

# A Gender Perspective on Corruption Encountered during Forced and Irregular Migration



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## **A Gender Perspective on Corruption Encountered during Forced and Irregular Migration**

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Authors:

Ortrun Merkle\*

Julia Reinold\*

Melissa Siegel\*

\*Maastricht Graduate School of Governance

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>IAWJ</b>	International Association of Women Judges
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OCCRP</b>	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>US</b>	United States

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## Abstract

Scholars and policymakers are starting to pay more attention to the links between migration and corruption. This study explores a specific area of these links, by examining the ways in which corruption affects the migration journeys of women – be they regular, irregular, forced or voluntary. It does so by looking at experiences of corruption in countries of origin, transit and destination. The analysis is based on desk research and interviews with stakeholders and migrants conducted between April and May 2017.

We find that corruption comes into play whenever legal options for migration are limited, and this seems to be a constant throughout all stages of the migration process of several migrant groups. While both men and women encounter corruption during the various stages of the migration process, this study finds that women are especially vulnerable to atypical forms of corruption, including sexual extortion ('sextortion') when their financial capital is limited. Women travelling alone are particularly vulnerable to different forms of corruption and sexual exploitation, which can have negative consequences on their short-, medium- and long-term mental and physical health.

The report concludes that sextortion, which occurs at the intersection of sexual violence and corruption must be clearly defined as a form of corruption and a criminal offence. The report continues with policy recommendations for the country of origin, transit and destination both in the realm of anti-corruption as well as women's empowerment and concludes with suggestions for further research.

## 1. Introduction

Corruption not only shapes migrant aspirations, it can also impact the entire migration process. Against this backdrop, the links between migration and corruption are gaining increased attention from scholars (Merkle, Reinold & Siegel, 2017; Carling, Paasche & Siegel, 2015). Anecdotal evidence suggests that female migrants are especially vulnerable to corruption. This study therefore adds a gender perspective on the corruption encountered during the migration process. The risk of abuse and exploitation seems highest among refugee women and female migrants with irregular status; therefore this study not only looks at female migration in general, but analyses the ways forced and irregular female migrants experience different forms of corruption during migration, with a special focus on sexual extortion ('sextortion'). In addition, it considers the ways lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people encounter corruption during the migration process, because they appear especially vulnerable and because LGBTI migration is expected to further increase in the future (Maulik & Petrozziello, 2016). A comprehensive gender perspective should naturally include aspects specific to male migration as well. Unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of this study.

The study has three specific objectives:

1. To conduct scientific research on the forms and effects of corruption that directly and indirectly affect female migrants, as well as current measures to counter them;
2. To answer a range of research questions on sexual extortion;
3. To develop recommendations on how German Development Cooperation can integrate gender aspects into its sectoral anti-corruption approaches.

In order to fulfil these objectives, the following general research questions and a number of additional sub-questions have been developed.



Table 1: Research Questions

1. What are the forms and effects of corruption that women experience during (involuntary, irregular) migration?
 

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  - a. Which types of corruption have an impact on women during (involuntary, irregular) migration?
  - b. Which direct effects does corruption have on women during the migration process?
  - c. How are female migrants indirectly victimised by corruption?
  - d. Where and when are female migrants most affected by corruption?
  - e. Which actors are involved in corruption in the context of female migrants?
  - f. Corruption in which institutions leads to direct and indirect victimisation of female migrants?
  - g. Which institutions mitigate the effects of corruption on female migrants?
  - h. How are different types of migration of women affected by corruption?
  
2. What are the forms and effects of corruption that women experience upon arrival at identified (intermediate/final) destinations?
 

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  - a. Which forms of corruption do women experience in refugee camps?
  - b. Which actors and institutions increase or mitigate the (direct/indirect) victimisation through corruption of female migrants in refugee camps?
  - c. Which programmes are mitigating the (direct/indirect) victimisation through corruption of female migrants in refugee camps?
  - d. Which forms of corruption do women experience in host communities?
  - e. Which actors and institutions increase or mitigate the (direct/indirect) victimisation through corruption of female migrants in refugee camps?
  
3. To what extent can sexual extortion experienced by women be seen as a form of corruption? How do these findings contribute to the definition of sextortion as a form of corruption?
 

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4. What are the prevailing forms of sextortion?
 

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  - a. Where do women face the threat of sextortion (geography)?
  - b. Which actors are involved in sextortion?
  - c. What types of services are provided for sexual favours?
  - d. Which groups of women are mostly affected by sextortion?



## 2. Mapping the Conceptual Terrain: Gender, Corruption and Migration

### 2.1. Gender – what are we talking about?

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, activities, attributes and behaviours, personality traits, relationships, power and influence that a society conceptually attributes to men and women. Whilst sex refers to the biological differences between men and women in sexual and reproductive functions, gender refers to the differences in roles and opportunities associated with being male or female as well as the relationships between women and men (Prince, 2005). It is important to note that “[t]hese attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities” (UN Women Training Centre, 2017). Gender not only relates to the conceptual categories of woman and man; it is also linked to sexual identity and orientation (Parent et al., 2013). Therefore, this report also looks at the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexed (LGBTI) people.

To fully understand gendered experiences, we must accept that inequalities do not arise solely through one system of oppression. Many different forms of oppression are interlinked and feed into one another to form an individual’s experiences (Bastia, 2014). First developed by Crenshaw (1990), the concept of intersectionality argues that race, class and ethnicity are interconnected and interdependent categories of disadvantages rather than separate notions (Burman, 2003; Valentine, 2007).



“Theories of intersectionality hold that discrete forms of oppression shape, and are shaped by, one another, and a failure to recognise this results in both simplistic analyses and ill-conceived policy interventions. This approach still retains a notion of structural inequality and operates with groups as the subjects of equality policies rather than individuals, but is attentive to the cross-cutting nature of structures of oppression and the overlapping nature of groups.” (Squires, 2008, p. 55)

Intersectionality has long been neglected in migration research. Not only was much of the research ‘gender-blind’, but “most of those who researched gender in migration, focused mainly on gender and/or women with little incorporation of class, ethnicity or race as relevant axes of differentiation” (Bastia, 2014, p. 241). Research with an intersectional approach demonstrates, however, just how important it is to analyse multiple layers of disadvantage, especially in the context of violence against migrant women. Chiu (2016) determines how the interlinkage of gender with class, culture and migration can make women particularly vulnerable to intimate partner violence.<sup>1</sup> Burman (2003) shows the importance of intersectionality in the service provisions for ethnic minority women following domestic violence and identifies several issues that are fundamental to consider also in the service provision for female migrants and refugees. Rather than being treated by a subject specialist (e.g. medical personnel), ethnic

<sup>1</sup> Research on intimate partner violence (IPV) has shown that many different factors can be risk factors for IPV, such as disability (Hassouneh-Phillips & McNeff, 2005), which should also be explored in the context of migration. For an overview of causes of IPV see Jewkes (2002). For an overview of risk factors for sexual violence see WHO (2010).

minority women would be referred to cultural specialist volunteer organisations, which did not have the ability to deal with domestic abuse. In this case, the attempted culturally sensitive ‘special’ treatment excluded women from necessary care rather than giving them additional resources. This can be a pitfall also in migrant and refugee care, where the focus on ethnic and cultural background might prevent women from getting adequate help. Bastia (2011) shows that gender alone cannot explain the choices made by women on return from migration, for example in (re)negotiating their position in the family and society as a whole. Therefore, this report argues that it is essential to take an intersectional approach to gender to fully understand women’s experiences.

Understanding gender also plays an essential role in refugees’ and migrants’ experiences of violence. “Gender-based violence is considered to be any harmful act directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. It may include sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage and harmful traditional practices” (OHCHR, 2014, p.1). “The term ‘gender-based’ is used because such violence is shaped by gender roles and status in society” (Russo & Pirlott, 2006, S. 181). While gender-based violence is often synonymous with violence against women and girls it is crucial to note that gender-based violence against men and boys also needs to be addressed (Carpenter, 2006). In the context of migration and corruption, sexual violence occurs all too frequently.



“ Sexual violence [is defined as] – any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work. ” (WHO, 2010, p.11)<sup>2</sup>

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2 Coercion can be physical force but may also “involve psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats – for instance, the threat of physical harm, of being dismissed from a job or of not obtaining a job that is sought” (Jewkes et al., 2002).

## 2.2. Corruption

Corruption worldwide costs billions of US dollars (Hameed & Magpile, 2014; UNODC & World Bank, 2007), while also eroding state institutions and the social fabric of societies (Rose-Ackerman, 2012). It undermines trust in political and economic systems, has been linked to environmental degradation (Kahn, 2005; Robbins, 2000) and various health issues (Holmberg & Rothstein, 2011), and can be a driver of conflict (e.g. Le Billon, 2012; Orre & Mathisen, 2008).

In the context of development cooperation, corruption is usually defined as “the abuse of entrusted authority for illicit gain” (Norad, 2008, p.11). It can be differentiated in terms of political (grand) and bureaucratic (petty) corruption; the former include the highest political decision makers while the latter cover policy implementers (J. Andvig, Fjeldstad, Amundsen, Søreide, & Sissener, 2000). Both levels include bribery and extortion, nepotism, official theft, fraud, patronage and conflict of interest, (Johnston, 2005). Therefore, for this report we are using a broad understanding of corruption (for an overview of forms of corruption included in this research see Table 2.) Another important note is that ‘illicit gain’ in the context of corruption not only means monetary gain (Bayley, 1966), but also includes other benefits for an individual, group or family member or the political party. Corrupt acts normally require at least two parties, who may participate either willingly or not. Davis (2004) lists three possible interactions: 1) a willing cooperation between bribe payer and receiver, 2) a forceful extraction of bribes, or 3) a bribe payer anticipating future benefits. Another differentiation, especially in judicial and police corruption, is where corruption involves the extortion of payments from the innocent and the giving of bribes by those facing punishment, thus promoting impunity (J. C. Andvig & Fjeldstad, 2008).

Table 2: Forms of Corruption

Type of Corruption	Definition	Group of Terms
Bribery	Payment (in money or kind) that is given or taken in a corrupt relationship	Kickbacks, gratuities, “commercial arrangements, baksheesh, sweeteners, pay-offs, speed- or grease money
Embezzlement	Theft of resources by people who are put to administer it	Straddling, official theft
Fraud	Economic crime that involves some kind of trickery, swindle or deceit	Involvement in illegal trade networks, counterfeit, racketing, forgery, smuggling
Extortion	Money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or the threats to use force	Blackmail, protection or security money, informal taxation, sextortion (sexual extortion)
Favouritism	Mechanism of power abuse implying ‘privatisation’ and a highly biased distribution of state resources.	Cronyism, nepotism, clientelism, bias, patronage

Source: adapted from Andvig et al. (2001, S. 8ff)

Corruption by definition takes place “behind closed doors” and is therefore difficult to measure. Many authors have tried to find objective measures of corruption, including conviction rates (Fiorino, Galli, & Petrarca, 2012; Hill, 2003) and press reports (Rehren, 1996), but the most commonly used measures are still subjective ones, such as perception of corruption (e.g. Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index) or participation in corrupt acts (Morris, 2008, S. 390). Other measures<sup>3</sup> of corruption that are commonly used are public sector diagnostics (i.e. studies measuring the strength of government institutions), private sector surveys and multi-country tools, which use a mix of perception data and information about existing anti-corruption laws (UNDP, 2008). One major shortcoming of the existing data is that very little of the research done so far has looked at the variation of corruption “between or within societies” but rather focused on explaining “variations in whole countries’ scores on one-dimensional corruption indices” (Johnston, 2005, S. 19). This also means that existing measures do not take into consideration gendered differences, or levels of poverty (Hossain, Nyami Musembi, & Hughes, 2010). Therefore, while the existing measures of corruption can be useful for this study to determine the overall level of corruption in the country of origin, transit or arrival they only provide very limited information on the exact role corruption plays. At this point, studying how corruption affects female migrants during migration and upon arrival by asking for actual corruption experiences seems the most appropriate line of inquiry.

### 2.3. Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines migration as “movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification” (IOM, 2011). In contrast to the perception that mainly poor people migrate, migrants need to be able to draw from a certain amount of resources, a fact that often precludes the poorest from human mobility.

Different migrant groups can be identified, even though the line between them is not always clear-cut. In this study, an important distinction is made between regular and irregular migrants. Irregular migrants, also known as undocumented, illegal or clandestine migrants, are those lacking legal status. This can be a consequence of illegally entering the transit or destination country or visa expiration (IOM, 2011). Hence, what might have begun as regular migration can become irregular migration and vice versa. According to IOM (2010) estimates, irregular migration accounted for approximately 10-15 per cent of total migration flows in 2010.

