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**SEXTORTION:
CORRUPTION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Åsa Eldén, Dolores Calvo, Elin Bjarnegård, Silje Lundgren and Sofia Jonsson

Sextortion: Corruption and Gender-Based Violence

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till

Expertgruppen för biståndsanalys (EBA)

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Foreword by the EBA

Corruption and gender-based violence have long been established as two important, though distinct, areas of concern in international development cooperation. During the last few years, increasing international attention to cases of abuse of power and position in exchange for sexual favours in various contexts has highlighted how these phenomena may be interlinked. In 2008, the International Association of Women Judges coined the term ‘sextortion’ in order to recognize and render visible these forms of abuse. Given that sextortion simultaneously constitutes a form of corruption and gender-based violence – but fits neither definition perfectly – this phenomenon risks falling between two stools and remaining unaddressed.

Whereas the concept of sextortion has existed for some years now, and Transparency International has picked up the term in its Global Corruption Barometer, it has remained largely absent in anti-corruption work as well as in development cooperation. Moreover, empirical knowledge about sextortion – where, how and to what extent it occurs and how it is perceived and dealt with – is very limited. The combination of conceptual, legal and empirical obscurity, the issue of perceived “consent” and the stigma associated with sextortion render victims vulnerable and often lead to impunity for perpetrators. This report addresses some of the knowledge gaps concerning sextortion by summarizing the existing knowledge, identifying gaps and presenting two case studies of the dynamics of sextortion in Tanzania and Colombia.

The report concludes that sextortion is not only a gross violation of human rights in itself, but also hinders victims’ rights in other spheres as well as sustainable development at large. Sextortion deepens poverty and constitutes a greater risk for those living in poverty. In order to better combat sextortion in development cooperation, the authors stress the need to clearly define sextortion; link agendas on anti-corruption and sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, abuse and harassment; promote awareness, policy and regulation at all levels; and ensure the allocation of adequate resources to this work.

I hope that this report will find its intended audience among decision- and policymakers at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida as well as actors in international development cooperation more broadly. In addition, the report should be of great value for readers in civil society, the research community and the general public interested in gender equality, gender-based violence and anti-corruption work.

The study has been conducted in dialogue with a reference group chaired by Sara Johansson de Silva, member of the EBA. However, the authors are solely responsible for the content of the report and the recommendations made.

Gothenburg, September 2020



Helena Lindholm

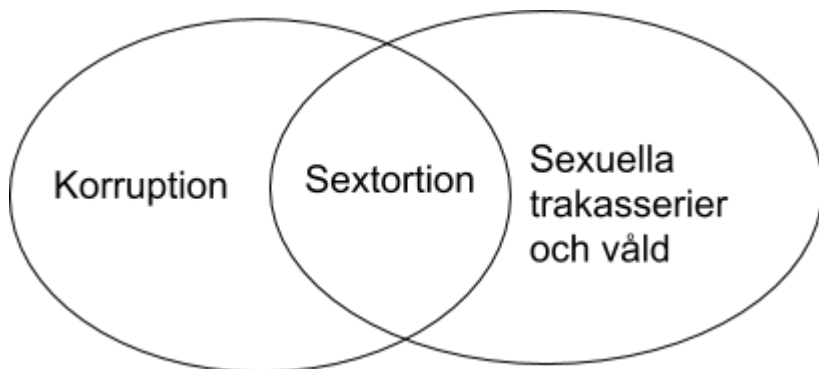
Sammanfattning

Sextortion är en form av korruption och könsbaserat våld. Det innebär att en person missbrukar sin maktposition för att få tillgång till en sexuell tjänst i utbyte mot en tjänst eller förmån som hen har möjlighet att bevilja eller undanhålla i kraft av sin position.

Sextortion är en korrupt handling där valutan är sex, och en sexuell handling där utbytet, *quid pro quo*, medför en form av tvång. Ansvaret för sextortion ligger alltid hos den part som missbrukar sin position (förövaren), och utbytet bidrar till skam, rädsla och osynliggörande genom att offret framställs som 'medskyldigt'.

Sextortion är en kränkning av mänskliga rättigheter och ett missbruk av makt, och måste förstås i relation till de köns- och maktrelationer och -normer som utgör handlingens sammanhang.

Sextortion äger rum i gränslandet mellan å ena sidan korruption, och å andra sidan könsbaserat våld i form av sexuella trakasserier, utnyttjande och våld.



Dock faller sextortion ofta mellan stolarna och platsar inte i sedvanliga definitioner av vare sig korruption eller könsbaserat våld.

Denna studie syftar till att undersöka hur sextortion utgör ett brott mot mänskliga rättigheter och ett hinder för hållbar utveckling. Rapporten består av följande delar:

Del 1 ger en bakgrund till och definition av sextortion. Här diskuteras också vad det innebär att Sida (Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingsamarbete) har börjat arbeta för att sammankoppla utvecklingsarbetet mot å ena sidan korruption, och å andra sidan könsbaserat våld/sexuell exploatering, övergrepp och trakasserier (GBV/SEAH).

I del 2 återfinns en genomgång av tidigare forskning och identifierade kunskapsglapp, och en diskussion om hur sextortion kan förstås som en form av könad korruption.

Del 3 av rapporten omfattar analysen av två fallstudier om sextortion i Tanzania och Colombia. Dessa fallstudier syftar till att ge ny kunskap om hur sextortion kan förstås i olika kontexter, och utvecklar definitionen av begreppet sextortion i relation till konkreta empiriska exempel. Fallstudiernas material samlades in under fältresor till Bogotá i oktober 2019 och Dar es Salaam i januari 2020, genom intervjuer med Sidas partners i Tanzania och Colombia, forskare och experter inom sextortion, och Sidas personal i Stockholm och vid Svenska ambassaden i Bogotá och Dar es Salaam.

I del 4 presenteras rapportens slutsatser och rekommendationer om hur arbetet för att motverka sextortion kan stärkas inom utvecklingsamarbetet.

I rapporten framförs följande argument:

Sextortion är en form av könad korruption. De flesta studier av korruption undersöker mutor med fokus på pengar, vilket riskerar att osynliggöra könade aspekter av korruption. Det innebär att enkätstudier som mäter förekomsten av korruption inte tar hänsyn till sexuell korruption. Denna snäva förståelse av korruption leder sannolikt till en underskattning av globala nivåer av korruption.

Sextortion utgörs av ett utbyte som inkluderar en sexuell transaktion. Detta har viktiga implikationer och bidrar till osynliggörandet av sextortion. Offer för sextortion upplever ofta rädsla, skam och

stigmatisering. När sextortion dessutom äger rum i ett sammanhang där kvinnors rättigheter inte respekteras och homosexuella, bisexuella, transpersoner, personer med queera uttryck och identiteter och intersexpersoner (HBTQI-personer) förföljs, leder detta till att flertalet fall av sextortion inte rapporteras och aldrig kommer upp till ytan.

Maktmissbruk är centralt för att förstå sextortion. Denna rapport använder en definition av sextortion som utgår från förövaren, genom att fokusera på *det ansvar en person i en maktposition har* för att genomföra sina åtaganden på ett riktigt och rättvist sätt.

Sårbarhet är också centralt för att förstå utsatthet för sextortion. Rapporten anlägger ett multidimensionellt perspektiv på fattigdom, vilket innebär att en människas tillgång till materiella och icke-materiella resurser, valmöjligheter, makt och röst har direkt påverkan på hennes sårbarhet i relation till personer i maktpositioner. I en situation där någon är utsatt för sextortion missbrukas denna maktposition, och offrets mänskliga säkerhet kränks.

För att en handling ska räknas som sextortion gäller att den som kräver eller tar emot en sexuell tjänst måste erbjuda någon form av gentjänst. *Transaktionen skiljer sextortion från andra former av sexuella trakasserier och utnyttjande.* Transaktionsaspekten är av vikt då den bidrar till att framställa offret som medskyldigt till handlingen, vilket i sin tur legitimerar det sexuella utbytet, och blir en strategi för förövaren att minska risken att ställas till svars för sin handling.

Eftersom sextortion både är en form av korrupktion och könsbaserat våld, finns det ofta *utmaningar med att lagföra sextortion.* Detta gäller både inom korrupktionslagstiftning, som ofta inte inkluderar sexuella tjänster som en form av valuta i mutbrott, och inom sexualbrottslagstiftning, som ofta inte inkluderar korrupktion (*quid pro quo*). Det finns risker och begränsningar med båda dessa former av lagföring. Om sextortion räknas som en form av korrupktion, och sexuellt tvång som mutbrott, finns risken att offer för sextortion anklagas för bestickning och därmed anses medskyldiga till brottet. När sextortion inkluderas i anti-korrupktionsarbete måste risken att offer kriminaliseras tas i beaktande. När sextortion istället hanteras inom ramen för

könsbaserat våld, är det av yttersta vikt att problematisera frågor om samtycke, då sextortion per definition utgör en form av maktmissbruk och det därmed finns en maktobalans inbyggd i situationen. Detta gäller särskilt människor i extremt sårbara situationer såsom exempelvis fattigdom, post-konflikt kontexter, eller vissa migrationssammanhang.

Fallstudiernas resultat kan sammanfattas på följande sätt:

Sextortion återfinns i olika samhällssektorer och nivåer i Tanzania och Colombia, och kan sägas vara normaliserat och institutionaliserat. En skillnad mellan Tanzania och Colombia är att sextortion inte används som begrepp i Colombia, vilket det gör i Tanzania, och detta har en rad implikationer:

I *Tanzania* är sextortion ett erkänt fenomen med ett eget begrepp på swahili, "rushwa ya ngono". Det finns överlag en medvetenhet om sextortion i Tanzania, vilket är ett resultat av kvinnorrättsorganisationers medvetna och systematiska mobilisering i breda koalitioner med t ex Förenta Nationerna (FN), givare och regeringen. Detta innebär att *förekomsten av sextortion som begrepp* i Tanzania ger *verktyg att motverka normalisering av sextortion som praktik*. I rapporten identifieras dock glapp mellan policy och lagstiftning, och dess faktiska implementering i Tanzania. Det finns ett stort behov av säkra och pålitliga anmälningsmekanismer som tillgängliggörs nära människors liv, då offrens rädsla är välgrundad och det finns risker och hinder förknippade med att synliggöra sextortion.

I *Colombia* var det under den väpnade konflikten som startade på 1960-talet vanligt förekommande att maktpositioner missbrukades för personlig vinning i form av sexuella handlingar. Detta har bidragit till att normalisera förekomsten av sextortion i den nuvarande post-konflikt kontexten, dvs efter att fredsavtalet undertecknades 2016. I Colombia är korruptionen institutionaliserad, och Sidas partners berättade hur kvinnor förväntades betala med sina kroppar vad män kunde betala med pengar (exempelvis i kontakt med rättssystemet eller för att korsa en gräns). I Colombia bidrar denna kombination av *normaliseringen av förekomsten av sextortion* och *frånvaron av sextortion som begrepp* till att

sextortion osynliggörs. Ett fenomen som saknar namn men som i praktiken är normaliserat tenderar att bli självbevarande.

Sextortion innebär i sig ett brott mot mänskliga rättigheter, då sextortion kränker offrets rätt till kroppslig integritet. Sextortion försvårar också offrens tillgång till andra rättigheter. Det kan handla om grundläggande rättigheter till utbildning, hälsa, arbete under värdiga former, rätten till mark och vatten, säkerhet eller tillträde till rättssystemet. Alla aspekter av ett multidimensionellt perspektiv på fattigdom – brist på materiella och icke-materiella resurser, valmöjligheter, makt, röst och mänsklig säkerhet – innebär dels försvärande omständigheter för de som utsätts för sextortion, och dels fördjupar sextortion fattigdom i alla dess aspekter.

Sextortion är alltså ett allvarligt hinder för hållbar utveckling, och måste hanteras inom biståndets alla sektorer och på alla nivåer. Eftersom sextortion ofta faller mellan stolarna är det nödvändigt att inkludera sextortion inom *både* den utvecklingsagenda som rör könsbaserat våld och sexuella trakasserier, *och* inom anti-korruption, och det måste ske en samverkan mellan dessa.

Rapportens rekommendationer rör utvecklingssamarbete på alla nivåer: nationell, regional och global, och alla stadier: policy, praktik och implementering. För att på ett effektivt och relevant sätt arbeta mot sextortion är det nödvändigt att koppla samman olika nivåer och stadier, med målet att hitta redskap som gör skillnad i människors vardag.

Vi identifierar fem kluster av rekommendationer gällande hur utvecklingssamarbete kan hantera sextortion. För det första är det centralt att introducera och använda en tydlig och för utvecklingssamarbete ändamålsenlig definition av sextortion. När begreppet används på landnivå, måste biståndets aktörer vara medvetna om att det kan tolkas på olika sätt, och därför kommunicera med lokala organisationer som arbetar med anti-korruption och könsbaserat våld.

För det andra ser vi ett behov av att länka samman policyområdena anti-korruption och GBV/SEAH, och se till att det finns tillräckliga resurser för detta övergripande arbete. Sextortion bör explicit inkluderas som en specifik form av korruption och av

könsbaserat våld, och ett ramverk för diskussioner mellan olika policyområden inom Utrikesdepartementet och Sida bör etableras.

