

The myth of gender-neutral power

Citation for published version (APA):

Merkle, O. (2018). *The myth of gender-neutral power: corruption and gender norms*. Boekenplan. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20181205om>

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2018

DOI:

[10.26481/dis.20181205om](https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20181205om)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

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Propositions Accompanying the Thesis

The Myth of Gender-Neutral Power – Corruption and Gender Norms

By Ortrun Merkle

1. When discussing any abuse of power, it is essential to understand who has access to power to begin with.
2. The narrative around corruption must shift from the male centric view of the exchange of money and goods to one that also includes the (female) body as a currency.
3. Benevolent sexism is used to exclude women from formal politics and clientelistic networks and limits the political space available in which they are able to engage.
4. Corruption is a constant companion throughout the migration journey for irregular migrants and experiences are highly gendered.
5. Combining insights from feminist and corruption creates valuable nuance in our understanding of corruption.
6. Focusing on women as anti-corruption heroes or helpless victims of corruption makes for alluring storytelling but poor analysis.
7. There are labyrinths of power dynamics in patriarchal systems. (...) Patriarchal systems must be envisioned as “terrains of power” in which both men and women wield varying types and amounts of power. (Hunnicut, 2009, p.555)
8. Without general elections, without freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, without the free battle of opinions, life in every public institution withers away, becomes a caricature of itself, and bureaucracy rises as the only deciding factor. - Rosa Luxemburg
9. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. [...] Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the center of the universe. – Elie Wiesel (Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, 1986)