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Variation in Corruption between Mexican States Elaborating the Gender Perspective

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Abstract:

Dollar et al. (2001) sparked off research on gender and corruption. They showed, in a cross-country comparative study, that a high number of women in elected office is related to a low level of corruption. Whether there is a causal relationship is, however, disputed. Sung (2003) has argued that modern liberal democracy is the driving force behind a high number of women elected, as well as government accountability. This paper focuses on subnational variation in Mexico. Data from Transparency International indicate that corruption is ten times more likely to occur in requesting or receiving public services in the state most hit by corruption than in the state least affected. There is also considerable variation in the numbers of women elected, and the subnational analysis confirms previous cross-country findings: states with a high number of women elected tend to display lower levels of corruption than states with a low number of women elected. The Mexican case strengthens the idea that there are important links between gender and corruption. This paper launches a “rationality perspective,” arguing that when calculating costs and benefits, women more often than men choose to abstain from corrupt behavior.

Keywords: Corruption, gender, Mexico, public services, subnational level.

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Introduction

Why should we care about the link between gender and corruption? The short answer is that it tells us something about how societies progress. Cross-country comparative research has established that societies that elect large numbers of women tend to be less corrupt than societies that elect few women (Dollar et al., 2001; Swamy et al., 2001). Whether there is a causal relationship between gender and corruption is, however, disputed, and I agree with researchers who say that electing an increased number of women is no simple shortcut to good governance (Goetz, 2007; Vijayalakshimi, 2008).¹ Yet, this paper shows that a pattern corresponding to the pattern established in cross-country research is visible at the subnational level in Mexico. This result is a call for further elaboration of the gender perspective. Few studies have scrutinized the subnational level—Mexico is a federation of 31 states plus the national capital, Mexico City. A closer look reveals that in some states a high number of women elected is related to low levels of corruption, but that situation is not true for all states. In states that deviate from the findings established in cross-country comparative research, a large proportion of the population are low income and live in rural areas. What this study illuminates is the urgent need for fine-tuned understandings of the role that gender plays in social and economic development.

The main argument of the paper is that previous research in the field of gender and corruption has been too occupied with constructing or rejecting *monolithic theories*, that is, theories with the ambition to offer a foundation for all cases within a certain area. I believe that the relevant research questions in the field of gender and corruption concern *when*—under what circumstances—it is reasonable to believe that gender is a factor driving the results, and *what* gender theory is applicable. Thus, I argue for a *mixed model*, and the purpose of this paper is to use data from Mexico to confront existing hypotheses in the field of gender and corruption and make adjustments that further elaborate the gender perspective.

Mexico is a new democracy where women, partly due to the recent introduction of quota laws, are making steady progress towards gender equality in political life. The point of departure for this paper is, however, that the development is uneven. In 2005, the number of women elected to state legislatures varied between 8% in the state of Durango and 39% in the state of Quintana Roo. At the same time the number of women elected to municipal legislatures varied between 17% in the state of Chiapas and 48% in the state of Campeche. Together with the fact that there is considerable variation between the Mexican states in levels of corruption, this constitutes fruitful soil for delving into matters of gender and corruption.

I will start by presenting the main threads in previous research on gender and corruption. The conclusion of that section is that there is a need to develop dynamic understandings of women's position vis-à-vis men in society. So far, most theories in the field—even though they differ on important points—share a rather static view, which hinders theoretical progress. The second step is a presentation of the Mexican case and the spread of corruption. The backbone of the paper is the section where I, examine, in tandem, variation in corruption between Mexican states and variation in the number of women elected. The main section also includes an examination of additional differences between the Mexican states: What else characterizes states that have a high number of women elected and low levels of corruption and, conversely, what else characterizes states with a high level of corruption and low numbers of women elected? In the concluding section I come back to the argument that there is a need for a mixed model in research on gender and corruption. I launch what I call a "rationality perspective," taking into account women's position at the crossroad between democratic developments and old power structures. The methodology used is descriptive analysis with macro-level data.

Main Threads in Previous Research on Gender and Corruption

The article “Are Women Really the ‘Fairer’ Sex? Corruption and Women in Government,” by David Dollar and colleagues at the Development Research Group of the World Bank, initially sparked off research on gender and corruption. The article presents a large cross-country study and establishes that the proportion of women in parliament has a significant effect on corruption, even when other factors, such as overall level of social and economic development, political and civic freedom, average years of schooling, and ethnic fractionalization, are taken into account (Dollar et al., 2001). In this first extensive study, the assumption that women are more honest than men was never tested, but was underpinned by results from previous research findings pointing in the direction that women, for example, are more likely than men to exhibit “helping” behavior and to a larger extent, base voting decisions on social concerns (Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Goertzel, 1983). Later studies have added empirical evidence from sources like the World Value Surveys, showing that women are less involved in bribery and are less likely than men to condone bribe-taking.² Additional studies have also presented correlations between the changes in women’s position and the extent of corruption within countries over time (Swamy et al., 2001).

Important to note is that there are few, if any, studies that reject the relationship presented above. However, a number of authors have criticized the study by Dollar and colleagues regarding their failure to address the issue of the possibility of reversed causality—political regimes committed to impartiality and probity might also provide opportunities for women to attain positions of political power. Hung-En Sung, one of the most fervent critics of the research initiated by David Dollar and colleagues, suggests that “gender equality and government accountability are both great achievements of modern liberal democracy” (Sung, 2003, p. 718). The main dividing line brought forward so far is between a theoretical perspective saying that gender and corruption are parallel phenomena without much connection, highlighting a *spurious correlation*, and a theoretical perspective highlighting *gender differences/sex roles in society*. The article from Swamy and colleagues (2001) represents typical work from the latter strand of research. They emphasize the use of “several distinct data sets” and “careful analyses” when they underpin their argumentation:

We are making a simple point: to question the central finding of this paper, one needs to argue that the results of careful analyses of several distinct data sets have, by sheer fluke, all been biased in the same direction. Our conclusion, that there is indeed a gender differential in tolerance for corruption, is more plausible. (p. 25)

What I want to illustrate with the quote above is the lack of thorough theoretical reasoning; the authors rely heavily on the strength of the empirical evidence. Later studies in the same vein have, however, continued to flesh out the argument. In a study using data on eight Western European countries from the World Values Survey and the European Values Survey, covering the period 1981–1999, Torgler and Valev (2006) examine relationships between gender and age in the field of corruption. The results show that older individuals of both sexes were found to have similar strict moral perceptions; young men are singled out as the deviant law-breaking group. Torgler and Valev highlight lack of self-control among young men as an explanation for their tendency to be involved in illegal activities. The perspective brought forward is interesting, since it shifts focus from women to men, or at least male traits are included in the discussion. Torgler and Valev point to corruption as a criminal act and refer to the finding among criminologists that there is a rather universal gender gap in crime: women are “always and everywhere” less likely than men to commit criminal acts (see

also Mendoza, 2003). This line of reasoning is the other side of the coin in the discussion of women as more ethical or compliant than men.

Another strand of research in the field of gender and corruption relies on a theoretical perspective saying that the relationship between gender and corruption has to do with opportunities to commit “reckless” acts (Torgler & Valev, 2006, p. 138). Theories of *opportunity structures* basically comprise two versions, one focusing on conditions in the everyday lives of citizens and one focusing on conditions in the public sphere. Anne-Marie Goetz (2007) opposes a “myth-making” about male and female nature in corruption research and suggests differences in recruitment to political positions as an alternative approach:

The point is that the ways women are recruited (or not) to the leadership and rank-and-file of political parties restrict their opportunities for engaging in corrupt activities. These restrictions have to do with women’s relative exclusion from male patronage networks, and the sexual danger associated with inclusion. (p. 99)

It is a common understanding in corruption research that it is important to focus on corrupt subsystems, sustained by the collective action of interest groups who benefit from the corruption.³ The expression “old boys’ networks” is sometimes used to illustrate the duration of these subsystems and the fact that women, in most countries, are relatively few in positions of power. In a study from Ghana, Namawk Alhassan-Alolo (2007) concludes that, when exposed to an opportunity for corruption, women in public life do not prove less corrupt than men.

Turning to the citizen level, what is highlighted in research on opportunity structures is that women usually earn less money than men and that, due to family responsibilities in the private sphere, they are less involved in public matters. Naci Mocan (2008) develops the logic behind the argument:

All else the same, highly educated and high-income individuals should have higher exposure to being asked for a bribe by a government official because of their higher earning capacity and because they are likely to have more opportunities to interact with government officials. (p. 3)

The main argument in this strand of research is that gender has an indirect effect; women are less corrupt than men because they are not, to the same extent, found in certain layers of the population. A hypothesis brought forward by Manuel Alejandro Guerrero and Eduardo Rodríguez-Oreggia in a study about decisions among citizens in Mexico to commit corruption, is that women and men differ in their time values. Guerrero and Rodríguez-Oreggia (2005, p. 17) quote a male interviewee emphasizing that, if you are stopped by the police, “you save time and procedures by paying it [the bribe] there and then” and a female interviewee emphasizing that “you try to negotiate and try to pay them [the police] the least you can.” The underlying assumption is that men, generally speaking, value a fast process more than women.

