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# GENDER AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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## Gender and Corruption in Nigeria

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This report was prepared by the Data Development and Dissemination Section of the Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

### Research coordination and report preparation:

**Data Development and Dissemination Section:** Michael Jandl (until April 2020), Suyu Liu, Stephen Okiya, Fatma Usheva

**UNODC Country Office Nigeria (CONIG):** Oliver Stolpe (Country Representative), Elisabeth Bayer (Deputy Country Representative), Princess Aruoriwoh-Esmer Chifiero, Adebusuyi Isaac Adeniran, Abdullahi Shehu, Queen Kanu and Rezaun N. Mercy.

**Corruption and Economic Crime Branch:** Jennifer Bradford, Mafaro Kasipo

#### Editing:

Jonathan Gibbons

#### Cover design

Suzanne Kunnen

#### Supervision:

Jean-Luc Lemahieu (Director, Division of Policy Analysis and Public Affairs), Angela Me (Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch) and Enrico Bisogno (Chief, Data Development and Dissemination Section).

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Contact: UNODC, Research and Analysis Branch: [rab@unodc.org](mailto:rab@unodc.org).

# INTRODUCTION

In one form or another, corruption has been with us since the dawn of civilization. Today, corruption remains among the major challenges for both developed and developing countries across the world. Corruption is a phenomenon that has a detrimental impact on every aspect of the social and economic performance of a country. Among other things, corruption hinders development, aggravates income inequality, reduces investment, both domestic and foreign, leads to the inefficient allocation of public funds, significantly lowers the quality of public sector services and deprives people of access to basic public services.

The urgent need to fight corruption was first recognized by the international community in the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003. The Convention introduces a comprehensive set of standards, measures and rules that all countries can apply in order to strengthen their legal and regulatory regimes to fight corruption. With 187 States parties,<sup>1</sup> UNCAC is one of the most ratified United Nations conventions. Corruption has also been recognized as a major impediment to development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under Goal 16, “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”, Member States have committed to “substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms” (target 16.5) among the population (16.5.1) and among businesses (16.5.2).

The first step in that process is for countries to measure the level of and trends in corruption and bribery effectively by conducting experience-based sample surveys on a regular basis. When well designed and implemented, experience-based surveys can avoid the pitfalls of both administrative data on corruption and the shortcomings of perception-based corruption studies, which by definition capture opinions about corruption rather than the actual phenomenon itself.

Nigeria has been exemplary in implementing experience-based corruption surveys. In 2016, the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria (NBS), in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with funding from the European Union, conducted the first-ever comprehensive nationwide survey on the experience of bribery in Nigeria. To measure if progress had been made and to determine in which areas more needed to be done, the Government of Nigeria carried out a second corruption survey in 2019 with the technical support of UNODC and funding from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Published in December 2019, the survey report, *Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends*,<sup>2</sup> highlights areas of progress and areas that still pose a grave concern. One particularly important finding is that women are consistently less likely than men to pay bribes when in contact with a public official, and initial evidence indicates that female public officials may be less likely to take bribes than their male colleagues. The report concluded that there is a need to conduct further research on how socioeconomic and cultural factors and their intersectionality underpin the linkages between gender and corruption in Nigeria.

On the one hand, culturally learned risk-averse behaviour that is ingrained in women, and the disproportionate sanctioning that women receive when caught engaging in corrupt activities, may suggest that women are less likely than men to engage in corrupt activities. On the other hand, it is often claimed that women simply do not have the opportunity to engage in such activities as they are excluded from collusive and corrupt gendered networks. Such networks, which are predominantly male, effectively serve to limit the participation of women in both the public and private sectors as well as in the political sphere. Research indicates that criminal behaviour is increasing among women and is coinciding with increased female participation in the labour market. It thus remains to be seen how the increased participation of women in socioeconomic and political life will change their involvement in corruption.

This report is a response to the need to conduct further research on gender and corruption in Nigeria. By presenting the first empirical evidence on gender and corruption in the country, it is aimed at encouraging

<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/ratification-status.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/ratification-status.html).

<sup>2</sup> UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends – Second Survey on Corruption as Experienced by the Population* (Vienna, 2009).

debate about whether and how gender equality in the public administration of Nigeria can contribute to an effective reduction in corruption. The report also provides in-depth analysis of the differences in bribe-paying between men and women, as well as differences in their attitudes and perceptions, with a view to assisting the improvement of anti-corruption strategies at both the national and local level.

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## KEY FINDINGS



## POLICY IMPLICATIONS



Female public officials are consistently less likely than male public officials to solicit and take bribes.

When citizens deal with public officials in Nigeria, bribery is significantly more likely to occur when the official is male.

Male police officers are five times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues, and male Federal Road Safety Corps are more than three times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues. The largest gender disparity is among judges, among whom males are roughly six times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues.

The differences are less marked for doctors and teachers/lecturers – the two public sector occupations with the largest share of women: male teachers/lecturers are only 1.5 times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues; male doctors are twice as likely to do so. The prevalence of bribery in relation to these occupations is also among the lowest in the public sector.

In addition, male public officials are 36 per cent more likely than female public officials to make a direct bribe request, whereas female public officials are much more likely to receive an unsolicited bribe.

While female officers are significantly less involved in corrupt practices than their male colleagues, this difference could be partially due to the fact that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions where they can engage in such activities.

In most public sector occupations with a better gender balance, male officials are less likely to take bribes than in those where men heavily outnumber women. This suggests that efforts to increase the participation of women in all sectors of public service, particularly in those most affected by corrupt practices, could have a beneficial impact on the reduction of bribery.

Building on the fact that female public officials have a lower propensity than their male colleagues to solicit bribes, arrangements should be explored for officials of both sexes to work jointly in conducting key assignments. For example, the improvement of the gender balance should be promoted among law-enforcement teams, which are particularly prone to soliciting bribes.

Raising awareness of these findings both among policymakers and the general public in Nigeria is a way to promote the active role of women society and establish positive role models for all.





## When in contact with public officials, women are less likely to pay bribes than men

The prevalence of bribery among men is 35.2 per cent, compared with 23.9 per cent among women.

Although the prevalence of bribery decreased among both sexes from 2016 to 2019, the decrease was more marked among women than among men. This suggests that women may be the more receptive to anti-corruption policies and awareness campaigns.

There are various reasons why gender differences exist in bribe-paying. One could be related to the different role played by men and women within the household. The data suggest that the disproportionate exposure of men to bribery may be the result of the bribery transactions carried out on behalf of the household or other family members.

The fact that Nigerian women are less likely than men to pay bribes to public officials needs to be highlighted when developing anti-corruption policies and awareness campaigns, which should be gender-sensitive in nature.

The regular collection of gender-disaggregated data is crucial to the evaluation of anti-corruption policies irrespective of whether or not they already have a gender dimension.



## Men and women tend to interact with and pay bribes to different types of public officials

The prevalence of bribery among men and women also differs because they tend to deal with different types of public officials. Women have more contact with officials such as public health workers, with whom the risk of bribery is lower; men interact more with officials from law enforcement officers, who are more likely to solicit bribes.

Furthermore, men are significantly more likely than women to pay bribes to certain types of public officials when interacting with them: in 2019, 37 per cent of men who had contact with police officers paid a bribe, while the share of women who did so was 25 per cent.

Measures developed to reduce bribery in the different areas of the public administration should be tailored to the sex composition of service users.

Certain key law enforcement duties are particularly at risk of bribery in Nigeria, which suggests that guidance and supervision need to be strengthened, including in relation to the treatment of both male and female citizens.



"Body currency" is perceived to be common in Nigeria, but related data are scarce as victims are reluctant to report it.

Some 41 per cent of both men and women think that body currency – the exchange of sexual favours in return for preferential treatment – happens very frequently in Nigeria and almost 30 per cent think it happens fairly frequently.

More than 30 per cent of men and women indicate that they would not feel comfortable telling anybody if they were asked for a sexual favour by a public official in exchange for preferential treatment.

Existing information, including of an anecdotal nature, suggests that requests for sexual favours may be a recurrent practice, with women being disproportionately affected. Due to the highly sensitive nature of body currency, collecting reliable and representative data on this phenomenon continues to be a major challenge.

Given the lack of solid evidence relating to body currency, a dedicated study on this practice is essential. Understanding the extent and modality of this phenomenon is crucial to the design of policies that can effectively reduce this form of corruption.

There is a need for awareness-raising efforts to highlight that requesting sexual favours in return for preferential treatment is a criminal offence that is liable to be considered both corruption and sexual abuse.

Awareness campaigns aimed at encouraging the victims of body currency to come forward and at shifting the stigma from victims to public officials who solicit sexual favours need to be designed and implemented.

Anti-corruption bodies should consider special reporting procedures for women and girls seeking to lodge complaints related to requests of a sexual nature.

The necessity of specific legislation relating to the criminalization of requests by public officials for sexual favours from citizens should be taken into consideration.



Both male and female citizens remain very reluctant to report corruption.

Less than 4 per cent of men and women report their bribery experience to authorities that are capable of conducting a formal investigation.

One of the most common reasons for not reporting bribery among men and women in Nigeria is that they do not know to whom they should report it.

Awareness of the existing institutions in Nigeria where men and women can report bribery needs to be raised.

The limited reporting of bribery suggests there is an urgent need to strengthen the responsiveness and reliability of official complaint and disciplinary systems.

Given the different patterns of bribery affecting men and women, gender-sensitive messages about the importance of reporting bribery by both male and female bribe-payers could be considered.



## Men are more likely than men women to be targeted for vote-buying.

During the 2019 national and state election campaigns, slightly more than 23 per cent of eligible male voters reported that they were personally offered either money or non-monetary favours in exchange for their vote, while less than 19 per cent of women received such an offer.

Gender-sensitive campaigns before elections could be considered, so as to raise awareness of the importance of ensuring a transparent electoral process as well as to fight vote-buying.



## Men are more likely than women to use nepotism to secure employment and promotion in the public sector.

An estimated 29.5 per cent of male candidates who secured a public sector position in 2019 resorted to nepotism in order to do so, compared with 24.9 per cent of female candidates.

Moreover, 14.2 per cent of male public officials secured a promotion in the public sector using the help of friends or relatives, while the figure was only 8.7 per cent among female public officials.

Formal, merit-based and transparent recruitment processes should become universal practice.

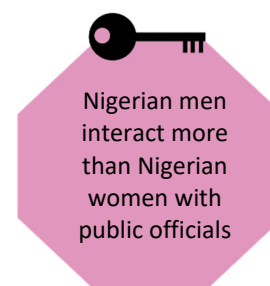
Monitoring of the recruitment processes and gender equality among applicants and recruitment panels could be considered in order to improve transparency and gender equality in public sector recruitment and subsequent career paths.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BRIBE-PAYING

In 2019, almost a third of adult Nigerians (30.2 per cent) who interacted with a public official paid a bribe to, or were asked to pay a bribe by, that public official.<sup>3</sup> Such a large share of citizens directly being exposed to administrative bribery begs the question: Are men and women equally at risk of bribery in Nigeria? The answer will not only help improve understanding of bribery in Nigeria in general but also help policymakers to design and tailor policies specifically targeted at corruption. This chapter uses data from the corruption surveys conducted in Nigeria in 2016 and 2019 to look at gender differences from the perspective of citizens confronted with bribery requests by public officials. Gender differences from the perspective of public officials who take bribes are considered later in this report.

### Gender differences in interactions with public officials

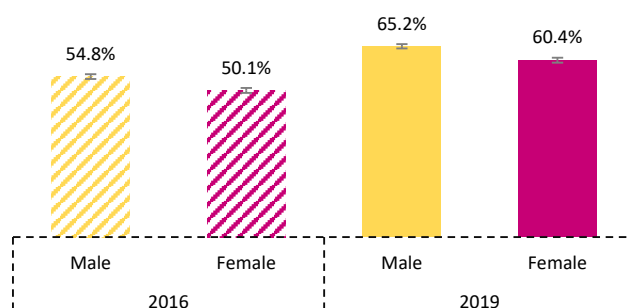
As in other countries, interaction with public officials is an integral part of daily life in Nigeria. Whether passing through a police roadblock, attending a doctor's appointment at a public hospital, or applying for a passport, a relatively large share of the population have regular encounters with public officials. In 2019, 63.0 per cent of the adult population of Nigeria, or almost two out of every three adult Nigerians, had at least one contact with a public official. Referred to as the "contact rate", this is an important concept to look at because public officials can only seek undue remuneration for their services through direct or indirect contact with the general public.



Even though contact between Nigerian citizens and public officials has increased considerably since 2016, when the rate was 52 per cent, the male contact rate remains around 4.8 percentage points higher than the female rate.

**i** **Contact rate**  
The share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the previous 12 months

**Figure 1** Contact rate with public officials, by sex, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019



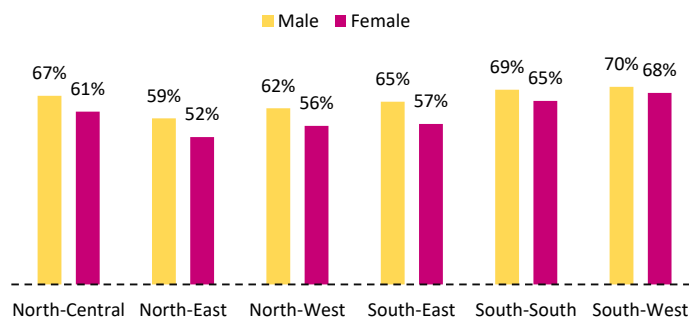
Note: The contact rate corresponds to the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian population. The black bars indicate the confidence intervals for the prevalence of bribery at 95 per cent confidence level. Taylor-linearized variance estimation is used to calculate the confidence intervals for the prevalence rates.

Depending on various factors, such as level of socioeconomic development and cultural background, the difference in the male and female contact rate varies substantially across the different geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The North-East has the lowest contact rate in the country and one of the largest differences in

<sup>3</sup> UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends – Second Survey on Corruption as Experienced by the Population* (Vienna, 2019).

the male and female rate, at 7 percentage points,<sup>4</sup> while the South-West has the highest contact rate and the smallest gender difference, at 2.2 percentage points. In spite of these variations, the female contact rate is consistently lower than the male rate across the country's six zones. Moreover, further disaggregation shows that the female contact rate is lower than the male contact rate in 35 of the country's 36 states, as well as in the Federal Capital Territory.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 2 Contact rate with public officials, by sex and geopolitical zone, Nigeria, 2019**

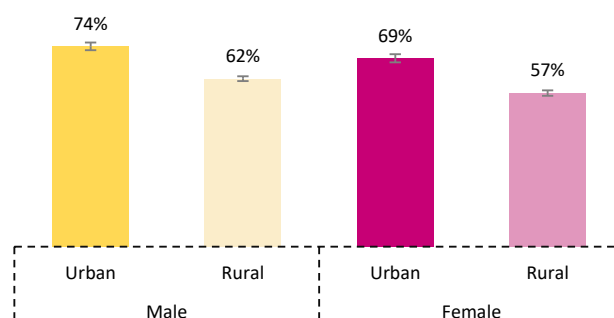


Note: The contact rate corresponds to the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian population.

In addition to regional variations, the degree of urbanization of an area is also a crucial factor in the level of interaction between citizens and public officials. Rural areas in Nigeria are more likely than urban areas to lack certain types of public services and utilities, such as water and electricity supply,<sup>6</sup> thus limiting possible contact with public officials significantly. Also, administrative offices and large health-care centres are almost exclusively located in the country's highly urbanized areas.

Indeed, the data show that both the male and female contact rate are substantially higher in the country's urban areas than in its rural areas. Among the different subpopulation groups, women in rural areas have the least contact with public officials, with only slightly more than half having at least one contact with a public official in 2019.

**Figure 3 Contact rate with public officials, by sex and degree of urbanization, Nigeria, 2019**



Note: The contact rate corresponds to the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian population. The black bars indicate the confidence intervals for the prevalence of bribery at 95 per cent confidence level. Taylor-linearized variance estimation is used to calculate the confidence intervals for the prevalence rates.

<sup>4</sup> At 7.8 percentage points, the difference in the male and female contact rate is largest in the South-East zone of the country.

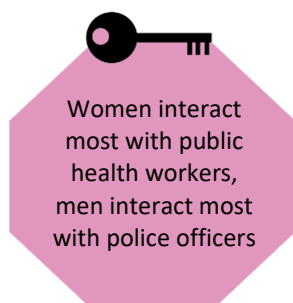
<sup>5</sup> In 2019, only the state of Ondo recorded a higher female (64 per cent) than male contact rate (61 per cent).