För det tredje poängterar vi behovet av policy och reglering på alla nivåer. Sextortion bör läggas till i målbeskrivningar gällande anti-korruption och könsbaserat våld i relevanta landstrategier och inkluderas i dialoger på alla nivåer. Sverige bör även arbeta för att sextortion inkluderas i biståndskommittén vid Organisationen för ekonomiskt samarbete och utvecklings (OECD/DACs) rekommendationer om GBV/SEAH och anti-korruption.

För det fjärde pekar vi på att det är viktigt att arbeta systematiskt med sextortion i utvecklingsarbetets praktik. Arbetet måste vara kontextspecifikt och bygga på lokal kunskap. Det bör inkludera stöd till initiativ för att överbrygga klyftan mellan policy/lagstiftning och implementering, och till organisationer som arbetar förebyggande och med offer för sextortion, särskilt civilsamhällesorganisationer och kvinno- och HBTQI-rättsaktörer.

Till sist ser vi ett behov av ökad kunskap och medvetenhet bland utvecklingsaktörer. Sextortion bör inkluderas i interna kurser om GBV/SEAH och anti-korruption på Sida, och stöd bör ges till initiativ som syftar till att öka den allmänna medvetenheten på landnivå, inom alla sektorer och på alla nivåer.

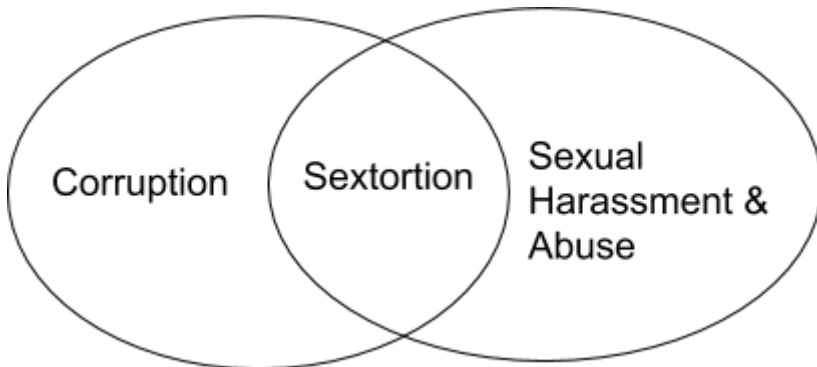
Summary

Sextortion is a form of corruption and gender-based violence. It occurs when a person with entrusted authority abuses this authority to obtain a sexual favor in exchange for a service or benefit which is within their power to grant or withhold.

Sextortion is a corrupt conduct in which the currency is sex, and a sexual conduct involving coerced *quid pro quo* (this for that). The responsibility for sextortion always lies with the actor that abuses their entrusted authority (the perpetrator), and the transactional aspect of sextortion adds to the shame, fear, and invisibility by making the victim appear ‘complicit’.

Sextortion is a violation of human rights and an abuse of power, and must be understood in the context of gendered power relations and norms.

Sextortion occurs *at the intersection* of corruption on the one hand, and gender-based violence in the form of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, on the other.



Nevertheless, sextortion tends to fall between lines of responsibility since it does not necessarily fit current definitions of either corruption or gender-based violence.

The aim of this study is to understand the dynamics of sextortion as a violation of human rights and as an obstacle to sustainable development. The report is structured as follows:

Section 1 introduces a background to and definition of sextortion and discusses the implications of Sida's (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) ongoing work to bridge gaps between the gender-based violence/sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (GBV/SEAH) and anti-corruption development agendas.

Section 2 presents a review of earlier research and identifies knowledge gaps, and develops a discussion around sextortion as a form of gendered corruption.

Section 3 presents the analysis of two case studies, Tanzania and Colombia. By exploring sextortion in two different countries, the report develops context-specific knowledge about the dynamics of sextortion and discusses the definition and content of the concept of sextortion in relation to concrete empirical cases. The material for the case studies was collected through field trips to Bogotá in October 2019 and to Dar es Salaam in January 2020, and through interviews with Sida's partners in Tanzania and Colombia, researchers and experts on sextortion, and personnel at Sida in Stockholm and at the Embassy of Sweden in Bogotá and Dar es Salaam.

Section 4, with conclusions and recommendations from the report, explores how measures in development cooperation can be strengthened to improve the work to combat sextortion.

The report makes the following arguments:

Sextortion is a form of gendered corruption. Most studies of corruption use definitions of bribes that do not take into consideration gendered aspects of corruption, solely formulating the transaction as a monetary exchange. As an implication, surveys examining the extent of corruption generally do not aim to capture instances of sexual corruption. It is likely that this narrow measurement of corruption leads to an underestimation of the prevalence of corruption worldwide.

Sextortion is an exchange involving a sexual transaction, which is key to understanding its consequences and invisibility. The fear, shame and stigma that is often experienced by victims of sextortion, sometimes in combination with lack of jurisdiction for women's rights and the persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, makes most cases of sextortion pass un-reported and unknown.

To understand sextortion, it is necessary to focus on the abuse of authority. The definition of sextortion used in this report is thus perpetrator-based. With the perpetrator and the power relation between the parties involved in focus, it becomes clear that *the responsibility for the act must be placed on the person with entrusted authority*. This person is responsible for carrying out associated duties in a just and fair manner, and for not abusing their entrusted position by offering or withholding benefits that are available through this position in exchange for personal favors.

Vulnerability is key to understand exposure to sextortion. The report applies a multidimensional perspective on poverty, stressing that a person's access to material and non-material resources, opportunities and choices, power and voice directly impacts the vulnerability in relation to those in positions of entrusted authority on which the person depends. In a situation where someone is exposed to sextortion, this authority is abused and the human security of the person is violated.

In order for an act to qualify as sextortion, the person who demands or accepts a sexual favor must offer something in return. *The transactional aspect distinguishes sextortion from other forms of sexual harassment and abuse*. The transactional aspect is important because it has the effect of portraying the victim as complicit to the act, which in turn legitimizes the sexual favors obtained, and becomes a risk-reducing strategy on the part of the perpetrator.

As sextortion occurs at the intersection between corruption and gender-based violence, *sextortion tends to be difficult to prosecute* under most anti-corruption laws, which often do not take into account sexual favors as a possible currency of a bribe, as well as under legislations dealing with sexual violence, that often do not consider corruption (*quid pro quo*) elements. Both approaches carry certain

risks and limitations. Dealing with sextortion as a form of corruption and characterizing sexual coercion as bribery risks positioning victims of sextortion at fault as ‘bribe givers’, and thereby, potentially as accomplices of a criminal act. The risk of criminalizing victims needs to be taken into account when including sextortion in anti-corruption work. When addressing sextortion within a gender-based violence framework, it is of utmost importance to reframe the issue of consent by taking into account the power imbalance that is inherent in sextortion through the abuse of entrusted authority. This is of particular importance in situations of extreme vulnerability such as poverty in all its dimensions, in post-conflict contexts and in certain contexts of migration.

The results from the case studies can be summarized as follows:

In both Tanzania and Colombia, sextortion is present across sectors and at different levels, and in many instances normalized and institutionalized. The difference between Tanzania and Colombia is that sextortion as a concept is absent in Colombia but present in Tanzania, which has a number of implications:

In *Tanzania*, sextortion is recognized as a phenomenon and referred to by the Swahili term “rushwa ya ngono”. The general awareness of sextortion in Tanzania can be traced back to a conscious and systematic mobilizing by women’s rights actors, in broad coalitions also including the United Nations (UN), development actors and the government. As an implication, the *presence of sextortion as a concept in Tanzania gives tools to work against the normalization of sextortion as a practice*. However, this report identifies gaps between policy and legislation and their implementation. There is a great need of safe and reliable reporting mechanisms close to people, but also well-grounded fear among victims and risks and obstacles attached to making sextortion visible.

In *Colombia*, the abuse of an entrusted position for personal benefit in the form of sexual acts was an extended practice during the armed conflict that started in the mid-1960s, which contributes to normalizing the occurrence of sextortion in the post-conflict context, i.e. after the peace agreement was signed in 2016. Within the current context of institutionalized corruption in Colombia, Sida’s partners referred to the phenomenon that women were

expected to pay with their bodies what men might be able to pay with money (e.g. when accessing justice or crossing borders). In Colombia, the combination of a *normalization of sextortion as a practice* and the *absence of sextortion as a concept* contributes to the invisibilization of sextortion. A phenomenon that it is not clearly named, and at the same time is a normalized practice, tends to become self-perpetuating.

Sextortion is in itself a violation of human rights, as it hinders the right to bodily integrity of the person victim of sextortion. It also violates and hinders the access to a wide range of other rights. This includes for instance fundamental rights to education, health, water, land, decent work, security, and access to justice. All aspects of a multidimensional perspective on poverty – lack of material and non-material resources, opportunities and choices, power and voice, and human security – are aggravating circumstances for being exposed to sextortion, and sextortion deepens poverty in all its dimensions.

Thus, sextortion is a serious obstacle to sustainable development and must be dealt with in all sectors and at all levels of development cooperation. As sextortion tends to fall between lines of responsibility, it is necessary to address sextortion *both* within the GBV/SEAH agenda, *and* within the anti-corruption agenda, and in collaboration between the two.

The recommendations of this report regard development work at all levels: national, regional and global, and all stages: policy, practice and implementation. We underline that in order to be able to efficiently address sextortion, it is necessary to connect these different levels and stages – with the aim to develop measures that make a difference in people’s everyday life.

We identify five clusters of recommendations on how development work may address sextortion: First, we stress the importance of introducing and using a clear definition of sextortion that is suitable for development cooperation. When used at country level, development actors must be aware that the concept may be interpreted in different ways and thus always communicate with local anti-corruption and gender-based violence organizations.

Second, there is a need to always link anti-corruption and GBV/SEAH in policy as well as practice, and to make sure that there are resources available for this overarching work. Sextortion should be explicitly included as a specific form of corruption and of gender-based violence, and a framework for cross-policy sector discussions should be established at both the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and at Sida.

Third, we stress the need to promote policy and regulation of sextortion at all levels. Sextortion should be added to the goals on anti-corruption and gender-based violence in relevant country strategies and brought up in dialogue at all levels. Sweden should also promote the inclusion of sextortion in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) recommendations on GBV/SEAH and anti-corruption.

Fourth, sextortion should be systematically addressed in development practice. The work must be context-specific and build on local knowledge. It should include support to initiatives that bridge the gap between policy/legislation and implementation, and to organisations that work with prevention as well as victims of sextortion, in particular CSOs and women's and LGBTIQI-rights actors.

Finally, there is a need to increase knowledge and awareness about sextortion among development actors. Sextortion should be included in internal Sida courses on GBV/SEAH and anti-corruption, and initiatives to raise public awareness at country level, in all sectors and at all levels, should be supported.

Abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCB	Global Corruption Barometer
IAWJ	International Association of Women Judges
ILO	International Labour Organization
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
TAWJA	Tanzania Women Judges Association
TI	Transparency International
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Introduction

There is growing attention to how sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse constitute an obstacle to sustainable development and occurs in, as well as hinders, international development cooperation. High-profile cases have put the spotlight on abuses of power and position at different levels all over the world, and the visibility of these cases have pushed – or inspired – stakeholders to take action.

Within this frame of growing national and international attention, cases of abuse of power and position to obtain sexual benefits have been brought to the fore. These are cases of sexual and gender-based violence, but may also be interpreted as a form of corruption. In 2008, the term ‘sextortion’ was coined by the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), as a tool to make visible forms of abuse that would otherwise remain invisible (IAWJ 2012). Since then, sextortion has slowly but gradually been included in discussions about the links between corruption and sustainable development. In discussions about and initiatives against sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, however, sextortion has so far largely been absent.

However, empirical knowledge about sextortion, both in general and specifically in relation to development cooperation, is scarce, and the attention to sextortion is limited also in discussions about corruption. It was only recently that Transparency International (TI) included a question about sextortion in their Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) 2019 for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (see Colombia section below) and for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region,¹ an initiative to raise awareness about sextortion in a report that assesses the state of knowledge about the links between corruption and sextortion and proposes ways to tackle sextortion within a corruption framework (Feigenblatt 2020). Nevertheless, despite the growing attention to sextortion in the

¹ TI found that one in five people had experienced or knew about someone who had experienced sextortion when accessing government services such as education and health care both in the LAC region (Transparency International 2019a) and in the MENA region (Transparency International 2019b). See also Feigenblatt (2020).

corruption sector, the concept has not yet been included in any internationally agreed definitions of corruption and is still a marginalized perspective in anti-corruption work.

With this lack of knowledge, language and tools to address sextortion follows that most cases of sextortion pass un-reported and unknown (see e.g. Gitlin 2016). In addition, sextortion is a phenomenon that tends to fall between lines of responsibility in the sense that it does not necessarily fit definitions of neither corruption nor gender-based violence. From a corruption perspective, the fact that sex (rather than money or other services and goods) can be used as the transaction currency is not yet universally acknowledged and does not necessarily fall under statutes. From a gender-based violence perspective, the ‘consensual’ aspect of sextortion is challenging, as victims of sextortion may be considered to have consented to the sexual act (IAWJ 2012).