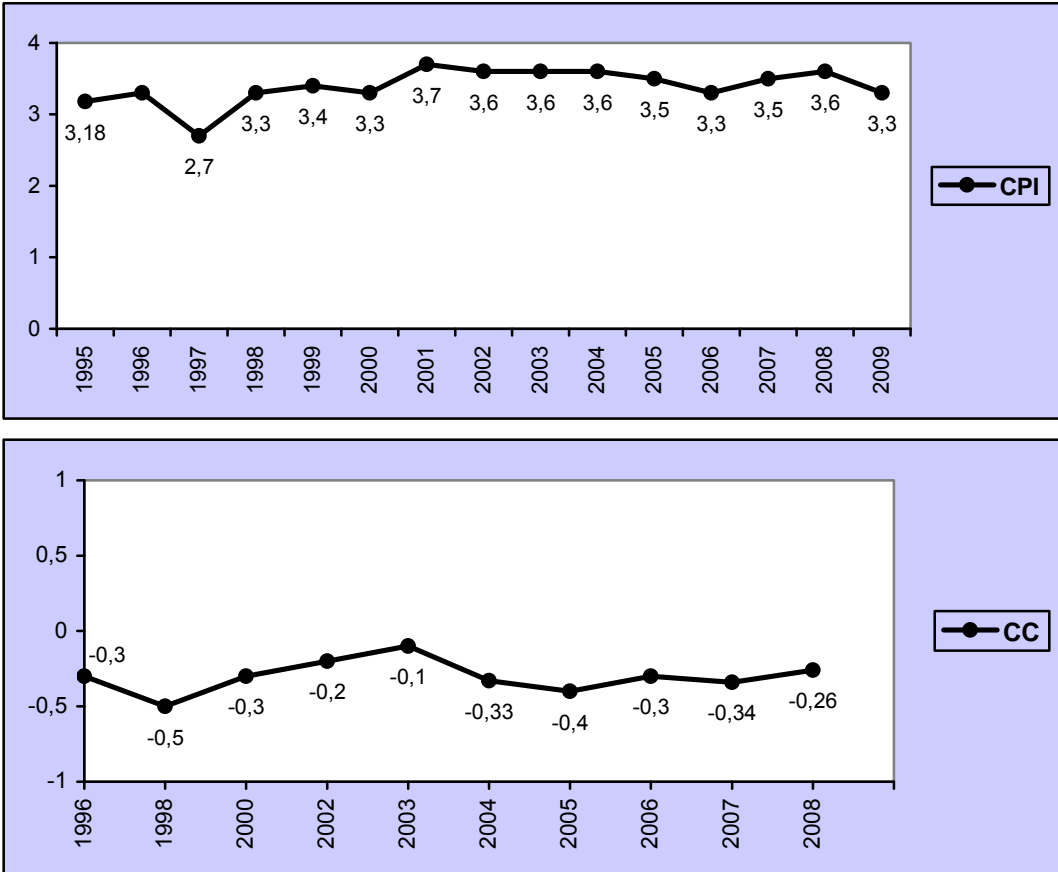
Currently, more and more studies use experimental designs to assess the relevance of the gender perspective, and the overall impression from these studies is that gender in its pure or basic sense has little impact (Alatas et al., 2009; McCabe, Ingram, & Dato-on, 2006).⁴ I find experimental studies interesting, since they suggest that gender differences found in previous research may not be nearly as universal as stated. However, there is a need to

supplement experimental studies with analysis of non-laboratory situations that take context into account. The point of departure for an experimental study is to create a situation of “all things being equal,” but most indicators tell us that, in real life, things are not equal between women and men. There will always be a myriad of factors that come into play in real life that do not necessarily show up in a situation strictly controlled by the researcher or the research team. A dense case study can reveal important connections between gender and factors hindering or enabling corruption.

Corruption in Mexico

“All of us take *mordidas*—100% of us,” says the Mexican police officer Antonio Martínez in an interview, and he continues: “Maybe not all the time. Maybe one time in 10. It buys lunch for the day” (USA Today, Sept. 16, 2009). The quote illustrates a well-established truth about Mexico. There is little doubt that Mexico is a country severely hit by corruption. Furthermore, data from Transparency International as well as the World Bank tell us that little has changed during the past decade of democratization. Figure 1 shows developments in corruption in Mexico since the mid-1990s when Transparency International (CPI) and the World Bank (CC) started their investigations. Both indexes display the same pattern: Mexico is consistently found on the bottom halves of the scales, leaning towards the end category, “a highly corrupt state,” and there are very small fluctuations between measurement occasions.⁵

Figure 1
Level of Corruption in Mexico 1995–2009



Comment: Data from Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) show perceptions of corruption from business people and analysts like journalists and researchers. The scale goes from 0, highly corrupt, to 10, highly clean. The World Bank indicator Control of Corruption (CC) is based on a number of different datasets measuring perceptions of corruption. The scale goes from -2.5, highly corrupt, to 2.5, highly clean. Both sources use the following definition of corruption: “exercise of public power for private gain.”

Though never under the control of a military dictatorship, as countries elsewhere in Latin America, Mexico was ruled by a single party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), for more than 70 years. For much of this time, the PRI indiscriminately used state resources to serve the needs of the PRI (Bruhn, 1996; Tangeman, 1997). It is far-fetched to single out PRI as the only source of corruption in Mexico; however, the hegemonic situation fostered a climate where informal exchanges became ubiquitous and where power was in the hands of a few close to the president (Magaloni, 2006; Morris, 1991). In 2000, the hegemonic rule came to an end when Vicente Fox from the left-right Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) became president.

Stephen D. Morris, a prominent scholar of corruption in Mexico, characterizes the election of 2000 as a “long-awaited” defeat of PRI (Morris, 2009, p. 5). Important changes towards democratization had been started already in earlier decades and Morris (2009, p. 3) points to a triple play of heightened electoral competition, divided government, and pluralism, that has strengthened the power and the role of the legislature, the judiciary, state and local governments, and society vis-à-vis the president and the federal government. Administrative reforms, directed at curbing corruption, have also been implemented more forcefully since 2000. In fact, there are a number of reasons to expect improvements in Mexico, but Morris’s (2009) thorough analyses presented in the book *Political Corruption in Mexico: The Impact of Democratization* confirms that, so far, high hopes have not been met.

The overall conclusion of Morris’s work is that an institutional approach—focusing on effective and accountable institutions as a way to combat corruption—is insufficient for understanding developments (in the case of Mexico, a lack of change). Morris (2009) discusses culture as a hindering factor and he hints that changes might, in the long run, come as a result of institutional design and conscious efforts by devoted actors. How long this will take is impossible to state. He reminds us that democratization in Mexico is an ongoing process:

In stunning contrast to just a decade ago, the effort against corruption and abuse of power has taken on new adherents and, ideologically at least, has become the norm rather than the exception. Still, as Mexico struggles to address a range of pressing issues in its transformation from an authoritarian into a truly democratic state, corruption continues to shape the nature and course of Mexican politics. (p. 239)

Variation in Corruption Between Mexican States

A less well-known fact, in comparison to the general picture of Mexico as a country severely hit by corruption, is that there is considerable variation between Mexican states. Different methods have been used to capture this variation. Arturo del Castillo and colleagues (2005) have constructed an *Index of Honesty and Efficiency in Public Infrastructure* in which they estimate the gap between what has been spent on infrastructure in Mexican states during three decades, 1970–2003, and real, existing infrastructure. The gap represents missing resources—lost due to either bad and inefficient planning and administration and/or corruption and misuse of public funds. The findings show that the gap is smallest in Michoacán, a state in West Mexico, and largest in Distrito Federal, that is, the capital, Mexico City. In Distrito Federal, over the past three decades, nearly six times more resources have been spent on infrastructure than the cost of the city’s actual infrastructure. On the contrary, the state of Michoacán has, during the same period, spent 0.15 times more money on infrastructure than actual costs (del Castillo et al., 2005, p. 8).