<sup>6</sup> According to the Nigeria DHS Survey (2018), only 58 per cent of the population in rural areas of Nigeria had access to an improved source of drinking water, compared with 74 per cent in urban areas. In addition, only 39 per cent of households in rural areas had electricity, compared with 83 per cent in urban areas.



## Contact and type of public official

Geographical location is not the only consideration when attempting to understand gender differences in the bribery experience of Nigerian citizens: the type of public official with whom men and women interact is another essential factor. Given that a large share of women seek medical services related to their own reproductive health and their children's health, it is perhaps unsurprising that Nigerian women interact

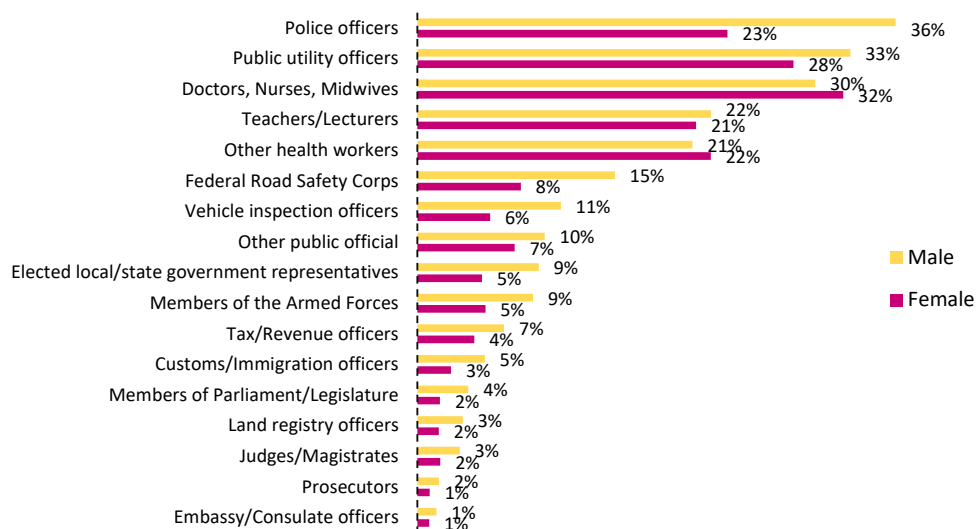


most with public health-care officials such as doctors, nurses and other health workers. The fact that women are disproportionately more likely to provide unpaid care to ageing family members, who may regularly need medical assistance,<sup>7</sup> is no doubt another reason why women also have more contact with public health care officials than any other type of public official.

With the exception of health care workers, men have a higher rate of contact than women with every type of public official covered in the survey, although the difference is very small in the case of teachers and lectures.

The difference is by far the largest in relation to police officers. There may be various reasons why men are significantly more likely than women to interact with the police. As women participate in the labour force less than men in Nigeria,<sup>8</sup> one possible explanation could be that women are therefore less likely to encounter police officers at roadblocks while commuting to work. Also, women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector as domestic workers, home-based workers or contributing family-workers, making them less likely to travel than men, or to travel shorter distances.<sup>9</sup> The relatively riskier behaviour of men and the fact that they are more likely than women to become involved in criminal or illegal activities, as reflected in the generally higher crime rate among men than women,<sup>10</sup> is another reason why men have much more contact than women with law enforcement agencies in Nigeria.

**Figure 4 Contact rate, by sex and by type of public official, Nigeria, 2019**



Note: The contact rate corresponds to the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian population.

<sup>7</sup> UN Women, *Families in a Changing World* (2019).

<sup>8</sup> According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, ILOSTAT database), in 2019, 58 per cent of male adults in Nigeria participated in the labour force, compared with 48 per cent of women.

<sup>9</sup> International Labour Office, *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: a Statistical Picture* (Geneva, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Greg T. Smith, "Long-term trends in female and male involvement in crime", *The Oxford Handbook of Gender, Sex, and Crime* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

## Gender differences in bribe-paying

Although women in Nigeria have less contact than men with public officials, a lower contact rate per se does not necessarily mean that women are less susceptible to bribery than men. The prevalence of bribery is defined as the share of adult Nigerians who had contact with a public official in the previous 12 months and paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe. In other words, to understand the gender difference in the risk of bribery, it is necessary to establish the share of those who actually paid a bribe, or were asked to pay a bribe but refused to do so, among those who had an encounter with a public official.

### i

#### Prevalence of bribery

The share of adults who had contact with a public official in the previous 12 months and paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe but refused to do so.

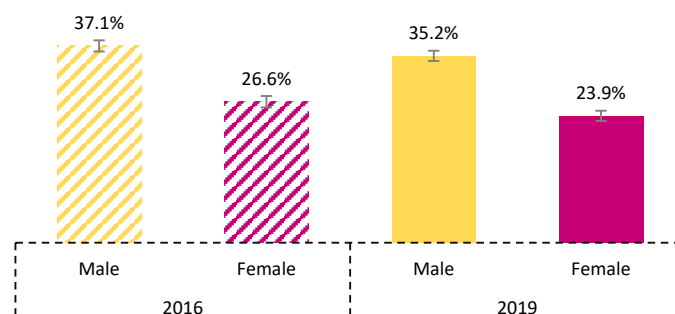
The data do show, however, that men are actually significantly more likely than women to pay a bribe in Nigeria and the difference is considerable. When in contact with a public official in 2019, men were 47 per cent more likely than women to pay a bribe. Indeed, irrespective of differences in age, educational level and employment status, Nigerian women are consistently less likely than men to pay a bribe, or be asked to pay a bribe, when interacting with a public official.

Moreover, although the prevalence of bribery decreased among both sexes from 2016 to 2019, the decrease was more marked among women than among men, falling by 10.1 per cent among women and 5.1 per cent among men.



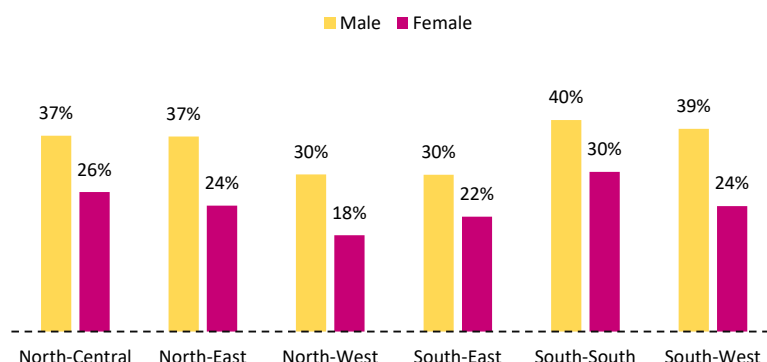
Nigerian men are more likely than Nigerian women to pay bribes

**Figure 5** Prevalence of bribery, by sex, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019



Note: The prevalence of bribery is calculated as the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official, on at least one occasion in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian who had at least one contact with a public official. The black bars indicate the confidence intervals for the prevalence of bribery at 95 per cent confidence level. Taylor-linearized variance estimation is used to calculate the confidence intervals for the prevalence rates.

Regional analysis reveals a lower prevalence of bribery among women than among men across all Nigeria's six zones. The lowest prevalence of bribery among women is in the North-West, where only 18 per cent of women pay a bribe when in contact with a public official. Women are most likely to pay a bribe in the South-South, where 30 per cent of women pay or are asked to pay extra when accessing public services. These regional patterns are not unique to women, however, as the data for men show the same pattern.

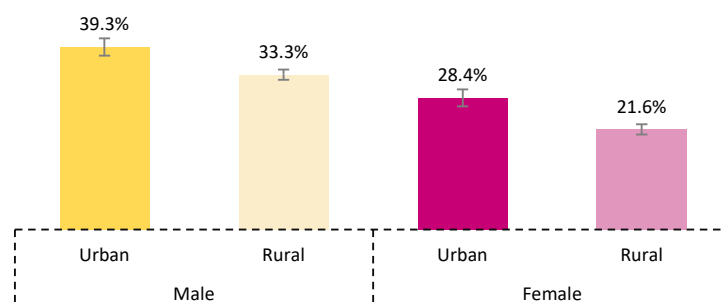
**Figure 6** Prevalence of bribery, by sex and zone, Nigeria, 2019

Note: The prevalence of bribery is calculated as the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official, on at least one occasion in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian who had at least one contact with a public official.

As with the contact rate, the degree of urbanization is a crucial factor in explaining the level of bribery in a particular location. The data suggest that people living in urban areas are much more likely to pay or be



asked to pay a bribe than people living in rural areas when in contact with a public official, and that is the case for both men and women. Bribery requests may be more prevalent in larger cities because the relationship between public officials and individuals is less personal than in less urbanized areas, which may make it easier for public officials to solicit bribes, either directly or indirectly.<sup>11</sup> Women living in urban areas, for example, are 31 per cent more likely to pay bribes than their female counterparts in rural areas. Men living in urban areas, on the other hand, are only 18 per cent more likely to pay a bribe than those living in rural areas. These findings suggest that place of residence may play a more important role in bribery among women than among men.

**Figure 7** Prevalence of bribery, by sex and degree of urbanization, Nigeria, 2019

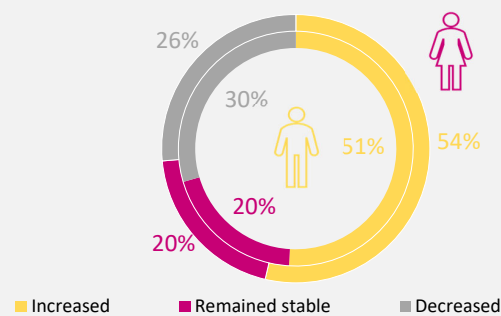
Note: The prevalence of bribery is calculated as the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official, on at least one occasion in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian who had at least one contact with a public official. The black bars indicate the confidence intervals for the prevalence of bribery at 95 per cent confidence level. Taylor-linearized variance estimation is used to calculate the confidence intervals for the prevalence rates.

<sup>11</sup> Jennifer Hunt, "Trust and bribery: The role of the quid pro quo and the link with crime", *IZA Discussion Papers 1179*, Institute of Labor Economics (2004).

### Perceived trends in corruption

Although public perceptions do not necessarily reflect actual experiences of corruption, it is important to analyse them as they affect people's behaviour, which can in turn have real consequences for the economy. Public opinion and perceptions are also indicative of the general level of trust in the Government and public institutions. The 2019 survey asked about people's perceptions of how the level of corruption had changed in the two years prior to the survey. Even though the prevalence of bribery had decreased both among men and women since 2016, the majority believed that corruption had either increased or remained stable in Nigeria. Women had a slightly more pessimistic view, with 54 per cent believing that corruption had increased, compared with 51 per cent of men. The perception of corruption as an ever-bigger problem, irrespective of its actual level, is a phenomenon observed in many countries and one that is often linked to media coverage of high-profile corruption cases.

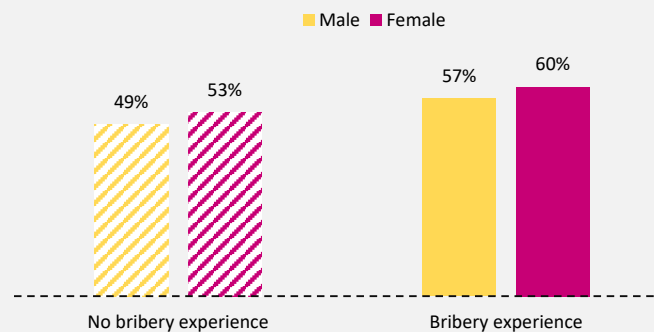
**Perceived trend in corruption, by sex, Nigeria, 2019**



Note: Perceived trend in corruption refers to the period May 2017 to June 2019.

To provide supporting evidence of how public perceptions of corruption are formed, the figure below compares the trend in corruption as perceived by people who have experienced bribery and by those who have not. The data show that around 50 per cent of men and women still think that the level of corruption in Nigeria has worsened despite their lack of direct experience of it. The share among those with direct bribery experience is even higher, which suggests that perceptions are indeed influenced by experience, although only to a very limited extent.

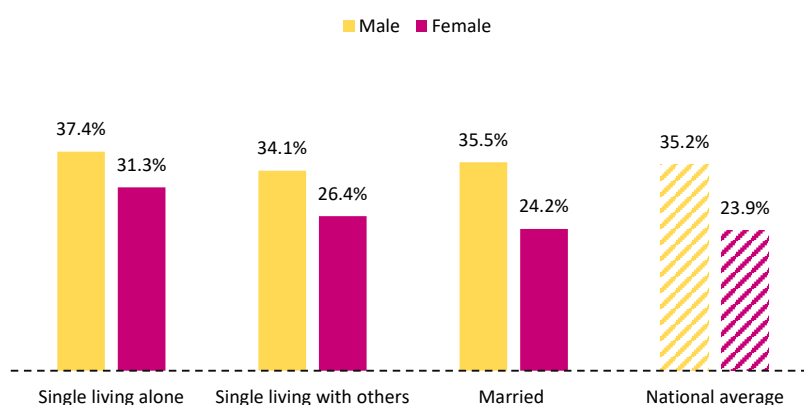
**Share of men and women who think corruption increased in the previous two years, according to their experience of bribery, 2019**



## Bribe-paying and type of household

There are various reasons why gender differences exist in bribe-paying. One could be related to the different role played by men and women within the household. This is suggested by the fact that the prevalence of bribery among single women who live alone in Nigeria is significantly higher than the national average among women and is much closer to the male prevalence rate. Moreover, the prevalence of bribery is lowest among married women and the difference compared with that of married men is the largest. The disproportionate exposure to bribery of married men may suggest that some of the administrative transactions carried out by married men are done so on behalf of the family. Another reason for the gender difference in bribe-paying in Nigeria could be linked, for example, to a possible difference in the attitude of public officials towards men and women, although there is a lack of evidence relating to such an explanation.

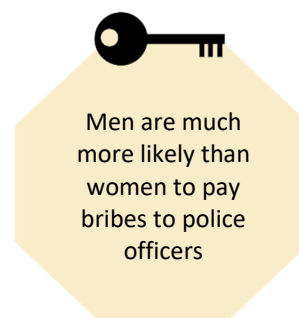
**Figure 8 Prevalence of bribery, by sex and marital status, Nigeria, 2019**



Note: The prevalence of bribery is calculated as the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official, on at least one occasion in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian who had at least one contact with a public official.

## Bribe-paying and type of public official

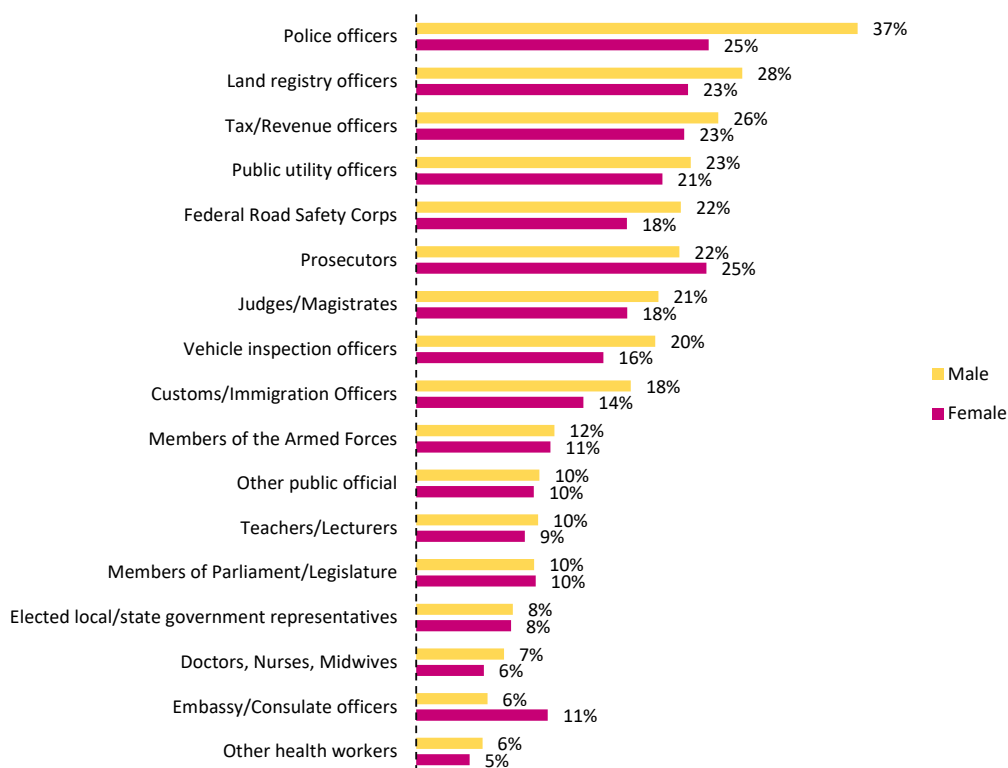
Gender differences in the prevalence of bribery could also be explained by the different types of public official to whom men and women actually pay bribes.<sup>12</sup> Disaggregation of the prevalence of bribery by the sex of bribe-payers and the type of public official who take bribes confirms the overall trend: men are more likely than women to pay bribes to almost all types of public official. One of the largest differences is in relation to police officers, to whom women are 34 per cent less likely than men to pay a bribe. By contrast, in the case of the other most frequently encountered public officials, such as public utility officers, teachers/lecturers and health-care workers, the gender difference in the prevalence of bribery is very small. This suggests that a non-negligible part of that difference is driven by the proportion of bribes paid to law enforcement agencies, to whom women are significantly less likely than men to pay bribes.