We should also distinguish between voluntary and forced migration. Those who, according to their own preferences, decide to move mainly for better opportunities are called voluntary migrants (IOM, 2011). On the other hand, forced migrants have to leave their homes due to reasons beyond their control. While this distinction is debated in academia (Carling & Talleraas, 2016) it is essential in the context of development cooperation. For the purpose of this report, forced displacement is defined as conflict-induced forced migration<sup>4</sup> (for a detailed discussion see Merkle, Reinold, Siegel et al., 2017). This is crucial since this form of forced displacement, in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention, has important legal implications for states and forcibly displaced individuals (refugees and asylum seekers) themselves, which must be taken into account in the context of development cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of shortcomings and advantages of different corruption measurements see Kis-Katos & Schulze (2013) and Sequeira (2012).

<sup>4</sup> Other forms of forced migration are disaster (e.g. Bose & Lundstrom, 2014) and development-induced (e.g. Robinson, 2003) displacement.

International borders are crossed when migrating from one country to another. This “situation between emigration and settlements, that is characterized by migrants’ indefinite stays, legal or illegal” is defined by Papadopoulou-Kourkoulou (2008) as transit migration. There is, however, no internationally agreed upon definition of how long this situation can last, and whether the intention to migrate onwards and seek opportunities already makes this a state of transit (UNECE, 2012). Where possible, this report distinguishes between the various groups of migrants, yet in many cases it will refer to migration in general. This is because population movements, especially during transit, are often mixed and different migrant groups (regular, irregular, forced, voluntary) cannot easily be distinguished from one another. (For a glossary of key migration terms please refer to Annex II.)

Research shows that migrants are often well connected through social networks and often follow routes taken previously by relatives (Townsend & Oomen, 2015). The existence of such social networks increases the likelihood to migrate, and at the same time raise the expected benefits and lower the costs of the migration journey (McKenzie & Rapoport, 2007).

### 3. Methodology

This study follows a qualitative research approach and is based on an academic literature review, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and female migrants, as well as a desk research supporting the information provided by stakeholders and migrants. Interviews were conducted between April and May 2017.

#### Academic Literature Review

To identify academic literature, systematic searches for literature using the Maastricht University Library search engine and Google Scholar<sup>5</sup> were conducted (see Annex I for an overview of the search terms used). The review includes literature about the key thematic areas corruption, migration and gender. Each article identified has been added to a systematic database of resources.

#### Interviews with Stakeholders and Female Migrants

To complement the literature review, 43 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and female migrants were conducted (see Annex II for an overview of all interviews and Annex III for the interview guides). Possible stakeholders were identified based on the literature review, additional desk research, and existing networks of the research team. They include scholars, policymakers, representatives of local, national and supranational government organisations, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and other practitioners in the field of corruption, migration and/or gender. Where possible, female migrants were interviewed to achieve a better understanding of how certain forms of corruption affect their migration experience or the migration experiences of their friends and acquaintances. Migrants were identified with the help of stakeholders. Interviews were conducted in person as well as over telephone or Skype, depending on time and distance. Stakeholders could choose whether or not to remain anonymous while all migrant interviews are anonymised.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://scholar.google.com>

It is important to note that the response rate for stakeholder interviews was very low. The research team contacted more than 150 possible interview partners, of which only 35 agreed to be interviewed during the course of the research. A possible explanation for this is that most of the contacted stakeholders did not feel informed enough about this relatively new research area. Given the sensitivity of the topic it was similarly difficult to recruit migrants for interviews. In total, the research team interviewed seven female migrants and one male migrant, spread across four European countries. Interviews have been randomly numbered throughout the report. Unless noted otherwise, interview numbers refer to stakeholder interviews.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research, this project has been examined and approved by the Ethical Review Committee Inner City faculties (ERCIC) of Maastricht University.

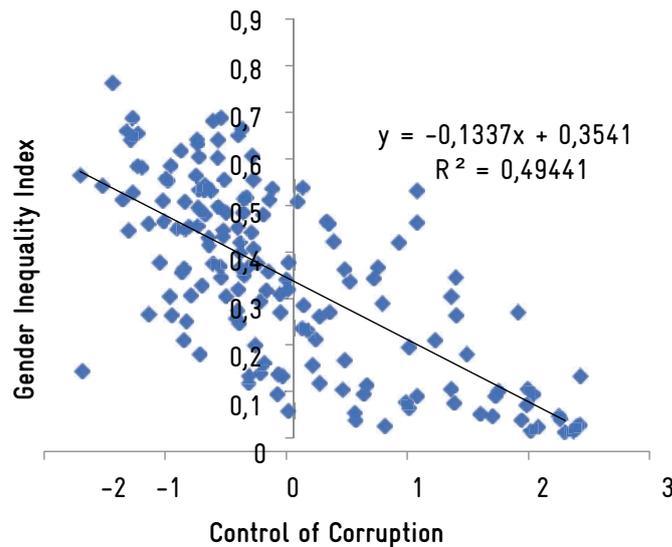
### **Additional Desk Research**

The desk research that supported the interview findings was based on a review of documents including academic articles, grey literature such as government and NGO reports, investigative journalism, news articles, blog entries, as well as legal and policy documents.

## 4. Gender and Corruption – an Introduction

Gender has only recently been included in the discussion of causes and effects of corruption. A first look at the data shows that there seems to be a correlation between gender inequality and corruption; yet, this data tells us nothing about the causality of the relationship.

Figure 1: Gender Inequality and Control of Corruption



Source: Gender Inequality Index (GII), 2015; Control of Corruption: Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2015

Two seminal papers by Dollar et al. (2001) and Swamy et al. (2001) explored for the first time how levels of corruption might be impacted by gender. Analysing a considerable number of studies they find that higher numbers of women in parliament are linked to lower levels of corruption.

Since then three essential questions have been identified in the literature. Are women by nature less corrupt? How can they help in fighting corruption? What are the effects of corruption on women and how are they different from men?

The idea that women are inherently less corrupt than men is largely based on behavioural studies, showing that women have higher scores on integrity tests (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1998), and showcase higher norms of ethical behaviour (Glover, Bumpus, Logan, & Ciesla, 1997; Reiss & Mitra, 1998). Dollar et al. (2001) hypothesise that women are more likely to sacrifice personal gains for the common good and are therefore less prone to be involved in corrupt behaviour. Other studies argue that women are less corrupt because of differences in self-control (Swamy et al., 2001), risk aversion (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999; Eckel & Füllbrunn, 2015; Harris, Jenkins, & Glaser, 2006) and a lower willingness to engage with criminal or corrupt officials (Frank, Lambsdorff, & Boehm, 2011). Yet, the argument that women are inherently less corrupt has been increasingly criticised for reinforcing gender stereotypes and oversimplifying the relationship.

Continuing to investigate the relationship between corruption and female political participation, Sung (2003) argues that this is not a causal relationship. Rather, low levels of corruption and high levels of women's political participation should be attributed to "the presence of functioning liberal democratic institutions" (p.719). This argument is furthered by Esarey and Chirillo (2013), who show that female

participation only has an impact on corruption levels when strong political institutions already exist. It might even be the case that only less corrupt governments are actually willing to include women in decision making roles (Wängnerud, 2014), e.g. because they are based more on merit than on tight networks. Looking at gender differences in attitudes towards corruption, Alhassan-Alolo (2007) showed that male and female public servants in Ghana have similar attitudes toward corruption and are equally likely to engage in it. He hypothesises that the question if an individual engages in corruption is a question of opportunity, networks and social norms, rather than one of gender differences. Alatas et al. (2009) came to similar conclusions. Using an experimental study in India and Indonesia the authors find that there are no significant gender differences in the attitudes towards corruption. Vijayalakshmi (2008) also finds that there is no difference in rent-seeking attitudes or actual levels of corruption between male and female elected representatives in India.

Many scholars also argue that it is simply a question of access to opportunities for corrupt behaviour (e.g. Alhassan-Alolo, 2007; Bjarnegård, 2013; Goetz, 2007). For many aspects of corruption a network is essential, e.g. clientelism in democratic structures by definition contains a network (Stokes, 2007). Women often do not have access to these clientelistic networks (Bjarnegård, 2013), as this corruption normally relies on ‘homosocial’ capital, a type of social capital built on the relationships of men.

This focus on the inherent gender differences in susceptibility to corruption is not just a theoretical discussion but has fundamental impacts on women’s lives and anti-corruption initiatives.

The myth of inherently less corrupt women leads to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes (UNDP, 2012), where “[t]he very traits that traditionally branded women as deficient in moral development, their concern to help and to please, are now seen as a functional for good governance reforms in developing and transitional societies” (Goetz, 2007, S. 91). Hazarika (2016) continues this argument and notes that “traits ascribed to women once viewed as making for moral weakness are now seen as cornerstones of moral strength, that is, the definition of morality has changed. It may make little sense to consider women morally superior if notions of morality are mutable. Perhaps it is more useful to speak of honesty than morality” (p.8). Echazu (2010) argues that differences in corruption are much more rooted in power imbalances. Where one group is dominant the other group will be much more intolerant of this group’s misbehaviour. Without changing the system, simply increasing the number of women might therefore even have the opposite effect and lead to *more* corruption. The verdict is still out on the role women that can and should play in anti-corruption; however, it is clear that this discussion has deflected attention from the big question of gendered impacts of corruption (Goetz, 2007; UNDP, 2012).

To comprehend the effects of corruption, one first has to understand that the effects of corruption on an individual can be direct and indirect. A direct effect can be any event where an individual is directly participating in a corrupt act, e.g. paying a monetary bribe to receive a government service. However, equally important are the indirect effects corruption can have, since a corrupt act not only affects the parties involved but “its externalities usually *indirectly* affect third parties, including the general population, taxpayers, specific professions, or communities” (Boehm & Sierra, 2015, S. 2).

One main reason why men and women can be affected differently by corruption, both directly and indirectly, are the unequal power relationships within societies and resulting gender roles. Where some roles are typically dominated by men, others are assigned to women and each of them will lead to different exposures to corruption. If men typically carry out certain activities, they are more exposed to

corruption in this sphere in absolute terms; however, women can “still be proportionally more vulnerable” (Boehm & Sierra, 2015, S. 2). Ellis, Manuel and Blackden (2006) for example show that women are targeted more frequently by corruption, even though significantly more men work in the private sector in Uganda. Unfortunately, there is little data available on the question why women are often more vulnerable to corruption than men as this goes beyond the question of exposure to corruption (Boehm & Sierra, 2015).

Several areas have been identified where the effect of corruption differs for women and men. Corruption disproportionately affects the poor, by taking up a larger share of their income (Hunt & Laszlo, 2012; Justesen & Bjørnskov, 2014). Gender plays a large role in poverty, where “[l]ower proportions of women than men have their own cash income from labour as a result of the unequal division of paid and unpaid work” and women, especially when they have dependent children and no partners are more likely to be poor than men (United Nations, 2015, p. xiv). Access to basic public services is an area where women are affected differently. Control over household resources lies with men, so women in developing countries often do not have the financial resources to pay for bribes and so are frequently denied services (Nyami Musembi, 2007). As women spend more time in the health care system, during pregnancy and child care, they are also more exposed to corruption in this sector than men (Transparency International, 2010). The type of corruption that women and girls are exposed to can also differ, for instance in the education sector in high corruption countries girls frequently face demands for sexual acts which makes school attendance increasingly difficult (Leach, Dunne, & Salvi, 2014). In addition, women may face sexual extortion in the work place (Transparency International, 2016).

Economic, social and political roles are largely shaped by gender and so corruption can also be experienced differently in these areas.

In the context of migrants and refugees, it is therefore essential to not only look at the gendered effects of corruption, but to understand that a multitude of factors in society and characteristics of the female migrant shape where and when she is more vulnerable to corruption.