It goes without saying that corruption is a phenomenon hard to detect. There is a Mexican chapter of Transparency International (TI Mexico), which since 2001 has regularly conducted a *National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance*. The survey covers perceptions, as well as experiences, of corruption at the household level. The backbone of the survey is a set of questions that records the frequency with which acts of corruption take place in requesting or receiving public services. About 35 services are included, such as obtaining water, collecting garbage, and receiving an approval for working or selling in a public area. Questions also concern payment of bribes in connection with “services” like avoiding a ticket from the transit police. Questions are asked in personal interviews and the implementation makes it possible for citizens to remind themselves of recent transactions where corruption has been involved (normally questions concern transactions during the year preceding the survey, but timeframes are adjusted to fit different items).

Table 1. Variation in corruption between Mexican States, 2005

Ranking after percentage of public transactions where bribe-paying has been involved

TI Mexico full index	%	TI Mexico thin index	%		
Querétaro	2.0	Querétaro	1.0	<i>ranking in</i>	1→1
Chiapas	2.8	Nayarit	2.0	<i>thin index</i>	2→7
Baja California Sur	4.8	Coahuila	2.1	<i>compared to</i>	3→9
Sonora	5.2	Baja California	2.2	<i>full index</i>	4→14
Guanajuato	5.2	Colima	2.2		5→15
Zacatecas	5.3	Zacatecas	2.3		6→6
Nayarit	5.7	Guanajuato	2.3		7→4
Aguascalientes	6.2	Sonora	2.5		8→4
Coahuila	6.5	Sinaloa	2.8		9→10
San Luis Potosí	6.6	Aguascalientes	2.8		10→8
Sinaloa	6.6	Chiapas	2.9		11→2
Yucatán	6.7	Tamaulipas	2.9		12→13
Tamaulipas	6.8	Chihuahua	3.1		13→17
Baja California	6.9	Nuevo León	3.2		14→20
Colima	7.0	San Luis Potosí	3.3		15→10
Jalisco	7.2	Baja California Sur	3.8		16→3
Chihuahua	7.4	Puebla	3.9		17→25
Campeche	7.8	Yucatán	4.3		18→12
Oaxaca	8.1	Campeche	4.4		19→18
Nuevo León	9.3	Durango	4.7		20→27
Quintana Roo	9.4	Morelos	4.7		21→26
Tlaxcala	10.0	Veracruz	5.0		22→23
Michoacán	10.8	Jalisco	5.1		23→16
Veracruz	10.8	Quintana Roo	5.4		24→21
Puebla	10.9	Hidalgo	5.6		25→29
Morelos	11.0	Tlaxcala	5.7		26→22
Durango	11.1	Oaxaca	6.4		27→19
Guerrero	11.1	Tabasco	7.2		28→31
Hidalgo	11.4	Michoacán	8.2		29→23
Estado de Mexico	13.3	Estado de México	8.9		30→30
Tabasco	13.6	Guerrero	10.2		31→27
Distrito Federal	19.8	Distrito Federal	11.5		32→32
National average	10.1	National average	4.4	Spearman's rho	0.82

Comment: Data from the National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance by Transparency International Mexico, which records the frequency with which acts of corruption are reported in requesting or receiving 35 public services (full index) or 18 public services (thin index). Number of persons interviewed ~15,000.

On the national level, the data from TI Mexico, in accordance with the data from Transparency International and the World Bank, show a remarkably stable situation. In the first study, 2001, the national average in the *National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance* showed corruption in 10.6% of transactions. In subsequent surveys the national average has been 8.5% (2003), 10.1% (2005), and 10.0% (2007).⁶ Turning to the comparison

between Mexican states, the data from TI Mexico regularly singles out Distrito Federal as heavily corrupt. However, which state is least corrupt varies between surveys.

Table 1 focus on results from the TI Mexico 2005 survey. The table includes two measures: *the full index* which is the original index, and *the thin index*, which excludes items from the original index that relate to bribe-paying in cases like parking illegally or avoiding having one's car towed.⁷ The thin index has been constructed in order to get an indicator of corruption that purely concerns entitlements. The thin index also excludes services that are normally very seldom required, like asking for a building permit. The logic behind the thin index is thus to get an indicator that captures administrative corruption, taking place here and now, in citizens' everyday lives.

The results in Table 1 show that the full index and the thin index differ in the estimate of corruption levels. The full index indicates that, on average, every tenth transaction in Mexico involves bribery, whereas the thin index indicates that the same is true for every 25th transaction. However, Spearman's rho shows strong agreement (0.82) between the rank order of states: Querétaro, a state in north central Mexico, appears as the least corrupt state in both indexes, whereas Distrito Federal appears as the most corrupt. For individual citizens the difference is huge: the results indicate that one is ten times more likely to be confronted with corruption in requesting or receiving public services in the capital, Mexico City, than in Querétaro.

Stephen D. Morris, whose work I referred to previously, has conducted a comparative analysis of corruption in Mexican states, using the full index presented in Table 1 (Morris 2005). The overall conclusion is that very few cross-national findings could be duplicated at the subnational level in Mexico. For example, Morris finds only a weak hint that poorer states in Mexico suffered more corruption than wealthier states, and corruption was largely unaffected by the level of electoral competition in the state. Moreover, despite the long reign of the PRI and its attendant corruption, PRI-controlled states were not shown to differ from states held by opposition parties. The only factor that showed a robust significant effect was population; the larger the population, the higher the frequency of corrupt transactions. Morris argues that population affects the level of corruption because of its impact on the demand for government services, but what he really stresses is that the analysis, in the end, provides little to truly account for the variation (Morris, 2005, p. 17).⁸ There is a need for further scrutiny of corruption at the subnational level in Mexico.

Women's Political Representation in Mexico

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, sparked a worldwide quota trend with significant impact on Latin America (Dahlerup, 2006; Jaquette, 2009; Zetterberg, 2009). In 1996 a temporary law was approved in Mexico that recommended political parties at the national level consider adopting gender equality policies into their party statutes. In 2002 the reform was made into legislation: At the national level, Mexican law stipulates that parties are to have no more than 70% candidates or alternates of the same sex.⁹ The current number of women elected to the national lower house, the Cámara de Diputados, is 26.2%; this number is higher than in corresponding assemblies in countries like Canada (22.1%) and the United States (16.8%), which both represent well-established democracies.¹⁰

More important to note is that there is, as stated in the introduction to this paper, considerable variation between Mexican states. As of 2009, 18 of 32 Mexican states have enacted quota laws for the state legislative bodies, but the laws are sometimes very weak, and the presence of a quota law does not say much about the actual outcome. Table 2 shows the number of women elected to Mexican municipal legislatures—the average per state—and to state legislatures, as of 2005. What can be noted is that the number of women elected is

highest at the municipal level. The national average for the number of women elected to municipal legislatures was 30% in 2005 and the national average for state legislatures was 20%.

Table 2. The number of women elected in Mexico, 2005 (percent).

Municipal Legislatures	%	State Legislatures	%
Campeche	48	Quintana Roo	39
Tamaulipas	48	Distrito Federal	32
Chihuahua	43	Campeche	31
Zacatecas	43	Baja California Sur	29
Sonora	40	Zacatecas	27
Nayarit	36	Nuevo León	26
Coahuila	36	Chihuahua	24
Sinaloa	35	Tabasco	24
San Luis Potosí	34	Veracruz	24
Aguascalientes	33	Tamaulipas	22
Nuevo León	33	Coahuila	20
Yucatán	33	Colima	20
Tabasco	32	Guerrero	20
Colima	31	Puebla	20
Puebla	31	Yucatán	20
Guanajuato	30	Guanajuato	19
Jalisco	30	Jalisco	19
Morelos	30	San Luis Potosí	19
Querétaro	29	Sinaloa	19
Veracruz	29	Michoacán	18
Baja California	28	Hidalgo	17
Michoacán	27	Nayarit	17
Hidalgo	24	Oaxaca	17
Estado de México	24	Tlaxcala	16
Baja California Sur	23	Chiapas	15
Guerrero	23	Estado de México	15
Quintana Roo	23	Morelos	13
Tlaxcala	21	Sonora	13
Durango	19	Querétaro	12
Chiapas	17	Aguascalientes	11
Distrito Federal	16	Baja California	8
Oaxaca	-	Durango	8
National average	30	National average	20
Correlation* with TI full index 2005	0.30	Correlation* with TI full index 2005	0.14
Correlation* with TI thin index 2005	0.48	Correlation* with TI thin index 2005	-0.11