<sup>12</sup> It is important to point out that the prevalence of bribery by type of public official may be higher or lower than the national average depending entirely on the number of men and women who had contact with that type of official and those who actually paid, or were asked to pay, a bribe.



**Figure 9 Prevalence of bribery, by sex of bribe-payer and type of public official receiving bribes, Nigeria, 2019**



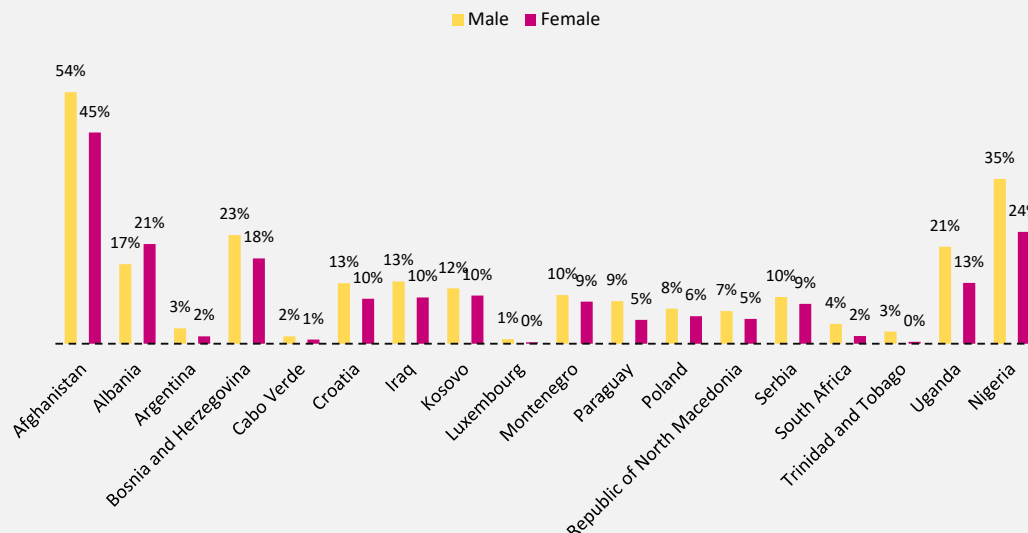
Note: The prevalence of bribery is calculated as the number of adult male/female Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official, on at least one occasion in the 12 months prior to the survey, as a percentage of the adult male/female Nigerian who had at least one contact with a public official.

### Are women less likely than men to pay bribes? Evidence from 17 countries

In the past two decades, there has been an increase in the amount of research that provides evidence on the macro- and micro-level determinants of corruption. At the macro level, researchers have identified factors, such as level of economic development, quality of institutions, government size and government structure, press freedom, trade openness and level of human capital, that are correlated with the level of corruption in a country.<sup>a</sup> With the increasing availability of micro-level data and data measuring the experience of individuals rather than their perceptions, researchers have also been able to identify individual level characteristics that determine the likelihood of engaging in corrupt practices. Research shows that better educated and higher-income individuals are more likely than others to be targeted by corrupt public officials, as are people living in larger cities. Conversely, age is negatively correlated with bribery, with older individuals being less likely to be asked to pay a bribe than younger people. Finally, research also shows that, on average, men are more often the target of bribery requests than women.<sup>b</sup>

However, available data on the prevalence of bribery by sex collected by UNODC from 17 countries suggest that this is not always the case. In Albania, for example, 21 per cent of women who had contact with a public official reported having paid a bribe, compared with 17 per cent of men. While Albania is the only country, among those with available data, where women are more likely than men to pay a bribe, other countries such as Montenegro and Serbia have reported a very small difference between men and women. Despite these exceptions, on average, the data confirm that men are more likely to pay bribes than women. Nevertheless, it is still important to analyse how socioeconomic and cultural factors interact and shape corrupt practices in different countries.

## Prevalence of bribery, by sex, countries with available data (since 2007)



Source: United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of the Criminal Justice System.

Note: Afghanistan: 2012; Albania: 2010; Argentina: 2016; Bosnia and Herzegovina: 2010; Cabo Verde: 2016; Croatia: 2010; Iraq: 2011; Kosovo:<sup>c</sup> 2010; Luxembourg: 2013; Montenegro: 2010; Paraguay: 2010; Poland: 2010; North Macedonia: 2010; Serbia: 2010; South Africa: 2010; Trinidad and Tobago: 2007; Uganda: 2016.

<sup>a</sup> Jakob Svensson, "Eight questions about corruption", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 19, No.3 (2005), pp. 19–42; Daniel Treisman, "The causes of corruption: A cross-national study", *Journal of Public Economics*, vol. 76, No.3 (2000), pp. 399–457; Eugen Dimant and Guglielmo Tostato, "Causes and effects of corruption: What has past decade's empirical research taught us? A survey", *Journal of Economic Surveys*, vol. 32, No.2 (2018), pp.335–356.

<sup>b</sup> Naci Mocan, "What determines corruption? International evidence from microdata", *Economic Inquiry*, vol. 4, No. 46 (2008), pp. 493–510; Ishita Chatterjee and Ranjan Ray, "Does the evidence on corruption depend on how it is measured?" Results from a cross-country study on microdata sets", *Applied Economics*, vol. 44, No.25 (2012), pp. 3215–3227; Jennifer Hunt and Sonia Laszlo, "Is bribery really regressive? Bribery's costs, benefits, and mechanisms", *World Development*, vol. 40, No.2 (2012), pp. 355–372.

<sup>c</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

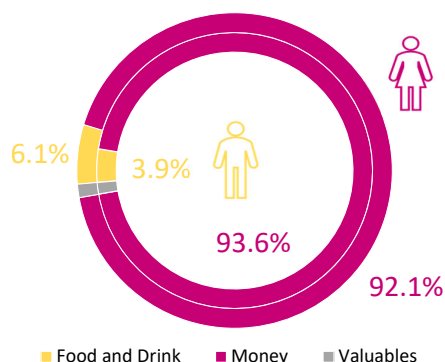
## Gender differences in forms of bribe payment

Although bribes are paid to public officials in various shapes and sizes, they can be broadly classified into four categories: cash, valuables, food and drink, and other favours.<sup>13</sup> Despite this variety, 93 per cent of bribes paid to public officials in Nigeria are paid in cash. Cash is the most common means of bribe-payment for both men and women, but on the rare occasions that bribes are paid in food and drink, women are more likely to use that form of payment. (In 2019, 6.1 per cent of female bribe-payers paid a bribe in the form of food and drink, while just 3.9 per cent of men did so. The 2016 survey paints a similar picture.



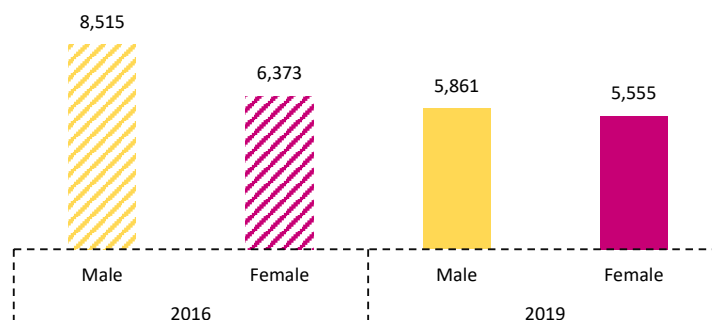
Although cash is used in the vast majority of bribes, women are more likely to pay a bribe in the form of food and drink

<sup>13</sup> Another important category is "body currency". The limitation of the present survey is that it cannot provide any evidence on that form of bribe payment. Two different questions were asked, both direct and indirect, in an attempt to measure the extent of that type of

**Figure 10 Form of bribe payment, by sex, Nigeria, 2019**

Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The average cash bribe in 2019 in Nigeria was 5,754 Nigerian Naira (NGN), an amount equivalent to roughly \$52 (PPP).<sup>14</sup> The difference in the size of the average cash bribe paid by men and women in 2016 was relatively large but, despite the continuing difference in the male and female prevalence of bribery, has since largely disappeared.

**Figure 11 Average size of cash bribe in Nigerian Naira, by sex, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019**

Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### Body currency in Nigeria

Requesting sexual favours in exchange for preferential treatment is a type of abuse of authority known as “body currency” that occurs both in developed and developing countries. Evidence suggests that women are disproportionately affected but due to the highly sensitive nature of this phenomenon, collecting reliable and nationally representative data continues to be very challenging.

The 2016 and 2019 corruption surveys included specific sets of questions aimed at measuring the occurrence of cases when citizens were asked for sexual favours in exchange for public services.<sup>a</sup> The findings of the two surveys indicate that respondents are reluctant to disclose their direct experience of requests for sexual favours.

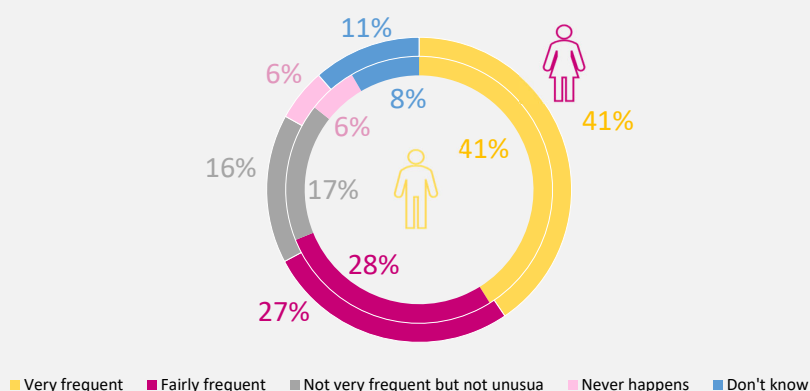
corruption among the population of Nigeria. Due to the sensitivity of the question, however, the survey was not able to capture any such experience.

<sup>14</sup> Amounts in NGN have been converted to International Dollars in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) so as to take into account the difference in the cost of living in Nigeria and in the United States of America. In particular, “Purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factor is a spatial price deflator and currency converter that controls for price level differences between countries.” (World Development Indicators database). The exchange rate used to convert NGN into Dollars PPP used in the present report was obtained at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.PPP>.

Furthermore, another UNODC study has highlighted the fact that body currency may not be viewed by the victim as a form of corruption, such as bribery or abuse of authority, which indicates that further methodological developments are needed in this particular area.<sup>b</sup>

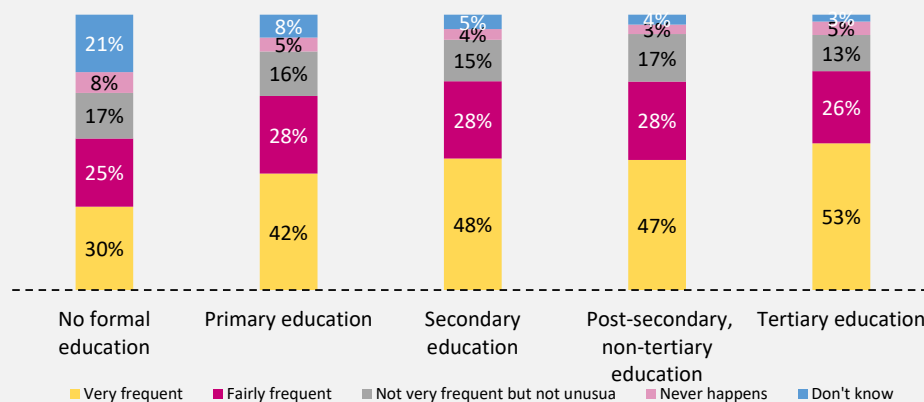
Nevertheless, other information collected in both surveys suggests that cases when the body is used or requested as a form of currency are not rare in Nigeria. While perceptions are not an accurate measure of experience, as previously discussed, they can still provide useful insight. The figure below presents the opinion of men and women about how frequently public officials ask for sexual favours in return for preferential treatment: 41 per cent of both men and women think that such practices happen very frequently and almost 30 per cent think they happen fairly frequently.

#### Perceived frequency of requests for sexual favours in return for preferential treatment, by sex, Nigeria, 2019



Education and employment status play a crucial role in shaping these perceptions, depending on people's different experiences. Women with no formal education are the least likely to think that sexual favours are frequently exchanged for preferential treatment, but the share almost doubles in the case of the highly educated. In addition, women who work in the private sector, followed by students, are significantly more likely to think that public officials frequently solicit sexual services. Although the perceptions reported below are only those of women, the opinions of men closely resemble them.

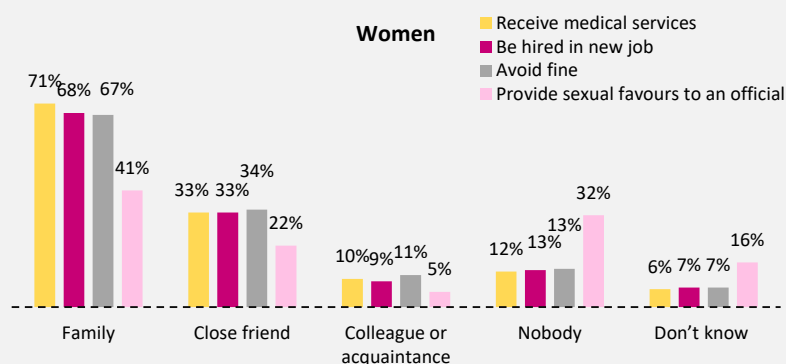
#### Percentage distribution of women according to how frequently public officials ask for sexual favours in exchange for a service, Nigeria, 2019



Aimed at providing further evidence of how sensitive the issue of sexual favours is among the Nigerian population, the figure below presents information about how comfortable men and women would feel in sharing their corruption experiences with family, friends and colleagues. Overall, both men and women feel quite comfortable talking about their bribery experiences, be they related to medical services at a hospital, to securing a new job or to avoiding the payment of a fine. A notable exception is when people are asked who they would tell if they had to provide a sexual favour in exchange for preferential treatment, as the share of both

men and women who would tell family members, friends or colleagues decreases significantly. Moreover, more than 30 per cent of men and women indicate that they would not feel comfortable telling anybody. Overall, these findings indicate that although the request for sexual favours in exchange for preferential treatment is perceived as a frequent practice in Nigeria, it remains an issue of great sensitivity among citizens and, accordingly, there is widespread reluctance to report it to family or friends and, as the lack of data suggest, even more so in a general population survey. There is therefore a clear need for awareness-raising efforts to highlight that body currency, i.e. sexual favours and acts of a sexual nature, is also a form of corruption.<sup>b</sup>

**Share of women who would feel comfortable sharing their bribery experiences with family, close friends or colleagues or acquaintances, by purpose, Nigeria, 2019**

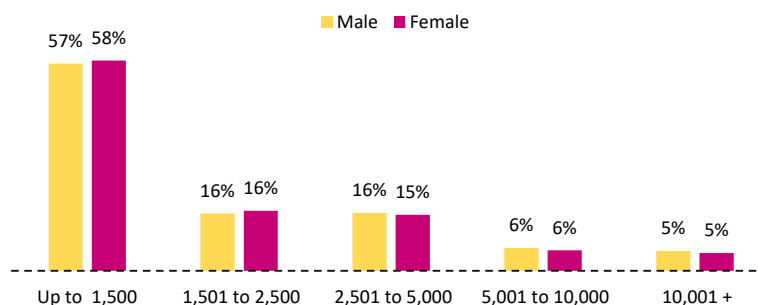


<sup>a</sup> UNODC, *The Time is Now – Addressing the Gender Dimension of Corruption* (Vienna, 2020).