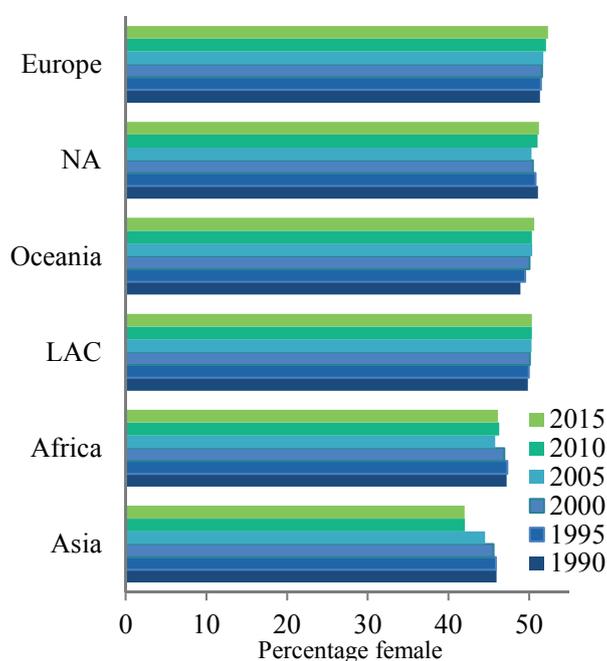
## 5. Gendered Migration and Corruption

### 5.1. Migration and Gender – an Introduction

Earlier studies on migration focused primarily on male (labour) migration, while female migration was more associated with marriage migration and family reunification and therefore of lesser interest (Fleury, 2016). Female migration is not a new phenomenon, but scholars have only recently devoted attention to the topic, in line with the rising numbers and reasons for female migration (Fleury, 2016; Donato & Gabaccia, 2016; Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014). Today, female migration dominates in some regions: in the Americas, for instance, particularly in the Southern Cone and Andean areas (Rico, 2006). In addition, female migrants predominantly work in so-called ‘female jobs’ such as domestic work, care and entertainment (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014).<sup>6</sup>

Approximately half of the world’s migrant population is female. In many receiving countries the rate of increase of female migration by now exceeds that of male migration, which is referred to as the feminisation of migration (Fleury, 2016). The share of migrant men and women differs among regions. In the Northern hemisphere women constituted around 51.9 per cent of all migrants in 2015 compared to only 43.3 per cent in the South. Looking at developing regions, the share of women among all migrants dropped from 46.4 per cent in 1990 to 43.4 per cent in 2015.

Figure 2: Percentage of Women among All International Migrants by Major Area of Destination, 1990-2015



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, while NA refers to Northern America.

Source: UN DESA (2016, p.8)

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on domestic and care work see for instance Anderson (2000; 2007) and Cox (2006); for discussions focused on Asia see Huang, Yeoh & Rahman (2005) and Huang, Thang & Toyota (2012).

Another point to highlight is that women and men can be affected differently by migration. Women might experience social stigma when migrating without a partner or husband (Malkin 2004). At the same time, migration can also serve as a chance to become economically independent, and has been linked to women's empowerment and changing gender roles (Lopez-Ekra et al., 2011; Lodigiani & Salomone, 2015). Increased economic independence has also helped women to escape abusive relationships (Taylor, Moran-Taylor & Ruiz, 2005); however, women often end up in precarious work environments in host communities, such as bars and domestic work. This increases their vulnerability to exploitation (Tacoli & Mabala, 2010). From another perspective, just how easy and accepted it is for women to migrate is linked to the nature of the society in which they live. A more patriarchal society makes it more difficult, as migration is more tied to a husband or partner, in contrast to more matriarchal societies (Massey, Fischer & Capoferro, 2006).

## 5.2. Differences in Reasons for Migration

Women migrate for many reasons: for work, for marriage, for education, for family reunification and as refugees (Castles et al., 2014; Fleury, 2016). Furthermore, the lines between different forms of migration can be blurred and migration motivations can change over time. Evidence suggests that “[m]igration patterns are highly gendered, in terms of the causes and consequences of movement” (Ghosh, 2009, p.8). As already pointed out, historically speaking women migrated primarily to join their husbands after marriage or as part of voluntary family movements. Nowadays, motivations for women to migrate are more diverse and include economic considerations such as job and education opportunities (Gosh, 2009; Fleury, 2016). It has been established that it is common among poor women to migrate in search of improved opportunities. One should note, however, that this does not apply for the poorest because one needs capital to sustain the migration. Not only financial capital is important in this regard, but also social capital and networks (Fleury, 2016; Castles et al., 2014).

Ghosh (2009) points out that female migrants are more disadvantaged than men regarding these resources. Having employment is positively associated with migration, and migration rates increase with educational level. Furthermore, gender norms can affect migration aspirations, particularly in cases where women face structural inequalities and discrimination (Fleury, 2016). In turn, migration has been found to have a positive effect on women's empowerment (Fleury, 2016). As gender equality improves in a country, women are more likely to migrate, while men's probability to migrate decreases. Moreover, there is a negative correlation between gender equality and low-skilled male migration, and a highly positive correlation with the migration of high-skilled women. Irrespective of gender, the modernisation of a society affects the mobility of workers and is therefore correlated positively to the migration of low-skilled workers (Baudassé & Brazillier, 2014).

Additionally, discriminatory social norms can hinder women from migrating. Gender inequality manifested in social norms can have negative effects on female migration (while male migration levels remain unaffected). This indicates a difference in men's and women's incentives to migrate. Gender inequality in social institutions moreover limits women's access to resources, power and opportunities, thus shaping their migration motivations (Barbieri & Carr, 2005) and often preventing them from realizing their migration aspirations at all (Ferrand & Tuccio, 2015).

### 5.3. Migration Process

Figure 3: Opportunities for Bribery during Migration



#### Opportunities for Bribery

- To exit refugee camps, guards and security personnel are often bribed.
- Corruption in the issuance of falsified or fraudulent identity or travel documents may require bribing the relevant public administration in charge, or bribery may be required to facilitate the use of such fraudulent documents (e.g. by lack of scrutiny).
- Documentation fraud may involve the purchase of passports and visas through corrupt officials in embassies.
- Another common scheme is 'visa smuggling', often involving the creation of fictitious companies to sponsor an illegal immigrant.
- 'Approved destination status' allows for multiple people to enter using one legitimate visa.
- Bribery of customs officials, immigration officers or border police at border crossings of transit and destination countries is usually necessary, even with falsified documentation.
- Bribery of transportation officials who stop vehicles to inspect cargo will be required to avoid detection or to pass check-points.
- Corruption in the form of bribery or coercion can induce or intimidate law enforcement officials to look the other way (and not open investigations or initiate prosecutions).
- Corruption in the form of bribery or coercion can induce or intimidate members of the judiciary to not convict smugglers or other participants of the illicit scheme.
- Immigration officials may be bribed to fail to implement a deportation order.
- Officials may also be bribed to facilitate the illegal housing and employment of immigrants upon arrival.

Source: OECD, 2015

Migration, and in particular irregular migration can be facilitated by several forms of corruption. Figure 3 lists several situations where bribery may be necessary for women and men in the migration process. Common examples are bribing administrative employees and immigration officials to obtain travel documents, or to be able to stay in the host country; border guards to be able to cross the border; law enforcement officers to prevent investigation or prosecution (OECD, 2015). In the following, we will explain occurrences of corruption that are specific to the experience of women, and show how women are affected differently and point to their vulnerabilities during each stage of the migration process, looking especially at forced displacement and irregular migration. We are aware that the realities of migration can be much more complex and that distinguishing between the three stages can be difficult. Nevertheless, it is a useful tool to arrive at a better understanding of the migration process.

### 5.3.1. Origin and Transit

In comparison, women seem to encounter more challenges during the migration process than men (Ghosh, 2009). Social norms and consequent legal restrictions can impact the mobility of women, particularly in the country of origin (Fleury, 2016). For instance, certain countries restrict or prohibit independent female migration. This implies for instance that they depend on the permission of their husbands, fathers or other male household members to apply for travel documents. Consequently, men can prevent female international migration in these countries (Fleury, 2016; Ghosh, 2009). Such restrictive policies can increase irregular migration, for instance through smuggling, and thus the vulnerability of women to human trafficking (Ghosh, 2009). In countries with high gender discrimination, women are further disadvantaged in terms of education and training. This not only affects job opportunities in the receiving country, but also access to information about the migration process – thus fuelling false expectations. Hence, women are generally found to depend more on middlemen to organise the migration process, which increases their risks of exploitation (Ghosh, 2009; Fleury, 2016; Kwar, 2003). As women have fewer (financial) assets in general, they can be forced to take on large loans to enable the migration process, leading to greater liabilities and an increased risk of debt bondage (Ghosh, 2009). Other costs relevant to the migration process include passport costs. Female migrants often report exploitative fees being charged, as well as being abused physically and sexually by middlemen, recruiters, police officers, border officers and other authorities (Ghosh, 2009). Samuels et al. (2012) report that as part of the migration process to India middlemen organise for Bangladeshi migrant women to do sexual favours to border guards without their prior knowledge or consent. Female migrants in general are extremely vulnerable “because of the greater possibilities of violence against them” (Ghosh, 2009, p.16). The risk of abuse and exploitation is highest among refugee women and female migrants with irregular status who are travelling alone (Ghosh, 2009; Fleury, 2016; Amnesty International, 2016; Wong et al., 2008).

According to Amnesty International (2016), female refugees “face violence, assault, exploitation and sexual harassment at every stage of their journey, including on European soil” (para.1). It has been reported that in most transit countries they have experienced “physical abuse and financial exploitation, being groped or pressured to have sex by smugglers, security staff or other refugees” (ibid.).

Natural disaster and development-induced forced migration involves less threats, but can similarly affect migrant women. In such cases, women often have a difficult time proving that they deserve compensation for being displaced because (developing) countries often follow the “male breadwinner model”. Women may not have formal land rights or other recognised property, which makes it difficult to convince authorities that they are the sole breadwinners deserving compensation (Ghosh, 2009). Nevertheless, women have been found to exhibit greater flexibility and faster ways to adapt to changing conditions than men (Ghosh, 2009).

### Human Smuggling and Trafficking

Corruption facilitates human smuggling, including refugee smuggling. Examples for this are bribery, coercion, extortion and fraud (OECD, 2015). Human smuggling refers to any form of assisted (voluntary) irregular migration. Smuggled women not only face unsafe conditions during transit, but are also at risk of extortion as well as physical and sexual abuse. It has been reported that women are offered free journeys or discounts in exchange for sexual favours (Amnesty International, 2016). In addition, due to their dependence on middlemen they are vulnerable to debt bondage and of being forced to work, for instance in the sex industry (Ghosh, 2009).

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention, one should not punish refugees for illegally entering or residing in a country. This principle in a way encourages irregular migration of asylum seekers. Refugee smuggling is a form of human smuggling that concerns asylum seekers and refugees specifically, even though the smuggling process as such does not differ from other forms of smuggling. Smuggling can also be a means to depart from refugee camps, with undesirable conditions for women (OECD, 2015).

Similarly, corruption plays an important role in facilitating human trafficking. Human trafficking is defined as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation [... including] the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs” (UNODC, 2004, Annex II). Hence, it does not happen voluntarily. Women and girls are at a higher risk of becoming victims of human trafficking (Castles et al., 2014). While attention has been brought to exploring the links between migration and corruption only recently, a quite significant body of literature already exists that analyses the relationship between human trafficking and corruption. Both human trafficking and smuggling are made possible, for instance, by means of bribing border guards, customs officials, consular officers and other diplomatic personal (Shelley, 2014). Border guard corruption depends on the guards’ age and income as well as importance, size and type of crossing point (Rusev, 2013). Human trafficking is, however, beyond the scope of this paper since women have limited influence on the migration process.

One should note however that human smuggling and trafficking are often confused, despite the clear differences. In the context of smuggling, persons are willing to migrate irregularly; in cases where legal migration is not an option, for instance (Shelley, 2014; Castles et al., 2014). The lines between trafficking and smuggling can be blurred because clients of smugglers are at risk of exploitation and because victims of human trafficking assumedly have a limited amount of agency. A journey that starts out as smuggling can end up in trafficking. Human trafficking and smuggling, as well as related fees, appear to increase in line with the strictness of migration policies and border controls (Castles et al., 2014). Reducing corruption in origin, transit and destination countries is considered important to address human trafficking and smuggling (Bales, 2011; Rusev, 2013; Shelley, 2014). Moreover, developing more legal migration and reducing migration pressures is considered key to fighting human trafficking and smuggling, so that individuals no longer have to rely on these practices (Carling, 2016).

### 5.3.2. Humanitarian Assistance and Refugee Camps

This section discusses how displaced women can experience different forms of corruption in the context of humanitarian assistance or when living in refugee camps. Countries affected by emergencies such as natural disasters and conflict are often poor and face high levels of corruption (Chêne, 2009). In this context inflows of aid resources can actually increase corrupt practices, which then negatively impact the quality and quantity of humanitarian assistance. Women are assumed to be most affected by such emergencies – not least because they often lack information regarding their rights. Hence, they are also most affected by corruption in the context of humanitarian aid. It has been reported that Syrian refugees in Lebanon had to pay bribes for humanitarian aid (OCCRP, 2014). Furthermore, limited financial resources make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation, in particular because of patriarchal attitudes, gender discrimination, and the fact that it is oftentimes men who deliver basic services (e.g. shelter, food distribution, health services, and education). Transactional sex therefore can become a survival strategy (Chêne, 2009; UNHCR & Save the Children, 2002; Ghosh, 2009; Amnesty International, 2016). Single and widowed women are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation for aid because they are not protected by male household members (Chêne, 2009). Having male household members, however, does not necessarily protect women from exploitation. UNHCR and Save the Children (2002) report cases of men having to offer their female (under aged) family members to humanitarian aid workers in exchange for access to aid.