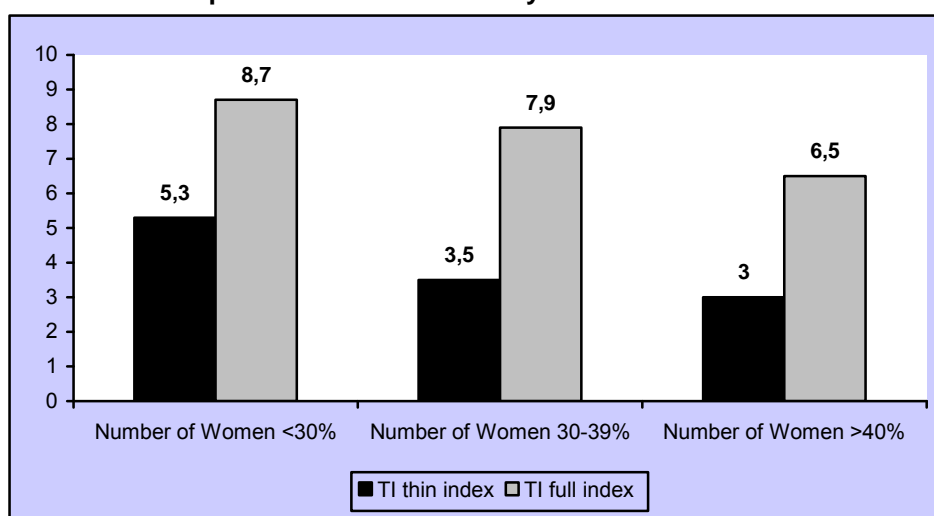
Comment: *Spearman's rho. Data on the number of women elected is provided by Sonia M. Frias (cf. Frias, 2008). Source: Sistema Nacional de Información Municipal 2005. The Federal District does not have municipalities; it is divided into districts and the number represents the delegates in these who are female. The case of Oaxaca is not comparable to the other states, since the majority of municipalities in this state elect their governing body through "usos y costumbres" which means that indigenous communities are allowed to use customary laws in elections and these laws sometimes exclude women from participation (see Danielson & Eisenstadt, 2009).

Table 2 also includes a measure, Spearman's rho,¹¹ on the correlation between rank orders of states according to the number of women elected, and rank orders of states according to the two TI Mexico indexes—the full index and the thin index—presented in the previous section. Interesting to note is that there is *no* correlation between the number of women elected to state legislatures and the level of corruption: Spearman's rho for the full index is 0.14 and for the thin index -0.11.¹² However, there is correlation between the number of women elected to municipal legislatures and the level of corruption. The agreement is most obvious in the case of the thin index—Spearman's rho is 0.48—and even though this is not, from a statistical point of view, a sign of a strong relationship, the finding is intriguing and invites further analysis.

A Categorization of Mexican States

In her seminal book on stratification by sex, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) launches the theory of a critical mass. The idea behind this theory is to seek to identify a tipping point at which the impact of women's presence in a certain organization, like a legislature, becomes apparent; a figure of ~30% is often mentioned. In Figure 3, I follow this line of reasoning and use data on the number of women elected to municipal legislatures in Mexico, in order to divide the states into three groups: states with less than 30% women elected, states with 30–39% women elected, and states with more than 40% women elected. Distrito Federal and the state of Oaxaca are excluded, since the municipal/district legislatures in these entities are very different from those in other states.¹³ For each group the average level of corruption is calculated. Black bars show results for the thin index and grey bars, results for the full index.

Figure 2
Level of corruption in Mexican states by the number of women elected



Comment: Data from the National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance by Transparency International Mexico, which records the frequency with which acts of corruption are reported in requesting or receiving 35 public services (full index) or 18 public services (thin index). Number of persons interviewed ~15,000. Data from 2005.

Both indexes display a reduction in corruption as the number of women elected increases: In Figure 2 the full index shows 8.7% corrupt transactions in states with the lowest number of women elected compared to 6.5% in states with the highest number of women elected. The thin index shows 5.3% corrupt transactions in states with the lowest number of women elected compared to 3.0% in states with the highest number of women elected. The results thus support that a critical mass approach might be useful in the search for connections between gender and factors hindering or enabling corruption.

The results above suggest that any of the two indexes could lay ground for further scrutiny; however, I have picked the thin index as the main indicator in the following sections. The argument here is that the thin index excludes public services that might have occurred well before 2005, and that it also excludes a number of items that possibly could be related to circumventing laws and regulations, rather than exercising entitlements. In order to elaborate the gender perspective further, I will categorize the Mexican states into four groups, according to the number of women elected to municipal legislatures (above or below 30%) and the level of corruption (above or below 3.5 in the thin index). The cut-off points here are somewhat arbitrary, but the findings reported in Figure 2 are, when no other guideline is

available, a reasonable point of departure. The logic behind a division of the Mexican states into four groups is the following:

- First, there is some correlation between the number of women elected to municipal legislatures and the level of corruption in Mexican states (see Table 2); however, the agreement between the two different rank orders of the states is not strong. There are obviously a number of states where the level of corruption and the number of women elected is high. I want to be able to separate these cases from cases that display a more expected pattern, i.e., either that the number of women elected is high and the level of corruption low, or the level of corruption high and the number of women elected low.
- Second, the results in Figure 2 indicate that the major difference is having a low or a fairly high number of women elected. The reduction in the thin index is from 5.3 to 3.5 in the first comparison, but only from 3.5 to 3.0 in the second. The group encompassing states with more than 40% women elected to municipal legislatures will therefore be merged with the group encompassing states with 30–39% women elected.

Figure 3 presents the states in each category: states with a high number of women elected and a low level of corruption; states with a low number of women elected and a low level of corruption; states with a high number of women elected and a high level of corruption; and finally, states with a low number of women elected and a high level of corruption.

Figure 3
Categorization of Mexican states by corruption and number of women elected

Level of corruption TI thin index	Women in municipal legislatures	
	High (30% or above)	Low (below 30%)
Low (below 3.5)	Tamaulipas Chihuahua Zacatecas Sonora Nayarit Coahuila Sinaloa San Luis Potosí Aguascalientes Nuevo León Colima Guanajuato <i>Group A, 12 states</i>	Querétaro Baja California Chiapas <i>Group B, 3 states</i>
	Campeche Yucatán Tabasco Puebla Jalisco Morelos <i>Group C, 6 states</i>	Veracruz Michoacán Hidalgo Estado de México Baja California Sur Guerrero Quintana Roo Tlaxcala Durango <i>Group D, 9 states</i>

Comment: Distrito Federal and Oaxaca are excluded. See Table 2 and Figure 2 for details.

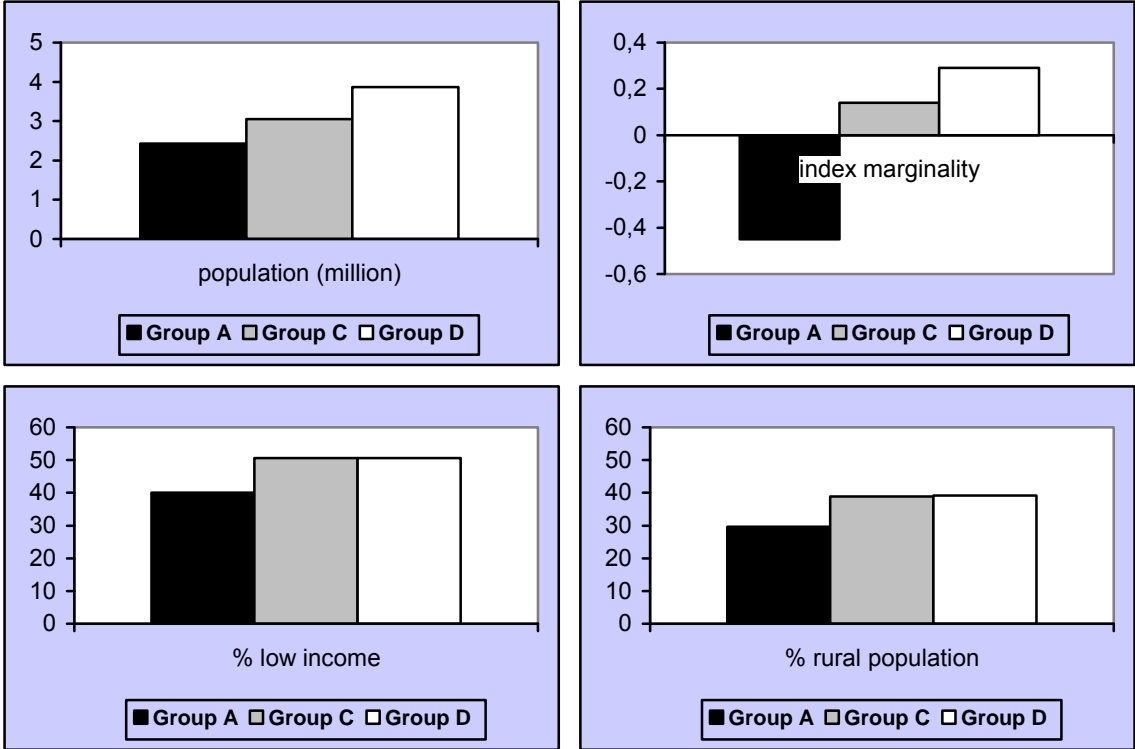
There are three states—Querétaro, Baja California, and Chiapas—found in group B, which is the category with a low number of women elected and a low level of corruption. The difference between Baja California, an “Americanized” state in northern Mexico, and Chiapas in the south, with its large indigenous population, is, for anyone with some knowledge of Mexico, particularly apparent. I see no point in including group B in the further analysis. The purpose is to elaborate the gender perspective and so these states are, at least at this stage of

the research process, the least relevant to include.¹⁴ The following analysis will thus focus on the 12 states in group A, the six states in group C, and the nine states in group D.