<sup>b</sup> In the 2019 survey, two distinct approaches were used to explore the prevalence of such experiences among the population of Nigeria: one question directly asked respondents if they had been personally asked to provide services or favours in exchange for obtaining a public service, implicitly suggesting sexual favours. Another question used the “List Experiment” questionnaire design technique – specifically developed for sensitive topics with a high social desirability bias – to facilitate the disclosure of such experiences by respondents.

Given that bribes are paid for a variety of purposes to different officials with a varying frequency (some bribes are paid only once, to obtain a particular document, for example, while others are paid frequently, to avoid the payment of traffic fines), it is not surprising that the size of cash bribes paid in Nigeria varies greatly. The distribution of bribes paid by sex of the victim, i.e. the share of men and women that pay a bribe of a particular size, shows that most bribes are relatively small, which means that the average bribe size is strongly influenced by a limited number of large and very large bribes. More than half of bribes (57 per cent) paid in 2019 were of NGN 1,500 (\$13.5 PPP) or less, and 32 per cent were of NGN 1,501–5,000 (\$13.5–\$22.6 PPP), both well below the average amount. Of the larger bribes, 6 per cent were of NGN 5,001–10,000 (\$45.3–\$90.7 PPP) and 5 per cent of more than NGN 10,000 (above \$90.7 PPP).

**Figure 12 Distribution of cash bribes, by sex, Nigeria, 2019**

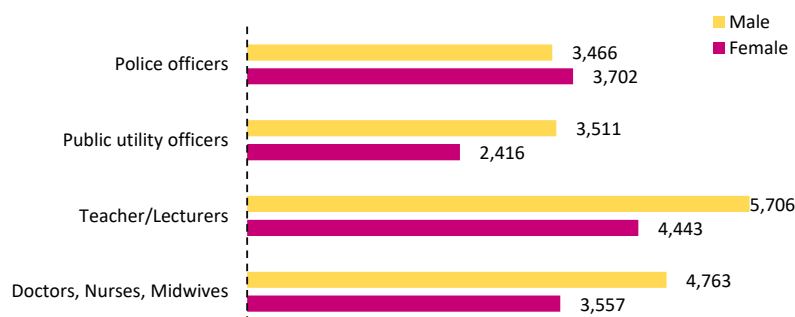


Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.



Despite the fact that there are no large differences in the average bribe size paid by men and women, nor in the distribution of bribes, there are variations in the average bribe size according to the type of public official who receives it. Based on the four types of public official with whom Nigerians interacted the most in 2019, on average, women pay smaller amounts than men in three of the four categories: health care professionals, teachers/lecturers and public utility officers. In the case of police officers, however, men and women appear to pay a very similar size of bribe.

**Figure 13 Average bribe size in Nigerian Naira, by sex and selected public officials, Nigeria 2016 and 2019**



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### Gender differences in bribe-paying: evidence from qualitative research

The two large-scale corruption surveys conducted in Nigeria in 2016 and 2019 were accompanied by extensive qualitative research activities aimed at gaining in-depth insights into the modalities and patterns of the various forms of corruption encountered by interview partners.<sup>15</sup> This research also yielded important insights into the attitudes and motivations of bribe-payers in different circumstances; for the purpose of the present research, the interview and focus-group transcripts have been subjected to a thorough ex-post analysis focusing on specific gender-specific aspects of bribery and corruption expressed by participants. While the qualitative research as such is not necessarily representative of the overall situation in Nigeria, the rich accounts collected from participants support many of the quantitative findings on gender-specific aspects of corruption presented in this study.

A recurrent theme encountered in interviews and focus group discussions was that whereas male respondents had a tendency to justify the payment of bribes pragmatically in order to reach certain concrete objectives, such as obtaining documents, employment or other services they felt entitled to, women more often reported feeling angry, displeased and humiliated about paying bribes, as illustrated by the following quotes:

*"I can't remember whether I have experienced corruption in the past... for example, one cannot really understand the difference between gifts and bribes in most cases... what I know for sure is that there is no way anyone can survive in Nigeria without motivating some public officials from time to time (bribery)" (Male, Political Office Holder, Kano, August 2019).*

<sup>15</sup> See Qualitative Study on Corruption in Nigeria (2016) and Qualitative Study on Corruption in Nigeria (2019). Available at <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/corruption.html>. In 2016, a total of 30 in-depth interviews and 6 Focus Group Discussions were conducted in three states from different Nigerian zones (Abuja, Rivers, and Lagos States). In 2019, a total of 40 in-depth interviews and eight moderated focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted in four states (Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Lagos). In each state, 10 in-depth interviews and 2 focus group discussions were conducted. Each focus group discussion had a sample of 8 to 10 participants. Participants were drawn from different agencies, institutions and sectors in order to obtain a diversified picture of corruption from different perspectives and were equally divided into men and women.

*“Many times in school, one of our lecturers, he asked us to pay the sum of 20k (NGN 20,000) if you want to obtain A, if you want B, 15k (NGN 15,000), depending on how much you pay. Then I didn’t have up to 20k, I had only 10k but I wanted A for that particular course, and he said if I don’t have 20k I have to... you know what I mean go the other way round, he wanted me to pay in “kind” (sleep with him), but luckily I was able to raise the money and paid. That was how I passed that course...” (Female, NGO worker, FCT, January 2016).*

Consistent with the quantitative evidence in this study, female respondents reported having suffered more than male participants from corruption within the educational, health and related sectors, and some participants also mentioned having encountered demands for sexual favours in return for preferential treatment. In addition, although most male participants in the research also drew attention to the negative consequences of corruption, women tended to emphasize the immorality of the behaviour and the illegality of corruption. Overall, in their statements, women seemed to be more intolerant than men of corruption, its manifestations and consequences and they also seemed to be more pessimistic both about the past as well as the future development of corruption in the country.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HOW BRIBERY WORKS

Knowing there are differences in the prevalence of bribery between men and women is not sufficient for designing well-targeted and effective anti-corruption policies with a gender dimension. A fundamental part of understanding the mechanisms of bribery is answering questions such as: Are there gender differences in the purpose of a bribe? Who instigates bribes? When are bribes paid? Who refuses to pay bribes and why? Who reports incidents of bribery? Why do men and women refrain from reporting? This chapter attempts to answer all those questions in order to complete the picture of gender differences in bribe-paying.

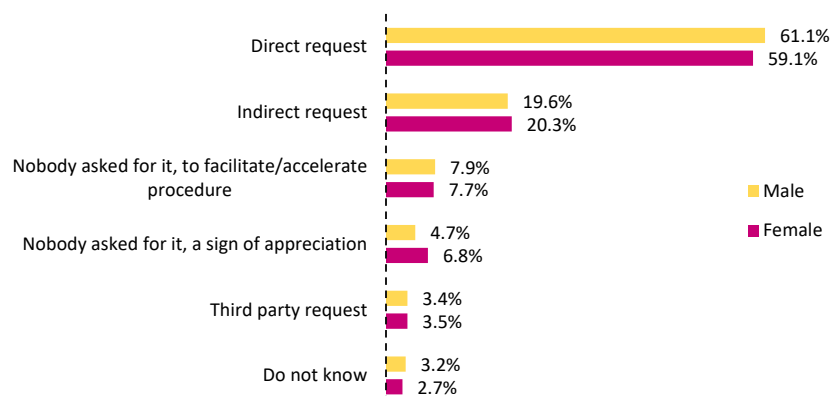
### Gender differences in how and why bribery occurs

There are two main ways in which a bribery transaction is initiated. A public official explicitly solicits a bribe, either directly or indirectly, or a citizen voluntarily gives a gift. The more immune from negative consequences a public official feels, the more likely he/she is to make a direct request. In Nigeria, around 60 per cent of bribes are paid following an explicit request by a public official, while indirect requests account for 20 per cent. By comparison, just 15 per cent of bribes are unsolicited, either as a sign of appreciation, to accelerate a procedure or simply to avoid a fine.<sup>16</sup> The large share of direct bribery requests suggests a well-established bribery culture with a lack of negative consequences for public officials who solicit bribes.



There are no striking gender differences in how bribe requests are initiated. The vast majority of both women and men pay bribes following a direct or indirect request from a public official. Direct requests are more prevalent in rural areas, whereas people of both sexes living in urban areas experience indirect bribe requests more frequently.

**Figure 14** Percentage distribution of bribes paid to public officials, by modality of bribe request/offer, and by sex, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Although gift-giving may be culturally acceptable and not be seen as bribery in the eyes of many, such practices can foster corruption. If public officials become accustomed to receiving gifts for carrying out their professional duties, they may start refusing to provide services to those who cannot afford to give

<sup>16</sup> Due to time constraints in the duration of the survey and so as not to overburden respondents by asking details about each single experience, the survey only obtained details about the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

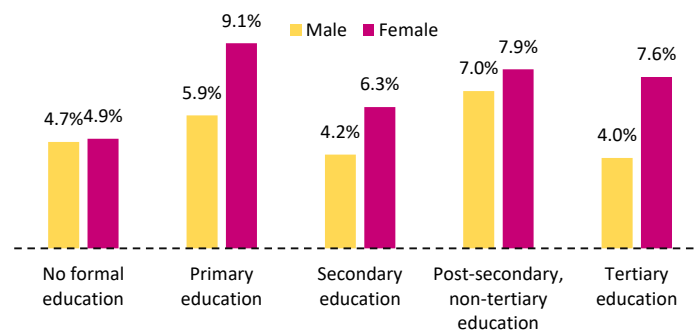
gifts or refuse to do so. Over time, gift-giving may thus lead to bribe-seeking, with the most affected being the most socioeconomically disadvantaged.



Having said that, the data suggest that, in 2019, only a small share of men and women paid unsolicited bribes in Nigeria: 13 per cent of men paid an unsolicited bribe either to facilitate/accelerate a procedure or as a sign of appreciation, as did 15 per cent of women. The gender difference in the payment of unsolicited bribes is explained by the fact that women are more likely to pay bribes as a sign of appreciation rather than to speed up a procedure.

The level of education and sex of bribe-payers also appears to play a role in the decision to pay unsolicited bribes to public officials. Apart from people with no formal education, for all other education groups women are more likely to pay a bribe as a sign of appreciation. The largest difference is between men and women with a tertiary education, among whom women are twice as likely to personally offer money or gifts to public officials as a sign of appreciation for services rendered.

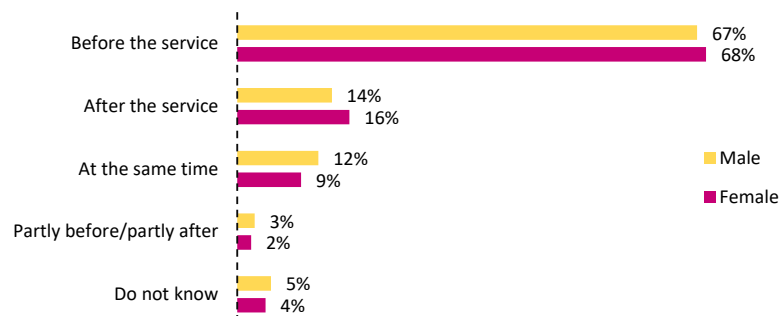
**Figure 15** Percentage of bribes given to public officials as a sign of appreciation, by education and sex, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

In Nigeria, it seems to be commonly understood that bribes are to be paid before services are provided. This is shown by the fact that more than two thirds (67–68 per cent) of both men and women reported having paid a bribe before a service was provided, while less than a third (around 30 per cent) were paid at the same time, or after the service was provided. The consistently large share of bribes paid in anticipation of a service to be rendered by a public official is an indication that bribes are routinely expected and are prepared for in advance by both men and women.

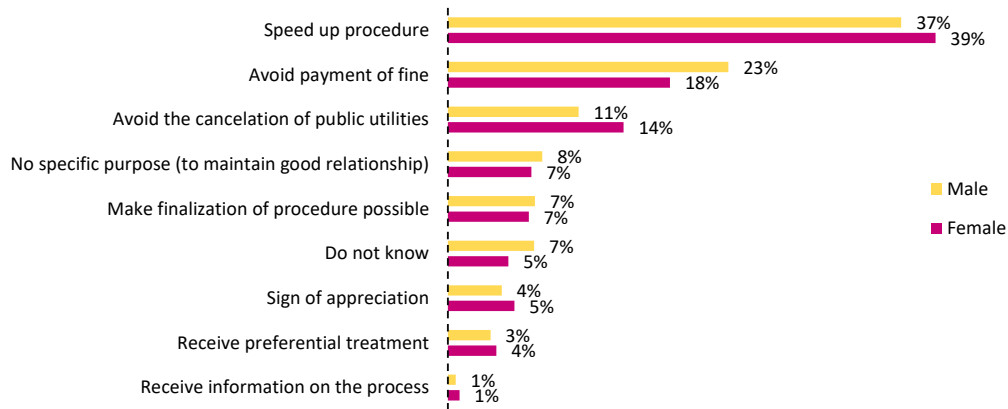
**Figure 16** Percentage distribution of bribes paid to public officials, by sex and timing of payment, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

People pay bribes for various purposes. In Nigeria, the most commonly purpose reported by both men and women in 2019 was to speed-up bureaucratic and lengthy procedures. Although such behaviour leads to some people benefitting from more efficient service, in the long term it contributes to a vicious cycle of slow and inefficient public services, especially for those who cannot afford to pay a bribe.

**Figure 17** Percentage distribution of bribe payments, by purpose and by sex, Nigeria, 2019

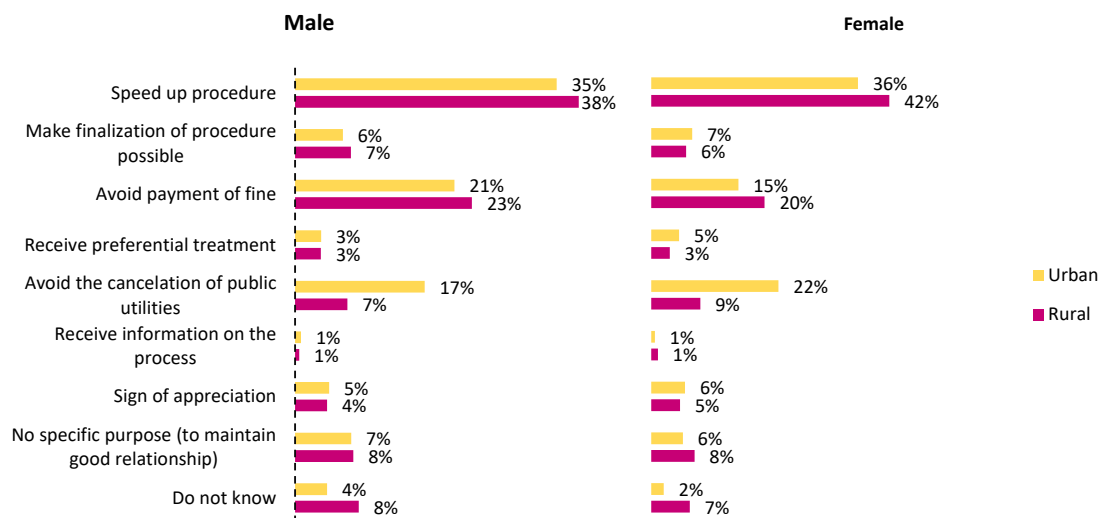


Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Avoiding the payment of a fine is the second most commonly reported purpose of bribes paid to public officials both among men and women in Nigeria. The vast majority of those bribes are paid to law enforcement agencies such as the police, the Federal Road Safety Corps and Vehicle Inspection officers. However, women are disproportionately more likely to pay bribes to public utility officers in order to avoid a fine.

The third most common purpose of bribes paid to public officials, both among men and women, is to prevent the cancellation of the use of public utility services such as electricity, water and sanitation. It is important to note that a disproportionate number of bribes related to the cancellation of public utility services are paid in urban areas, where a larger share of the population has access to such services.

**Figure 18** Percentage distribution of bribe payments, by purpose, sex and degree of urbanization, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.



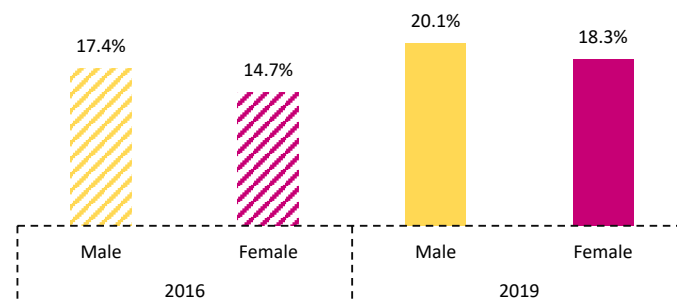
## Gender differences in refusing bribes

With a prevalence of bribery at 30.2 per cent, deciding whether or not to pay a bribe is a dilemma that Nigerians often have to face. On the one hand, is their need to obtain the service they are seeking; on the other, is their sense of right and wrong.