In conclusion, even though cases of sextortion are increasingly acknowledged in research and policy reports, the concept is still fairly unexplored and “the scale and dynamics of sextortion in different sectors and countries are still largely unknown” (UNDP-SIWI 2017: 12, referring to IAWJ 2012). The point of departure for this study is these knowledge gaps and the absence of a terminology for making sextortion visible – in particular as part of a gender-based violence/sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (GBV/SEAH) agenda – and the lack of tools available for addressing sextortion both as a form of gender-based violence and corruption. These gaps imply that certain violations of human rights remain invisible, and hence sextortion constitutes an obstacle for sustainable development.

Section 1: The study

Overall aim

The overall aim of this study is to understand the dynamics of sextortion as a violation of human rights and as an obstacle to sustainable development.

To achieve this aim, this study develops through three stages and answers the following questions:

1. **Review of existing literature and identification of current knowledge gaps.** In which contexts has the concept of sextortion been developed? Which are the implications of including sextortion as a form of corruption to make visible and tackling specific forms of gender-based violence?
2. **Empirical case studies** (Tanzania and Colombia). Which dynamics of sextortion can be identified at a country level, in countries relevant for Swedish development cooperation? How are cases of sextortion handled, or not, within current definitions of corruption and gender-based violence? Have Sweden's development cooperation partners come across cases of sextortion, and if so, how do they interpret and how have they dealt with sextortion?
3. **Conclusions and recommendations.** How can the measures in development cooperation be strengthened to improve the work to make visible and combat sextortion?

The study reviews existing knowledge about sextortion relevant for development cooperation and develops this knowledge through two case studies. Therefore, the study aims to both contribute to the theoretical understanding of the term sextortion, and to its practical implication for development cooperation. These practical implications mainly focus on the work of Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), but the results of

the study should also be relevant for other development actors in Sweden and elsewhere.²

Defining sextortion

The definition of the concept ‘sextortion’ is still under exploration, and a clear and internationally agreed upon understanding of sextortion is not yet in place. Therefore, an important part of this study has been to explore the meaning of the concept, and this is also a necessary process to find ways to address sextortion as an obstacle to sustainable development and as such of direct relevance to development cooperation.

It was the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) that in 2008 coined the term “sextortion” (IAWJ 2012). Testimonies from members in different parts of the world and from different sectors added to each other in ways that made it impossible to discard them as mere exceptions; rather they reflected a broad and systematic abuse of power for purposes of sexual exploitation (Hendry 2018). The common denominator – from stories about migrants passing borders, to women delivering food and medication to their sons and husbands in prison, or pupils forced to have sex for grades – was men using their power positions to demand sexual favors in exchange for services (IAWJ 2012).³

IAWJ showed that policy, legislation and practice failed to address these cases. A key aspect was the very lack of a name that connected the cases and made the problem visible (IAWJ et al. 2015: 14). Thus IAWJ saw a need for a vocabulary, and they decided to use the term sextortion (IAWJ 2012).

² In 2018, Sida pointed out the need for an overview on and suggestions for how to approach sextortion (Eldén 2018). One of the conclusions in the overview was that there is a need for more thorough knowledge on sextortion, and this study follows up on this conclusion.

³ The IAWJ report included cases of women, men, boys, and girls being victims of sextortion, but the perpetrators of those cases were exclusively men.

IAWJ defines sextortion as:

...the abuse of power to obtain a sexual benefit or advantage. Sextortion is a form of corruption in which sex, rather than money, is the currency of the bribe. It is not limited to certain countries or sectors, but can be found wherever those entrusted with power lack integrity and try to sexually exploit those who are vulnerable and dependent on their power (IAWJ et al. 2015: 19).

Sextortion has two components: A sexual component and a corruption component.

The sexual component of sextortion involves a request, implicit or explicit, to engage in any kind of unwanted sexual activity, from exposing private body parts or posing for sexual photographs to physical touching, abuse or sexual intercourse (IAWJ 2012: 9; IAWJ et al. 2015: 19).

The sexual component in the IAWJ definition of sextortion is thus to be understood as one form of sexual violence, broadly defined in the Civil Society Declaration of Sexual Violence as “all violations of sexual autonomy and sexual integrity (...) often characterized by humiliation, domination and destruction” (The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence 2020: 4). Sexual violence cannot be understood in isolation but forms a continuum of different forms of violence (including but not limited to physical, psychological, sexual violence) that are merged and connected, and needs to be interpreted in relation to gendered norms; as gender-based violence (see Kelly 1988; Lundgren et al. 2001). Within this broader framework, sextortion involves the use of the victim’s body for the gratification of the perpetrator. Cahill reminds us that an act of sexual violence can mean very different things for the perpetrator and the victim, and that this needs to be acknowledged and interrogated in order to understand the sexual component of sexual

violence (Cahill 2001).⁴ The discussion about what constitutes the *sexual* in sexual violence is too large to review here⁵ and as sextortion shares this definitional challenges with other work on sexual violence, harassment and abuse it is not the focus of this report.

The corruption component of sextortion has three features (IAWJ 2012: 9-11; IAWJ et al. 2015: 20; IAWJ 2016: 179):

1. Abuse of authority: Power is used by someone with entrusted authority for personal benefit. Positions of entrusted authority may include government officials, judges, educators, employers (public or private), or law enforcement personnel.
2. *Quid pro quo*/This for that: A sexual favor is demanded or accepted in exchange for a benefit.
3. Psychological coercion: The imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim allows for coercive pressure rather than physical violence.⁶

Thus, sextortion does *not* refer to corrupt conduct in which the currency is anything other than sexual acts, nor does it refer to sexual conduct where there is no *quid pro quo* component (IAWJ 2012: 9).

Sextortion occurs *at the intersection* of corruption on the one hand, and gender-based violence in the form of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse on the other, and includes both these components.

⁴ The list of indicia of what makes an act sexual, compiled in the Civil Society Declaration of Sexual Violence, provides a useful (but not necessarily exhaustive) starting point, but also demonstrates that the “sexual” is not easily captured. It lists acts that: involve exposure of or physical contact with sexual body parts, were intended to be sexual by the perpetrator or perceived as such by the affected person, gave or intended to give sexual gratification, intended to impact a person’s sexual autonomy or integrity, intended to impact the person’s sexual orientation or gender identity, involved sexual language or innuendo, or involved use, interference, control or degradation of fluids or tissue associated with sexual and reproductive capacity. (The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence 2020:6).

⁵ For a useful discussion on the erasure of the sexual in wartime rape, see Eriksson Baaz and Stern 2018.

⁶ This third feature is discussed further in the sub-sections “Sextortion from a gender-based violence perspective: power and coercion/consent” and “Vulnerability, poverty, and coercion/consent”.

Figure 1



The IAWJ definition of sextortion has been developed from stories about experiences with a common denominator labelled as sextortion. As our study aims at having practical implications for development cooperation, we have striven to keep our discussions about and theoretical explorations around the concept of sextortion close to practice. Being grounded in a need to find tools to make visible and handle experiences of abuse, the IAWJ’s definition of sextortion has proven to be a fruitful point of departure throughout our study.⁷

⁷ Sextortion as a concept in scholarly literature as well as in policy and practice is sometimes used in a different (although related) meaning than the one used in this study, namely as “threats to expose sexual images to coerce victims to provide additional pictures, sex, or other favors” (Wolak et al. 2018). In order to avoid confusion, we mention this understanding here and make our own position clear. Previous research highlights sexual extortion of adolescent or young victims, primarily on online platforms. As such, the part of virtual extortion related to pornography is central (e.g. Wittes et al. 2016; Wolak et al. 2018). In the latest report from the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, which deals with “online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective”, sextortion is referred to as “the use of ICT to blackmail a victim” by threatening to spread intimate pictures in exchange for e.g. additional photos/videos and/or sex (see e.g. HRC 2018, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children 2018, <http://www.sextortion.org>). The international ICT-community is since autumn 2017 involved in discussions on sexual harassment sparked by high-profile cases, where sextortion in this sense is one aspect (see e.g. <https://protectourspace.org>, <https://www.takebackthetech.net/know-more/blackmail>, <https://www.apc.org>, <https://www.wikigender.org/online-discussion-combatting-online-violence-against-women-and-girls/>). This use of

However, our study points towards some important supplements and clarifications in relation to the IAWJ definition of sextortion. These have emerged through attention to the actors involved in the act of sextortion.

Sextortion has its linguistic origin in two words, *sex* and *extortion*. Extortion is not synonymous with corruption, and our understanding of this component thus requires some elaboration. Extortion is commonly understood as the practice of obtaining something through threats or the use of force. However, since we study sextortion as a form of sexual corruption, our main focus is on the abuse of authority rather than on the form of coercion used. The definition is thus perpetrator-based, in that it focuses on the *responsibility of the person with entrusted authority* to carry out associated duties in a just and fair manner. Accepting sexual favors in exchange for something which is within their power to grant or withhold, thus corrupts this entrusted authority and is considered sextortion, regardless of who took the initiative and regardless of whether or not it was explicitly demanded.

It is important to note that this corruption of entrusted authority is what differentiates sextortion from prostitution. In cases of prostitution, the person who buys sex does not necessarily hold and abuse entrusted authority. In cases of sextortion, the abuse of authority means that the perpetrator illegitimately bargains with services or privileges within the realm of this authority in exchange for sex. For victims, sextortion implies that refusing sex may lead to the withholding of a service to which they are entitled or to the

‘sextortion’ is at the same time broader and more narrow as compared to the one IAWJ suggests and the one used in this study. It is broader in the sense that it also includes aspects of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse that do not form acts of corruption, and more narrow as it limits the phenomena to the use of ICT. Both these notions of sextortion – as corruption in which sex instead of money is the currency, and as online sexual blackmailing – have relevance for development cooperation. However, for the purpose of this study, and also for development cooperation at large, we argue that the former understanding of sextortion as a form of corruption is the most fruitful use of the concept. At the same time, it is important to include and address the online aspects of sextortion.

withdrawal of an unwarranted privilege. Thus, the character of the transaction is different in sextortion and prostitution.

It is also necessary to distinguish between sextortion and other forms of sexual harassment and abuse, where the perpetrator uses coercive methods such as threats or physical violence to obtain sex.⁸ To qualify as sextortion, a transactional aspect is required, i.e. the person who demands or accepts a sexual favor must offer something in return. Thus, the act becomes transactional: it becomes sextortion instead of “merely” sexual harassment or abuse (see Figure 1). This is important because it has the effect of *rendering the victim complicit*. We assume that the transactional aspect to some extent legitimizes the sexual services obtained in the eyes of the perpetrator, and perhaps also in the eyes of the victim. The transaction could also be understood as a risk-reducing strategy on the part of the perpetrator. By making the provider of sexual services complicit, and by using a *quid pro quo* argument in lieu of physical coercion, the risk of being reported is minimized.⁹

Thus, to summarize: unlike other forms of sexual abuse and harassment, sextortion always involves a transactional aspect. However, unlike other forms of transactional sex, such as prostitution, sextortion always involves the abuse of entrusted authority in exchange for sexual services.

Throughout this report, we refer to the actors in sextortion as ‘*perpetrator*’ and ‘*victim*’ of corruption, and we do not use other common concepts to describe relationships in corruption, such as ‘bride-taker/bribe-giver’ or ‘patron/client’ nor concepts that are more commonly used to describe victims of gender-based violence,

⁸ Implicit threats of violence can be present also in cases of sextortion, inducing a fear in the victim that saying no to a demanded sexual favor is not a feasible choice.

⁹ TI makes a similar reflection in their newly published report on sextortion. They argue that apart from a lack of reporting mechanisms, there are also other reasons why sextortion goes unreported: “Key among these is the fear of being blamed and shamed for the abuse, as has occurred in countless cases of sexual violence where survivors/victims who speak up have been met with accusations from family, friends and the authorities. These can range from lying to that they “provoked” the abuse. Self-blame mechanisms can also be a factor for many survivors/victims” (Feigenblatt 2020: 29).

such as ‘survivor’. Because sextortion occurs *at the intersection of* corruption and gender-based violence, it is important to use concepts that are applicable from both perspectives. Labelling the actors involved in sextortion ‘perpetrator’ and ‘victim’ also reflects an established use of concepts in the vast majority of reports on sextortion (e.g. IAWJ et al. 2015; IBA 2019), although a recent report instead uses the double concept ‘survivor/victim’ (Feigenblatt 2020). Furthermore, an additional background to the use of the perpetrator-victim terminology in this report is that it contributes to stressing three aspects: 1) that sextortion is a crime, 2) the responsibility of the party abusing an entrusted position, and 3) the power relation between the actors involved in sextortion.

The perpetrator-victim terminology is gender neutral, but our analysis nevertheless rests on an understanding of *sextortion as a gendered phenomenon*. In a vast majority of the empirical cases of sextortion that occur in this and previous studies, men are abusing women. This does not mean that all perpetrators are men or that all victims are women, but that sextortion cannot be understood without a structural understanding of gendered norms and relationships between gender and power. Also cases of sextortion where men and boys are targeted take place within a framework of specific conceptions of gender and sexuality, and within a broader framework of power and vulnerabilities related to structural inequalities, discrimination and access to resources.