Variation Between Mexican States: Socioeconomic Stratification

A hypothesis brought forward in previous research on gender and corruption is that the correlation between a high number of women elected and low levels of corruption is spurious. What is said to be driving the result is, instead, modern liberal democracy. Researchers relying on cross-country comparisons have singled out accountability as the key mechanism at work. Alejandra Ríos-Cázares and Guillermo M. Cejudo (2009) have, in a study of the current situation on accountability in Mexico, found variation at the subnational level. However, most importantly, they found that accountability mechanisms are incomplete in all Mexican states: “Even in those cases where the legal framework has been updated and the institutions are in place, the incentives and capacities of those institutions fail to guarantee that governments will be held accountable” (Ríos-Cázares & Cejudo, 2009, p. 27). This finding is in line with the research from Stephen D. Morris (2009), following developments over time, that shows very little effect of administrative reforms directed towards curbing corruption.

Figure 4
Variation between Mexican states: socioeconomic stratification



Comment: For the categorization of Mexican states into groups A, C, and D, see Figure 3. The index of marginality comprises data on four areas of socioeconomic development: (i) education (literacy and completion of primary school), (ii) income, (iii) size of rural population and, (iv) housing (water, waste water, electricity, overcrowding, and dirt floors. Low income is defined as less than two minimum wages (~8 USD) per day and rural is defined as the proportion of people in the state living in communities of 5,000 inhabitants or less. The data on these variables was collected and compiled by Mexico’s National Commission on Population (CONAPO) in conjunction with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). Data from 2005, except for rural population, which is from 2002.

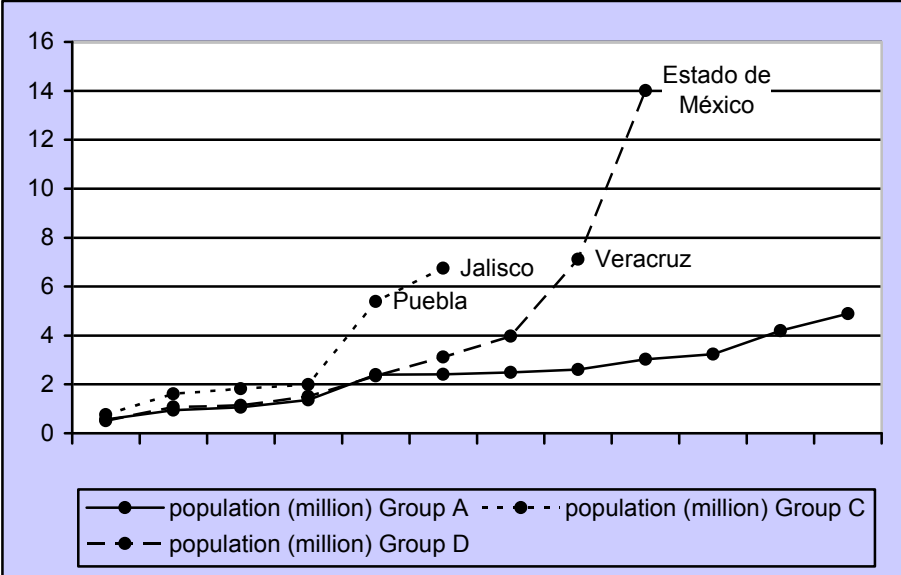
In this study I deviate from the debate on accountability and confront the hypothesis of a spurious correlation with data that reflect socioeconomic stratification. I include a measure

of population size, since this factor has shown significant effect in previous studies on variation in corruption between Mexican states. I also include two indicators on the level of inequality—an index of marginality and a measure of the percentage of population with low income—since international findings tell us that inequality is fertile soil for corrupt behavior (cf. Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; You & Khagram, 2005). I also include an indicator on the percentage of rural population. This measure indicates differences in modernization processes between Mexican states.¹⁵ Figure 4 show four different diagrams. For each of the indicators *population*, *index of marginality*, *percentage low income*, and *percentage rural population*, an average is displayed for states in groups A, C, and D. In the index of marginality, lower figures means a better—more equal—situation. The other measures are self-explanatory.

The most striking result in Figure 4 is that states in group A distinguish themselves by consistently lower levels. The average population is lower in this group than in groups C and D. The index of marginality is also lower, which means a more equal situation, and the corresponding result, a more equal situation, is also displayed in the results for the indicator percentage of households with low income. There are also, on average, fewer people living in rural areas in states included in group A than in states included in the other two groups.

What should be remembered, however, is that the different categories consist of relatively few cases; this means that one or two states displaying extreme results can have great impact. I have, therefore, for each indicator, also looked at the results for individual cases. For the indicators index of marginality, percentage low income, and percentage rural population, the patterns displayed in Figure 4 remain rather stable (results are not shown in a table). However, for the indicator population, the detailed analysis shows that a few extreme cases actually have great impact. The results in Figure 5 illustrate this finding. Figure 5 includes individual values for the 12 states in group A, the nine states in group C, and the six states in group D.

Figure 5
Population in Mexican states in groups A, C, and D



Comment: For the categorization of Mexican states into groups A, C, and D, see Figure 3. For more information, see also Figure 4.

There are only four states with a population considerably higher than four million people: Estado de México with the population of 14.2 million people, Veracruz with 7.1 million people, Jalisco with 6.6 million people, and Puebla with 5.4 million people. Among these

states, only Estado de México can be considered as simultaneously extremely corrupt (see Table 1) and therefore I find it less likely that population is the sole factor explaining variation in levels of corruption between Mexican states.

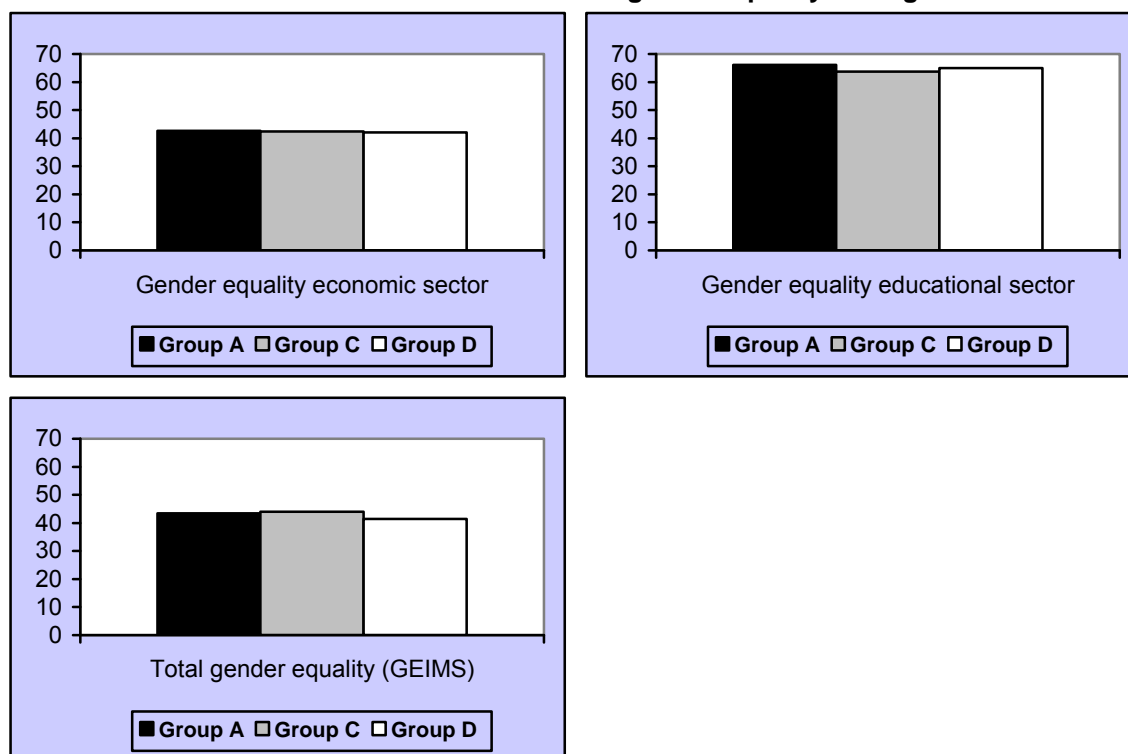
The most interesting category in this analysis on socioeconomic stratification is actually group C, that is, states with a high number of women elected and a high level of corruption. The only thing that distinguishes states in this group from states in group D is the number of women elected. The way I, at this stage of the analysis, interpret the results is that equality and modernization are important driving forces behind different levels of corruption. Going back to the hypothesis of a spurious correlation between gender and corruption, the adjustment I want to make after the results presented in this section, is that analyses of a “liberal” value like accountability should be supplemented with analyses of socioeconomic stratification. It might be the case that there exist important thresholds for development: When inequality is pertinent and processes towards modernization slow, it is extremely hard to pursue good governance.