With only one out of five Nigerians (19 per cent) asked to pay a bribe actually refusing to do so, it seems that pragmatism tends to outweigh principle. As with the prevalence of bribery itself, the bribery refusal rate is higher among men than women. This implies that women find themselves more often than men in situations in which refusing to pay a bribe is not an option, or that they are less willing than men to stand up to public officials.

Women are less likely than men to refuse to pay bribes

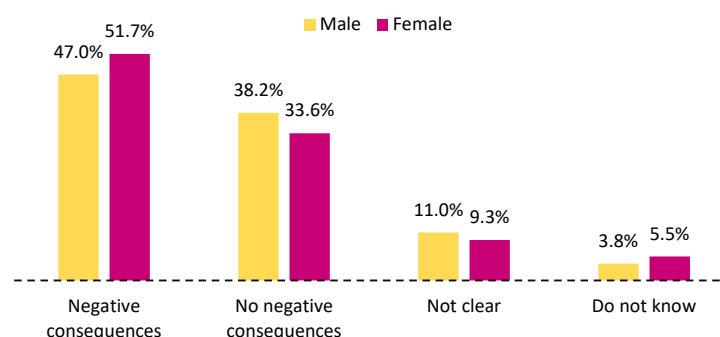
**Figure 19** Proportion of Nigerian men and women who refused to pay a bribe by sex, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019



Note: The bribery refusal rate is calculated as the number of men and women who refused to pay a bribe at least once as a percentage of those who paid or were asked to pay a bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey. Data refer to the last bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey.

This is hardly surprising given that women are more likely than men to experience negative consequences after turning down a bribe requests by public officials. In 2019, slightly more than half of women (51.7 per cent) reported negative consequences after refusing to pay a bribe, compared with 47.0 per cent of men. Women living in urban areas are even more likely to be threatened with negative consequences and put in situations in which refusing is an unattractive option, with 55.4 per cent of those who refused to pay a bribe reporting that they subsequently experienced negative consequences. Interestingly, the data paint a slightly different picture of men's experiences when refusing to pay a bribe, with men in rural areas being significantly more likely to report negative consequences (50.7 per cent) than those living in urban areas (41.1 per cent).

**Figure 20** Percentage distribution of consequences of refusing to pay a bribe, by sex, Nigeria, 2019

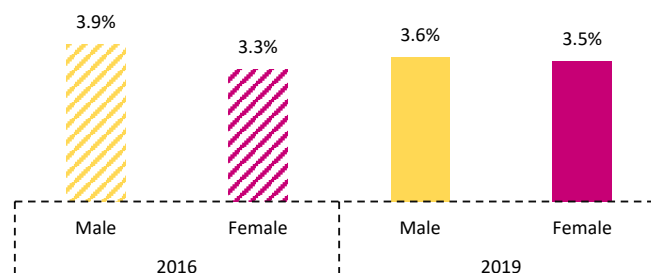


## Gender differences in reporting bribery



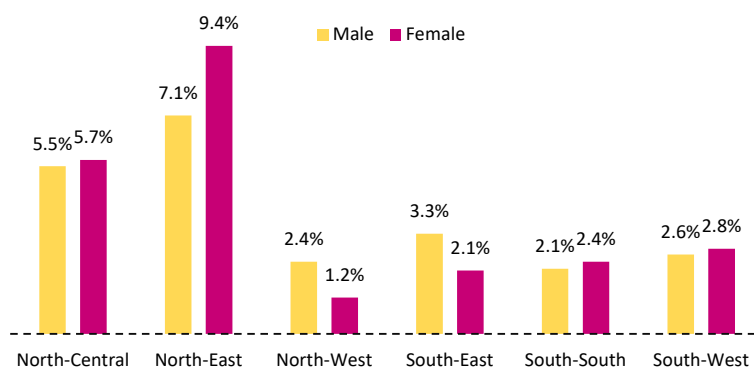
Nigerian citizens are legally obliged to report bribery, which remains one of the most important means of fighting corruption. When unreported, bribery incidents remain undetected and the public officials involved go unpunished. The 2016 and 2019 surveys both indicate that the vast majority of Nigerian women and men involved in a bribery incident neither reported their experience nor filed a complaint with an official institution capable of conducting an investigation. Indeed, in 2019, less than 4 per cent of both men and women who experienced bribery reported the last bribery incident, a figure that has remained largely unchanged since the 2016 survey.

**Figure 21 Reporting of bribery to an official institution, by sex, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019**



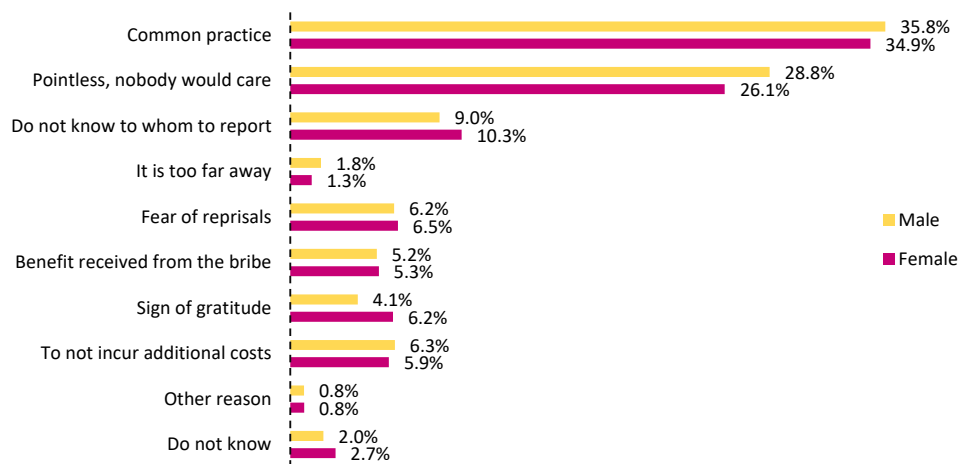
The reporting of bribery incidents to official institutions by men and women is generally rare across all the geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The reporting rate is below the average in the country's southern zones but is significantly above it in the North-Central and the North-East zones. Women and men living in the North-East zone appear to have the highest reporting rate in the country. The reporting rate is particularly low among women in the North-West zone, where only 1.2 per cent of women who paid a bribe in 2019 actually reported the incident to an official authority.

**Figure 22 Bribery reporting rate to official institutions, by zone and sex, Nigeria, 2019**



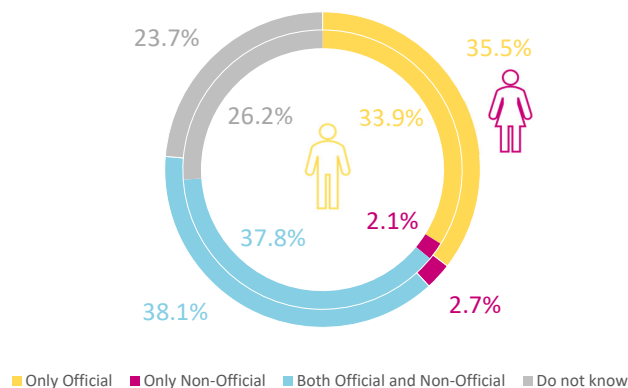
The main reason for not reporting bribery, both among men and women, is that bribery is a common practice that is not worth reporting. A large share of people also think that reporting bribery is pointless as nobody would care, with this sense of apathy being equal among both sexes. The third most common reason for not reporting bribery in Nigeria, and a particular cause for concern, is that people do not know to whom they should report it. This seems to be more of an issue among women than men as a slightly larger share of women reported a lack of such information.

**Figure 23** Percentage distribution of the main reasons why a bribery incident was not reported to an official or non-official institution, by sex, Nigeria, 2019



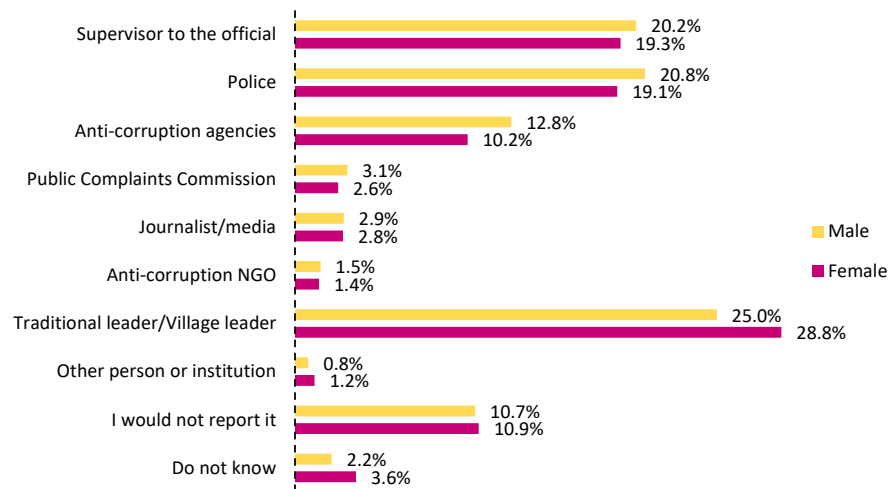
As well as to official institutions, Nigerians can report their bribery experience to a non-official institution, such as the media, non-governmental organization (NGO), traditional leader or faith-based institution. They may do so in the hope that the publicity generated will lead to consequences for the corrupt official involved. Around 38 per cent of bribery cases reported by men and women were reported to both official and non-official institutions in 2019, while over a third were exclusively reported to official institutions. Although reporting bribery to non-official institutions is rare for both men and women, the fact that almost 40 per cent of reported bribery cases in Nigeria are reported to both official and non-official institutions underlines the importance of civil society in the fight against corruption.

**Figure 24** Share of reported cases of bribery, by type of authority or institution that received the complaint, by sex, 2019



In addition to the bribery reporting experience of citizens, the 2019 survey also collected information on their opinions about the most important institutions for future reporting of bribery incidents. By far the most popular option chosen by both men and women was traditional/village leaders, with an even larger share of women than of men choosing that option. Given that traditional/village leaders do not tend to have the legal power to pursue and punish acts of bribery, this may have little effect on the fight against corruption. Moreover, it is telling that only a small share of men and women consider anti-corruption agencies a viable option for future reporting of bribery.

**Figure 25** Percentage distribution of Nigerian citizens who consider selected institutions the most important for future reporting of bribery, by sex, Nigeria, 2019

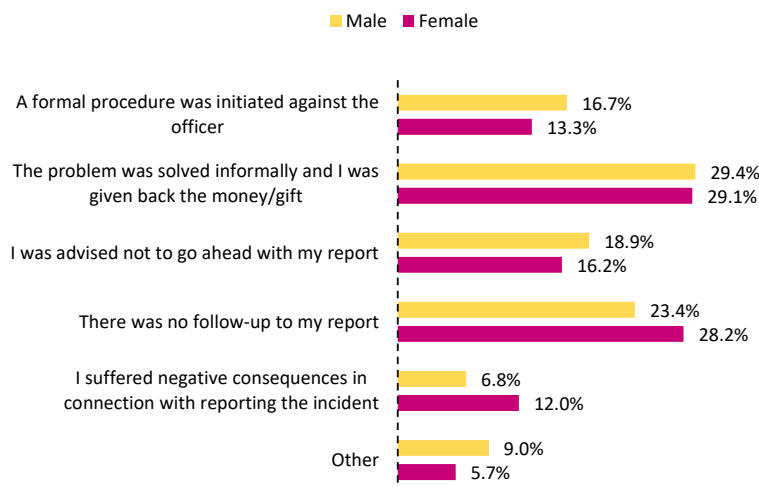


## Consequences of reporting bribery



To gain further understanding of the reasons for the low bribery reporting rate in Nigeria, the 2019 survey collected information on the consequences faced by men and women after bribery cases were reported. This showed that women are almost twice as likely as men to suffer negative consequences as a result of reporting a bribery incident. Women are also more likely than men to experience no follow-up to their bribery report, whereas the reporting of bribery by men is more likely to result in a formal procedure being initialized against the corrupt public official (16.7 per cent versus 13.3 per cent). Little or no action being taken when women report bribery incidence suggests that there could be potential institutional and social bias towards women in Nigeria.

**Figure 26** Consequences of reporting by sex, Nigeria, 2019



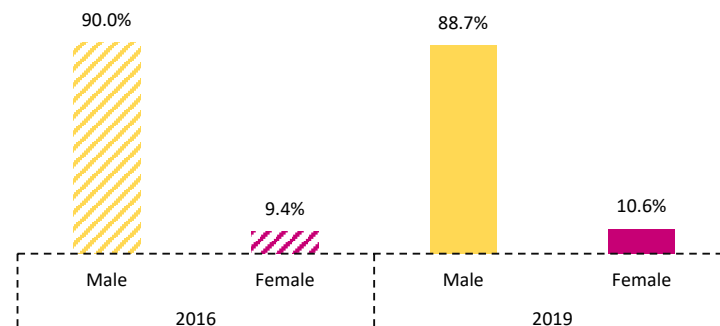
## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BRIBE-TAKING

Since the early 2000s, a large body of academic and policy research has emerged that highlights the importance of adopting a gender perspective in the analysis of corruption and in anti-corruption policymaking. It has been argued that women may play a decisive role in reducing corruption, with early empirical work showing that women are less involved than men in bribery and are less likely to condone bribe-taking.<sup>17</sup> Although these findings have been challenged and the initial evidence considered only suggestive, the debate on whether policies that promote gender equality in positions of power can effectively reduce corrupt practices has gained momentum in recent years.<sup>18</sup> This chapter explores the relationship between gender and bribe-taking in Nigeria, using data collected both in the 2016 and 2019 corruption surveys.

### Gender differences in bribe-taking among selected public sector occupations

In order to shed light on the bribe-taking behaviour of male and female public officials, the 2016 and 2019 surveys collected data on the sex of public officials who take bribes. Both surveys found that roughly 9 out of every 10 bribes paid to public officials in Nigeria are paid to male public officials, while just 1 is paid to a female public official. There was barely any change from 2016 to 2019 in the respective shares of male and female public officials who took bribes.

**Figure 27** Percentage distribution of bribes, by sex of public officials who received bribes, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019



Note: Data refer to the most recent bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey. The total male and female percentages may not equal 100 per cent as the sex of public officials was not reported in some cases.

### Gender differences and type of public official

Although a disproportionate share of male public officials receive bribes, there is substantial variation in reported bribe-taking across the different types of public official in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> In 95 per cent of bribery cases involving police officers, for example, bribes are paid to a male officer, while just 5 per cent are paid to a female officer. More than 90 per cent of public utility officers, Federal Road Safety Corps, vehicle inspection officers and judges, magistrates and prosecutors who receive bribes are also male. In the case of doctors and teachers at state schools/universities, however, the share of female bribe-takers is significantly larger,

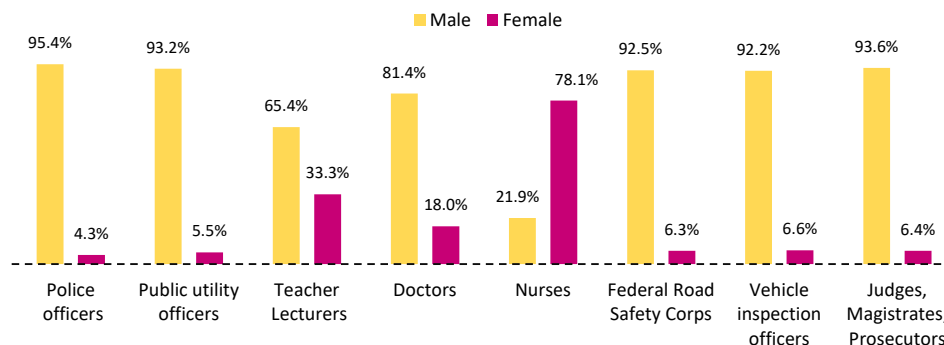
<sup>17</sup> David Dollar, Raymond Fisman and Roberta Gatti, "Are women really the "fairer" sex? Corruption and women in government", *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, vol. 46, No. 4 (2001), pp. 23–429; Anand Swamy and others, "Gender and corruption", *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 64, No.1 (2001), pp. 25–55.