With the perpetrator-based definition of sextortion that we suggest in this study, it becomes particularly important to explicitly focus on norms for men’s behavior by critically examining masculinity ideals and how they may lead to a sense of entitlement to sex, a sense of power in relation to one’s official position and control of assets, as well as assessments about risk-taking in relation to gendered roles in society. Without specifying the norms that guide the behavior of many perpetrators, we will not understand the gendered phenomenon of sextortion. This strong analytical focus on perpetrators constitutes an important challenge for future research and practice on sextortion: the need to develop methods for studying and understanding the perpetrator perspective.

Building on the IAWJ definition, further developed throughout our study, we suggest the following *definition of sextortion*:

Sextortion is a form of corruption and gender-based violence. It occurs when a person with entrusted authority abuses this authority to obtain a sexual favor in exchange for a service or benefit which is within their power to grant or withhold.

Sextortion is a corrupt conduct in which the currency is sex, and a sexual conduct involving coerced *quid pro quo* (this for that). The responsibility for sextortion always lies with the actor that abuses their entrusted authority (the perpetrator), and the transactional aspect of sextortion adds to the shame, fear, and invisibility by making the victim appear ‘complicit’.

Sextortion is a violation of human rights and an abuse of power, and must be understood in the context of gendered power relations and norms.

Between development agendas

As noted, sextortion is a phenomenon that tends to fall between established lines of responsibility as it does not necessarily fit into definitions of neither gender-based violence nor corruption. In section 2 below, we elaborate on how the definition of sextortion is far from self-evident, neither from a corruption perspective, nor from a gender-based violence perspective, and we argue that in order to address sextortion as an obstacle to sustainable development and find ways to combat the phenomenon at all levels, it is necessary to explore what is meant by sextortion, and how it can be identified and measured.

Before we enter this discussion, it is relevant to identify the development policy tools and agendas that may be used to deal with sextortion in development practice. As Swedish aid is in focus for this study, our point of departure is the definition of gender-based violence and corruption and anti-corruption work used by Sida.

Gender-based violence

Sida defines gender-based violence as “(a)ny harm or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman or girl, man or boy and that has a negative impact on the physical, sexual or psychological health, development or identity of the person. The cause of the violence is founded in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination” (Sida 2015: 6). Gender-based violence is one of the priority areas in Sida’s work for gender equality,¹⁰ in line with the policies of the Swedish government specified e.g. in one of the goals of the feminist foreign policy being women’s and girls’ “freedom from physical, psychological and sexual violence” (Swedish Government 2019: 3). Gender-based violence is recognized as one of the most severe and prevalent human rights violations in the world. Statistics from all over the world show that women and girls are by far the most targeted by such violations, as well as children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, and that men are highly overrepresented among perpetrators.¹¹ Thus, all over the world, gender-based violence constitutes a serious obstacle to sustainable development, democratic development and public health, economic growth and peace, and hinders those who are exposed and people around them from being full citizens and participating in the development of their societies (Sida 2015). The second target of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality specifically addresses gender-based violence as the “elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres”,¹² and a manifold of international agreements, instruments and policy tools address gender-based violence.

¹⁰ See e.g. Sida Gender Tool Box that covers several aspects of gender-based violence. URL: <https://www.sida.se/English/partners/methods-materials/gender-tool-box/>, and the Strategy for Sweden’s Development Cooperation for Global Gender Equality and Women’s and Girl’s Rights 2018-2022 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2018).

¹¹ For a continuous update on global numbers and efforts, see for example WHO (<https://www.who.int>) and UN Women (<https://www.unwomen.org/en>)

¹² See e.g.: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

Of particular interest for this study is the recently developed Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response. This is the first international instrument on SEAH directly applied to the development and humanitarian sector (OECD/DAC 2019). The point of departure for these recommendations is an approach centered around the survivor/victim, bearing in mind that “effective prevention and response to SEA and SH must be based on the wishes and needs of survivors and victims, requires listening to those who are affected, responding robustly and sensitively, and learning from every case” (OECD/DAC 2019: 2).

The OECD/DAC recommendation is built around six pillars – from policies and standards to monitoring and shared learning.¹³ It does not seek to precisely define SEAH, but refers to United Nations (UN) documents defining sexual exploitation as “any actual or attempted abuse by personnel of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting momentarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another”,¹⁴ and sexual harassment is defined as “encompass(ing) a continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviours and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favors and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating”.¹⁵ Given these definitions, cases of sextortion may be included in the acts covered by the recommendation. However, the corruption

¹³ The six pillars are 1) Policies, professional conduct standards, organizational change, and leadership; 2) Survivor/victim-centred response and support mechanisms; 3) Organizational reporting, response systems, and procedures; 4) Training, awareness raising, and communication; 5) International coordination; and 6) Monitoring, evaluation, shared learning, and reporting.

¹⁴ UN Secretary-General bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13.

¹⁵ UN General Assembly Resolution ‘Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment’ (A/RES/73/148).

component embedded in sextortion (abuse of authority, *quid pro quo*, psychological coercion) is not made explicit in this instrument.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) on the other hand, uses *quid pro quo* (along with hostile work environment) as a key component in their definition of sexual harassment, *quid pro quo* meaning “any physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature and other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men, which is unwelcome, unreasonable, and offensive to the recipient; and a person’s rejection of, or submission to, such conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a basis for a decision which affects that person’s job” (ILO 2017). In a section on union campaigns and advocacy on violence and harassment, they also mention sextortion as a specific phenomenon in a footnote about Tanzania.¹⁶

Corruption and anti-corruption

Sida defines corruption as the “abuse of power, trust or position for improper gain” and mentions “bribes, extortion, embezzlement, kick-backs, nepotism, fraud and breach of trust” as common forms of corruption (Sida 2019a: 3). As with gender equality and gender-based violence, anti-corruption work in development cooperation is highly prioritized by the Swedish government and Sida as it “poses a serious threat to development” and “can make poverty worse in many ways”.¹⁷ Corruption is a target of SDG 16 for peace, justice, and strong institutions: “to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms” (16.5). Anti-corruption work is also

¹⁶ “Following revelations of pervasive sexual harassment in the public sector in Tanzania, guidelines were issued by the independent Ethics Secretariat that oversees ethics in public leadership. These included a crackdown on ‘sextortion’: when an official exercises power to sexually exploit someone in return for a service from his or her authority. TAMWA, a Dar es Salaam-based women’s rights group, recently reported that about up to 89 per cent of women in the public sector have experienced some form of sexual harassment while looking for a job or promotion, or seeking a service” (ILO 2017: 64).

¹⁷ Sida’s website (accessed 29 August 2020) URL: <https://www.sida.se/English/how-we-work/approaches-and-methods/our-work-against-corruption/>

mainstreamed – considered a prerequisite for the fulfilment of all seventeen goals – as is gender equality.¹⁸

Sida has a twofold entrance into anti-corruption work, addressing 1) The risks that development assistance funds are fraudulently used, and 2) Corruption as a central obstacle to sustainable development. Both aspects are relevant when discussing sextortion. Sextortion may constitute a risk in an intervention, and lead to development funds being used improperly. And wherever sextortion occurs, it may seriously hinder sustainable development at all levels.

Even though these aspects of sextortion are intertwined, the focus of this study is on the latter. Thus, this study does not explore how sextortion may be a risk in the delivery of development cooperation. Instead, the focus lies on how sextortion constitutes an obstacle to sustainable development when it occurs within different areas and sectors of development cooperation. Sida points out that the understanding of corruption, and in which way it is connected to the conditions for development, has changed during the last decade (Sida 2019a). Sida draws two main conclusions: 1) “The extent and character of corruption in our partner countries has been seriously underestimated”, and 2) “The problem is far more complex and therefore also more difficult to address than initially thought”, and that corruption is a “question of politics and power and should be dealt with as such” (ibid.: 2). We see our study as a contribution to these conclusions. By approaching sextortion as an obstacle to sustainable development, and emphasizing the power imbalances inherent in the phenomenon, we contribute to new knowledge about – in Sida’s words – the extent and character as well as the complexity of corruption.

OECD/DAC has issued specific recommendations for development actors working with the SEAH agenda, as well as recommendations relating to the corruption agenda, particularly the *Recommendation of the Council for Development Co-operation Actors on*

¹⁸ For a discussion on the role of anti-corruption work in the SDGs, see e.g. Transparency International (accessed 29 August 2020 URL: <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/no-sustainable-development-without-tackling-corruption-sdg-16>)

managing the Risk of Corruption (OECD 2016). As the title indicates, these recommendations focus on “the internal and external risks to which aid activities are exposed” and it “encourages adherents to set up or revise their systems for managing risks for corruption and for responding to actual instances of corrupt practices in development co-operation” (ibid.: 3). An explicit gender perspective as well as an understanding of corruption as an obstacle to sustainable development are though absent in these recommendations, and corruption is described primarily in financial terms.

Linking the GBV/SEAH and corruption agendas

In the annual report from 2018 on how Sida handles suspicions of corruption, a dramatically increased number of reports concerning sexual harassment and sexual abuse is noted (Sida 2019b). Sida’s analysis of this goes back to 2017 and the #metoo-movement, and how this led to more visibility of these kinds of assaults also in the development sector. In this report, Sida makes clear that with their definition of corruption as “abuse of power, trust of position for improper gain” follows that “when a manager or any other kind of superior uses their position against someone in a subordinate position in exchange of sexual services it is considered corruption” (ibid.: 13, our translation). Sida stresses the importance of establishing channels for reporting what they label as ‘SEAH-related corruption’, and also refers to several initiatives within the UN and elsewhere to develop donor commitments and recommendations (ibid.).

Moreover, in a guidance for Sida’s work on corruption as a development obstacle, published in 2019, sextortion – defined as “the abuse of power to obtain a sexual benefit or advantage” – is mentioned as one form of corruption, “which has a long history but only recently has been made visible” (Sida 2019a: 3).

This illustrates that Sida has already taken important steps to bridge the gaps between the GBV/SEAH¹⁹ and anti-corruption agendas, in a direction of making sextortion visible and developing tools to deal with sextortion. In Section 4 of this report, with conclusions and recommendations, we will get back to how this may be further strengthened and given a tangible shape.

While sextortion occurs at the intersection between corruption and gender-based violence, our assessment is that the corruption field has slowly started to acknowledge that sex is a potential currency in corruption, but that there are fewer explorations of the implications of inserting a corruption logic into a gender-based violence framework. This assumption constitutes a starting point for this report: sextortion should clearly be understood as a form of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, and we furthermore focus on understanding and pinpointing the potential added value of a corruption lens to this understanding.

Material and method

This study takes as its point of departure the conclusion in the Introduction above, namely that the scale and dynamics of sextortion are still largely unknown. Due to the scope of the proposed study, we do not focus on the former (scale) but on the latter: to explore the dynamics of sextortion relevant for development cooperation contexts in general, and for Swedish aid in particular. With this explorative character, the study relies on qualitative methods.

¹⁹ For the purpose of this study, we use GBV/SEAH when we refer to the development agendas relevant for sextortion. These two abbreviations, GBV and SEAH, are inherently interconnected but not mutually exclusive; acts included in SEAH are forms of GBV, but GBV also includes acts that are not SEAH. Development work against GBV and SEAH may be handled within different organizational departments and different parts of global agreements and national legislation, depending on context. However, by consequently referring to GBV/SEAH, we stress the importance of including sextortion in all relevant arenas.

As mentioned, the study has developed through three stages:

The first stage (Section 2 in this report), “Review of existing knowledge, gaps and dilemmas”, answers questions about the contexts in which the concept of sextortion has been developed, and the implications of including sextortion as a form of corruption to make visible and tackling specific forms of gender-based violence. It consists of a literature review, complemented by six interviews with six key experts in the field.²⁰

We have used some additional background material for this part of the study. In particular, we contributed to a workshop at Sida Partnership Forum²¹ where development actors from different parts of the world participated, representing civil society, academia and government agencies.²² During this workshop, we listened to their narratives and understandings as they shared the many examples of sextortion that they had come across in their work. It became clear to us that while they saw the connection between gender-based violence and corruption, the concept of sextortion as well as its content and boundaries were new to them. This was an important reality-check at a crucial stage in our process. It clearly demonstrated the need for first delineating, specifying and defining sextortion, and then moving on to increase our knowledge and provide training.

The second stage (Section 3), “Case studies” is made up by the two empirical case studies presented in the sub-section below. As part of these case studies we conducted 25 interviews with 32 interviewees representing Sida and Sida’s partners, and carried out a workshop with 30 participants (see below and Appendix 1).

The third stage (Section 4), “Conclusions and recommendations”, explores which measures are available, or would be required, to make visible and combat sextortion in development cooperation. This stage is based on the findings and conclusions from the current study, complemented by consultations with a

²⁰ IAWJ, SIWI, TI, TI-LAC, and UN Women. See Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews.

²¹ The one-day workshop was part of the course *Corruption through a gender lens* held at Sida Partnership Forum in Härnösand 20-22 November 2019. See Appendix 1.

²² A total of 31 participants; both women and men. See Appendix 1.

thematic expert at Sida and two experts at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and with five geographical experts at Sida Stockholm and at the Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam and Bogotá. In these conversations, the authors have presented the findings and preliminary conclusions from this study, and the subsequent mutual discussion about how development cooperation might strengthen the work against sextortion has resulted in the recommendations presented in this report.