Variation Between Mexican States: Gender Equality Among Citizens and in the Public Sphere

The data used in this paper are macro-level data, but the hypothesis in previous research on gender and corruption regarding gender differences/sex roles and opportunity structures concerns mechanisms at the individual level. Macro-level data are, however, extremely useful for producing a bird’s-eye view of society, and at least theories on opportunity structures can be reformulated to fit macro-level analysis. Theories on opportunity structures, focusing on the citizen level, stipulate that women are less corrupt than men because they usually earn less money than men and that, due to family responsibilities in the private sphere, they are less involved in public matters. Following that line of reasoning, states with low levels of corruption should display more traditional gender roles than states with high levels of corruption. More traditional gender roles mean that a comparatively high number of women are kept out of the layers of population where corrupt transactions usually take place.

In a rich analysis on variation in gender equality at the subnational level in Mexico Sonia M. Frias (2008) concludes that differences between the states are surprisingly small. She constructs a *Gender Equality Index in Mexican States* (GEIMS), assessing the level of gender equality in the economic, the educational, the political, and the legal spheres. For each sector she uses about seven parameters to estimate the level of gender equality. For example, the economic sphere includes measures of employment and women’s presence among business owners; the educational sphere includes measures like college degrees and the presence of women in such male-dominated areas as natural sciences; the political sphere includes measures of the number of women in elected office, but also in appointed positions such as those at the state-level administration; the legal sphere includes measures of legislation granting women’s rights, like abortion and publicly funded women’s shelters. To facilitate comparisons, Frias standardizes all indicators and calculates a *ratio* whereby the score of 100 represents full equality between women and men, and scores tending towards zero reflect greater inequality favoring men (Frias, 2008, p. 218). Figure 6 shows average results for states in groups A, C, and D on Frias’s total index (GEIMS) and two subindexes for the economic and the educational spheres of society.¹⁶

Figure 6
Variation between Mexican states: gender equality among citizens

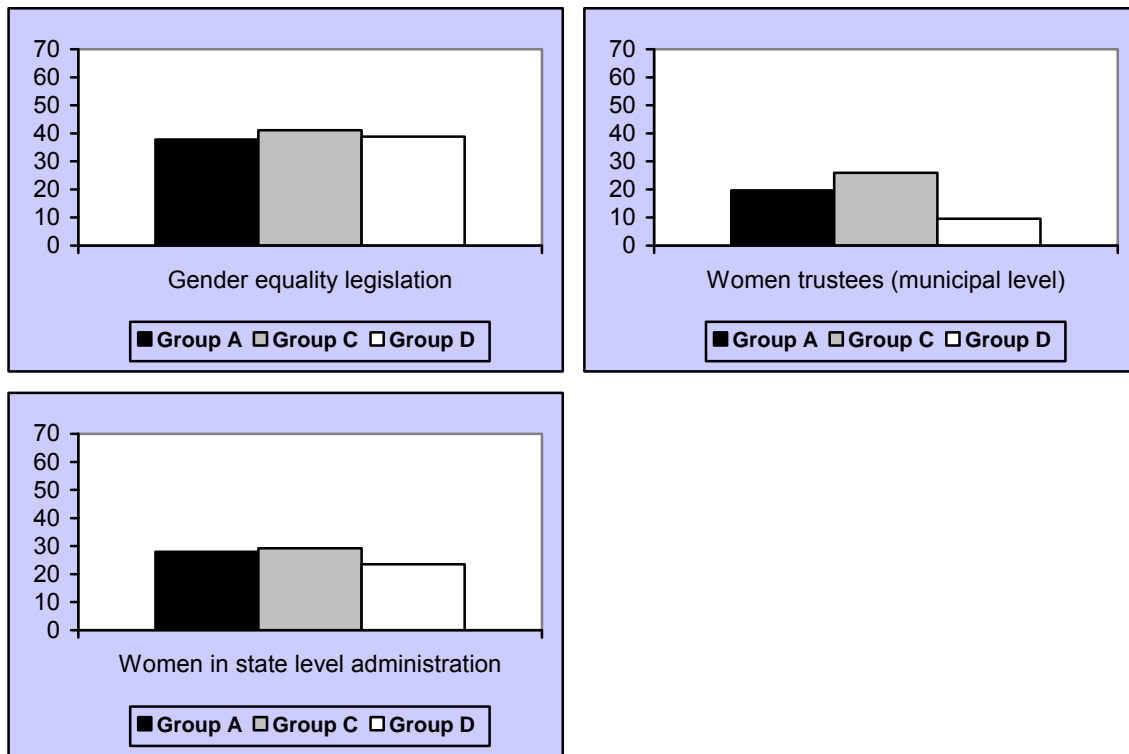


Comment: For the categorization of Mexican states into groups A, C, and D, see Figure 3. The data on gender equality have been compiled and published by Sonia M. Frias (2008). The indicators reflect a ratio whereby the score of 100 represents full equality between women and men, and scores tending towards zero reflect greater inequality favoring men. The *Gender Equality Index in Mexican States (GEIMS)* assesses the level of gender equality in the economic, the educational, the political, and the legal spheres. Gender equality in the educational sector and the economic sector represents two subindexes in GEIMS. Data reflect, with some minor exceptions, the situation as of 2005.

First of all, the results in Figure 6 confirm the conclusion from Frias (2008) that there is very little variation between Mexican states. An equally flat result is also noted when scores for individual states in each category are taken into account (results are not shown in a table). Second, the results tell us that, even though women are making steady progress towards gender equality in political life in Mexico, there is a long way to go towards full gender equality. For example, the index of total gender equality shows that for every 100 men there are, on average, about 40 women in equivalent positions in Mexico. Before drawing any further conclusions, I will also present some results that speak to the hypothesis on opportunity structures, focusing on conditions in the public sphere.

Even though the data are not ideal for confronting the hypothesis with a focus on conditions in the public sphere, Sonia M. Frias's study can be used to scrutinize a kind of "women-friendliness," as manifested not only in laws protecting women's rights but also in the presence of women in positions of power. Figure 7 includes ratios for *gender equality in legislation* and *number of women trustees* (a position at the municipal level in Mexico with great financial power and high visibility) and for an index on *women in state-level administration* (state secretaries, federal civil servants, and positions at the state supreme courts). The findings indicate that there is some variation between the Mexican states, especially in the number of women trustees, and even though the results should not be exaggerated, Figure 7 suggest that states in group C should be singled out as more ambitious or women-friendly.

Figure 7
Variation between Mexican states: gender equality in the public sphere



Comment: For the categorization of Mexican states into groups A, C, and D, see Figure 3. The data on gender equality have been compiled and published by Sonia M. Frias (2008). The indicators reflect a ratio whereby the score of 100 represents full equality between women and men, and scores tending towards zero reflect greater inequality favoring men. The variable gender equality legislation reflects the number of laws in different states that grant women’s rights. The variable women trustees reflects the percentage of city trustees (síndicos) who are women relative to the percentage of city trustees who are men. The variable women in state-level administration is an average of the ratio women to men in three types of positions: state secretaries, federal civil servants, and “magistrates,” a position at the state supreme court. Data reflect, with some minor exceptions, the situation as of 2005.

In summary, the results presented in this section undermine the hypothesis on opportunity structures, focusing on the citizen level, in the field of gender and corruption. There is very little indication that gender roles vary between Mexican states in ways that add anything to the picture. I believe the results in this section should be interpreted against the backdrop of the results presented in the previous section on socioeconomic stratification. Taking on a bird’s-eye view, I suggest that states in group C face as many obstacles to good governance as states in group D; however, states in group C seem to use gender equality in the public sphere as a strategy to combat some of these obstacles. States in group C do not only have a comparatively high number of women elected to municipal legislatures, but they also have a comparatively high number of women appointed as trustees. It should also be noted that states in group A do not distinguish themselves in this analysis on gender equality.