Corruption and sexual exploitation curtails women's and girl's access to basic services and can lead to severe physiological, psychological and social consequences for them (Chêne, 2009). Other possible forms of violence include sexual assault, rape, forced marriage, sterilisation, forced prostitution, military sexual slavery, and human trafficking (Ghosh, 2009). In a study on the Calais refugee camp, researchers found that the presence of smugglers within the camp leads to fears of sexual exploitation, with roughly 73 per cent of women saying they felt unsafe in the camp (Hangul et al., 2016).

### 5.3.3. Arrival

Female labour migrants often work in positions traditionally performed by women, including domestic work and sex work (Fleury, 2016; Farah, 2006). Domestic work in most cases implies low social standing, lack of proper contractual arrangements, and highly personalised relationships with employers (Piper, 2005; Kofman et al., 2005). In turn, this often leads to poor working conditions and a high prevalence of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse (Piper, 2005). Sex workers often receive little support from receiving societies, especially when the dominant culture in the country is patriarchal. Zhidkova et al. (2016) report on patriarchal attitudes to sexuality in Turkey, whereby sex workers are socially stigmatised, and where the focus is on public health and morality rather than protection of migrant women. In the case of victims of trafficking, female migrants will often find themselves criminalised and without appropriate help from authorities – because of a combination of the low societal status of women, and low-salaried officials taking bribes (Boyd, 2006).

Although females are rarely the subject of targeted immigration policies, they can also be found in more skilled positions such as the health sector, even though they form a minority there (Ghosh, 2009; Fleury, 2016; Piper, 2005). A lot of research has been done on the migration of nurses, for instance (Fleury, 2016). Upon arrival in the destination country, female migrants are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed compared to male migrants and the female native population (Gosh, 2009; Fleury, 2016). Possible explanations for this are issues regarding the recognition of qualifications and professional experience, language barriers, and double discrimination. Double discrimination implies that all women are subject to gender-specific stereotypes, which can affect their employment situation.

Employers, for instance, may not regard women as primary breadwinners and assume that they only want to work temporarily before starting a family (Castles et al., 2014). In the case of migrant women this is combined with stereotypes against migrants, ethnic and racial groups, and a weak legal standing (Gosh, 2009; Castles et al., 2014; Piper, 2005). As a consequence, female migrants often have the worst paying jobs and are at risk of “isolation, abuse, or sexual violence” (Ghosh, 2009, p.24).

Immigration laws often regard male migrants as principal migrants, while female and underage migrants are seen as dependents. This has important implications for their rights regarding work and residence and can lead to deportation in case of relationship breakup (Ghosh, 2009). Women who followed their partners under dependency visas, for instance, might not be allowed to work for a defined period of time under certain national laws. In addition, this situation can lead to women’s qualifications and skills not being recognised sufficiently and push them into underemployment once they have the right to work. This again can have an impact on their access to settlement services (Ghosh, 2009).

## 6. Analysis and Interpretation of Interview Findings

The following section discusses the most important findings of the interviews with stakeholders and female migrants, in terms of how female migrants encounter different forms of corruption during the migration process, including origin, transit and arrival, while acknowledging that the lines between the individual phases can be fluid. It is important to emphasise that men also face difficulties and that experiences of men and women can be very similar. Still, our interviews show that women seem to be at higher risk of encountering other forms of corruption, in addition to the forms of corruption experienced by male migrants during the migration process, in particular sexual extortion, or “sextortion”. In addition, it is important to note that corruption during migration often takes place in an irregular/illegal environment, which makes the issue difficult to detect and to address.

The analysis will first discuss the three stages of the migration process, discussing the migration experiences of LGBTI persons as a special case. Subsequently, the issue of sextortion will be discussed. Finally, it examines which factors contribute to women’s increased vulnerability to corruption, including sexual extortion.

### 6.1. Origin

Our interviews confirm that corruption can facilitate and/or speed up the migration process including both regular and irregular migration (Interviews 11; 35; 21; 26). Common examples of corruption are bribery and fraud when authentic and/or fake travel and identification documents are issued (Interviews 35; 21; 26). In the case of women this is particularly the case in countries where women cannot obtain travel documents without the consent of their husbands or another male family member.

On the macro level, corruption within a nation state can break down social protection systems and democratic institutions. The resulting inadequacy of the state to allow the appropriate flourishing of citizens can be a push factor, encouraging citizens to seek opportunities elsewhere (Interviews 29; 4). One interview respondent, a former sex worker, indicated that high levels of governmental and institutional corruption in Nigeria often push Nigerians into criminal activities, in an attempt to make a living (as explained by migrant women in Europe). In addition, states where levels of corruption are high tend to allow the development of trafficking and smuggling networks, which also influence the decision and conditions of migration (Interview 16).

Getting access to smugglers and actually being smuggled is also linked to corruption because in many cases, in order to exit the country migrants need someone who knows the route and has a vehicle (Interviews 11; 11; 35). It has been reported that women pay smugglers for going to embassies instead of themselves to receive necessary documents. The fact that some embassies provide official documents without the physical presence of the women concerned constitutes in many cases an act of corruption (Interview 41). Also, many women never gain physical possession of these documents, even though they have paid large sums of money for them to the smugglers (Interviews 10; 39). This continues in the destination country, whereby smugglers (as was also reported for traffickers) often hold on to documents to force women into prostitution. In general interviewees agree that the issue of smuggling becomes more and more important as other migration routes close down, as a consequence of securitisation, for example.

Gendered forms of corruption can already be experienced in the origin country. Several interviews show that women use contraception before leaving their origin countries in anticipation of sexual abuse during the journey (Interviews 27; 23; 30). In countries where contraception is illegal or difficult to obtain because of social, religious, or cultural taboos or lack of resources, getting access to contraception can be linked to corruption. Using inadequate contraception can have negative effects on women's health (Interview 23). It is remarkable that most often women from East Africa, particularly Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, were reported to take such preventative measures (Interview 27; 23), especially when preparing for transit through Libya (Interview 30). They are, however, not the only ones; other interviewees also report cases from West Africa (Interview 23). Another phenomenon associated especially with Eritrean women is paying the journey with organs because of a lack of other means to fund the journey (Interview 8). It is important to note that a large share of Eritrean migrants are young males, since they are the ones affected by forced military service (Interview 1). Interviews also identified large differences in experience of corruption for women and men travelling alone. Most often young men are leaving the country with the *support* of their families; women travelling alone are usually leaving *against* their families' wishes. Women have been reported to most often migrate alone (without adult male family members) when they or their daughters are facing female genital mutilation or forced marriage. Many women also reported to be forced or tricked into the hands of traffickers. What all of these women have in common in their journey is the lack of family (financial) support, which has long-lasting effects for the women (Interview 10). For one, where families often scrape together all the funds they can get to support a young man's migration journey, women often leave without any financial support of the family. This makes them especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation as their "body is the only capital they have to offer" (Interviews 10; 39). The lack of psychological support from the family is also a large problem for many of the women, both throughout their journey and upon arrival in the destination country (Interview 43).

Different countries of origin are also associated with different risks of becoming a victim of corruption (Interviews 4; 21; 26; 33; 31). As noted by many interviewees, in some countries, corruption is a normal and widespread practice and therefore the likelihood of becoming a victim of corrupt practices is very high even before leaving the country. This is the situation in Syria, for instance, where internal migration is highly constrained and corruption affects internally displaced persons (IDPs). To move around Syria, families must seek the protection of "smuggling services" and too often during these journeys women and girls are victims of corruption and sextortion (Interview 31). Within the context of Syria, for example, interviewees report that different armed groups that control supplies and basic goods in many regions of the country ask families for extra payments, such as sexual acts, forced marriage of girls, and the joining of armed groups of the boys in the family (Interview 31). In Nigeria at the same time many women and girls are tricked or forced into smuggling networks by relatives or acquaintances<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Due to the widespread use of 'aunty', 'sister', etc. also for non-blood related individuals it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the exact relationship the trafficked woman has with the person she is talking about. Yet, the use of aunt, e.g., frequently signifies a hierarchical relationship where a younger woman has to follow and trust the advice of the older. This has also been confirmed in the expert interviews.



“But then in my second year of high school, we do not have much money, my mom does not live with my dad, they separated when I was young. So, the responsibility was just towards my mother. [...] So, she [the aunt] said that she wanted to help me to get some food for school and some money for the school fees. I said ok, she said I had to travel with her to her house. [...] I spent two days inside [the aunt’s house in another city] she said the money that she is supposed to give me she lends them out to a friend in [distant city]. She does not have chances to go there but I should go instead. [...] I went there [...] a lady came out and picked me to her house. So, it was nice then. I spent in her house two days. The first night I told her to give me the money that I wanted to go back to school, that is what my aunt told me and she said that she would give me the money. I waited. After four days, she told me that she wanted to take me back to my aunt’s house in X, I said ok and took my bag. I followed her and we entered the bus; I did not even know that the bus was not going south to Nigeria but to another country. That is how I left Nigeria [...]” (migrant woman, Europe).

Similar stories were told by other women and in expert interviews, where either parents forced a girl to go with a smuggler or they were tricked by “aunts” and “sisters” into a smuggling network.

The vulnerability women face in terms of corruption here is often the result of patriarchal structures in the origin countries, which assign different roles to men and women/boys and girls and also include clear family hierarchical structures that need to be respected. The fact that women have to adhere to decisions of family members and elders makes them more vulnerable to being forced into trafficking networks. At the same time, in societies where women and girls are often valued less, they have to use corruption to fulfil migration aspirations as legal channels and/or financial resources are not available.

## 6.2. Transit

All interviewees see the transit process as the time where corruption has the largest role for both men and women. “Corruption is big in all parts of transit routes and if you don’t have money you are very likely to be the victim of violence and sexual violence”, one respondent noted (Interview 32).

According to the majority of interviews from regular and irregular migrants, both men and women seem to be most vulnerable to corruption during transit (Interview 13; migrant women, Europe). They can be asked to pay bribes at any stage of the journey, for instance for receiving information, for being allowed to continue their journey, or for a police or border officer to turn a blind eye to fake documents. In the ECOWAS region where citizens from Member States have the right to free movement, it has been reported that migrants arrive in their destination without having any money left because they had to pay bribes to be allowed to cross the internal borders or continue travel if they did not possess certain travel documents (Interviews 11; 1). Turkish police and border officials have been reported to let asylum seekers on the way to Europe pass for bribes as low as £8 (O’Brien, 2016). Other asylum seekers travelling through Bulgaria tell similar stories of abuse and extortion from police officers (Foster, 2015). In the case of Mexico, one migrant told us that Latin American women work in prostitution upon arrival in the south of Mexico, to save money and be able to bribe police officers and cartels on their journey through Mexico (Interview 27). Our migrant interviews also confirm that

corruption is necessary at “all borders, when you come, if you didn’t give them money, they would beat you, search you” (migrant woman, Europe). Often smugglers and traffickers also have been reported to pay off border police with the girls that they are trafficking (Interviews 26; 31; 7; 4). Overall, the interviews confirmed that the very nature of a transit situation can lend itself to corruption. As one interviewed expert noted, transit journeys are often chaotic and full of opportunities for corruption (Interview 36).

Interviewees report that women face sexual extortion continuously throughout transit. As one migrant rights activist and a migrant himself, describes it: “For us, men, we give them money but for women it’s the double price. They always have to pay this double price”. The same interviewee reports that migrant vehicles would always need to have to transport at least a couple of women in order to be able to cross the border. “We travel in pick-ups, and there always needs to be at least two women in each pick up: when there are women in a connection, there are more chances to cross. In Tamanrasset in Algeria, the police [came] and [took] the women and [left] with them, it’s often policemen” (Interview 6). Another interviewee, an irregular migrant from Nigeria, reported that women were most severely affected by corruption and violence during transit. She noted that border guards and soldiers would ask women to take their clothes off, harass them and often rape them, and that this was most frequent when crossing borders (migrant woman, Europe). Similar experiences were reported from other former Nigerian sex workers, who reported having been used to pay soldiers at the various checkpoints along the route (Interviews 13; migrant women, Europe).



“In the desert [on the way to Libya] there is a lot of blockage in the desert. Any blockage by the military you have to pay. They ask you for money before you can cross. Then if you do not have the money, if you are a lady they will demand sex, if you are a guy, they would beat you. Even though you paid the money they will still beat you, if they are hungry or something like that, they will still beat you.” (migrant man, Europe).