In sum, the empirical material consists of 31 interviews with 38 interviewees, workshops with 61 participants and consultations with 8 thematic and geographical experts.²³

Case studies

The case studies aim to gain new knowledge about the dynamics of sextortion on a national level, but they also feed into the discussion about the definition and content of the concept of sextortion. The main material for the case studies are interviews with Sida's partners in Tanzania and Colombia.²⁴

The case studies take previous context specific research and reports on gender and corruption that raise/mention the problem of sextortion as a point of departure (IAWJ 2012; UNDP-SIWI

²³ See Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews, workshops, and consultations.

²⁴ A note on language in relation to the case studies: In our project, we have seen that the term 'sextortion' works well in English because it blends the ideas of sex and extortion (see above). The term 'sexual corruption' on the other hand can be understood in a moral sense as meaning 'sexually corrupt', in English and also in Spanish (and other languages). In Swahili the term 'rushwa ya ngono' is used as an equivalent to sextortion. The direct translation is 'sex corruption' or 'sexual corruption', but in Tanzania the term 'rushwa ya ngono' is generally defined in the same way as we use 'sextortion' in this study. In the case of languages where 'sextortion' does not work well, in this study Spanish, a translation of 'sexual bribes' (i.e. 'coimas sexuales') and sexual extortion (i.e. 'extorción sexual') is more relevant to use than 'sexual corruption'. Thus, for the interviews in this study we have used 'sextortion' in English (in Tanzania connected to 'rushwa ya ngono'), and a translation of 'sexual bribes' and 'sexual extortion' in Spanish. In Swedish, we have used 'sextortion' as we have not yet found an adequate translation.

2017). Moreover, this study adds to these initial reports with our exploration of the occurrence and handling of – or lack of means to handle – instances of sextortion in the national contexts. This is developed and exemplified through a focus on how sextortion is experienced, interpreted and framed in different sectors in a post-conflict context ²⁵ (Colombia), and how sextortion may be established as a well-known and officially recognized concept in a national context while at the same time show huge gaps in implementation (Tanzania).

Both Tanzania and Colombia are important to current Swedish development cooperation, with well-established and long-term partnerships. As in Swedish development cooperation at large, a gender equality and human rights perspective is vital in both country strategies (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2013, 2016). By looking at two different contexts, we are able to build our analysis on complementary knowledge that is context-specific, but that at the same time contributes to understanding sextortion on a broader scale.

In line with the explorative character of the study, and in order to gain broad knowledge about the dynamics of sextortion, the case studies focus on different sectors. These are identified according to priorities set out for the Swedish development cooperation in Colombia and Tanzania respectively.

The case studies rely on qualitative methods, including interviews with three categories of actors.²⁶ The first category consists of researchers and experts at global and local levels, such as the IAWJ, the Tanzania Women Judges Association (TAWJA), Transparency International (TI), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), that have reported on sextortion in Tanzania and Colombia. With them we have discussed

²⁵ When we say “post-conflict” we are referring to the period starting with the peace agreement signed in 2016 between the FARC and the state of Colombia. See Section 3: Colombia.

²⁶ See Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews, workshops, and consultations.

their results in previous reports and the context-specific framework for the phenomenon of sextortion.

The second category is personnel at Sida in Stockholm and at the Swedish Embassies in Dar es Salaam and Bogotá.

The third category is Sida's partners in Tanzania and Colombia, including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working with women's rights/gender equality, law, human rights, disability rights, workers' rights and education at different levels (Tanzania) and public servants, UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and CSOs that work with women's rights, gender-based violence, support to victims from the armed conflict, access to justice and corruption (Colombia). We have complemented this sample of Sida's partners with independent scholars and practitioners. As we have chosen to focus on Sida's partners, this sample of interviewees does not represent the whole of Tanzanian/Colombian civil society or society in general, but a specific selection that we consider to be relevant for the purpose of this study, namely Sida's partners working with issues related to the broader themes of women's and human rights, gender-based violence and corruption. A relevant sample within this group was identified in conversations with, and contacted through, the Embassies in Dar es Salaam and Bogotá.

In sum, 25 interviews were conducted for these second and third categories in the case studies. We have interviewed a total of 32 persons, both men and women, and they have had positions at different levels of their organizations (from founder/director to employee). The interviews have been either recorded and transcribed, or transcribed from notes. The empirical material also consists of meetings and workshops with a total of 61 participants. Given the sensitivity of the issue being investigated, the interviews were conducted in a confidential manner in order to provide the conditions for our interviewees to speak openly.²⁷ We have thus

²⁷ The sensitivity of the issue also provided limitations with regards to seeking interviewees beyond those suggested by the embassies in Dar es Salaam and Bogotá. Given the timeframe of this study, it was not possible to establish independent relations of trust necessary for interviewees to share information about sextortion. Instead we had to rely on the already established trust between

chosen to maintain the anonymity of our interviewees and have therefore not included a list of the organizations with which we have met. However, when relevant, we have provided information about the areas with which the organizations of the interviewees work, in order to show the relevance of these organizations in the work against sextortion. The interviewees have approved the quotes included in the study.²⁸

We collected the material during a period of twelve months from May 2019 to May 2020, which included field trips to Colombia in October 2019 and to Tanzania in January 2020.

The case studies are further presented in Section 3 of this report.

the embassies and their partners, which limited the number of interviews possible to carry out for this study.

²⁸ See Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews, workshops, and consultations.

Section 2: Review of existing knowledge, gaps, and dilemmas

Introduction

As noted, sextortion occurs at the intersection between gender-based violence and corruption, and cases of sextortion tend not to be included in either; therefore, these cases often fall between established lines of responsibility. In their tool kit for ending sextortion, IAWJ argues that “it is precisely because sextortion has elements of both corruption and sexual exploitation that it often eludes prosecution as either” (IAWJ 2012: 14). This has several implications.

From a gender-based violence perspective, the ‘this for that’ (*quid pro quo*) aspect and the condition that sextortion is exercised through psychological coercion rather than physical violence are particularly challenging (IAWJ 2012; IBA 2019). In many rape statutes (since 2018 including the Swedish), absence of consent is what constitutes the crime. Cases of sextortion may within this framework be understood as ‘consensual’, if the victim is considered to have ‘consented’ to sex in exchange of a benefit that the perpetrator is in power to give (IAWJ 2012: 6). There is hence a risk that the framework of consent fails to take into account the imbalance of power underlying sextortion.

From a corruption perspective on the other hand, an act that would be perceived as corrupt if money or other kinds of goods and services were exchanged, is not necessarily considered to fall under corruption statutes if the exchange of favor instead consists of ‘merely’ sex. At the same time, the consequences when sex is the currency of the bribe may be more severe and long-lasting. In other words, the consequences of sextortion for the victim may be similar to the consequences faced by victims of sexual violence: when a sexual bribe rather than a monetary bribe is demanded of a person, “s/he may experience the same kind of shame that rape and other sexual violence victims experience” (IAWJ 2012: 6). Transparency

International stresses that women are often the primary target of this form of corruption, and cases are not brought forward due to fear of reprisal (Transparency International 2016a, 2016b, 2019a; see also UNDP-SIWI 2017; UNDP-Huairou Commission 2012; IBA 2019; Feigenblatt 2020). Cases of sextortion against male victims by male perpetrators must be approached by taking into account the specificities of that relation, and also understood in relation to the justice system of the local context (e.g. if same-sex sexual relations are criminalized). Such cases may hence involve an additional stigma that creates further obstacles in reporting sextortion.

In this Section 2, with sextortion at the intersection between gender-based violence and corruption as our guiding dilemma, we review the existing knowledge and debate about sextortion as well as point out identified knowledge gaps. As noted above, while the corruption field has slowly started to explore sextortion, the concept is still largely unknown in the gender-based violence field. This is an observation that affects the design and progress of this section. We begin by linking gender, power and corruption, and by demonstrating how sex has started to become acknowledged as a potential currency in corruption. Once we have explored sextortion as gendered corruption, we move on to exploring the implications and challenges of applying these insights to a gender-based violence framework with a particular focus on coercion and consent. We end the section with reflections on aspects that are particularly relevant when studying sextortion in a development context including post-conflict situations.

Gender, power, and corruption

During the last twenty years, policy makers and civil society actors have started to acknowledge that links between gender and power are highly relevant when studying and combating corruption. Gender relations shape the opportunities for, as well as the exposure to, corruption. For example, it has been shown that in contexts where the road to power is corrupt, there are fewer women in

positions of power (Bjarnegård 2013, 2018; Bjarnegård et al. 2018).²⁹ The unequal distribution of power between men and women – intersecting with other forms of discrimination and oppression – are relevant for the involvement in, attitudes to, consequences of and effective actions against corruption. Corruption also increases inequalities, and anti-corruption work is thus in itself a tool for the achievement of gender equality (Lindberg & Stensöta 2018; Stensöta & Wängnerud 2018; Transparency International 2014; UNDP-SIWI 2017).

Although the recognition is indeed growing, gender is far from self-evident, neither in definitions of corruption nor in international agreements. For example, the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) (UN 2003), does not mention gender at all, and makes no connection between (violations of) human rights and corruption. Fortunately, today we see ongoing initiatives aimed at recognizing and changing this. In the last years, TI in collaboration with IAWJ have been pushing for the mainstreaming of gender in the UNCAC (Fatafta 2018). Most recently, in March 2020, TI published a new report on sextortion, showing that sextortion is indeed a pervasive, far-reaching form of gendered corruption that occurs all over the world, that it affects both children and adults in vulnerable positions in relation to power asymmetries, and that while “women are disproportionately targeted, men can be targeted too, as can transgender and gender non-conforming people” (Feigenblatt 2020: 11).

Most studies of corruption use definitions of bribes that do not take into consideration gendered and sexual aspects of corruption, solely formulating the transaction as a monetary exchange. When a gender lens is applied to the exchange, it becomes clear that not only money or goods but also sexual favors can constitute the currency of corruption. Notably, surveys that examine the extent of corruption generally do not even aim to capture instances of sexual corruption. It is likely that this narrow perspective and measurement

²⁹ Scholars have highlighted that the financial strength obtained by men, compared to women, together with the fact that men are supposedly more involved in public matters (Mocan 2008), create more opportunities to engage in corruption for men (especially perhaps in political) practices (as discussed in Stensöta & Wängnerud 2018).

of corruption leads to an underestimation of the prevalence of corruption worldwide. This narrow focus on corruption has possibly also limited the examination of corruption as a gendered practice. The literature is still inconclusive about how gender relations play a role in different types of corruption.

Thus, while there exists a large body of literature on corruption, there is only an emerging literature that has started to examine the relationship between corruption and gender, and an even smaller share of this literature investigates gendered forms of corruption, among these – sextortion. We argue that women and men are not only involved in and suffer the consequences of corruption to a different extent and in different ways, but that there are also forms of corruption that are inherently gendered.

Sextortion as gendered corruption

Most literature on corruption has conceived and measured corruption as the abuse of public power for private (often monetary) gains, rather than for example sexual gains. This literature has applied a narrow and non-gendered conceptualization of bribes that precludes many non-monetary payments, such as sexual favors. Until recently, sextortion has not been recognized in global and national surveys about corruption (Feigenblatt 2020).

Our concern with such a way of defining and measuring corruption is that it leaves out a large part of corrupt exchanges that may disproportionately affect women. As mentioned, indices measuring corruption by primarily capturing its monetary forms may thus lead to systematic underestimation.³⁰ What is more, a narrow conceptualization prevents researchers from grasping and engaging with the gendered dimensions of corruption. In this report, we suggest that research that precludes sexual acts as the

³⁰ Nancy Hendry elaborates on this issue in the following way: “Imagine you are someone who has just tried to get a work permit and been told by the immigration officer that you can have it, but you first need to meet him and provide some sexual favor in exchange. Imagine now that, after this experience, you are asked if you have ever been asked to pay a bribe: Would you even realise that you had been asked for a bribe by the immigration officer?” (Interview 1).

currency of a bribe uses an inadequate conceptualization of corruption. This includes surveys that construct corruption indices based on bribe definitions that do not include sexual acts as the currency of the bribe.

In 2016, Transparency International (TI) emphasized the importance of taking into account “sexual extortion” or “sextortion” when examining corruption rates in a country (Transparency International 2016a). As elaborated in the section “Colombia” below, in 2019, TI published their Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), in which sextortion for the first time was included in the questionnaire (Transparency International 2019a). The same year, sextortion was also included in the barometer for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (Transparency International 2019c).

Hence, by including questions about sextortion in surveys, the observed empirical relationship between gender and corruption might change. When explicitly including sextortion, figures may show that women are more exposed to corruption, in other ways or in other sectors, than what has previously been known. For instance, women might be more frequently exposed to corruption in sectors such as education, health care, water, sanitation, land, public housing, and documentation (including visas), since in certain contexts women are foremost responsible for many of these issues as caretakers (Goetz 2007; IAWJ 2012; Transparency International 2019a; UNDP-Huairou Commission 2012). Indeed, cases of extortion for sexual favors have been documented in sectors and contexts such as the water sector, education and health sectors, migration, border control, humanitarian aid, diplomacy and the judiciary system (Amnesty International 2016; Chêne 2009a; Chêne 2009b; Feigenblatt 2020; IAWJ 2012; Merkle et al. 2017; Towns 2015; Transparency International 2016b; UNDP-Huairou Commission 2012; UNDP-SIWI 2017).