<sup>18</sup> For an overview of the topic, see: UNODC, *The Time is Now – Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption* (Vienna, 2020)

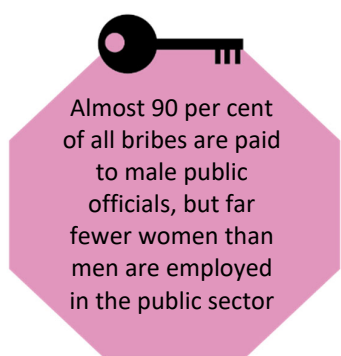
<sup>19</sup> Results are presented for a selected number of public officials depending on data availability: police, teachers/lecturers, doctors and nurses, public utility officers, Federal Road Safety Corps, vehicle inspection officers and judges, magistrates and prosecutors. These public officials interact most frequently with the public and cover a number of core areas of public service in Nigeria.

at 18 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively. The only type of public official among whom a larger share of females receive bribes than their male counterparts is nurses, yet these findings are not sufficient proof of whether or not male public officials are more prone than female public officials to bribe-taking.

**Figure 28** Percent distribution of bribes, by sex of public officials who received bribes, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data refer to the most recent bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey. The male and female totals may not equal 100 per cent as people may answer “Do not know”. Data for doctors and nurses refer to 2016 because the two categories were combined in the 2019 survey.



One of the reasons that a larger share of bribes are taken by male public officials than by female public officials is that, as in many countries, the Nigerian public sector employs more men than women, in particular in managerial positions,<sup>20</sup> which means that men largely outnumber women in most areas of the public administration. In most public sector institutions, it is therefore more likely for citizens to be dealt with by male officials than by female officials, and consequently more likely for bribes to be paid to male officials than to female officials. To compute the probability of male and female officials taking bribes from citizens, the gender composition of different public sector occupations has to be taken into account.<sup>21</sup>

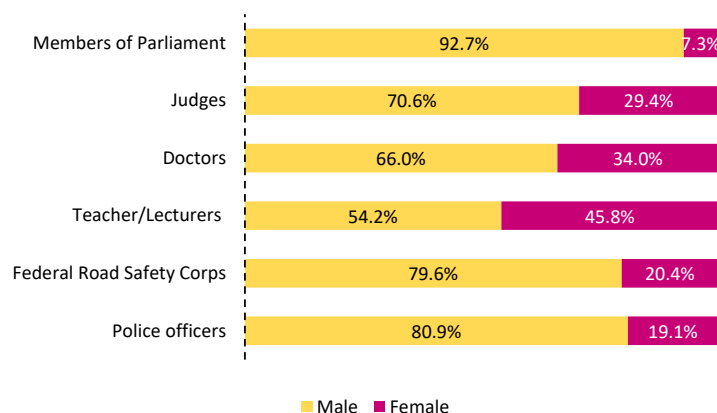
The extent to which men outnumber women varies significantly across different types of public official. For example, in 2017, more than 8 out of 10 police officers in Nigeria were men, while just 2 were women. The same was true of Federal Road Safety Corps, the law enforcement agency in charge of road traffic and safety.

Women are also significantly underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making in Nigeria. In 2020 they occupied only 7.3 per cent of parliamentary seats, with just 8 women in the Senate and 26 in the House of Representatives.<sup>22</sup> Women are better represented in other areas of the public sector, however, with the most recent available data indicating that almost half of teachers/lecturers (45.8 per cent), more than a third (34.0 per cent) of doctors and just under a third (29.4 per cent) of judicial officers are women.

<sup>20</sup> NBS, *Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria* (May 2019).

<sup>21</sup> This probability is computed separately by sex and type of public official. It is calculated as the ratio between the number of citizens paying bribes to a particular sex and type of official and the number of citizens in contact with the same sex and type of official. Since the sex distribution of public officials in contact with citizens is not known, this is approximated by the employment distribution by sex of each public sector occupation. This approximation is legitimate under the assumption that, for each public sector occupation under consideration, the sex distribution of public officials in contact with citizens closely resembles the employment distribution by sex.

<sup>22</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. Available at <https://www.ipu.org/>.

**Figure 29 Gender composition of selected public sector occupations, Nigeria, latest available data**

Sources: Judges: National Juridical Council (2018); Nigeria Police Force: HQTS, Abuja (2017); FRSC: Federal Road Safety Corps (2018); Teachers/lecturers: National Bureau of Statistics: NBS (2017); Doctors: NBS (2018); Members of Parliament: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020).

*Note: In the case of teachers/lecturers, the data is from 2017, with the exception of those at secondary schools, for which the most recent data is from 2015-16; the data for police officers is from 2017. Employment data for nurses, public utility officers and vehicle inspection officers are not available.*

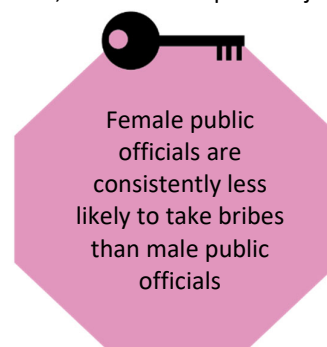
By combining the data on the gender composition of selected public sector occupations and the sex of bribe-takers in those positions, it is possible to make an inference about the bribe-taking behaviour of male and female public officials.<sup>23</sup> The resulting evidence clearly indicates that female public officials in Nigeria are consistently less likely to take bribes than their male colleagues,<sup>24</sup> and that the likelihood of them doing so varies by occupation.

Male police officers, for example, are five times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues. Similarly, male Federal Road Safety Corps are more than three times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues. The largest gender disparity is among judges, among whom males are roughly six times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues.

The differences are less marked for doctors and teachers/lecturers – the two types of occupation with the largest share of women employed. For example, male teachers/lecturers are only 1.5 times more likely to take a bribe than their female colleagues, and male doctors are twice as likely to do so as female doctors. The prevalence of bribery in relation to these occupations is also among the lowest in the public sector.

It appears that in public sector occupations with a larger portion of women, with the exception of judges, male officials are less likely to take bribes than in those where men heavily outnumber women. This could be related to the specific characteristics of those occupations, such as salary, social status or average level of educational attainment among those employed, but it could also be related to the fact that the attitude of female officials to bribe-taking may have an indirect (and positive) impact on male colleagues.

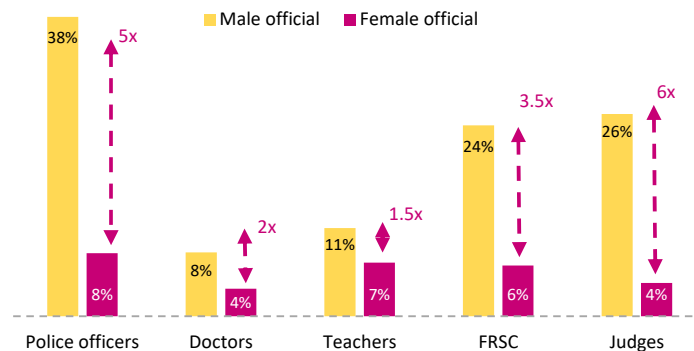
While female public officials are significantly less involved in corrupt practices than their male colleagues, this difference may be at least partially due to the fact that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions where they can engage in such activities.



<sup>23</sup> The inference on such behaviour is made only in the case of those public officials for which the employment distribution by sex and data on bribery are available

<sup>24</sup> This statement applies only to the occupations covered in this analysis: police, doctors, teachers, FRSC and judges.



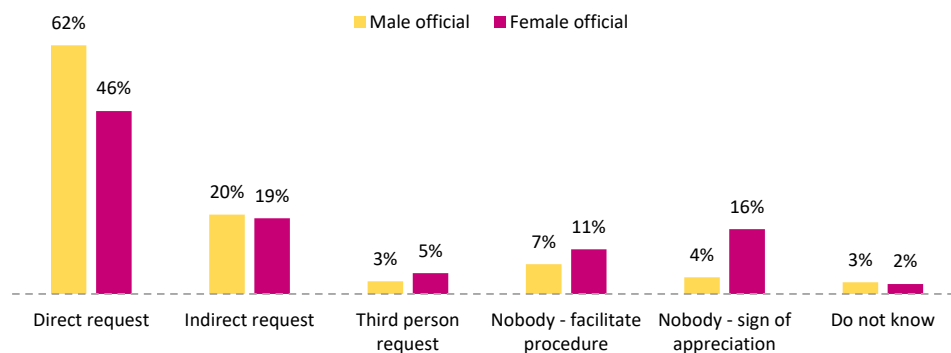
**Figure 30** Likelihood of male and female public officials to take a bribe, Nigeria, 2019

Note: See methodological annex for further information.

### Modality of bribe-taking and sex of public officials

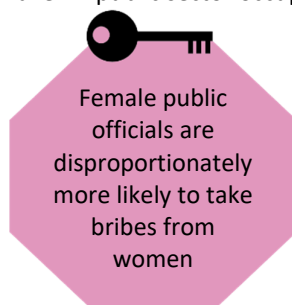
As shown in chapter 3, the vast majority of bribes paid to public officials in Nigeria are paid after a bribe is either directly or indirectly requested by a public official. This section shows that the way bribes are requested by public officials is influenced by the sex of the official who receives the bribe.

In 2019, for example, male public officials were 36 per cent more likely than female public officials to make a direct bribe request, whereas female public officials were much more likely than their male counterparts to receive unsolicited bribes. Some 16 per cent of bribes paid to female public officials were paid as a sign of appreciation, while the figure was just 4 per cent in the case of male public officials. Moreover, female officials were more likely to receive bribes related to family or personal reasons, while male officials were more likely to receive bribes related to work or business reasons. This may partially explain why female public officials are more likely than male officials to receive gifts as a sign of appreciation.

**Figure 31** Distribution of bribes paid, by sex of public official and modality of bribe request, Nigeria, 2019

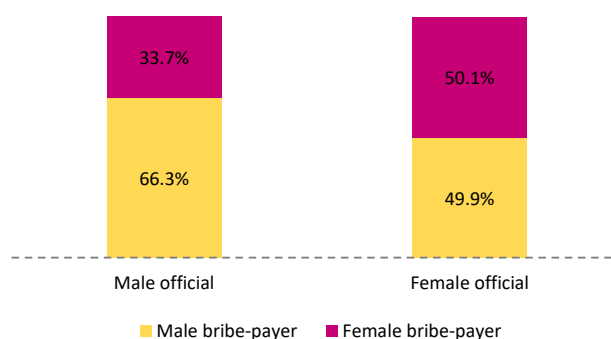
## Bribe-taking and sex of bribe-payers

This chapter has shown that while male public officials in Nigeria are significantly more likely to take bribes than female public officials, the disparity in bribe-taking between male and female public officials is much smaller in public sector occupations with a better gender balance. This section looks at gender differences in bribe-taking by public officials in relation to those who pay bribes.



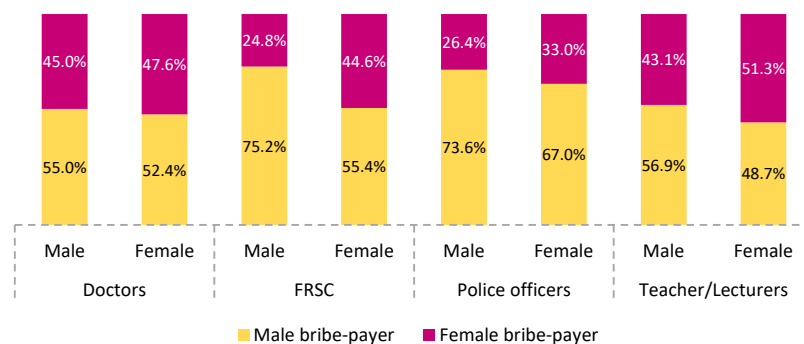
In 2019, two out of every three bribes paid to male public officials in Nigeria were paid by men and one out of every three was paid by women. Yet while male public officials predominantly take bribes from men, female officials take an equal share of bribes from men and women. Given that the prevalence of bribery is lower among women in Nigeria than among men, these findings suggest that women are disproportionately more likely to interact with and pay bribes to female public officials than to male officials.

**Figure 32** Distribution of bribes, by sex of public official and sex of bribe-payer, Nigeria, 2019



The fact that female public officials take disproportionately more bribes from female bribe-payers is valid across almost all types of public official for whom data are available. For example, 26.4 per cent of bribes paid to male police officers in Nigeria are paid by women, while the figure is 33.0 per cent in the case of bribes paid by women to female police officers. Similarly, 24.8 per cent of bribes paid to male Federal Road Safety Corps are paid by women, while 44.6 per cent of bribes paid to female Federal Road Safety Corps are paid by women. In the case of doctors and teachers/lecturers, the overall picture is more balanced, although female doctors and teachers/lecturers are still slightly more likely than their male colleagues to take bribes from women.

**Figure 33** Distribution of bribes, by sex of public official and sex of bribe-payer, selected public officials, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data for doctors refer to 2016.

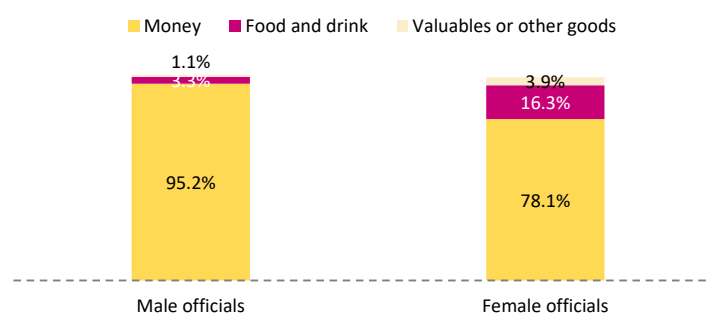
## Gender differences in bribe-taking: form and size of bribes

The 2019 survey also points to interesting gender differences in the form and size of bribes paid to male and female public officials. For example, while 95.2 per cent of male bribe-takers are paid bribes in cash, the share is considerably smaller among female bribe-takers, at 78.1 per cent. Female bribe-takers are more likely to take bribes in the form of food and drink (16 per cent) or valuables (4 per cent) than their male counterparts (3 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively).<sup>25</sup>



Female public officials are more likely than male officials to accept bribes in the form of food and drink

**Figure 34** Gender difference in bribe-taking, by form of bribe, Nigeria, 2019

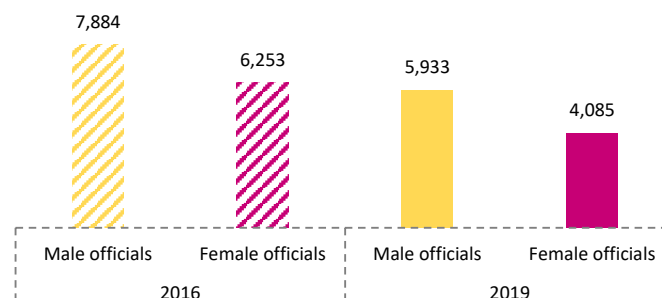


Note: Data refer to the last/most recent bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey; the categories do not necessarily total 100 per cent as the category “Do not know/do not read out” is not shown in this figure.

Although chapter 1 showed that men and women paid cash bribes of a similar average size in 2019, this does not mean that male and female public officials receive the same average size of cash bribe.

In 2016, the average cash bribe received by male public officials was NGN 7,884, while the average received by female officials was NGN 6,253, which is around 20 per cent less. In 2019, the average cash bribe received by both sexes was smaller, but with male public officials receiving an average of NGN 5,933 and female officials receiving NGN 4,085, the gender disparity was actually larger, at more than one third less. However, this was mainly driven by the fact that men are significantly more likely than women to receive very large bribes.

**Figure 35** Average bribe size, by sex of public official, Nigeria, 2016 and 2019

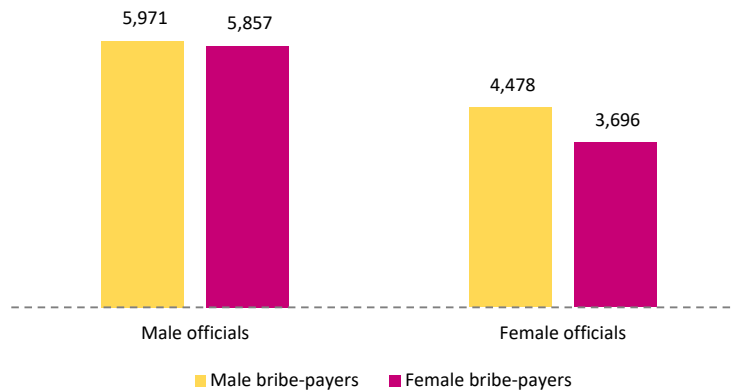


Note: Data refer to the last/most recent bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey. The data for 2016 have been converted into 2019 data according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

<sup>25</sup> Men may also be more likely than women to ask for sexual favours, but no data that can provide empirical evidence are available.