Moreover, the women interviewed for this report described Libya as the worst location on their journey, a place where they had no freedom and where they were forced into prostitution to make money. It was clear that both men and women were under immense strain during transit, however the reported difference in regards to corruption at checkpoints was that women were generally sexually abused, whilst men were beaten (Interviews migrant women, Europe; 13). According to one migrant interview, many people died along the route and in Libya: “everybody was in a bad situation. Because if you are not strong, if God is not with you, I bet you would also be bad. Even some people died in the journey”.

Interviewees also reported that they hear frequently that smugglers abuse their position and sexually extort women (Interviews 11; 17). “In Mexico, it is common that if women want to cross the border illegally to the US, they have to – in most cases – engage in sexual activities with the coyotes, the men who are in charge of bringing them across the border” (Interview 27). Depending on the route, migrants are literally at smugglers’ mercy. For instance, when crossing the Sahara, migrants have no option but to stay with the smugglers since running away would result in death because of the harsh environmental conditions (Interview 11) and because of the presence of bandits across the region (Interview 6).

One expert reported that sexual exploitation of migrant women appears to have grown worse over the last few years. During field work she met many women who had become pregnant unintentionally, as well as medical staff dealing with pregnant women arriving at Europe's periphery (Interview 23). Another interviewee who works with migrant women in Germany also met several migrant women who had become pregnant unintentionally during the journey, because of being sexually extorted. For her, these cases are not a form of corruption, but "rape" (Interview 17). Smugglers often instrumentalise pregnancy in order to make women even more dependent on the network (Interview 41). Smuggling networks come in different forms and the vulnerability of women in these networks varies. For example, one interviewee had encountered two women who became smugglers themselves to protect migrant women from sexual abuse and exploitation during the journey (Interview 35). In addition, it has been reported that women dress up as boys or men to protect themselves (Bennhold, 2016).

Transactional sex has been identified as one of the major forms of corruption encountered during transit: "A number of women have told me about having to exchange sex for false documents, having to exchange sex for passage on a boat or a train or a bus or a car when they weren't able to afford it" (Interview 20). Corruption can sometimes also be the only way of getting access to basic social services including health care and reproductive health care, which migrants might not be entitled to, especially if they are irregular migrants (Interview 16).

Interviewees agree that women travelling alone are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation during transit. They are more likely to be pressured into corruption, especially sextortion. It has been reported several times that women might have to engage in transactional sex for protection with men (Interviews 27; 11; 23). They pretend to be couples during transit and/or upon arrival to be less vulnerable to violence from other migrants or groups they meet along the way and to increase their chances of being accepted or granted asylum in the destination country (Interview 8). Another example of this is female migrants in Libyan prisons having to engage in sexual acts for food, water and health services (Interview 23). This also applies to housing needs, especially in Algeria and Morocco, where abusive landlords often claim sexual services as a form of complementing a low rent (Interview 6). It is also reported that sextortion, or as one interviewee preferred to call it "survival sex", is common in refugee camps such as the former so-called "Calais Jungle", where one respondent highlighted that single mothers in the camp were particularly vulnerable to transactional sexual relationships built around protection (Interview 12). Travelling with a male family member, however, does not protect women from sexual exploitation automatically (Interview 11). Evidence suggests that migrant women are forced to "pay down [their] husband's debt to smugglers by making [themselves] available for sex along the way" (Bennhold, 2016); for a more detailed discussion of sextortion see chapter 6.5.



“Morocco, Libya and Turkey are a catastrophe. It is pure violence and women hardly talk about it. It must be appalling experiences that they cannot talk about. They can talk about their forced prostitution in Italy, Spain and Greece, but about their experiences in Libya and Morocco they say ‘it was not good’. They tell you about 29 rapes on their journey from [their country of origin] to Morocco, but what happened in Morocco ‘was not good’” (Interview 10).

Interviews with former sex workers who were trafficked from Nigeria to Italy highlighted that women were especially and overwhelmingly sexually abused by corrupt officials whilst in transit in Libya (Interview migrant women, Europe; 13). Whilst most of the migrants interviewed for this report were reluctant to talk about Libya and their journey, the few words that they used to describe it are enough to understand the situation. In fact, they described their life in Libya as “terrible”, “hell”, “lots of suffering”, “no freedom”. Respondents explained that women would be told that they would have to go with the men, and if they refused they would be beaten or whipped (Interview migrant woman, Europe). It was also clear that the impact of being in a transit country where the women had no command of the language, contributed to feelings of insecurity and a loss of autonomy (Interview migrant woman, Europe). One girl pointed out that she was stuck in Libya for more than 10 months because they were waiting for the money needed to pay corrupt border police in order to gain safe passage (Interview migrant woman, Europe). The abuse in these countries often has long-lasting impacts on the women, beyond the abuse itself.



“In Libya is very bad, they sleep with you. Many of them do not use condoms because men... you don't know the sickness they have or anything, you can take it from them. So when you get to Italy you can be sick, they can be pregnant, lots of them they don't know the father, the father is in another country. So that is very bad. But there are girls [inaudible] there is a lot of pain, maybe man came and slept with you in that condition and you get pregnant and you can't say that you don't want to... I can't explain this... as in very risky. I can't invest any hope my friends or relatives as in come to Libya, or pass through that route, it's very risky” (migrant woman, Europe).

### 6.3. Destination Countries

Corruption continues to play a role for female migrants including refugees once they arrive in the destination countries<sup>8</sup>, even though corruption seems to be less prevalent compared to origin and especially transit countries.

Women who were trafficked or smuggled are often forced into prostitution, often to pay off debt from their journey.

<sup>8</sup> For this report, we are considering the destination countries to be in Europe.



“She [the madam<sup>9</sup>] took me to the supermarket to buy some clothes and I was very surprised, what are all these clothes for? She told me tomorrow that you are going to work, work. I didn’t understand the meaning of that word, work. So I said, okay. In mid-night, when I was sleeping she wake me up; it’s time, let’s go. When I got there, there were so many girls dressed up so I was surprised like wow what I am going to do? They said, this is the work you are going to do. And you are going to pay me money and you can’t tell me that you are going to leave. [...] [and she said] that I must pay her 30,000 Euros in [country in Europe]” (migrant women, Europe).

Similar scenarios were reported by multiple women and expert interviews. Corruption also plays a role in allowing these incidents, as cases have been reported where the police will turn a blind eye to the situation of the women in exchange for money or sexual acts (e.g. Interviews 10, 9, 32, 39). In places of first arrival such as Italy and Spain, corruption in the police force and detention centres is a significant cause of concern. Interview partners identified how police officers in Spain are frequently linked to trafficking networks, where they use their sexual services (often for free, in exchange for protection against police raids) (Interview 41). Another interview confirmed police corruption in Italy: “When we ask the women why they did not seek the help of the police, they ask ‘why should we, they will just ask us for sex as well’” (Interview 10). This is not necessarily a consequence of negative experiences with corrupt officials in the destination country, but can also be attributed to a “chronic fear of the police” (Interview 27) that developed in the home country or during transit. Of course, not all public officials and police officers are corrupt. Corruption in detention centres has also been identified as a serious issue that needs further exploration. Trafficking networks are present in detention centres in Ceuta and Melilla (Spanish enclaves in North Africa), where officials often commit a crime of omission/a diligence offence, and turn a blind eye to violence and other criminal behaviour rather than fulfilling their protection duties (Interview 16). For Italy, interviews paint a similar picture, identifying several cases of corruption in the management, where large amounts of money and people involved increase the risk of corruption (Interview 26). There were also several reported cases of fraud in the allocation of funds to cooperatives that were supposed to help migrants (Interviews 26; 4; 33). However, even if corruption is prevalent in reception centres and funds management in the destination countries, most instances of corruption were mentioned in the recruitment of staff, where nepotism rather than merit led to recruitment. Moreover, the role of corruption in host centres “depends on the entity that manages the host centre, how the staff is selected and the role of the staff” (Interview 4). Interviews also confirmed that in the first big wave of refugees coming to Germany, corruption by the staff was reported in the different refugee centres but this seems to have happened mostly during the more chaotic first weeks and is not currently indicated as a problem.

<sup>9</sup> For most Nigerian trafficked women, a Madam was involved in tricking them in the journey and forcing them into prostitution (both migrant and stakeholder interviews).

Multiple interview partners identified the housing situation as a major problem for women. Lacking the necessary infrastructure, accommodation is sometimes inappropriate or even inhumane (Interviews 27; 17). Interviewees often applied a very broad definition of corruption when asked about corruption experiences in Germany. They for example identified the private housing market as a major source of corruption (Interview 35). While this does not fall under the definitions of corruption used in this report, it is an important aspect to understand the experiences of female migrants upon arrival. For legal migrants, housing, especially in big cities, can be problematic. One interviewee describes it: “they [women from Eastern Europe] come here and they are allowed to work, they [are] educated, but the housing prices in this city are so high, it is almost impossible for these women to find housing. But, if they don’t find an apartment, they can’t register and if they can’t register, they can’t work... so landlords can ask for anything, because these women are desperate and there are just not enough apartments and the prices are ludicrous” (Interview 32). While this is hard to confirm, several interviewees indicated that landlords do ask for additional money or even sexual acts in order to get an apartment. For refugee families the housing situation is also often difficult. Once they have found an apartment, “[t]he official authorities pay the rent for the people but the landlords still require the families to pay. Nice for them, no? They just get the money twice. And people just don’t know that their rent is paid for already. And when they find out and complain they get kicked out. I know of a family that had to move into a garage because they did not want to pay rent once they knew it was paid for” (Interview 15).

An important aspect of corruption in the destination country is the expectations of the migrants and refugees: “[T]he more corruption there is on the migration route, and the more that individual experiences it, what you end up [with] in the destination country is something that is quite difficult to deal with because things like trust have been eroded, [...] well it prejudices your way of life. So, then it’s quite difficult for us and for police officers or immigration officers here to stand in front of people and say, ‘trust me’ because a background of distrust and a background of corruption has been built up” (Interview 36). This is important for two reasons: first, the lack of trust in public officials means migrants and refugees are less likely to seek help; second, it makes corrupt behaviour easier for officials and individuals, as migrants expect no different and are unlikely to protest.

#### 6.4. LGBTI Migration

During this research, it became apparent that when discussing issues of gendered migration, one should not forget to include migration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, who often migrate from countries where their gender identity and/or sexual orientation is not accepted or even criminalised to countries that do offer legal protection and recognition (Maulik & Petrozziello, 2016). While some countries grant more and more rights to these groups, “documented discrimination and violence against LGBTI people has alarmingly increased in many [other] countries” (Maulik & Petrozziello, 2016, p.329). At least 76 countries are reported to criminalise forms of gender and sexual identity perceived as ‘non-conventional’, and penalties for breaching these laws can even include the death penalty<sup>10</sup>. While this form of migration is by no means completely new, the phenomenon itself as well as its relation to other determinants of migration has received little attention within academic debates. Sexual orientation and gender identity can for instance lead to labour market discrimination and therefore be linked to economic migration motivations. LGBTI migrants who

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<sup>10</sup> More information about countries with anti-LGBTI laws can be found on Human Right Watch’s website about LGBTI rights: <https://lgbt-rights-hrw.silk.co/>

identify as female may face “triple discrimination as women, migrants and as LGBTI people from employers, recruiters, border officials, in public places and in the workplace” (ibid. p.332) – which may be a reason not to openly communicate their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Hence, female LGBTI migrants may encounter discrimination during all stages of the migration process, which is further exacerbated by social isolation and a lack of networks, increasing their vulnerability to different forms of corruption, violence and exploitation.

These notions are confirmed by our interviews: In their countries of origin, LGBTI people often face exclusion, a lack of perspective, human rights violations and/or persecution (Interviews 17, 11; migrant women, Europe). Therefore, many LGBTI people (try to) hide their gender identity because they fear the consequences, which is why they arguably depend *more* on corrupt practices (Interview 27). One transgender woman interviewed for this report, first moved to another city within her home country where she did not know anyone after her gender reassignment, as she feared being forced into prostitution if anyone found out about her identity. Back home the only people she ever told about her gender reassignment were her family. To start her migration journey, she bought a fake birth certificate to be able to issue the required travel documents to migrate to Europe, where she then applied for asylum. Using a false birth certificate in her view limited the risks of being identified as a transgender woman in her home country. Upon arrival in Europe, she had to stay in a detention centre before being assigned to a refugee centre – which for her was the first time she “felt safe” (Interview 27). Since she migrated to Europe she talks openly about her gender identity.

This does not imply that LGBTI people do not face difficulties upon arrival in arguably more tolerant destination countries. Transgender women living in a refugee centre in the Netherlands report being harassed by other male migrants, who for instance show their private parts and ask them to touch them (Interview 27).