As mentioned above, there is a growing academic field focusing on gender and corruption, but this literature has so far primarily rested on a traditional definition on monetary forms of corruption. It has investigated whether men and women are more involved in corrupt activities such as bribe-taking and whether gendered

compositions of the state affect levels of corruption (see e.g. Alatas et al. 2009; Dollar et al. 2001; Stensöta & Wängnerud 2018; Stensöta 2018; Sundström & Wängnerud 2016; Swamy et al. 2001). A small part of this literature has suggested that corruption may affect men and women differently (Bjarnegård 2013; Goetz 2007) and that different types of corruption may be present depending on the sex of the involved parties in a corrupt transaction (Lindberg & Stensöta 2018; Towns 2015). The following sections borrow insights from the two latter accounts in order to develop the concept of sextortion further.

The suggestion that corruption affects men and women differently is important for studying sextortion. Scholars have stressed that the corrupt channels that are used to recruit men to politics are not always open to women (e.g. Bjarnegård 2013; Sundström & Wängnerud 2016). It is, however, possible, that this assessment would change if a broader definition of corruption, including sextortion, was applied. A study of candidate selection in Tanzania reported rumors about women candidates being asked to perform sexual services in exchange for a position on the party lists (Bjarnegård et al. 2018). Goetz has also asked whether “women face different forms of abusive or corrupt behaviour from public officials than men”, and has suggested that the corruption women are involved in may be made invisible because the currency might be different.³¹ In addition, in many societies today, women and LGBTI persons are generally much more vulnerable to sexual rumours. Sextortion would thus be made even more invisible because of the stigma attached to such sexual rumours, which may for instance constrain women and LGBTI persons from seeking political office. Seen in this light, sextortion may also prevent them from accessing more basic services or from pursuing other career opportunities.

Towns (2015) and Lindberg and Stensöta (2018) are among the few scholars who have explicitly explored the concept of sexual corruption, emphasizing this type of corruption as gendered. Lindberg and Stensöta point out that sexual corruption can take place

³¹ If officials demand sexual favors, rather than money, in return for services when the client is a woman, it would not ‘count’ in formal indices of corruption (Goetz 2007: 101-102).

whenever there is a person with an ‘entrusted authority’ and that this can be a lower civil servant as well as a high-ranking diplomat.

Focus on the perpetrator of sextortion

The abuse of entrusted authority is key to unveiling the corruption component of sextortion. In sextortion, this authority is abused by offering or withholding services in exchange for sexual services. These transactions can and do look different, but it is possible to categorize the type of abuse of authority that takes place. This implies an increased focus on the perpetrator of corruption. In order to pinpoint the type of corruption we may distinguish between on the one hand, abuse of authority to give fair treatment and to provide something that the victim has a right to, and on the other hand, abuse of authority to give “better than fair treatment” (Rose-Ackerman 2013). In corruption research, this has mostly been theorized with a focus on the motives of the victim, and it has been conceptualized as “need or greed corruption”. It is described as need corruption when victims agree to the corrupt transaction because it is the only way in which they will receive fair treatment or access to the services that they are entitled to. Greed corruption occurs when the victim agrees to the corrupt transaction in order to “receive special advantages” (Bauhr 2017: 562-563).

The concept of sextortion raises new questions about the distinction between need and greed corruption, particularly as this distinction implicitly seems to place responsibility on the victim as driving the transaction by motivations of “need” or “greed”. This distinction needs to be reformulated in order to shift responsibility from the victim to the perpetrator and to assess the type and severity of the abuse of authority. The perpetrator in an act of sextortion exploits a power relation, often in terms of gender asymmetry, and always in terms of the entrusted authority of a superior position. With the power imbalance between the parties involved in sextortion in focus, the responsibility of the act must be placed on the person who abuses their entrusted position and authority by offering or threatening to withhold benefits that are available through this position.

Focusing on the perpetrator, and acknowledging the need to sometimes distinguish between different types of exchange, we suggest that a categorization along the lines of opportunistic and oppressive sextortion from the point of view of the perpetrator may be more appropriate. If the perpetrator seeks to entice the victim by promising more than what the victim is entitled to, it is opportunistic abuse of the perpetrator's position: the perpetrator sees an opportunity to use a position of authority to hand out unwarranted privileges. If the perpetrator, on the other hand, demands sexual favors in exchange for a benefit or a service the victim is legally entitled to, the perpetrator is guilty of oppressive sextortion, abusing the position of authority even more coercively to withhold basic rights.

Oppressive sextortion takes place in a situation in which a person in authority refuses to give out a service, such as health care or education, unless a sexual service is performed (cf. Bauhr 2017: 563). Opportunistic sextortion occurs when someone uses their entrusted authority in order to exploit vulnerabilities arising from inequalities and structural relations of power and marginalization. On a structural level, men are more likely to hold positions of power and to use overt or covert acts of violence to control and maintain power positions and the resources associated to these positions. The vulnerability of a victim of sextortion is always contextual as well as relational, but it also depends on the coercive level of the demand.

Focusing on the transaction and the type of abuse of authority is a necessary starting-point to analyze sextortion within a corruption framework, but the fact that sextortion is an exchange involving a sexual transaction is key to understanding its consequences and its invisibility. The fear, shame and stigma that a victim of sextortion often experiences, in combination with lack of jurisdiction for women's rights or the persecution of LGBTI persons, makes most cases of sextortion pass un-reported and unknown (UNDP-SIWI 2017; Gitlin 2016; IBA 2019; Feigenblatt 2020). Consequently, the perpetrator can rely both on stigma and on the lack of reporting opportunities for victims, due to the actual lack of legal and policy framework (e.g. our study in Colombia), or due to the limited implementation of such frameworks even when they exist (e.g. our study in Tanzania).

In the report by the International Bar Association, Carnegie stresses that “[t]he vulnerability of a victim of sexual abuse and the belief that they effectively ‘consented’ to what took place, combined with the power of the abuser, can also create significant barriers to reporting” (IBA 2019: 26). Indeed, the assumption that the victim consented to the *quid pro quo*, frames the act of sextortion as an agreement, although an illegitimate one. Therefore, focusing on how a perpetrator of sextortion abuses their position of authority is an important step forward. A person occupying a position of entrusted authority is not supposed to hand out benefits associated with that position in exchange for any personal favors, let alone for sexual favors. Whether a victim of sextortion has “consented” to the exchange or not is in this context not relevant; this is always an illegitimate, corrupt, and usually illegal action.

Between legal frameworks: gender-based violence and corruption

The fact that sextortion occurs at the intersection between corruption and gender-based violence/sexual exploitation presents several challenges. Most anti-corruption laws do not take into account sexual favors as a possible “currency” of a bribe, and legislations dealing with sexual abuse and sexual offences do not consider a corruption (*quid pro quo*) dimension (IBA 2019; Feigenblatt 2020). At the same time, this also offers the possibility of prosecuting sextortion either under laws that address corruption and abuse of power, or under laws that address sexual harassment and gender-based violence (IAWJ et al. 2015: 20). In most jurisdictions, there are three types of legislation that could be used to prosecute sextortion: anti-corruption and abuse of power laws, sexual harassment laws, and gender-based violence laws (IAWJ et al. 2015: 21-24; IBA 2019: 25; Feigenblatt 2020: 25).

In a comparative study of laws to prosecute corruption involving sexual exploitation,³² IAWJ shows that even though anti-corruption

³² The IAWJ report analyses nine different legislative frameworks, those of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, Taiwan, Uganda, and the United Kingdom.

efforts have traditionally targeted financial rather than sexual offenses, many of the statutes reviewed in the study could be used to prosecute sextortion, “either because they are written in terms broad enough to encompass bribes that take the form of non-pecuniary ‘advantages’ or ‘benefits’, or because they focus on abuse of power or breach of trust without requiring a specific inducement” (IAWJ et al. 2015: 21).

The International Bar Association (IBA) has recently published a report that analyses the legislative frameworks of selected countries (IBA 2019).³³ They identify several barriers that make it difficult for legislation of anti-corruption and abuse of power, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence to be used to prosecute sextortion. The IBA report does show that “certain bribery laws could be interpreted to include sextortion” because the language in this anti-corruption legislation is broad, even if sexual acts are not specified as being a potential currency of a bribe (IBA 2019: 26; see also Feigenblatt 2020: 26). However, these laws are not used, or have only rarely been used, for prosecuting sextortion (IBA 2019: 26-27).

The IAWJ comparative study finds that some gender-based violence statutes could also be used to prosecute sextortion cases, in particular those that “address sexual offenses by people in positions of authority” (IAWJ et al. 2015: 24). This is, for instance, the case of Taiwan’s Criminal Code which, as part of its offenses against morality, expressly criminalizes “the abuse of authority to extract sexual intercourse in a range of contexts, including official, employment, educational and guardianship relationships” (ibid.). Nevertheless, overall, IAWJ considers gender-based violence legislation less suitable for prosecuting sextortion because “the offenses require physical force and/or a refusal by the victim” (ibid.). Within a gender-based violence legislative framework, a case in which a person in a position of power abuses that power in exchange for sexual favors “may be dismissed as “consensual” (and therefore non-violent)” (ibid.; see also IBA 2019: 30).

Sexual harassment laws can often be used to target abuses such as those involved in sextortion. The problem with this kind of

³³ The IBA analysis covers eight jurisdictions: Brazil, India, Nigeria, Romania, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

legislation is that sexual harassment laws are usually limited to employment settings (IAWJ et al. 2015: 23). It might be also problematic in relation to the issue of consent: what happens when the victim of sexual harassment “consents” to otherwise unwelcome sexual inquires? (IBA 2019: 33) Besides, the penalties are usually civil or administrative (IAWJ et al. 2015: 23), and less severe than those foreseen by anti-corruption laws (IBA 2019: 26).

IAWJ argues for treating sextortion as a form of corruption, suggesting that “[t]he coercive power of authority that characterizes sextortion cases is precisely the type of coercion found in corruption cases” (IAWJ 2012: 16). Treating sextortion as corruption, IAWJ suggests, helps to eliminate the challenges in prosecuting sextortion under laws that address sexual conduct, namely questions of coercion and consent (ibid.). Along the same logic, corruption scholar Monica Kirya stresses that sextortion can and should be distinguished from existing sexual violence crimes (Kirya 2018). But even though sextortion is increasingly recognized as a form of corruption, Kirya points out that there is limited progress on developing appropriate legal frameworks (ibid.).

There are, however, also risks inherent in treating sextortion as a form of corruption. Law scholar Sarah Gitlin argues that characterizing sexual coercion as bribery, risks positioning victims of sextortion at fault as ‘bribe givers’, and thereby, as accomplices in a criminal act (Gitlin 2016; see also UNDP-SIWI 2017: 12; Feigenblatt 2020: 28). Also IBA, in its 2019 report, stresses that there is a risk that the victim of sextortion may be criminalized for their role in an act that falls under the definition of ‘bribery’ (IBA 2019: 28).

Such an understanding of sextortion as bribery, in which the victim can also be held accountable as a ‘bribe’-giver, implies a risk of continued underreporting of sextortion, and “[v]ictim reporting rates in sextortion cases are already very low” (Gitlin 2016). Gitlin therefore argues that a public official demanding sexual favors as a *quid pro quo* involving that official’s authority should be considered guilty of taking/extorting a bribe, but that the victim of sextortion should not be deemed guilty of paying a bribe (Gitlin 2016).

Attempts to include sextortion in anti-corruption work must therefore take into account the risk of criminalizing victims of sextortion as ‘bribe givers’. In the case of sextortion, it would be crucial that legal frameworks also take into account the underlying power imbalance that makes possible the psychological coercion of the victim and the fact that the responsibility of the act lies with the person who abuses their entrusted position. In line with existing legislation in other areas, it is possible to avoid criminalizing the victim. The Swedish law against prostitution is one example, criminalizing the buying of sex, but not the selling of sexual services (Erikson 2017). Likewise, because the abuse of authority is central to our understanding of sextortion, it is this abuse that should be at the center of any legal response, whereas sex should merely be recognized as a currency.

Sextortion from a gender-based violence perspective: power and coercion/consent

The above discussion shows that sextortion may be particularly challenging to prosecute, precisely due to the issue of consent, since victims of sextortion may be viewed as having consented to the sexual act (IAWJ 2012: 15). As Kirya argues, the power imbalance inherent in cases of sextortion is key: “Sextortion is an abuse of power and should be dealt with as such” (Kirya 2018). Taking into account the power imbalance underlying sextortion might hence contribute to reframing the issue of consent within a gender-based violence framework. According to the Gender-Based Violence classification tool used by, among others, the World Bank and Save the Children:

*[c]onsent refers to when an adult makes an informed choice to agree freely and voluntarily to do something”, but “[t]here is **no** consent when agreement is obtained through [...] [t]he use of a threat to withhold a benefit to which the person is already entitled (see GBV IMS n.d. and World Bank Group 2017: 12, emphasis in original).*

In their definition of sexual violence, the Civil Society Declaration on Sexual Violence state that one of the factors that are relevant to take into consideration when determining “whether an act of sexual nature was committed without genuine, voluntary, specific and ongoing consent” is the existence of an unequal power relation between the perpetrator and the victim, including the perpetrator being “a person in a position of authority” or the victim “having any type of dependency on the perpetrator” (The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence 2020: 11). Other codes of conduct to prevent gender-based violence also stress that:

relationships involving the withholding/promise of actual provision of benefit (monetary or non-monetary) to community members in exchange for sex – such sexual activity is considered ‘non-consensual’ (see Tvaip Codes of Conduct and Action Plan to Prevent Gender-Based Violence as well as Child Abuse/Exploitation 2017).

