and Corruption. *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 64, no. 1 (February), pp. 25-55.

» Available from [www.researchgate.net/publication/222684493\\_Gender\\_and\\_Corruption](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/222684493_Gender_and_Corruption).

Wängnerud, Lena (2010). Variation in Corruption between Mexican States Elaborating the Gender Perspective. QoG Working Paper Series, vol. 18. Gothenburg: Quality of Government Institute.

» Available from [www.researchgate.net/publication/228212121\\_Variation\\_in\\_Corruption\\_between\\_Mexican\\_States\\_Elaborating\\_the\\_Gender\\_Perspective](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/228212121_Variation_in_Corruption_between_Mexican_States_Elaborating_the_Gender_Perspective).



## Student assessment

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This section provides a suggestion for a post-class assignment for the purpose of assessing student understanding of the Module. Suggestions for pre-class or in-class assignments are provided in the Exercises section.

Theories within the field of gender and corruption have been proposing that women may be less likely to engage in corruption than men overall and that women may be less corruptible than men. These theories underpin the idea that gender mainstreaming, implementing gender quotas, and increasing the proportion of women in workforces (particularly in formal leadership positions in public office) will help curb corruption.

Write a 2000-word essay engaging with the debate on gender and corruption and discuss whether you agree that increasing the number of women in public office will drive corruption down, and why. The essay should critically assess the empirical literature on gender and corruption, as well as the literature investigating the relationship between gender mainstreaming strategies and reduced corruption. To excel at this essay, the student is expected to selectively dip into the Advanced reading material and draw on examples and cases to help defend his or her claims.

# Additional teaching tools

This section includes links to relevant teaching aides such as PowerPoint slides and video material that may help the lecturer to teach the issues covered by the Module. Lecturers may wish to adapt the slides and other resources to their needs.

## › Video material

**Gender and Corruption (2015).** Marginal Revolution University (4:33 min). A background lecture about gender and corruption, covering the Swamy and others' paper (2001).

- » Available from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5IGuKWBj4M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5IGuKWBj4M)

**Migration, Corruption and Sextortion (2017).** Ortrun Merkle (3:3 min). Ortun Merkle's research on gender migration and corruption covers some useful ground in sextortion.

- » Available from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD4XaTqN1ME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD4XaTqN1ME)

**'Sextortion': Online blackmail of men (2014).** BBC News (6:13 min). This news report explores how men around the world are failing victims to a pernicious form of online crime.

- » Available from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhN\\_bhK57dg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhN_bhK57dg).

**When the Bribe Isn't Money: Gender, Corruption and Sextortion (2018).** Lawrence University (45:19 mins). This is a lecture of Prof. Nancy Hendry who outlines the importance of understanding corruption and its effects on women beyond economic terms and harms.

- » Available from [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bx7JkQJJgxk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bx7JkQJJgxk).

## › Websites

The European Institute of Gender Equality provides information on gender mainstreaming strategies, including step-by-step guides. It offers primers on sex disaggregated data and links to gender equality.

- » Available from <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>.

## › Case studies, news reports and blogs

James Reston (2019). LGBTI+ Rights and Corruption: What's the Connection? Center for International Private Enterprise, 27 March.

- » Available from [www.cipe.org/blog/2019/03/27/lgbti-rights-and-corruption-whats-the-connection/](https://www.cipe.org/blog/2019/03/27/lgbti-rights-and-corruption-whats-the-connection/).

# Guidelines to develop a stand-alone course

This Module provides an outline for a three-hour class, but there is potential to develop its topics further into a stand-alone course. The scope and structure of such a course will be determined by the specific needs of each context, but a possible structure is presented here as a suggestion. It is based on the textbook of Rachels & Rachels (2012).

<b>Session</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
1.	Research at the turn of the century	Discussions of foundational papers by Dollar and others, 2001; Swamy and others, 2001; Sung, 2003; Goetz, 2007.
2.	Revisiting those theories	Discussions of work by Stensöta and others 2014, Esarey and Chirillo 2013.
3.	Deconstructing the stereotypes	Descriptive and injunctive stereotyping, and their role in corruption's gendered impacts.
4.	Opportunity structures for corruption	Revisit Goetz's argument, but bring in work on patronage and clientelist networks. See Wängnerud 2008, Szwarcberg Daby 2016.
5.	Corruption's gendered impacts (i)	Overview of the issue, revisit discussions of the pros and cons of sex-disaggregated data.
6.	Corruption's gendered impacts (ii)	Focus on sextortion.
7.	Gender mainstreaming (i)	Gender analysis, gender audit, gender budgeting.
8.	Gender mainstreaming (ii)	Gender stakeholder consultations, gender procurement, gender equality training. Introduce essay assignment instructions.
9.	Review week	Exercises to assess and reinforce learning over the course. Discussion of possible structures of the essay and feedback for any pre-class preparation of essay plans.



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