Regarding transit, interviews suggest that LGBTI migrants experience similar forms of corruption as men and women in general, especially when they hide their identity and even though they might be slightly more vulnerable. The situation is further complicated for many LGBTI migrants due to a lack of social support and networks during all phases of the migration process (Interviews 35; 11; 17; 27). If their perceived non-conventional gender identity is visible/obvious, they are reported to be attacked or harassed both verbally and physically. Where other migrants may rely on the support of other migrants, LGBTI migrants seem to be isolated. This is illustrated by the story of a transgender woman who migrated to the Netherlands and faced social exclusion upon arrival in a Dutch refugee centre: “When she came to the camp, if she sat down next to someone, the person would move and other people including women would laugh at her. She was told to stay in her room to prevent such situations” (Interview 27) by a staff member of the refugee camp. This reaction shows that staff members of refugee centres in apparently more tolerant destination countries also have difficulties and need time adjusting to the new situation of increased LGBTI migration.

### 6.5. Sextortion

As discussed in section 2.1, gender not only affects how one is targeted by corruption but also to which type of corruption one may be exposed. Since experiences of corruption are very much shaped by gender dynamics, it is important to broaden the classical, male-centric, vision of corruption focusing on the exchange of money and goods and acknowledge gendered forms and effects of corruption, in particular by looking at how female bodies are the currency of the bribe. As one interviewee sum-

marised, female migrants' and refugees' experience of corruption: "They pay with their body what men pay with money – that is the main difference in corruption between men and women" (Interview 39). When asked where these payments occur another interviewee stated bluntly: "Women pay with sexual acts... at every step of the way... every help they need, every interaction they have... they have to pay with sex" (Interview 10).

It is important to note that this does not mean that men are not exposed to physical or sexual violence throughout their journey, but the experiences of violence often differ significantly.



"Yes, the experience was different to that of a man. Because they really beat the man, as in they don't feel pity for them, if they feel pity for them they look at their face, they will beat them mercilessly. As in they beat men a lot, that is just the point. Women, what they do with them, they just sleep with them, after that kick them hard. But boys... had it so bad on the journey... mostly boys.

**Interviewer:** But with women it was more sexual?

Not that they don't beat them – they beat them. But what they always do is just to rape them, when you don't agree, they will do what they want to do. If [inaudible] they will leave you there and then drive away. That is just it." (migrant women, Europe).



"Yes, it [the experience of corruption] was different, really different because they can't have sex with men. [...] Even though the women pay. Because one of my girls that paid, she paid about 50 Dinar in a soldier blockage but they still ask her for sex. She said I have paid. They said no, she has to sleep with them. Then the driver told the girl that this is normal, this is how they do it, you have to sleep with them. [...] We spent almost 1 hour waiting for the girl to come back. We do not know how many boys have slept with her there. Just that we wait for her to come back to continue our journey."

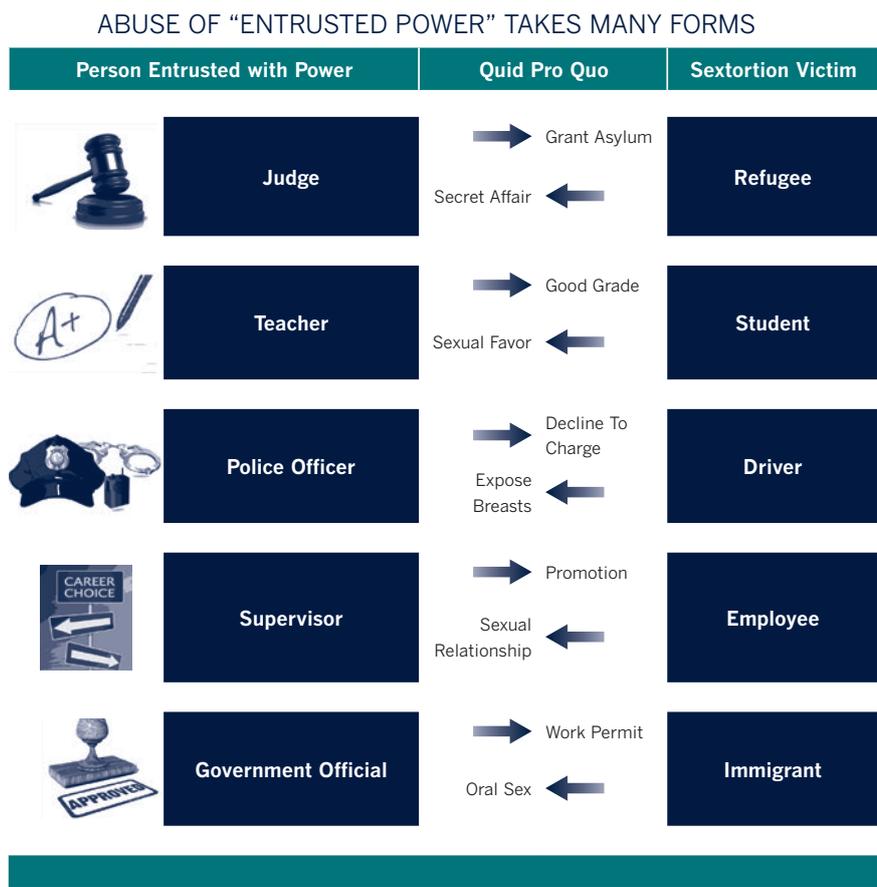
(migrant man, Europe).

The combination of corruption with a sexual component has been termed 'sextortion' and can be defined as "the abuse of power to obtain a sexual favour" (IAWJ, 2012). This phenomenon is a blend of corruption and sexual violence.

In addition to the sexual component, there are three distinct features that need to be present for the corruption component: "abuse of authority; a *quid pro quo* exchange; and psychological coercion rather than physical force" (IAWJ, 2012, p.9). The sexual act also does not have to involve sexual intercourse but can also be acts like exposing private body parts or posing for sexual photographs (ibid.). The International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), which coined the term sextortion, lists the numerous manifestations of this type of corruption (Figure 4).

The findings of our interviews show that family and patriarchal relationships should not be excluded when looking at sextortion. Entrusted power often also comes from family or society hierarchies, and not only official positions of power as described in the figure. Additionally, sextortion has also been reported to be a three-way relationship, where women and girls are forced into sexual acts in order for family members to access basic services or to pay off debts owed by family members to smugglers, to be able to continue the migration journey.

Figure 4: Examples of Sextortion



Source: IAWJ, 2012, p.10

According to UNHCR (2016) refugees and migrants often face high levels of gender-based violence and particular attention should be paid to sexual exploitation. There are many stories of girls and women that have faced sextortion during their migration process and even at their arrival at the refugee camps (UNHCR, 2016; IAWJ, 2012). Our research confirms previous findings that female migrants can face sexual extortion from many people, not only government officials and judges, but also from smugglers, police officers, other migrants, soldiers, and various authority figures in refugee camps (Gitlin, 2016).

Although sextortion is hard to investigate, the apparent prevalence of this phenomenon deserves particular attention from migration scholars and policymakers. Indeed, our analysis indicates that sextortion is present at every stage of the migration process and applies to a variety of situations across a diverse population of migrant women. As previously noted, all migrant and expert interviews acknowledge the existence of sextortion as a common form of corruption.

In an attempt to map this phenomenon, our results point to the fact that sextortion seems to occur most often in border areas, where women are often used as means of exchange for individual migrants or collectives to cross the border (Interviews 16; 30; 6). One migrant shares his memories on the journey across West Africa “[on border crossing] we’ve seen officials, military, they go and they choose the most beautiful women of the convoy...And sometimes to be nice they give them passports, that they had seized from other people... in exchange of sexual favours... Women are really used as the means of exchange”. The term ‘means of exchange’ appears frequently throughout the interviews, referring to the fact that female bodies are often commodified and turned into tradable goods.

Secondly, it is clear that impoverished women are most affected by sextortion, as it is usually this group that migrates through irregular channels – where they are more vulnerable to the whims of smugglers and officials. Interviewees also identified that levels of education play a role in how women experience sextortion. For one, many more educated women prepare for their journey by using contraception; while this does not prevent sexual abuse from happening it can prevent unwanted pregnancies (Interview 10). At the same time, experts note that more highly educated women often find it easier to get the appropriate help, because they understand how to navigate the system, also in a place that is unfamiliar (Interviews 10, 39). Interviews also confirmed the important role different forms of psychological coercion plays in getting or keeping women to remain complicit. The focus on psychological coercion is often no less threatening to the women experiencing it than physical violence. “The psychological coercion inherent in sextortion is a figurative knife that can be every bit as powerful as a real knife held to the victim’s throat” (IAWJ,2012). The interviews for this report continuously confirmed the power of threats against the family left behind. Another example was the use of ‘Juju’ in many parts of Nigeria, where a spell is cast on the women before being trafficked to ensure compliance (Interview 10). “Juju is used in both positive and negative ways in Nigeria, but this is really abuse and the people from these ceremonies are in partnership of this corruption because they’ll put a women through this traumatic process of often having things like pubic hair cut off, nails cut off, being bled and parts of the body being put in a special place as a form of sacrifice and then being told that they cannot tell anyone what’s happened [...] otherwise they will die” (Interview 28).

Women travelling alone have also been identified as especially vulnerable to sexual abuse and also sextortion as they often have no or very limited financial means. “Women told me that they would refuse food and water for days at a time because they were so nervous to go and use the latrines that were set up at the various border checkpoints because they were just not safe places for women. You can imagine, if you’re travelling by yourself, it’s magnified because then there’s no one to look out for your belongings. There is no one to look out for you” (Interview 20). This of course does make women more vulnerable to sexual abuse, but also to sextortion where individuals offer protection or access to a safer facility.

Ultimately, as an expert on gender and migration phrases it, “Women’s experiences [of corruption] are shaped by the fact that, if they have nothing, they still have female bodies” (Interview 2).

The effects of sextortion go far beyond the corrupt exchange itself; all interview partners confirmed the large psychological trauma women experience and the need for appropriate care in the destination countries. The physical harm, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancies are another long-lasting effect of sextortion on women.

Including sexual extortion as one aspect of corruption has been discussed critically in our interviews. Some respondents fear that it could downplay sexual violence against migrants. This is a legitimate concern, but we argue that highlighting the “corruption aspect” does not weaken the understanding of the long-term effects of sexual violence on women – rather, it helps explain the complex experiences of women and may even include behaviour that would not otherwise be criminalised (Thomson Reuters Foundation et al., 2015). Additionally, the way women experience their own agency in sextortion versus sexual abuse can be very different (Interview 43), which needs to be taken into consideration and also makes a distinction useful.

### 6.6. Vulnerability and Intersectionality

A recurring important finding throughout the interviews for this report is that the vulnerability of female migrants and refugees does not depend on gender alone. Rather, a multitude of different factors make women vulnerable to exploitation and determine the need to engage in corrupt relationships at specific points in their journey. This highlights the importance of intersectionality in migration studies and debates (see section 2.1). Many of the factors can also change throughout the journey, e.g. when a woman gets pregnant, when women get separated from their social networks, or get into debt bondage. When we talk about vulnerability to corruption, “it needs unpicking this vulnerability because it can be cultural, institution, it can be as simple as I am not as strong as the person oppressing me” (Interview 36). While women are often vulnerable, simply because they are physically weaker than many men, they are still not all equally vulnerable.

One factor that was pointed out throughout the interviews is the role education plays in the level of vulnerability, especially of irregular migrants (Interviews 21; 26; 7; 31; 4; 33, 10). “Many educated women organise their trips in groups. They know what to expect and they are self-confident enough for it. Of course, it is different if you have a lawyer from the Congo who decides to leave or a peasant girl. And people who are looking to exploit women know this, they can pick out who is vulnerable or not. They just know” (Interview 39). Less-educated or illiterate women also often do not have the necessary information, which makes them even more vulnerable to corruption. As one woman described it when talking about her experience in a camp: “Maybe that is how they do it here, I don’t know because I have not come here before, I don’t know anything about it, so anything they tell me I have to believe based on I have not come here before” (female migrant, Europe). Lack of worldly knowledge, which can be considered a facet of education, was also mentioned as an issue that worsened vulnerability whilst migrating. An example that particularly highlighted this came from a former sex worker who informed us that she was unaware that Europe and Africa were separated by a sea (female migrant, Europe). Also, women with learning difficulties/disabilities were reported to be disproportionately likely to be trafficked (Interview 36). Another factor that was mentioned by most interviewed was the knowledge of languages, especially those of transit countries (Interview 33).