IAWJ points to existing national legal frameworks on sexual violence that recognize that there are situations “in which the disparity in power is so great that the ‘consent’ is, in fact, coerced and not true or meaningful consent” (IAWJ 2012: 15). IAWJ therefore uses the term “coerced consent” to capture e.g. psychological coercion, threats, or abuse of authority “that would invalidate a sextortion victim’s apparent ‘consent’ to the sexual conduct” (ibid.). IAWJ Senior Advisor Nancy Hendry discusses “the coercive power of authority” (Hendry 2018), arguing that “you can have circumstances that are incredibly coercive but don’t involve physical force or violence. Sextortion is in that category” (Interview 1). Gitlin also argues that “legal consent cannot exist in contexts where the power imbalances are extreme”, and that therefore, “all cases involving a sexual *quid pro quo* should be deemed per se coercive” (Gitlin 2016).

This understanding of ‘coerced consent’ can also be read against the background of the implicit threat of violence in cases of sextortion. A public official demanding sex in exchange for a service might induce “fear that she does not have a legitimate choice and that violence would result if she attempted to say no. The sex would

be implicitly coerced, even if it is not explicitly coerced” (Gitlin 2016). From this perspective, viewing demands for sexual favors from a public official as implying an implicit threat of violence, might thus invalidate arguments of consent.

Vulnerability, poverty, and coercion/consent

Sextortion is a global phenomenon, and it occurs in every sector and at all levels of society (IAWJ 2012; IBA 2019; Feigenblatt 2020). No one and no sector or level of society is immune, which has been made clear all around the world since October 2017, in the wake of #metoo. However, when studying sextortion in contexts and countries where development cooperation is present, it is also relevant to consider circumstances that may be aggravating.

The key to understand exposure to sextortion is vulnerability. Hendry has on several occasions stressed the fact that wherever vulnerability collides with power, there is a risk of sextortion (Hendry 2016, 2018). In elaborating on the relation between vulnerability, power and consent, Hendry further points out that “vulnerability is really what makes sextortion possible. If you were not vulnerable and did not feel coerced in some measure, then what you would have is a total consensual relationship” (Interview 1). In the context of a transactional conduct such as sextortion, the more vulnerable a person is, the greater the coercive pressure is likely to be, which further invalidates arguments about consent. Vulnerable groups and persons, with fewer alternatives because of for instance lack of education, political power, insecure migration status, or other marginalizing factors, are more likely to be exposed to and affected by sextortion (Hendry 2018).

With a multidimensional perspective on poverty, the relationship between poverty and vulnerability is complex and “depends on how people are poor in all its dimensions” (Sida 2017: 15). Sida talks about four dimensions of poverty:

1. lack of material or non-material *resources* “that can be used to sustain a decent living standard, meet basic needs and improve one’s life”

2. lack of *opportunities and choices* concerning “possibilities to develop and/or use resources to move out of poverty”
3. lack of *power and voice* which is related to “people’s ability to articulate their concerns, needs and rights in an informed way, and to take part in decision-making affecting these concerns”
4. being poor in terms of *human security*, which means that “violence and insecurity are constraints to different individuals’ and groups’ possibilities to exercise their human rights and to find paths out of poverty” (Sida 2017: 16-17)

All these dimensions of poverty are relevant when analyzing sextortion. A person’s access to resources, opportunities and choices, and power and voice directly impacts the vulnerability in relation to persons with entrusted authority on which the person depends. In a situation of sextortion, where this entrusted authority is abused, the human security of the person is violated.

The issue of coercion and consent must be further problematized in fragile contexts such as armed conflict and post-conflict societies. While sexual violence has occurred during armed conflicts at all times (Gaggioli 2014: 504), in armed conflict/post-conflict societies, demands for sex in exchange for necessities such as food and water may be regarded as one among many other abuses of power (Kirya 2018). Impoverished women are particularly vulnerable to sextortion since they may find themselves in situations of corruption where “their bodies are the only things they have to offer” (ibid.; see also Merkle et al. 2017).

Similarly, the question of coercion and consent must be further contextualized in certain situations of migration, in which women are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. There are many testimonies and stories of refugees and migrants that have faced sextortion both during their migration process and at their arrival at the refugee camps (Fatafta 2018; Hendra 2013; IAWJ 2012; Merkle et al. 2017; UNHCR 2016). Merkle et al. (2017) point out:

Although sextortion is hard to investigate, the apparent prevalence of this phenomenon deserves particular attention from migration scholars and policymakers. Indeed, our analysis indicates that sextortion is present at every stage of the migration process and applies to a variety of situations across a diverse population of migrant women. As previously noted, all migrant and expert interviews acknowledge the existence of sextortion as a common form of corruption. (Merkle et al. 2017: 36)

Merkle et al. quote an interviewee who says: “They [women] pay with their body what men pay with money – that is the main difference in corruption between men and women” (Merkle et al. 2017: 34). The authors even point out:

Interviewees report that women face sexual extortion continuously throughout transit. As one migrant rights activist and a migrant himself, describes it: “For us, men, we give them money but for women it’s the double price. They always have to pay this double price”. (Merkle et al. 2017: 28)

Thus, which will be further explored in the case studies in section 3 of this report, poverty in all its dimensions – including fragile situations of conflict and post-conflict as well as migration – needs to be taken into consideration and contextualized when analyzing the relationship between vulnerability, power, and coercion/consent in cases of sextortion.

Concluding remarks

Sextortion occurs at the intersection of gender-based violence and corruption, and cases of sextortion tend not to be included in either and therefore often fall between established lines of responsibility. With this dilemma in mind we have reviewed the existing knowledge and debate about sextortion, identified the knowledge gaps, and emphasized aspects that are important to take into consideration when trying to understand and analyze sextortion.

Gender-based power inequalities – intersecting with other forms of discrimination and oppression – are relevant for the involvement in, attitudes to, consequences of, and effective actions against corruption. However, most studies of corruption use definitions of bribes that do not take into account gendered aspects of corruption. It is likely that this narrow perspective and measurement of corruption leads to an underestimation of the prevalence of corruption worldwide. When applying a gender lens to the exchange, it becomes clear that sexual favors can also constitute the currency of corruption. Surveys examining the extent of corruption generally do not even aim to capture instances of sexual corruption.

Some scholars have, however, started to explore the concept of sexual corruption, emphasizing this type of corruption as gendered (Towns 2015; Lindberg and Stensöta 2018). Organizations such as IAWJ and TI have been pushing for the mainstreaming of gender (Fatafta 2018), and as early as 2016, TI emphasized the importance of taking into account sextortion when examining corruption rates in a country (Transparency International 2016a). In 2019, TI included sextortion in two of its Global Corruption Barometers (Transparency International 2019a, 2019c) and recently published a report on sextortion, showing that sextortion is indeed a pervasive and far-reaching form of gendered corruption (Feigenblatt 2020).

We argue that the abuse of entrusted authority is key to unveiling the corruption component of sextortion, and that a focus on the perpetrator of sextortion is fundamental to understand sextortion. The perpetrator in an act of sextortion exploits a power relation, often in terms of gender asymmetry, and always in terms of entrusted authority of a superior position. If we focus on the perpetrator and on the power imbalance between the parties involved in sextortion, it becomes clear that the responsibility of the act must be placed on the person who abuses their entrusted position and authority by offering or threatening to withhold benefits that are available through this position. This abuse of authority can take different forms, and can be understood as opportunistic or oppressive.

In this sense, the vulnerability of a victim of sextortion is always contextual as well as relational, and also depends on the coercive

level of the demand. Vulnerability is key to understand exposure to sextortion. With a multidimensional perspective on poverty in mind, we have stressed that a person's access to resources, opportunities and choices, and power and voice directly impact the vulnerability in relation to those in positions of entrusted authority on which the person depends. In a situation of sextortion, where this entrusted authority is abused, the human security of the person is violated.

Focusing on the transaction and the type of abuse of authority is a necessary starting-point to analyze sextortion within a corruption framework. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that sextortion is an exchange involving a sexual transaction, which is key to understanding its consequences and invisibility. The fear, shame, and stigma that victims of sextortion often experience, sometimes in combination with lack of jurisdiction for women's rights and the persecution of LGBTI persons, makes most cases of sextortion pass un-reported and unknown.

Sextortion occurs, as already referred, at the intersection between corruption and gender-based violence, and thus sextortion tends to be difficult to prosecute under most anti-corruption laws, which do not take into account sexual favors as a possible currency of a bribe, but also under legislations dealing with sexual abuse and sexual offences, which do not consider corruption (*quid pro quo*) elements (IBA 2019; Feigenblatt 2020). However, this may also offer opportunities for prosecuting sextortion either under laws that address corruption and abuse of power, or under laws that address sexual harassment and gender-based violence. While certain anti-corruption statutes are broad enough to include bribes that take other forms than money or goods, it seems less likely to prosecute sextortion under sexual harassment laws and gender-based violence statutes. This is the background to why IAWJ argues for treating sextortion as a form of corruption, in order to eliminate the challenges in prosecuting sextortion under laws that address sexual conduct, i.e. issues of coercion and consent (IAWJ 2012).

There are, as we have shown, also risks inherent in treating sextortion as a form of corruption. Characterizing sextortion as bribery may position victims of sextortion at fault as 'bribe givers', and thereby, potentially as accomplices in a criminal act (Gitlin

2016). We argue that this risk of criminalizing victims needs to be taken into account if sextortion is to be included in anti-corruption work. In the case of sextortion, it is crucial that legal frameworks take into consideration the underlying power imbalance that makes possible the psychological coercion of the victim, and the fact that the responsibility of the act lies with the person who abuses their entrusted position.

Furthermore, sextortion may be particularly challenging to prosecute due to the sometimes underlying assumption that the victim of sextortion “consents” to the *quid pro quo*, which contributes to frame the act of sextortion as an agreement, albeit an illegitimate one. Therefore, it is important to reframe the issue of consent within a gender-based violence framework. In cases of sextortion, coercion is psychological rather than physical and the exchange of services is likened to a transaction that two parties enter with some level of “consent”. The ‘consent’ and agreement take place in a relationship of power asymmetry and should therefore be understood in terms of ‘coerced consent’. This is particularly so in situations of extreme power imbalances: in situations of poverty in all its dimensions, in post-conflict contexts and in certain contexts of migration, the issue of consent must be even further problematized, as in such contexts, people are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and corruption.

Therefore, it needs to be reiterated that focusing on the abuse of authority and the responsibility of the perpetrator is necessary in order to address sextortion in all contexts, at all levels. Regardless of whether the victim is considered to have consented or not, the person occupying a position of entrusted authority is not supposed to hand out the benefits associated with that position in exchange for any personal favors, let alone for sexual favors. This is always an illegitimate, corrupt, and usually illegal action.

Section 3: Case studies

Introduction

As noted in the aim of this study, the case studies seek to answer the following questions: Which dynamics of sextortion can be identified at a country level, in countries relevant for Swedish development cooperation? How are cases of sextortion handled, or not, within current definitions of corruption and gender-based violence? Have Sweden's development cooperation partners come across cases of sextortion, and if so, how do they interpret and how have they dealt with sextortion? The case studies also feed into the discussion about the definition and content of the concept of sextortion in several ways.

Both Tanzania and Colombia are national contexts with a long history and great importance for Swedish development cooperation. At the same time, there are substantial differences with regards to the prerequisites for studying the dynamics of sextortion in Tanzania and Colombia. For the purposes of this study, the differences between the two national contexts make it possible to collect material from a variety of contexts and key areas relevant for development cooperation, which in turn enables a broad picture of the dynamics of sextortion at local level.

There is also a fundamental difference between the two contexts of specific relevance for our study: *sextortion as a concept* is known in Tanzania, and unknown in Colombia. Building on previous reports (see e.g. IAWJ 2012; UNDP/SIWI 2017), and from initial discussions with colleagues and experts, we anticipated that this was the case, and this was also an argument for the selection of the two countries. Throughout the study, this difference was confirmed.

At the same time, again building on previous knowledge, we anticipated that in both countries testimonies about *sextortion as a practice* would be prevalent. Moreover, we had heard and read testimonies from both countries of how the practice of sextortion was taken for granted, and had become an *institutionalized* and *normalized* phenomenon in many sectors of the society. These

testimonies included stories of how sextortion was normalized both at an individual level in relationships between for example teachers and students or employers and employees, and normalized in society as an inevitable part of for instance the education system or work life. When using the concept normalization in this sense, we are inspired by Eva Lundgren's theory on the process of normalizing violence (Lundgren 2012). Although this theory was developed to understand violence in a different kind of relationships than sextortion (couple relationships instead of entrusted authority), Lundgren's use of the concept normalization sheds light on the obstacles for victims, perpetrators and the surrounding society to acknowledge experiences as violence, and the necessity of interpreting these obstacles in a context of norms of gender and power. Also, with regards to the normalization of sextortion, the similarities in Tanzania and Colombia were confirmed in our study.