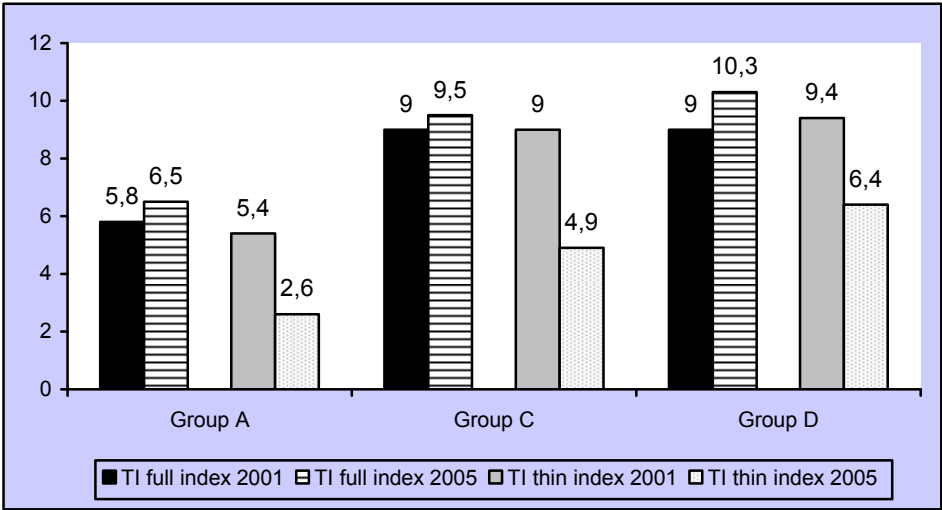
The Legacy of the Past

Corruption is about deep structures in society. Before I start to wrap up the findings, I will therefore present the level of corruption in Mexican states in previous years. It might be the case that the variation in corruption, reflected in tables and diagrams throughout this paper, is a legacy of the past. That would mean that any interpretation subscribing importance to the gender perspective is standing on rather shaky ground. Figure 8 compares levels of corruption in each category of states for 2001 and 2005. For each group columns one and two

presents results for the full index, which is the original index from TI Mexico. Columns three and four present results from the thin index, which is the index purely focusing on entitlements. Results from the full index indicate a small increase, in all groups, in the level of corruption between 2001 and 2005. However, the columns presenting results for the thin index indicate the opposite trend—that is, a trend towards reduced levels of corruption between 2001 and 2005.

If we look at the results in more detail, some differences between states in groups C and D becomes apparent. The general level of corruption, the full index, is about the same in both groups and levels do not change much between years. However, between 2001 and 2005, there is noteworthy reduction in corruption concerning entitlements, the thin index, and the reduction is, on average, larger in group C (from 9.0 to 4.9) than in group D (from 9.4 to 6.4).

Figure 8
Levels of corruption in Mexican states, 2001 and 2005



Comment: Data from the National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance by Transparency International Mexico, which records the frequency with which acts of corruption were reported in requesting or receiving 35 public services (full index) or 18 public services (thin index). Number of persons interviewed ~15,000. For the categorization of Mexican states into groups A, C, and D, see Figure 3.

The comparison across time highlights the importance of being really careful when turning notoriously contested concepts like corruption into concrete indicators and indexes. However, there is no reason to reject the idea that what is going on in Mexico is a multi-layered development. The full index includes “services” like preventing a car from being impounded by transit police or getting a car out of impound, which is the worst public transaction ever in Mexico from the perspective of corruption: In 2001 57.2% of transactions connected to this “service” involved bribery; in 2005 the corresponding figure was 60.2%. (For an overview of corruption in different services included in the *National Survey on Corruption and Good Governance* from TI Mexico, see Morris, 2009, pp. 195–196). There are also a number of other equally corrupt services included in the full index.¹⁷ This means that the overall impression might be one of stability, since there is a lack of change in these extremely corrupt areas, but, as indicated in the thin index, there might be real progress taking place in the shadow of these interactions.¹⁸

Elaborating the Gender Perspective

The gender perspective is indeed intriguing. The link between gender and corruption tell us something about how societies progress; however, the question is *what* does it tell us,

more exactly. The results presented here underscore the need for a mixed model in future research on gender and corruption; there is no simple or straightforward way to interpret the interactions taking place. As stated elsewhere in this paper, there are few, if any, studies that reject the relationship between the number of women elected and levels of corruption. The sheer fact that the finding established in cross-country comparative research is repeated at the subnational level in Mexico, from my point of view, strengthens the relevance of the gender perspective. It is hard to dismiss the findings presented here as only a matter of modern liberal democracy.

The theoretical perspective, currently gaining ground in research on gender and corruption, is the opportunity structure perspective. I do not reject the relevance of this perspective, but it is insufficient for understanding what is going on. I believe it is necessary to supplement research on gender and corruption with a theoretical perspective that take into account that the different positions women and men hold in society affect them in fundamental ways. Theories on gender differences/sex roles do not need to be rooted in essentialist understandings of women and men. I agree with Ann-Marie Goetz's (2007) statement that there is too much myth-making about the male and female nature. However, most contemporary societies are structured around sex, and that structure coincides with structures of power.

A Rationality Perspective

I believe it is useful to link theory development in the field of gender and corruption to questions about the rationale for women to abstain from corrupt behavior. In her extensive study *Women in Contemporary Mexican Politics*, Victoria E. Rodríguez (2003) finds that it is common among women politicians in Mexico to have a background in social movements. It might be the case that women are not just locked out from old boys' networks, where corruption is part of the game. In order to reach and uphold positions of power, women might actively seek to build alternative power bases. Democratic developments open doors for women to enter the public sphere, but women's connections with the surrounding society might still be different. In most societies social movements serve the role as a watchdog for abuse of public office (Grimes, 2008a, 2008b). To engage in corrupt behavior would then be particularly risky for women, since it could ruin their chances to gain support in future races.¹⁹

At a citizen level, one has to deal with the fact that women usually have fewer assets than men, whether in terms of cash, land, or other resources. At the same time women are most often responsible for the well-being of the family. In her book Rodríguez (2003) refers to a number of studies that highlight the difficulties women in Mexico face in trying to make ends meet. If corruption is viewed as an extra expense, leaving less money for food, schooling, and clothing, it becomes quite understandable why it would be rational for women to abstain from corrupt behavior and "negotiate to pay the least they can" when confronted with bribe-paying.²⁰ I also believe that Ann-Marie Goetz (2007) touches upon something important when she writes that there is, for women, a sexual danger associated with inclusion into patronage networks. This paper has dealt with bribe-paying in requesting or receiving public services. The bigger picture does, however, include that drug-dealing and trafficking leave important imprints on everyday lives in Mexico (McDonald, 2005; Olivera & Furio, 2006). In summary, when calculating costs and benefits, women might make a different decision than men about corruption. However, in contrast to Guerrero and Rodríguez-Oreggia (2005), I do not believe that the reasons "only" have to do with time values. There is a dynamic that puts women and men in different positions in society, with women as the subordinate group, and it is reasonable to believe that this affects behavior.

An alternative interpretation is that the patterns presented here is about *reciprocity*. To some extent, corruption presupposes a kind of mutual understanding between the parties and that can reasonably be easier to create if you belong to the same clan, ethnic group or, why not, sex. Especially in countries with large differences in terms of gender equality there might be difficult to establish mutual understandings and necessary “partnership.” The reciprocity perspective is a middle way between a rationality perspective and a perspective highlighting opportunity structures.²¹

Fine-Tuned Understandings of the Role of Gender in Social and Economic Development

The conclusion of this paper is not that hypotheses brought forward in previous research on gender and corruption should be rejected. I have two points to make. The first is that there is a missing spot in previous research that has to do with women’s and men’s calculations about whether or not to take part in corrupt interactions. I have started to fill this gap by launching what I denote as a rationality perspective.