The interviews suggest that irregular migrants are at greater risk of corruption than regular migrants, not just during the journey but also upon arrival in the destination country. Lacking papers and legal statuses and work permits they are often forced to work in the informal economy and are less likely to seek protection from authorities because of their fear of deportation (Interviews 21; 31; 29). In this way, irregular migrants are at high risk of protracted exploitation because they are removed from the system that exists to provide them with protection. However, regular migrants are also vulnerable. In parts of Europe, regular migrants are being exploited in the informal sector just as irregular ones (Interview 21).

Furthermore, pregnancy, breastfeeding or child bearing also stand out as major vulnerability factors during migration, as these greatly affect women's physical condition (Interview 2; 41; 16). Women are the primary carers in the immense majority of cases. According to gender and migration experts "the fact of migrating while pregnant or with children exposes further to exploitation and abuse." (Interview 2).

Family ties can make women either less or more vulnerable. Smugglers and traffickers can use threats against the family of the migrants to force them into compliance. At the same time, many women traveling alone migrate against the wishes of the family. They therefore lack financial and psychological support, which often makes them more vulnerable to sexual violence and sextortion.

The cultural background also plays an important role. As previously discussed, hierarchical and patriarchal structures might make women more vulnerable to trafficking and corruption.



“Women who come from certain cultures, certain backgrounds, or certain narratives: certain things that happened, actually lack self-esteem, self-confidence, have a view that they have a position in life. So corruption reinforces and says ‘yeah, you’re absolutely right, you’re not empowered, you are powerless, this is your role in life and you are a commodity to be used by men, or yes, you’re a second class citizen’. And I think it reinforces, or can reinforce, certain world views or life views, and certainly we deal with a lot of victims who actually you can see that they’re sort of shrugging their shoulders and are like ‘this is all I deserve in life anyway, I’m only a woman’. You know... so that’s a secondary effect – I think corruption reinforces a disempowerment for women from certain cultures.” (Interview 36)

Overall the research for this report showed that it is essential to understand migration experiences beyond the question of gender and include research on other factors that make women more exposed and vulnerable to corruption in the analysis.

## 7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

As the linkages between migration and corruption and specifically the ways in which corruption works as both an enabler and driver of migration receive increasing attention from academia and policymakers, this study set out to add a gender perspective on corruption encountered during the migration process. It analyses how female migrants experience corrupt practices during all parts of the migration journey, including in the countries of origin, during transit and in destination countries. While acknowledging that the migration process can be far more complex and that the individual phases can be fluid, dividing the process into these stages has been proven a useful analytical tool. The analysis is based on desk research as well as interviews with experts and female migrants in four European countries. While experiences with corruption during the migration process can be very similar for both men and women, we find that women are at higher risk of encountering other forms of corruption besides the forms experienced by migrating men, especially sextortion. In addition, LGBTI people who increasingly migrate to places where they do not have to hide their gender identity or sexual orientation, have been reported to be especially vulnerable to encountering corruption and gender-based violence throughout their journey.

Corruption has been found to come into play whenever legal options for migration are limited. Therefore, in the country of origin corruption has been identified as a way to facilitate and/or speed up the migration process for instance when officials issue authentic or fake travel and/or identification documents. In such cases, prevalent forms of corruption include bribing officials and administrative staff. In addition, the existence of smuggling networks are tightly linked to corruption (OECD, 2015) and these networks become more relevant as legal migration channels close down. The way in which female migrants experience corruption in the country of origin can vary depending on the context. In countries with patriarchal structures where the status of women is low and their rights are limited, corruption can be the only way to actually realise migration aspirations, where otherwise migration would depend on the consent of male family members.

The risk for female migrants to encounter corruption is highest during transit. Bribes can be demanded by police, soldiers, border guards, other officials, informants and other public officials at any step of the journey. In exchange, both regular and irregular migrants are allowed to continue their journey. This also involves officials turning a blind eye to fake documents, smuggling and trafficking. Women who do not possess any financial capital, are likely to experience 'sextortion', 'transactional sex' and/or 'survival sex' as there "body is the only capital they have to offer" (Interview 10). As already stressed sextortion takes place at the intersection of corruption and sexual violence and by no means does all sexual violence fall in this category. Morocco, Libya and Turkey have been identified as being among the countries where women had the worst experiences with sextortion and other forms of sexual exploitation and violence. Women who are travelling alone are especially vulnerable, which is why according to interviewees many women pay fellow migrants for protection, either with financial capital or with their body. Migrant women who experienced sextortion and other forms of gender-based violence during migration often have to deal with psychological trauma, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Rather alarmingly, evidence suggests that migrant women are often aware of these risks and try to take preventative measures, e.g. contraception, but are nevertheless willing to take the risk and migrate.

While female migrants encounter corruption less frequently upon arrival in Europe, corruption still does play a role in European destination countries. Mostly it appears to be linked to police corruption in Southern European countries and fraud in the allocation of resources.

Our research shows that women experience different levels of vulnerability in different phases of their journey. Irregular migrants and those less educated often have higher vulnerability to exploitation and are more likely to be subject to demands by corrupt officials, especially sextortion. Yet it is essential that vulnerabilities are not static and depend on the individual and cultural background of the women as well as different institutional factors in the origin, transit and destination country.

### Policy Recommendations

Making the migration process safer for women and reducing corruption throughout the journey can be difficult as corruption during migration most frequently takes place in an irregular/ illegal environment, which makes it difficult to detect and address. Irregular female migrants are considered especially vulnerable. Due to the illegal nature of irregular migration, migrants and smugglers often use remote/isolated routes, which are ruled by a certain 'lawlessness', to prevent being detected and stopped from migrating. Several interviewees argued that in such harsh environmental conditions it is almost impossible to apply measures to protect women. One interviewee gave the example of crossing the Sahara:



“A migration route such as the Sahara crossing seems especially dangerous. This applies of course to all migrants and refugees [...] because it is in a way a legal vacuum, where no protection can be provided because of a lack of any state power. Women do not have the possibility to escape smugglers or seek protection from another member of the group [...]. This is simply not possible in the middle of the Sahara. Women are at [smugglers'] mercy because if jumping from the pickup they would be doomed to die because they do not have any possibilities to continue their journey on their own” (Interview 11).

Nevertheless, based on the findings of this study we can formulate the following policy recommendations

### General Recommendations:

#### 1. Create more legal migration channels specifically for women and girls.

First and foremost, corruption is most likely to facilitate migration where legal options for migration are limited. Therefore, it is crucial to create more legal migration channels so that individuals are not forced into more dangerous irregular channels; these not only increase migrants' risk of being exposed to corrupt actors, but also their vulnerability to abuse, exploitation and (sexual) violence. Many interview partners agreed that European countries should establish specific programmes for women and children to migrate legally and safely to destination countries. This includes decreasing the dependency of migrant women on their husbands or other male family members throughout the migration process: e.g. by issuing official travel documents directly to women and ensuring that women's asylum claims are not dependant on (marriage) partners.

#### 2. Use a more inclusive approach to corruption

Corruption is often defined in rather narrow, male-centric ways. It often excludes sextortion, a type of corruption faced frequently by women. To fully understand the gendered effect of corruption and ways to combat those, sextortion needs to be internationally accepted and defined as a form of corruption both by legal systems and practitioners. The importance of including this concept into the understanding of corruption goes beyond the migration context as it has been shown to also be essential in other areas such as education and employment.

### Origin and Transit Countries:

#### 1. Provide information about risks during migration, and effective harm reduction

While most of the interviewed experts agree that it is difficult to prevent corruption and sextortion entirely in the origin country and during transit, many argue that more information about the dangers of migration should be given in the home countries. One of our interviewed migrant women phrased it similarly, when asked what could be done to make the journey safer:



“[...] we girls in Nigeria should stop putting our lives in danger. If they say we should talk about, it’s very dangerous, you don’t know the starting you know the end. They just put you inside [a boat]. What about if the boat tumbles? Most people do not know how to swim, like me I don’t know how to swim. How would I cope? That is just it. [...] They told me that they would just take a car. I would take a car. A car would just drop me in Germany, that’s what they told me. [...] they didn’t tell me that I would pass through borders and take a boat; they didn’t tell me I would cross a river. They didn’t tell me that. They told me that I would take four days or five days on the road to get to Germany, that’s what they told me. I wish I knew. I wouldn’t have done it” (migrant woman, Europe).

While some women seem very aware of the risks regarding sexual exploitation during the migration process and are able to take precautions, this does not apply to all female migrants. As one migrant interviewee reported: “And I was talking to this young woman, she was in her 20s and had been on the journey for a few years before she arrived here [Europe]. She told me, I wish I had known what would happen, I wish I had known what they would do to us. I would have never left. I would have rather killed myself.” (Interview19). Therefore, available pre-departure information and awareness-raising campaigns for prospective (female) migrants need to include material on the risk of sexual exploitation and possible consequences thereof as well as possibilities to at least minimise some of the long-term effects, such as contraceptives and medical advice, especially in rural areas and countries where these are not readily available.

#### 2. Support women’s empowerment and changing gender norms

Our research shows that uneducated women and those from patriarchal societies are especially vulnerable to corruption during their migration journey. Therefore, an essential precondition for making female migration safer throughout all phases of the migration process is to strengthen women’s rights and support women’s empowerment and education in origin countries and along the journey. They would then be more aware of their rights, better able to claim them, and thus seek protection from corruption or gender-based violence. Research shows that “societal norms supportive of sexual violence [and] societal norms supportive of male superiority and sexual entitlement” (Jewkes et al., 2002, p.159) increase the risk of sexual violence. Therefore, changing gender norms in a society can play a fundamental role in the fight against gender-based violence. Programmes for the prevention of gender-based violence should take into account the findings of this study.

### 3. Ensure aid measures consider experiences of violence

Both during transit and in destination countries, aid measures need to take account of experiences of violence. Trauma and reproductive care need to be available faster and without bureaucratic hurdles. Where possible, information about and access to contraceptives should be made available to (especially irregular) migrants. Expert interviews confirmed that upon arrival in destination countries it is important that women receive timely support to deal with the lasting effects of sextortion, as well as any other sexual or physical violence. This includes everything from medical care to psychological care (often not included in emergency care granted to e.g. asylum seekers). An often referred to example is that women who get pregnant during the migration, often against their will, not only require medical and psychological assistance but also, e.g. counselling for the mother – child bond.

### 4. Strengthen administrative and judicial systems

#### a. Police and border guards

Police and border guards have been identified as major actors in the experience women have with corruption during migration. Anti-corruption and anti-violence initiatives, as well as programmes promoting integrity in these institutions, must be a priority for the international community. While the exact initiatives need to be determined on an individual country level, they would normally include better training, codes of conduct, and performance reviews. These programmes must include awareness-raising for integrity issues as well as a wider understanding of gender-related issues, including sextortion. An increase in the number of female officers would also be an effective measure.

#### b. Establish complaint mechanisms

From most of the interviews, it was clear that women hardly ever report abuse and corruption during the journey. It is strongly advised to create accessible reporting mechanisms specifically for (female) migrants, to enable the reporting and recording of cases of corruption. Since trust in government and officials is often low, such reporting mechanisms could be developed within civil society. Mechanisms should be put in place to report directly or at a later point, once the migrant has already moved on (e.g. via phone apps).

#### c. Strengthen judicial systems

Judicial systems in transit countries need to be strengthened and equipped to deal with cases of corruption and violence in general, but also specifically against migrants and refugees. It is necessary to establish if laws are sufficient to respond adequately to gendered corruption and phenomena such as sextortion, and do not provide legal loopholes for such offences. The judicial sector needs to be trained on gender-specific aspects of corruption, the concept of sextortion, and the special vulnerabilities of (female) migrants.

## Destination Countries

### 1. Capacity-building for public officials and law enforcement

#### a. On gender specific and cultural backgrounds

Public officials, including police and border guards in destination countries need specific training to better understand gender-specific and cultural backgrounds. One example given by multiple stakeholders is the problems of credibility of women's migration experiences. Experts reported that women's stories have often been branded unbelievable because they were lacking details about dates, cities and often were not narrated in chronological order. Country experts, however, pointed out that chronological order plays no role in many African countries; rather, stories are told in order of importance and many women cannot tell what cities they were in, simply because they cannot read the signs or were never told where they were while being smuggled. Another underestimated factor is the fear of threats against the woman's family, because social structures and pressures in the home country are underestimated. Additionally, sexual exploitation is often a taboo issue, seen to have a negative impact on the woman's honour and that of her family. Therefore, it is essential to train officials, thoroughly vet country experts, and give more importance to the assessment of specialised organisations. Enough female trained personal should also be available, as often women will not be comfortable reporting their experiences of (sexual) violence and corruption to men.