Another interesting finding is that when the gender of bribe-payers is taken into consideration, it can be seen that male bribe-taking public officials receive almost the same size of cash bribe from both men and women, whereas female officials are paid roughly 17 per cent less by female bribe-payers, with men paying female public officials NGN 4,478 and women paying them NGN 3,696.

**Figure 36** Average bribe size, by sex of public official and sex of bribe-payer, Nigeria 2016 and 2019



Note: Data refer to the last/most recent bribe paid in the 12 months prior to the survey. The data for 2016 have been converted into 2019 data according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

## OTHER FORMS OF CORRUPTION

While the previous chapters present a comprehensive picture of gender differences in the extent, nature and dynamics of public sector bribery in Nigeria, other forms of corruption extend beyond acts commonly associated with the payment of bribes to public officials. Principal among them are vote-buying and nepotism in public sector recruitment and promotion as well as in access to public services. This chapter looks in depth at those two forms of corruption and how they differ between men and women.

### Gender differences in vote-buying

In every democracy the electoral process is supposed to be open, transparent and fair. Yet in many countries around the world, including Nigeria, that is not always the case. Given the considerable benefits of holding public office, some politicians are prepared to resort to foul means, such as vote-buying, to attain political power.

The act of offering money and/or other goods or favours in exchange for votes,<sup>26</sup> vote-buying has a detrimental effect on democracy by eroding the basic principles of the electoral system, enabling corruption to thrive and consequently impeding the economic and social development of a country. Nigeria is not immune to such practices: in 2019, 17 per cent of the adult population reported that they were personally offered money in exchange for their vote and a further 4.3 per cent were offered a favour. In total, one out of every five eligible voters experienced vote-buying during the 2019 elections.<sup>27</sup>

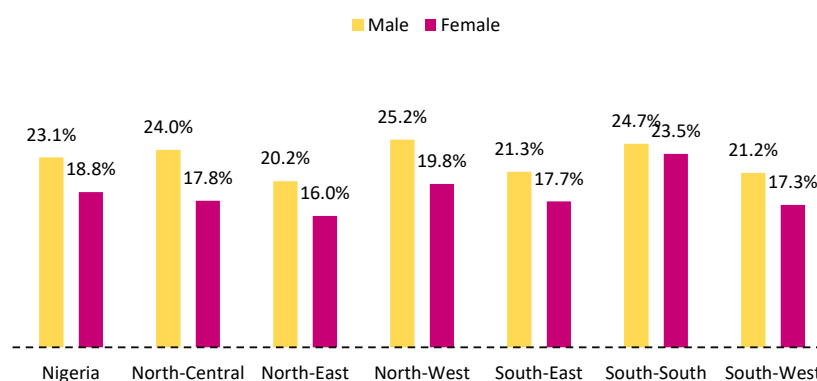


#### Vote-buying

The act of offering money, other goods or favours in exchange for the vote of a voter in elections.

As in the case of public sector bribery, there is a significant gender difference in the vote-buying experienced in Nigeria. During the 2019 national and state election campaigns, slightly more than 23 per cent of eligible male voters<sup>28</sup> reported that they were personally offered either money or non-monetary favours in exchange for their vote, while less than 19 per cent of women received such offers.

**Figure 37** Prevalence of vote-buying, by sex, Nigeria, 2019



Note: Data refer to the experience of men and women in the run up to the 2019 national and state elections.

<sup>26</sup> The data in this section refer to “intended” vote-buying as the survey did not collect information on whether or not citizens accepted a bribe.

<sup>27</sup> UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends – Second Survey on Corruption as Experienced by the Population* (Vienna, 2019).

<sup>28</sup> For the purposes of the present report, eligible voters are all those who are legally entitled to vote irrespective of whether or not they have registered to vote. In Nigeria, the minimum legal voting age is 18, thus eligible voters are all people over the age of 18.

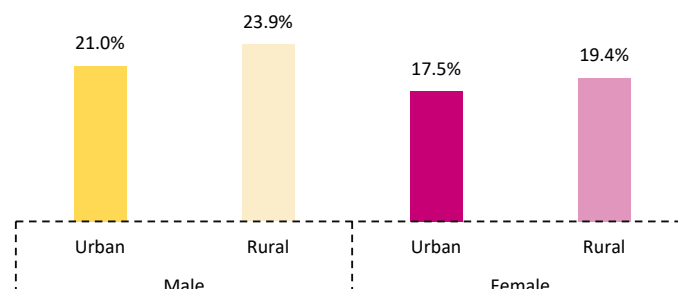
Similar results emerge in all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. In the North-Central zone, the gender difference in the prevalence of vote-buying is the largest, with 24.0 per cent of men reporting that they were personally offered money or non-monetary favours in exchange for their vote, while the figure for women is more than six percentage points lower, at 17.8 per cent. By contrast, the gender difference is smallest in the South-South zone of the country, at just 1.2 percentage points.

According to the Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria, women represented 47.1 per cent of total registered voters in 2019,<sup>29</sup> 8.2 per cent of the 73 presidential candidates and 6.6 per cent of the 1,068 governorship candidates in the 2019 elections.<sup>30</sup> It is therefore possible that women in Nigeria are less likely than men to be targeted for vote-buying because they are less likely to be politically active and less likely to vote in elections.

The degree of urbanization is also a significant determinant of vote-buying. Existing evidence from other countries suggests that poor voters are significantly more likely to be targeted for vote-buying than wealthier ones.<sup>31</sup> Since rural areas in Nigeria are characterized by substantially higher poverty rates than urban areas,<sup>32</sup> vote-buying is therefore likely to be more prevalent in rural areas. Indeed, the data confirm that vote-buying is more prevalent both among men and women in rural areas than in urban areas in Nigeria.



**Figure 38** Prevalence of vote-buying, by sex and degree of urbanization, Nigeria 2019



Note: Data refer to the situation in the run up to the 2019 national and state elections.



Although the difference is not very marked, there is also an educational dimension to vote-buying. Women with a tertiary education are those least exposed to vote-buying in Nigeria, with 16.3 per cent being offered money or non-monetary favours in exchange for their vote. At 24.7 per cent, men with a secondary education are those most targeted.

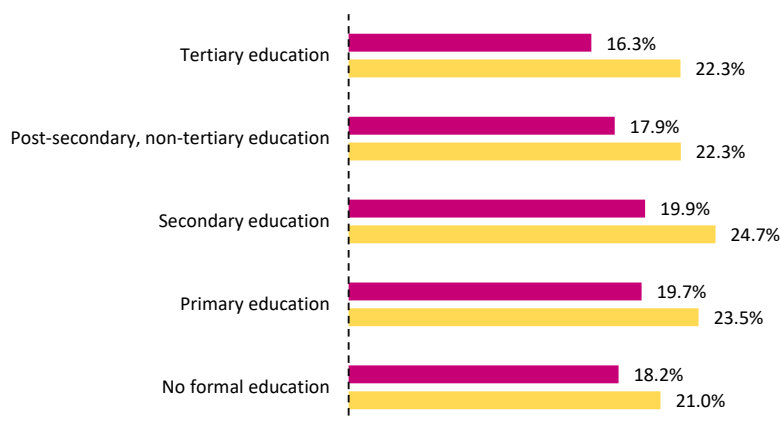
<sup>29</sup> Report of the 2019 General Election, Independent National Electoral Commission (August 2020).

<sup>30</sup> Independent National Election Commission. Available at <https://www.inecnigeria.org/>.

<sup>31</sup> Peter S. Jensen, and Mogens K. Justesen, "Poverty and vote buying: Survey-based evidence from Africa," *Electoral Studies*, vol. 33 (2014), pp. 220–232.

<sup>32</sup> According to the Nigeria Living Standards Survey, 2018-19, the poverty headcount rate in urban areas is 18 while in rural areas it is 52.1. The poverty headcount rate is defined as the proportion of the population living in households with per capita consumption expenditure at or below the poverty line. This means that 52.1 per cent of people in rural areas live in households where per capita consumer spending is at or below the poverty line, while the share in urban areas is significantly lower, at 18 per cent.

**Figure 39**      **Vote-buying, by sex and educational attainment, Nigeria, 2019**



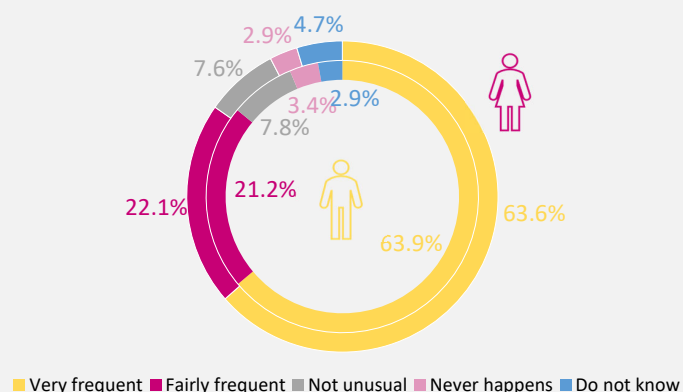
Note: Data refer to the situation in the run up to the 2019 national and state elections.

### Perceptions of electoral fraud

People's perceptions of electoral fraud,<sup>a</sup> although subjective, deserve attention. This is because, to a large extent, perceptions and beliefs in the fairness and transparency of the electoral system determine the proper functioning of the democratic process. The widespread belief that the electoral process is manipulated can discourage voter turnout, which will in turn result in elections with selective and unbalanced population representation.

Although only one out of five people in Nigeria has direct experience of vote-buying, the majority of the population still thinks that the electoral process is manipulated. In 2019, approximately 64 per cent of Nigerian men and women expressed beliefs that electoral fraud happens very frequently in their country. Despite the fact that there are no significant statistical differences in the opinions and perceptions of men and women, they should be analysed in more depth as they may have a different impact on men and women and on their political participation, both as voters and as politicians.

### Percentage distribution of perceptions of the frequency of electoral fraud, by sex, Nigeria, 2019



<sup>a</sup> Electoral fraud includes vote-buying and may also include other forms of electoral manipulation, such as ballot stuffing, ballot stealing, tampering with vote tallies, miscounting votes, voter list manipulation, etc.

## Gender, nepotism and bribery in public sector recruitment

The public sector in Nigeria, as in many other countries, accounts for a considerable share of total employment and its high level of job security makes it one of the most desirable sectors in which to work. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates, the public sector accounted for 8.6 per cent of total employment in Nigeria in 2019, of which 60.7 per cent of public officials were men and 39.3 per cent were women.<sup>33, 34</sup> Since the main function of the public sector is to deliver essential public services to the population, it is crucial that employees are recruited based on technical competence and merit rather than through bribery or nepotism.

Nepotism is widely understood to be the practice of favouring relatives, friends and/or members of the same tribe or community, especially in job recruitment.<sup>35</sup> Nepotism practices have a detrimental effect not only because they affect the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery, but also because they erode public trust in institutions. To provide a realistic view of how prevalent bribery and nepotism are in the public sector recruitment process in Nigeria, this section investigates the actual experience of such practices when men and women apply for and secure public sector jobs.



### Nepotism in public sector recruitment

The practice of favouring relatives, friends and/or members of the same tribe or community in public sector recruitment.

## Applying for public sector positions

The survey findings indicate that from June 2016 to May 2019, 11.9 per cent of Nigerian men applied for a position in the public sector, compared with only 7.3 per cent of women. The largest share of applicants among both men and women was in the 25 to 34 age group.



Men are more likely to secure professional, technical, scientific, managerial posts and senior positions, women are more likely to get clerical jobs

Despite the difference in the share of applicants by sex, the success rate, i.e. the share of applicants selected for a position out of those who applied, was almost the same among male and females, with roughly one out of five people who applied for a job being offered that job. These numbers do not take into account the extent to which women and men apply for or are offered the same type of position. Men, for example, are more likely than women to secure professional, technical and scientific jobs, as well as managerial or senior official positions. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to secure jobs in clerical support.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> ILOSTAT database. Available at <https://ilostat.ilo.org>.

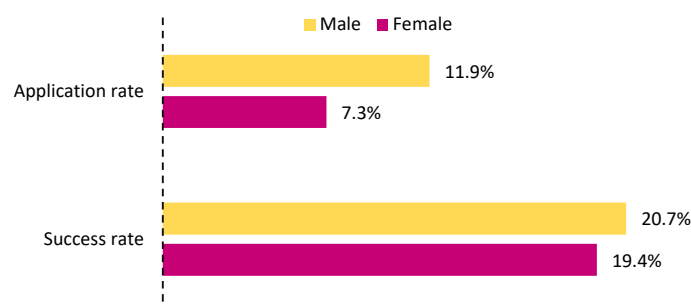
<sup>34</sup> Although almost 40 per cent of public sector employees are women, it is important to point out that women are significantly underrepresented in managerial and leadership positions.

<sup>35</sup> Nepotism comes from the Italian term "*nepotismo*", *nepote* meaning nephew. The term originated in the Middle Ages when popes and bishops in the Catholic church would assign their nephews to important positions. Although the original term only referred to close relatives, the term nepotism now has a wider meaning that also includes favouring friends or members of the same tribe or community. The broader term "cronyism", which also encompasses close associates, is not used in this report.

<sup>36</sup> While men are more likely than women to end up in managerial positions, it could also be that men are more likely to apply for such positions. The available data do not allow for more in-depth investigation of this question.

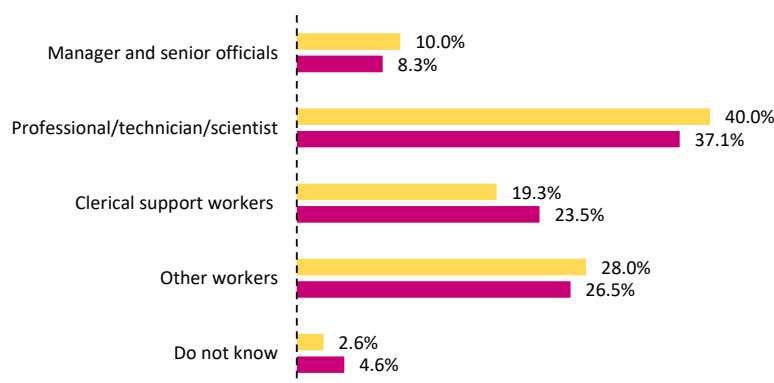


**Figure 40** Share of individuals who applied for a position in the public sector in the three years prior to the survey and were selected, Nigeria, 2019



Note: The data refer to the share of people who applied for a public sector job in the three years prior to the survey (June 2016–May 2019).

**Figure 41** Share of successful applicants for public sector positions, by type of occupation, Nigeria, 2019



## Public sector recruitment process

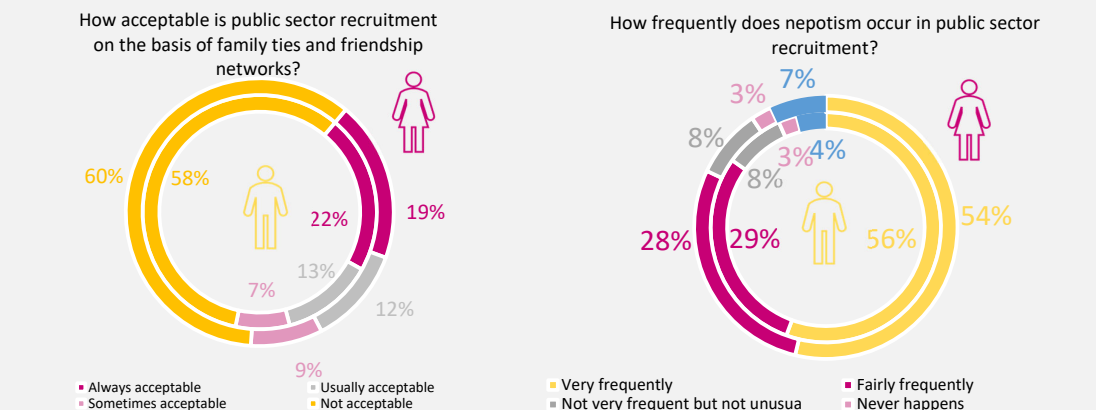
In Nigeria, public sector employees should normally be hired on the basis of their educational and professional expertise, which is evaluated through a competitive examination comprising a written test/oral interview.<sup>37</sup> A competitive recruitment process, including a review of qualifications and written test or exam, should guarantee transparency and also ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected. This is particularly relevant for professional, scientific and managerial positions for which the recruitment of highly qualified staff is essential.