The second point is that the issue of corruption has to be connected to the wider question on how societies progress. In international studies there is a much-used distinction between “incremental” and “fast-track” models explaining a high number of women in elected office (Dahlerup, 2006; see also Wängnerud, 2009). Sweden and Rwanda can be used to illustrate two typical cases in each category: During the 1970s Sweden crossed the threshold of 20% women in the national parliament and this proportion climbed past 30% during the 1980s and 40% during the 1990s. The current figure, after the election in 2006 is 47% women in the Swedish national parliament. Whereas developments in Sweden span more than four decades, the number of women in the national parliament in Rwanda increased tremendously in just a few years. Gender quotas for seats in parliament were implemented in Rwanda as a part of the reconciliation process after the genocide. In 1994 women made up 17.1% of the national parliament in Rwanda. After the election in 2008, the number was 56.3%. Rwanda’s situation is much different from Sweden’s. Sweden’s twentieth-century history is characterized by political stability, economic growth, and peace. In contrast, Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in the world and its modern history contains disastrous wars. The conclusion has been reached that the increased number of women elected, so far, has had little effect on policy outputs in Rwanda (Devlin & Elgie, 2008). Perhaps needless to say, Sweden is among the least corrupt countries in the world, whereas Rwanda is severely corrupt. In a recent rank order, Transparency International placed Sweden as number three and Rwanda as number 89 among a total of 180 countries in the world.²²

There is variation at the subnational level in Mexico in terms of social and economic development. Differences are perhaps not as striking as between Rwanda and Sweden, but what could be gained from the outlook above is that a high number of women elected can be related to far-reaching processes towards modernization and equality (Sweden), but it can also be related to a wish to start such processes (Rwanda). The Mexican states in group A, that is, states with a high number of women elected and low levels of corruption, would then be “Mexico’s Sweden” and states in group C, that is, states with a high number of women elected and a high level of corruption, “Mexico’s Rwanda.” However, in order to get any further and reach final conclusions, we need not only refreshed theoretical understandings, but also more data on the situation in Mexico, and not least, research designs that capture developments over time. Future studies would also gain from scrutinizing sub-subnational variation, i.e., variation at the municipal level or even smaller units of local administration.

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Appendix: Items Included in the Transparency International Thin Index

Q: Have you, or any member of your family, during the past year done any of the following? (yes or no) Did you have to pay a bribe, monetary or otherwise, to obtain this service? (yes or no)

- 1 ...carry out a transaction to obtain documents related to your education or degrees from public schools?
- 2 ...make arrangement for the immediate attention of a patient in a clinic or hospital?
- 3 ...visit a patient in the hospital outside of visiting hours?
- 4 ...carry out a transaction to obtain or expedite records of birth, death, marriage, or divorce at the civil registry?
- 5 ...carry out any transaction related to your vehicle: car, truck, motorcycle, or other (for example, a transfer of ownership)?
- 6 ...carry out a transaction to obtain government employment?
- 7 ...apply for a scholarship for some type of education?
- 8 ...apply for permits related to land uses or other transaction related to the public registry of land ownership?
- 9 ...carry out a transaction related to the connection or reconnection of electricity to your home?
- 10 ...carry out a transaction to obtain an official school enrolment card?
- 11 ...carry out a transaction related to getting a driver's license?
- 12 ...pay a tax?
- 13 ...carry out a transaction to obtain a telephone line?
- 14 ...carry out a transaction to register your vehicle?
- 15 ...obtain a hookup to the municipal water system?
- 16 ...receive mail?
- 17 ...request a municipal garbage truck to pick up your garbage?
- 18 ...carry out a transaction related to starting a business?

Notes

¹ There is no total correspondence between good governance and corruption; however, corruption is a decisive factor for good government and therefore the concepts are used interchangeably. In this paper I focus on the public sphere, and the analysis is rooted in the widespread definition of corruption as “exercise of public power for private gain.”

² Examples of recent studies that report gender differences in corruption (with women as less corrupt than men) are Bailey & Paras (2006), Melnykovska & Michailova (2009), Mocan (2008), and Treisman (2007).

³ For an introduction and overview to research on corruption, see Mocan (2008) and Treisman (2007). Bjarnegård (2010) is a good introduction to research on gender and corruption/good governance and presents a case study on Thailand.

⁴ For example, it has been shown that egalitarian gender-role attitudes contribute to both women's and men's propensity to perceive unethical behavior as unethical (McCabe, Ingram & Dato-on, 2006).

⁵ Bailey and Paras (2006, p. 65) estimate that for those households in Mexico (data for 2001) that admitted at least one act of corruption the average amount spent on such actions accounted for 6.9% of their total income, and for households with an income of one minimum salary or less this “regressive tax” represented 13.9% of the total income. Morris (2009, p. 1) refers to findings that 31% of Mexican households “normally” pay bribes during one year and that Mexico devotes 9–12% of its GDP to bribes.

⁶ A fifth study is planned for implementation in fall 2010. For more information about Transparency International Mexican Chapter, see www.transparenciamexicana.org.mx.

⁷ The thin index was originally constructed in a study of effects of Mexico's conditional cash transfer program, Oportunidades, on good government (Grimes & Wängnerud, 2010). For the items included in the thin index, see appendix. Morris (2009, pp. 195–196) presents an English translation for all items included.

⁸ There are surprisingly few studies on variation in corruption at the subnational level. However, Charron's (2010) study of the subnational level in India is an exception. The findings show that the level of development, measured in both economic and education terms, is significantly and negatively related to levels of corruption, whereas factors such as income inequality, religious fractionalization, and media exposure are statistically insignificant. A factor that also turned out to be significant is level of fiscal decentralization.

⁹ Data from QuotaProject Global Database of Quotas for Women, available at www.quotaproject.org.

¹⁰ Figures from Inter-Parliamentary Union, www.ipu.org, situation as of May 31, 2010.

¹¹ Spearman's rho assesses how well the relationship between two variables can be described using a monotonic function. The value 0 represents no correlation at all; the value 1 represents total agreement between two rank orders, whereas the value -1 represents rank orders that are in total opposition to each other. A rule of thumb is that a value of ~0.50 represents moderate agreement.

¹² I have no good answer to why there is no correlation at all between levels of corruption and the number of women in state legislatures. The theory of a critical mass is discussed in a subsequent section and it should be noted that there are only three states with more than 30% women in the state legislatures, whereas the same is true for 18 states (averages) when it comes to municipal legislatures.

¹³ The Federal District does not have municipalities. The case of Oaxaca is not comparable to the other states, because the majority of municipalities in this state elect their governing body through "usos y costumbres," which means that indigenous communities are allowed to use customary laws in elections and these laws sometimes exclude women from participation (see Danielson & Eisenstadt, 2009). In fact, there are several reasons to exclude the capital, Mexico City (Federal District)—it is an "outlier" in many respects.

¹⁴ A further argument is that group B only encompasses three states.

¹⁵ The variable percentage rural population does also to a large extent capture variation in indigenous population.

¹⁶ I will not report on Frias's (2008) study in detail; however, I will list the indicators included in each subindex: (i) *economic gender equality indicator*—the labor force, employed, civil servants, managers and administrators, business owners, health benefits, and above poverty-level households; (ii) *educational gender equality indicators*—average years of education, literate population, college degrees, graduates, engineering, and agricultural and natural sciences; (iii) *political gender equality indicators*—mayors, city councillors, trustees, state representatives, magistrates, state secretaries, and federal civil servants; (iv) *the legal sphere*—approved legislation granting women's rights or protecting already existing rights in the following areas: abortion, sexual harassment, political representation, stealing livestock more punishment than offenses against women, family violence as a felony, rape within marriage, intrafamily violence as cause for divorce, abuser's household abandonment, publicly funded shelters, age differences for marriage, time-limits for re-marrying, domestic work, and allowance in common-consent divorce.

¹⁷ A common denominator for the items included in the thin index is actually that none of them is handled by the police.

¹⁸ In our study on effects of Mexico's conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, Oportunidades, on good government (Grimes & Wängnerud, 2010) we found that increases in the number of households within a state that receive CCTs lower the level of corruption. (We compare corruption levels at 2001 and 2005.) The program targets families living in extreme poverty, and to achieve efficiency, it is designed in a way that eliminates most links in the implementation chain. However, there is very little indication that CCTs contribute to explaining the variation in corruption between Mexican states presented in this paper. States in group A have an average of 16% of households that receive CCT (2005), and the corresponding figure (2005) is 25% for states in group C, as well as for states in group D.

¹⁹ It should be noted that civil society in Mexico is reasonably strong. In a study on western democracies, Kittilson (2006) has found that it is especially important for women politicians to have ties with organizations outside the party, since they provide points of access for women. In Mexico the political system prohibits re-election to the same position; however, it is common to aspire to other political positions after a finished mandate period.

²⁰ In some cases, however this is, according to the director Eduardo A. Bohórquez and the personnel at Transparencia Mexicana very rare, bribes can be paid in order to lower costs of, for example, electricity bills. In most cases bribes are paid to speed up processes or to receive a requested service, at all.

²¹ I would like to thank Bo Rothstein for pointing out the importance of reciprocity in corrupt transactions (for research on reciprocity see Gintis, Herbert, Samuel Bowles, Robert Boyd, and Ernst Fehr (Eds.). 2005. *Moral Sentiments and Material Interests. The Foundations for Cooperation in Economic Life.*)

²² The same ranking from Transparency International shows that Mexico also is found in position 89.