#### b. On gender-specific corruption

More training on the causes, consequences and forms of gender-specific corruption, especially sextortion and its long-term effects, is needed in destination countries to understand the situation of refugee and migrant women, and to ensure their safety and physical well-being. Public officials and law enforcement should be trained to prevent cases of gender-specific corruption and understand the long-term consequences faced by women.

### 2. Increase cooperation among European police forces

Police forces (especially within Europe) need to cooperate better and faster to disrupt trafficking and smuggling networks and help women and girls escape these precarious situations. Stakeholder interviews pointed out that in large parts it is not a lack of willingness but rather bureaucracy that prevents fast and efficient help.

### 3. Create corruption-complaint mechanisms

All interviews showed that women are often hesitant to report corruption, especially sextortion. There is a need to establish a system where women can receive information about corruption and report incidences both in the country of residence and along the migration route. Trust in official institutions is often shaky and many women are hesitant to report incidences out of fear that it could impact their legal status (e.g. their asylum claims) or family honour; therefore, such a reporting system would ideally be run by a civil society organisation. Wherever possible, the establishment of such a system should be closely linked with awareness-raising about corruption and potential prosecution.

#### 4. Provide appropriate housing

Women need privacy and separate housing, both in camps and receiving institutions in destination countries. Female-only housing should be provided where possible; yet, where many women travel with families and/or rely on men for protection (Bennhold, 2016; Interviews 11; 17) this is not always possible. Even if separate housing is not possible, space needs to be provided where women can seek help and withdraw from men. Housing also needs to take intersectionality into consideration, where certain backgrounds and experiences might make it necessary to ensure separate accommodation.

### Recommendations for further research

#### 1. Consider intersectionality in corruption and migration research

Corruption and migration researchers frequently view gender as a one-dimensional variable and often ignore other factors of vulnerability, such as race, class, educational level and societal structures in the country of origin. To fully understand women's experiences, one needs to take intersectionality into account.

#### 2. LGBTI migration

LGBTI migration has significantly increased in recent years and is expected to rise further, but has so far received little attention from scholars and policymakers. Research on the particular experiences and vulnerabilities of LGBTI people both during migration and upon arrival is crucial to ensure physical and psychological safety and well-being of this group.

#### 3. Transit hubs

Throughout the research, it became apparent that certain transit hubs are not only especially violent for migrants but also are where they are most frequently faced with demands to engage in corruption. More research is needed on these hubs and the existing corruption taking place to see how it can be combated.

#### 4. Gendered corruption indices

Corruption indices need to include a gender perspective to be able to grasp the effect of corruption on women. Existing measures of data collection need to be evaluated, to see if they contain information on the forms of corruption that most directly influence women, such as sextortion. In parallel, methods for measuring these forms of corruption need to be developed. A call for more disaggregated data is in line with the UN's 2030 Agenda. Specifically, this agenda calls for more data to feed into a broad range of policies, so as not to leave vulnerable groups behind.

#### 5. Reliable statistics on (sexual) abuse of (female) refugees and migrants

More reliable statistics are needed on the occurrence of (sexual) abuse and violence against refugees and migrants, both male and female.

#### 6. Analysis of legal frameworks on corruption

Existing legal frameworks need to be examined to see if and how they adequately consider gendered corruption, especially sextortion. This would help identify the reforms needed to combat gendered corruption.

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## Annex I – Search Terms Used to Guide the Structured Literature Review

Thematic Area	Search Terms
Linkages between corruption and victimization of female migrants	Corruption and female migrants, corruption and gender, corruption and victimization, corruption and trafficking, corruption and food security, corruption and discrimination, corruption and age, corruption and human security, corruption and organized crime, corruption and criminal violence, corruption and disappearance, corruption and human rights, victimization and female migrants, corruption and smuggling, extortion and female migrants, extortion and gender, extortion and trafficking, extortion and food security, extortion of female migrants, extortion and smuggling, sexual exploitation and migration, sexual exploitation and trafficking, sexual exploitation and smuggling
Linkages between corruption and women in refugee camps	Corruption and humanitarian assistance, corruption and humanitarian aid, corruption and refugee registration, corruption and health, corruption and food security, corruption in refugee camps, sexual exploitation of refugees, female security in refugee camps
Linkages between corruption and female migrants in host communities	Corruption in destination countries, corruption in transit, extortion in transit, female exploitation in host communities
Linkages between corruption and sexual extortion of female migrants	Sexual extortion and corruption; sexual favours and corruption; sextortion; sexual extortion and migration.

## Annex II – Glossary of Migration Key Terms<sup>11</sup>

<b>Asylum Seekers</b>	“Asylum seekers are people who have crossed an international border in search of protection, but whose claims for refugee status have not yet been decided” (Castles et al., 2014, p.222). Procedures for asylum applications can take a long time. Marginalisation can be a consequence of not having a clear legal status.
<b>Circular Migration</b>	Circular migration involves the “fluid and continuous movement of people between countries, including temporary and long-term migration” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Environmental and Disaster Displacees</b>	This category of migrants includes individuals who are displaced as a consequence of threats environmental security in particular. Examples of such threats are “environmental change (desertification, deforestation, land degradation, rising sea levels), natural disasters (floods, volcanoes, landslides, earthquakes) and man-made disasters (industrial accidents, radioactivity)” (Castles et al., 2014, p.223). As will be discussed later, the impact of environmental factors on migration flows is controversial and often difficult to distinguish from other components of human security (Castles et al., 223).
<b>Forced Displacement</b>	Forced displacement refers to the situation of persons who are forced to leave or flee their homes due to danger to life and limb as a result of human rights violations, war, violence and persecution (Gutsche & Cannizzo-Marcus, 2016)
<b>Highly-Skilled Migration</b>	Migrants “who have achieved at least tertiary education” (UNU Jargon Buster) are considered highly-skilled migrants. Highly-skilled migration is often related to brain drain of the origin country, which implies a “substantial depletion of skills resources” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Human Smuggling</b>	Human smuggling is defined as “procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” (UNODC, 2004, Annex III). What distinguishes it from human trafficking is that migrants participate voluntarily in the migration process.
<b>Human Trafficking</b>	Human trafficking is defined as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation [... including] the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs” (UNODC, 2004, Annex II).
<b>Internal Migration</b>	Internal migration is a “movement of people from one area of a country to another for the purpose or with the effect of establishing a new residence. This migration may be temporary or permanent. Internal migrants move but remain within their country of origin (e.g. rural to urban migration)” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Internally Displaced Persons</b>	According to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (2011) IDPs are defined as individuals who “have been forced to flee their homes because their lives were in danger, but unlike refugees they have not crossed an international border. Many IDPs remain exposed to [human security threats] during their displacement” (p.9).
<b>International Migration</b>	International migration is a movement “across international borders for a purpose other than short-term visits” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).

<sup>11</sup> Merkle et al., 2017

<b>Irregular Migration</b>	Irregular migrants are “persons who, owing to illegal entry or expiry of their visa, lack legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe on a country’s admission rules and any other person not authorised to remain in the host country (also called clandestine/illegal/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation)” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Labour Migration</b>	Individuals who move within their country or between countries for the purpose of employment are considered labour migrants (IOM, 2015).
<b>Long-Term Migration</b>	“A long-term migrant is a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Low-Skilled Migration</b>	Low-skilled migrants are “migrants who have achieved no higher than middle-secondary education” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Migration</b>	Migration involves “the movement of a person or a group of persons either across an international border, or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people whatever its length, composition or causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Permanent Migration</b>	Permanent migration is the “movement of persons to a country other than that of their usual residence with the intention of making the country of destination their permanent residence” (IOM, 2015, n.d.)
<b>Temporary Migration</b>	A temporary or short-term migrant “is a person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least three months but less than a year except in cases where the movement to that country is for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).
<b>Refugees</b>	Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as an individual who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” In other words, refugee status can be obtained in response to human security threats in general and personal, community and political security threats in particular.
<b>Remittances</b>	Remittances are “Monies earned or acquired by non-nationals that are transferred back to their country of origin” (IOM, 2015, n.d.).

## Annex III – List of Interview Partners<sup>12</sup>

Name	Organization Name
Anonymous	Female migrant, Mexico
Anonymous	Female migrant, Nigeria
Anonymous	Female migrant, Ukraine
Anonymous	Male migrant, Nigeria
Sophia Berthuet	Condrobs
Davide Del Monte	Transparency International Italy
Zsuzsanna Dobos de Prada	MigraMundi e.V
Mike Emberson	Medaille Trust
Expert	Aid organisation
Expert	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Expert	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Expert	Human Rights Organization
Marwa Fatafta	Transparency International
Teresa Fernández	Women's Link Spain
Marta González	Proyecto Esperanza
Vanessa Elisa Grotti	European University Institute
Liz Hales	Academic and Practitioner in the criminal justice system, retired
Claire Healy	ICMPD – International Centre for Migration Policy Development

<sup>12</sup> In alphabetical order. Interview numbers in the text have been randomly assigned.

Name	Organization Name
Marcy Hersh	Women's Refugee Commission
Stephanie Hinum	Ärzte der Welt
Gabi Höhenreich-Hajek	SOLWODI e.V.
Sadija Klepo	Hilfe von Mensch zu Mensch e.V.
Theodora Leite Stampfli	cfm Christlicher Friedensdienst, Schweiz
Maria Nella Lippi	Officer Oxfam Italy
Philippe Lust-Bianchi	UN WOMEN
Emmanuel Mbolela	Refugee and activist
Michael McHugh	Refugee Youth Service.
Aidan McQuade,	Anti-Slavery International; Journalist
Sadhena Moenesar	Vluchtelingenwerk
Beshid Najafi	Arbeitsgemeinschaft gegen internationale sexuelle und rassistische Ausbeutung (Agisra)
Esther Nauts	Asielzoekerscentrum Echt
Valeska Onken	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Carrie Pemberton Ford	CCHART – Cambridge Centre for Applied Research in Human Trafficking
Serena Perini	Commission for Human Rights and Gender Equality, Solidarity and International Relations of the city of Florence
Nadia Sebtaoui	France Terre d'Asile
Corina Toledo	Women's rights activist, author, curator frau.kunst.politik
Zanobi Tosi	Oxfam Italy
Elisa Trossero	ICMPD Trafficking Department
Anna Zobnina	European Migrant Women Network

## Annex IV – Interview Questionnaire – Experts

1. Could you please introduce yourself briefly and explain what your current function is at this organization is you currently work for?  
.....
2. How would you define corruption?  
.....
3. The migration process can broadly be separated in 3 stages: origin country, transit and destination country. In your opinion what role does corruption play during each of these stages?  
.....
4. Would you say that men and women experience corruption during the migration process differently? If yes, how?  
.....
5. When, where and how are female migrants most affected by corruption?  
.....
6. Can you think of indirect effects of corruption on female migration?  
.....
7. How are different types of female migrants affected differently by corruption?  
.....
8. Are transgender women affected differently by corruption during the migration process? If yes, how?  
.....
9. Which factors make women (or certain groups of women) particularly vulnerable to corruption during the migration process?  
.....
10. Are you aware of programmes aimed at mitigating the effects of corruption on female migrants specifically? If yes, could you please give a few examples?  
.....
11. In your view, what else needs to be done to successfully mitigate the effects of corruption on female migrants and to prevent victimization?  
.....
12. Is there anything important you would like to add, that I might have missed during this interview regarding this topic?  
.....

## Annex V – Interview Questionnaire – Migrants

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your migration journey?  
.....
2. How would you define corruption?  
.....
3. The migration process can broadly be separated in 3 stages: origin country, transit and destination country. Did you encounter corruption during any of these stages?  
.....
4. Do you have friends, relatives or other acquaintances who encountered corruption during the journey? If yes, how?  
.....
5. As a women/man, would you say your experience of corruption was different from that of men/women? How? Why do you think that is the case?  
.....
6. In your opinion where and how are women most affected by corruption on their journey?  
.....
7. Which factors make women (or certain groups of women) particularly vulnerable to corruption during the migration process?  
.....
8. In your view, what needs to be done to make the migration process safer for women?  
.....
9. Is there anything important you would like to add, that I might have missed during this interview regarding this topic?  
.....

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Registered offices  
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Division Global Policy, Governance  
Section Governance, Human Rights  
Anti-Corruption and Integrity Programme

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E [anticorruptionprogramme@giz.de](mailto:anticorruptionprogramme@giz.de)  
I [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

**Responsible:**  
Nicole Botha | Anti-Corruption and Integrity Programme

**Contact:**  
Jan Duck | Anti-Corruption and Integrity Programme

**Design und Layout:**  
Barbara Reuter | Oberursel | [barbareuter-grafik@web.de](mailto:barbareuter-grafik@web.de)

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Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices  
Bonn and Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 - 5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E [info@giz.de](mailto:info@giz.de)  
I [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

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Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development