<sup>37</sup> The Public Service Rules present the set of laws and regulations governing the conduct of public sector employees in Nigeria. According to these rules, new entrants or serving officers wishing to transfer should go through the annual competitive Civil Service Entry Examination. For those who are already employed in the public sector, promotion will be made strictly on the basis of competitive merit. For more details about recruitment in the civil service in Nigeria, see UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria. Bribery: Public Experience and Response* (Vienna, 2017).

## Perceptions of nepotism

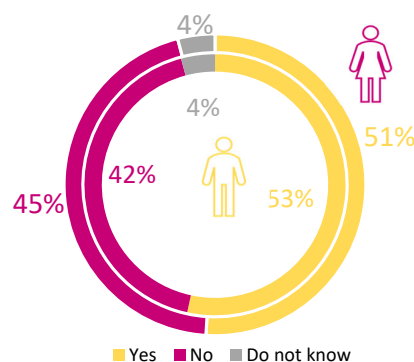
The perception of nepotism is arguably one of the most important factors in the decision about whether or not to apply for a public sector position. If people think that public sector recruitment is not based on merit or technical competence, but rather on personal connections, a large share of qualified individuals may be discouraged from applying. In Nigeria, men are more likely than women to consider nepotism in the public sector to be acceptable. In 2019, 22 per cent of men reported that it is always acceptable for a public officer to be recruited on the basis of family ties or friendship networks. The share of women was three percentage points smaller, at 19 per cent. Men are also more likely than women to think that nepotism occurs very frequently in public sector recruitment. Overall, however, the majority of both men and women in Nigeria still think that nepotism is unacceptable.

### Perceptions of nepotism in the public sector, by sex, 2019



Yet the survey data indicate that this is not always the case: roughly half of the men and women who secured a position in the public sector in the three years prior to the 2019 survey did not undergo a written test or oral interview. Women are slightly less likely to do so than men, possibly because of the type of post for which they are selected,<sup>38</sup> but the fact that, overall, a substantial share of successful public sector applicants are not subjected to a fair and transparent recruitment process, leaves the recruitment process vulnerable to corrupt practices.

**Figure 42** Share of successful applicants for public sector positions who underwent a written test/oral interview, by sex, Nigeria, 2019

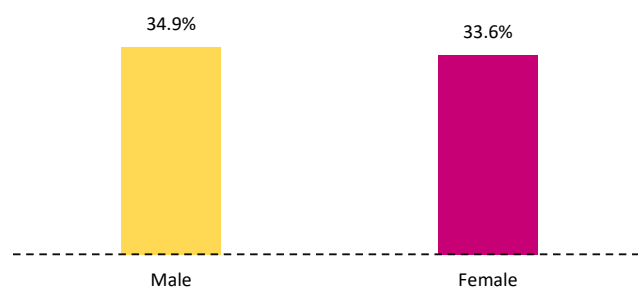


<sup>38</sup> People recruited in clerical support positions and manual workers are significantly more likely to obtain a job without undergoing a written test and/or oral interview. As women are more likely than men to secure clerical support positions, this could explain the smaller share of women who undergo a written test and/or oral interview.

## Bribery, nepotism or both?

The 2019 survey collected information on two types of malpractice through which people can secure a position in the public sector: bribery and nepotism. Purely in terms of bribery, 34.9 per cent of men admitted that they, either personally (22.8 per cent) or through a member of their household (12.1 per cent), paid to facilitate their recruitment. Although very similar in magnitude, a slightly smaller share of women (33.6 per cent) admitted that they, either personally (20.2 per cent) or through a member of their household (13.4 per cent) did the same.

**Figure 43** Share of successful applicants for public sector positions who paid a bribe to secure their position, Nigeria, 2019



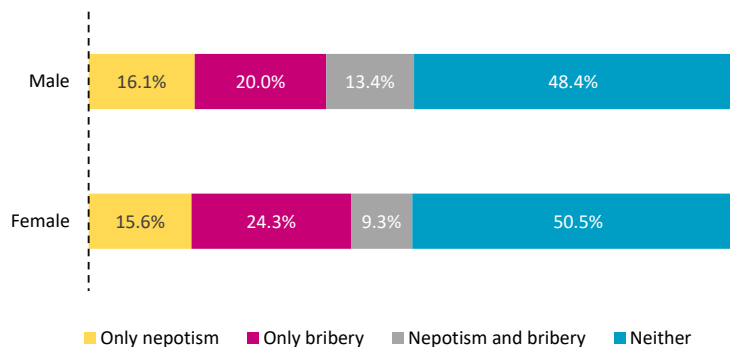
The 2019 survey also provided evidence that a considerable share of people secured their public sector positions with the help of a friend or relative. Men are more likely to ask or receive such help than women: around 30 per cent of men who secured a public sector position reported that friends or relatives helped, while the figure for women was around 25 per cent.

Some applicants for public sector positions resort to a combination of both bribery and nepotism to secure their jobs. Among those who do, women are more likely than men to resort purely to bribery, while men are more likely to resort to a combination of both bribery and nepotism in the form of assistance from a friend or relative.



Men are more likely than women to use the help of relatives or friends to secure a public sector position

**Figure 44** Share of successful applicants to public sector positions who used nepotism, bribery or both, by sex of applicant, Nigeria, 2019



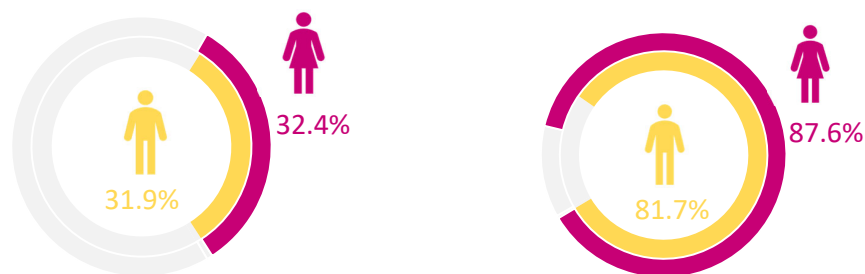
Note: The bars may not total 100 per cent because "Do not know" answers are not reported.

## Securing a promotion in the public sector

The use of nepotism and bribery does not necessarily cease once people have obtained a much sought-after public sector position, as such practices may also form part of the process for climbing the hierarchical ladder in public sector institutions.

The 2019 survey shows that 31.9 per cent of men and 32.4 per cent of women working in the public sector were promoted at least once in the period from June 2016 to May 2019. The vast majority of them had to undergo a written test and/or an oral interview to secure the promotion, with female public officials being slightly more likely to have done so than their male counterparts.

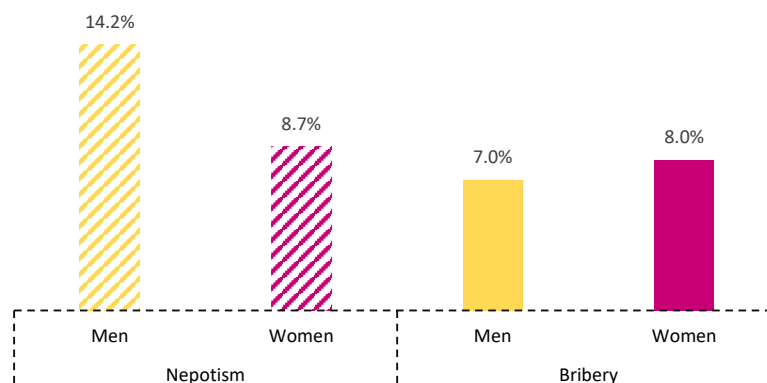
**Figure 45** Share of public sector employees promoted in the period June 2016 to May 2019 (left) and share of public sector employees who had to undergo a written test and/or oral interview to obtain a promotion (right), Nigeria



Having said that, compared with the public sector job recruitment process, promotion is significantly less susceptible to bribery and nepotism. Overall, 12.3 per cent of all public sector employees who secured a promotion did so with the assistance of a friend or relative (28 per cent in recruitment) and 7.3 per cent did so by resorting to bribery (32 per cent in recruitment). Thus, while people are more likely to pay a bribe in the recruitment process, nepotism plays a bigger role in securing promotion.

Nepotism in the promotion process is particularly prevalent among male public officials. Among those who secured promotion in the three years prior to the survey, 14.2 per cent reported that they did so with the assistance of friends or relatives. By comparison, only 8.7 per cent of their female counterparts resorted to that kind of help. Bribery, on the other hand, is almost equally prevalent among male and female public officials.

**Figure 46** Share of public sector employees promoted in the period June 2016 to May 2019 who reported to nepotism or bribery, Nigeria



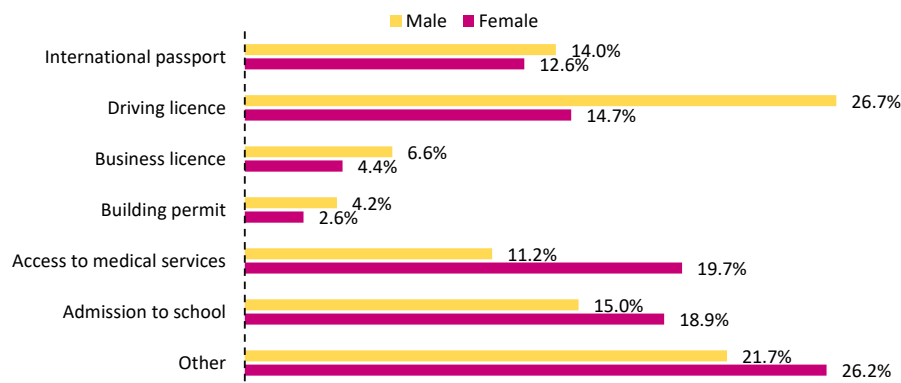
## Using nepotism to access public services

As this report shows, public officials often solicit bribes from citizens who need to access public services. To assess whether nepotistic practices are prevalent in such instances in addition to bribery, the survey collected data on citizens' experiences of obtaining selected documents from public institutions in the three years prior to the 2019 survey.

Male adults were significantly more likely than women to seek access to those documents: 9 per cent of men reported that they had tried to obtain a document from a public institution in the period from June 2016 to May 2019, while the figure for women was 5.1 per cent.<sup>39</sup>

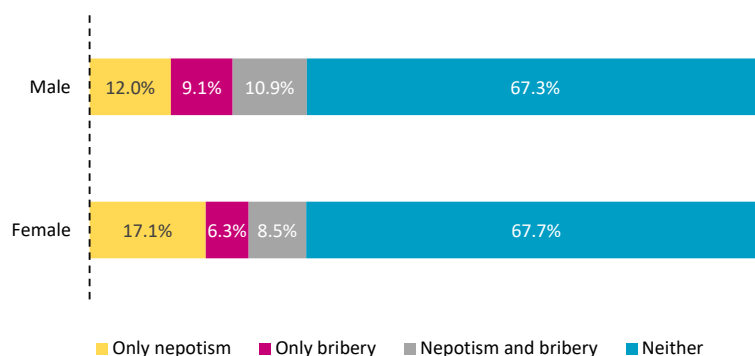
The most commonly requested document among men was a driving licence, while women were most likely to request documents enabling access to medical services, closely followed by documents related to their children's school admission.

**Figure 47** Percentage distribution of documents applied for by Nigerian men and women in the three years prior to the survey, Nigeria, 2019



Nepotism and bribery may also be employed to facilitate or speed up an administrative procedure: citizens can pay a bribe, get help from a friend or a relative working in a public institution, or both. Women, on average, are more likely to request the assistance of a relative, friend or member of their tribe, whereas men are more likely to pay bribes for gaining access to public services, either alone in combination with the assistance of a friends or relative.

**Figure 48** Share of Nigerians who resorted to nepotism or bribery to obtain an administrative document, Nigeria, 2019



<sup>39</sup> Some 80 per cent of people who applied for documents reported having obtained them.

## METHODOLOGICAL ANNEX

This report is based on two population surveys conducted in Nigeria in 2016 and 2019 by UNODC in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria (NBS). For information on sampling design and weighting, please refer to the survey reports *“Corruption in Nigeria, Bribery: public experience and response”* and *“Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends – Second Survey on Corruption as Experienced by the Population”*.

### Key indicators

The report presents three key indicators that are used in the analysis of gender differences in bribery from the perspective of those who pay and those who receive bribes:

- ❖ contact rate;
- ❖ prevalence of bribery; and
- ❖ probability of male and female public officials soliciting a bribe

#### Contact rate

The contact rate is defined as the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the previous 12 months. Adult population disaggregated by sex is used in the calculation of the contact rate for men and women separately. The contact rate is thus calculated as follows:

$$I_s = \frac{C_s}{A_s}$$

Where  $I_s$  denotes the contact rate among Nigerian adults of sex  $s$  (male or female).  $C_s$  is the total number of Nigerian adult males/females who had at least one contact with any public official in the 12-month period prior to the survey;  $A_s$  is the total adult male/female population of Nigeria.

The contact rate by sex and type of public official is calculated in a similar manner using the following formula:

$$I_{s,i} = \frac{C_{s,i}}{A_s}$$

Where  $I_{s,i}$  denotes the contact rate between adults of sex  $s$  (male or female) and public official of type  $i$ .  $C_{s,i}$  is the total number of adult males/females who had at least one contact with a public official  $i$  in the 12-month period prior to the survey;  $A_s$  is the total adult male/female population.

#### Prevalence of bribery

The prevalence of bribery represents the probability of Nigerian adults paying a bribe when in contact with a public official. It is formally defined as the share of adult Nigerians who had contact with a public official in the previous 12 months and paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe. The prevalence of bribery is indicator 16.5.1 under Sustainable Development Goal target 16.5: “Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms”.<sup>40</sup>

The prevalence of bribery by sex of bribe-payer is calculated as follows:

$$P_s = \frac{B_s}{C_s}$$

With  $C_s$  as defined above and  $B_s$  defined as the total number of Nigerian adult male/female that paid at least one bribe in the 12-months period prior to the survey. Similarly to the contact rate, the prevalence rate by sex and type of public official who receives a bribe is calculated as follows:

<sup>40</sup> Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>.

$$P_{s,i} = \frac{B_{s,i}}{C_{s,i}}$$

Where  $P_{s,i}$  denotes the prevalence of bribery of Nigerian adults of sex  $s$  (male or female) in relation to public official of type  $i$ .  $C_{s,i}$  is the total number of adult males/females who had at least one contact with a public official  $i$  in the 12 months prior to the survey;  $B_{s,i}$  is the total number of adult males/females who paid a bribe to a public official of type  $i$ .

All public officials included in question D1 of the survey questionnaires<sup>41</sup> are used in the computation of the contact rate and the prevalence rate. Results are weighted with population weights to obtain representative estimates.

### Probability of male and female public officials taking a bribe

On the one hand, the concept of the prevalence of bribery presented above describes the probability of Nigerian men and women paying a bribe when in contact with a public official. On the other hand, the probability of male and female public officials soliciting a bribe is formally defined as:

$$O_{i,s} = \frac{B_{i,s}}{C_{i,s}}$$

Where  $O_{i,s}$  denotes the probability of public official  $i$  of sex  $s$  (male or female) soliciting a bribe.  $C_{i,s}$  is the total number of Nigerian adults in contact with public official  $i$  of sex  $s$  in the 12 months prior to the survey;  $B_{i,s}$  is the total number of Nigerian adults who paid a bribe to public official of type  $i$  and sex  $s$ .

The denominator, i.e. the number of citizens in contact with public official of type  $i$  and sex  $s$ , is not known as the surveys did not collect information on the sex of public officials that citizens were in contact with. This number is approximated by the distribution by sex of each public sector occupation under the assumption that the sex distribution of public officials in contact with citizens closely resembles the employment distribution by sex. For example, in 2017, 80.9 per cent of all Nigerian police officers were male while women accounted for 19.1 per cent. Under the assumption presented above, 80.9 per cent of all contacts with police officers were attributed to male officers and only in 19.1 per cent of cases were attributed to female officer.

Nor did the surveys collect information on the number of people who paid a bribe to male and female public officials. They did, however, collect information on the sex of the public official involved in their last bribery experience.<sup>42</sup> For that reason, the total number of Nigerian adults who paid a bribe to public official of type  $i$  and sex  $s$  is computed using the sex distribution of public officials involved in the last bribery experience, as reported by the respondent. For example, since 95.4 per cent of all police officers who received a bribe were male while only 4.3 per cent were female, 95.4 per cent of all bribes are attributed to male officers and 4.3 per cent to female officers.

<sup>41</sup> Questionnaires can be accessed at <https://dataunodc.un.org/content/microdata>.

<sup>42</sup> The distribution of the last bribery experience of all bribe-payers is considered representative of the distribution of all bribes.