These fundamental differences (the presence vs absence of sextortion as a concept) and similarities (the normalization/institutionalization of sextortion as a practice) in the cases of Tanzania and Colombia, are our entry points when we in this section present our empirical material and interpret the dynamics of sextortion in each context.

In the case of Tanzania, the presence of sextortion as a concept allows for a discussion about how this has been established and is understood, about the legislative framework available and cases where sextortion has been directly addressed. We also discuss the gap between the presence of sextortion as a concept on the one hand, and experiences of, and (lack of) action against, sextortion as a practice, on the other. When studying this gap, we have focused particularly on the education sector as this is an important part of Swedish development cooperation with Tanzania.

In the Colombian case, a more explorative approach has been necessary, as we have aimed for inquiring about something that is absent as a concept. In focus are patterns that become visible through testimonies of sextortion as a practice in different sectors of society, permeated by the post-conflict situation and its implications for access to justice.

In the final part of section 3, as we draw conclusions from our empirical material, we return to the fundamental differences and similarities mentioned above. We ask what the implications are of the normalization/institutionalization of sextortion as a practice and the respective presence and absence of sextortion as a concept for the conditions of development cooperation and the role of aid actors in different settings.

Tanzania

The case study on Tanzania takes as its point of departure the Swedish strategy for development cooperation with Tanzania 2013-2019 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2013). Of particular interest for this study on sextortion are the strategic goals of increased capacity and reduced corruption in Tanzanian public administration, on enhanced capacity in civil society to demand accountability and increased awareness of human rights, on improved education, and the fact that the strategy points out the main target groups for the Swedish support as women, children and young people. We also note that the changes announced in the recently adopted new strategy, with “strengthened efforts in prioritized areas such as human rights, democracy and gender equality”, makes the scope of our study even more relevant.³⁴

Background and focus

In addition to Tanzania being one of the main recipients of Swedish aid since the 1960s, there are two reasons for why this country is particularly interesting and relevant for a study about sextortion. The first reason was mentioned above: sextortion, in Swahili

³⁴ As the new strategy for Tanzania was recently decided on and is still not operationalized, the strategy for 2013-2019 is the main reference for this study. However, worth noting is that the new strategy includes a relatively dramatic decrease of 1/4 of the support, due to the “negative developments (...) in Tanzania with regards to human rights and democracy”. (<https://www.swedenabroad.se/sv/utlandsmyndigheter/tanzania-dar-es-salaam/aktuellt/nyheter/the-swedish-government-changes-its-strategy-for-development-cooperation-with-tanzania/>)

‘rushwa ya ngono’, is a relatively well established and commonly used concept in Tanzania. However, even though sextortion has been a concept discussed in public and political arenas for years, reports show that sextortion is rampant in many sectors. There are reports on for example sextortion among public officials in Tanzania (see e.g. Transparency International 2019b; Makoye 2015; Vuckovic et al. 2017), in education (see e.g. Morley 2011; Vuckovic et al. 2017) and in land corruption (Mathot 2019).

The second reason why Tanzania is of particular interest for this study is that it is one of few countries in which Sweden (still) has substantial development support to the education sector. From previous studies we know that sextortion occurs in education at all levels; “sex for grades” is a global problem (see e.g. U4 2009). In addition to the bilateral strategy mentioned above, which in the education sector covers support mainly to primary and to some extent also secondary education and adult education/vocational training, support to higher education in Tanzania builds on the “Strategy for research cooperation and research in development cooperation” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2014).

Thus, in the case study on Tanzania, a focus on sextortion within and in connection to primary, secondary, and higher education was our point of departure. However, as the study developed, examples from other sectors also proved relevant to understand both sextortion in the particular context of Tanzania, and the phenomenon as an obstacle to sustainable development in general.

Related to our interest in the education sector, a comment on the age of the potential victims of sextortion is necessary. In this study, and in line with previous literature and policy in the field, one point of departure has been to analyze how sextortion can be understood at the intersection of corruption and gender-based violence. However, when studying sextortion in primary and secondary education, a children’s rights perspective is also highly relevant – which for instance has implications for the discussion about coercion and consent. As this is a field that needs specific and deep attention, we have chosen not to enter this discussion in our study. However, this aspect should be explored further, and we point to the need for further research in this direction in our recommendations below.

For the case study on Tanzania, we build our analysis on interviews with Sida partners from the national and international civil society working within the fields of women’s rights/gender equality, law, human rights, disability rights, worker’s rights and education at different levels (from primary and secondary education, adult education/vocational training, and university level). We have also met with representatives from the Tanzanian Association for Women judges (TAWJA), Sweden/Sida in Dar es Salaam and Stockholm, a former representative of UN Women in Tanzania, and independent researchers. Material collected during a workshop on sextortion organised by the Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam in January 2020 is also included in the material for this case study.³⁵

Sextortion – ‘rushwa ya ngono’

Everyone that we met for the purpose of this study had come across and was familiar with the concept ‘sextortion’. In Swahili, the equivalent wording is ‘rushwa ya ngono’, translated as “sex corruption” or “sexual corruption”, and the term refers to a specific phenomenon, in the sense that it is not understood as a combination of two separate acts. When people that we met for this study were asked to define sextortion, they gave explanations that very much resembled each other and were in line with the definition that we use in our study.

“Rushwa ya ngono – I would translate it to sex corruption. It is a concept that is commonly used. People know about it. They think about it as something that happens for women to get a promotion for example. It occurs in the private sector and in the government, and it is known that money can be involved, or services. Rushwa ya ngono is very commonly used, a known term.”
(Interview T7)

³⁵ See “Material and method” in Section 1 above, and Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews, workshops, and consultations.

“The concept *rushwa ya ngono* is recently made visible and discussed in Tanzania, but the practice has been here forever, everywhere. People with power, with a mandate to demand sexual services from others who do not have power, in order to gain privileges. It could for example be grades. It is people in power, in institutions, local leaders, police, and the key is the power relationship. There is no strong mechanism that can stop people in power. In villages, no people can raise their voices, those in power feel that they are safe. People become fearful and perpetrators cannot be taken to action. There is a culture of silence and people keep silent. They can’t talk. If they take a case to court it comes back to themselves.” (Interview T10)

In these quotes, ‘sextortion’ is filled with a content that include all aspects of sextortion as we use it: sexual acts, the abuse of entrusted authority, *quid pro quo*/this for that, and a power imbalance that enables coercive pressure. In these quotes, the entrusted authority described is of many different kinds: employers, government, private sector, police, institutions, local leaders. Others mention, in addition, for instance teachers, professors, religious leaders, traditional healers. The power embedded in the relationship is emphasized as a key element in sextortion in several ways: as a prerequisite for the act itself (“no strong mechanism that can stop people in power”), what makes the perpetrator sure there will be no consequences of the act (“those in power feel that they are safe”), and why the victim keep quiet (“people become fearful”, “there is a culture of silence and people keep silent”).

Interviewees also emphasized that sextortion was not only known in certain circles but a widely known concept and phenomenon.

“*Rushwa ya ngono* is not a new term, it is a common term. You can ask anyone on the street and they will tell you that it is sex in favor for something.” (Interview T4)

However, even if the term is widely known and used, it is not self-evident that everybody agrees on the definition or on the relevance or even existence of sextortion as a practice.

“It would be interesting to ask people on the street, anyone: Do you believe there is *rushwa ya ngono*? Many would answer no, especially men. They would say that there is no such thing, she consented to it so it is not *rushwa ya ngono*.”
(Interview T7)

According to this view – which our interviewee assumes to be common – the consent revokes the criminal aspect of sextortion. It is not seen as corruption, because the victim is assumed to have consented to the exchange, the *quid pro quo*. In common language, it may thus be the case that the aspect of consent overrides the abuse of authority that takes place, regardless of the potential consent.

Establishing the concept: a short history

Our interviews indicate that the practice of sextortion (if not yet the concept) was first discussed in Tanzania during a time when HIV prevention was high on the agenda.

“Many offices had high numbers of HIV, and many people were victims. But most of them were not ready to talk about it.” (Interview T1)

“It became obvious that the spread of HIV was prevalent among professional young women, and that this was connected to sexual harassment and sexual exploitation in workplaces, particularly within the public administration. To get anything done, and to be recruited at all, the women had to have sex with the men. So, they became aware that many were susceptible to HIV in that way.”
(Interview T11)

This initial attention was followed by a number of cases of sextortion on a high level in society (public administration,

universities, the judicial system), in one interview described as ‘Tanzania’s metoo’. In this context, the Tanzanian branch of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) were pioneers in naming sextortion. They were early in calling for public attention to the issue, and in this process other women’s rights organizations were also actively pushing the agenda forward and mobilizing actors from different spheres of the society.

“We heard so many stories, many people were affected, it was a normal thing. We wanted to have the victims’ reports, but people were afraid to talk about it, shy to explain what they had been exposed to. When the concept came, we reached out and many different organizations joined us. This was in 2013-2014. The government also supported exhibitions, and there were coalitions. In 2015-2016 we had cases reported, people were not as afraid to speak about this anymore.”
(Interview T1)

UN Women in Tanzania supported these efforts, and managed to bring together different organizations and provide resources for networking and projects relevant to address sextortion and other forms of gender-based violence. For example, IAWJ, supported by UN Women, initiated and carried out a training package for judges and magistrates. The training was executed by women with high legal positions, predominantly women in the Tanzanian High Court. This was an important prerequisite for the judiciaries to show up; they were educated by their seniors. The training package was also supported by a case law and manual on sextortion (Interview T11).

A study of political recruitment in Tanzania carried out in 2013 supports this picture of an emerging visibility of sextortion. Interviews were conducted with party representatives, aiming to investigate how political parties recruited candidates for the quota seats. The interviewees, without being asked, mentioned that the political parties had problems of sexual corruption in relation to candidate selection, such as sexual services in exchange for a position on the list (Bjarnegård et al. 2018).

In 2014, in the wake of the first wave of attention to the issue, TAWJA launched a campaign against sextortion, gathering several women's rights organizations.³⁶

“Our judges, mostly women judges, wished to see everything in place. Our president became the president of the international organization, and we got a lot of support from them. We worked together, in coalitions, and donors came along. As judiciary we were ready, many of our members were going out to talk, we reached out, we were not just waiting for others to come to us.” (Interview T1)

TAWJA is still very active in putting sextortion on the agenda.

“We are the main organization talking about sextortion, but we are not alone. Nowadays many are talking about it.” (Interview T1)

In 2018, Tanzania saw a second wave of attention to sextortion. This time the discussion was sparked by a university lecturer speaking out about sextortion at her university.

“There was a female lecturer who raised concern a couple of years ago. It became a big issue, and it added to the awareness. It is particularly discussed in relation to employment processes. Many face this, especially women. People in power are taking advantage of their position. It is good that we are talking about it, that it is opening up.” (Interview T4)

In the sub-section “Higher education: sextortion institutionalized” below, we elaborate on this recent wave and case.

³⁶ <https://tamwa.org/tamwa/index.php/media-center/press-released/item/19-launch-of-campaingn-against-sextortion-december-03-2014/19-launch-of-campaingn-against-sextortion-december-03-2014>

Legislation and policy

The term sextortion/rushwa ya ngono is not explicitly mentioned in Tanzanian legislation. However, in the interviews, two laws were referred to as directly addressing crimes within the realm of sextortion in Tanzania. Both these laws are from 2007, which means that they were in place before the concept of sextortion was coined.

The first law relevant in cases of sextortion is found within the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act from 2007, section 25:

“Any person being in a position of power or authority, who in the exercise of his authority, demands or imposes sexual favours, or any other favours on any person as a condition for giving employment, a promotion, a right, a privilege, or any other preferential treatment, commits an offence and shall be liable, on conviction, to a fine of not exceeding five million shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or both.” (United Republic of Tanzania 2007)

This law includes all the different aspects of sextortion: a sexual component as “sexual favors” (although it also opens up for other forms of favors), a corruption component as “position of power or authority”, the abuse as “demands and imposes”, and a *quid pro quo*/this for that as “a condition for...”. The law is handled by the Prevention and Control over Corruption Bureau (PCCB), with a mandate to deal with all types of corruption.

The second law that directly concerns sextortion is found in the Penal Code section 130(3). This law relates to crimes committed by a person in different kinds of positions of authority:

“3) Whoever –

(a) being a person in a position of authority, takes advantage of his official position, and commits rape on a girl or a woman in his official relationship or wrongfully restrains and commits rape on the girl or woman;

(b) being on the management or on the staff of a remand home or other place of custody, established by or under law, or of a women's or children's institution, takes advantage of his position and commits rape on any woman inmate of the remand home, place of custody or institution;

(c) being on the management or staff of a hospital, takes advantage of his position and commits rape on a girl or woman;

(d) being a traditional healer takes advantage of his position and commits rape on a girl or a woman who is his client for healing purposes;

(e) being a religious leader takes advantage of his position and commits rape on a girl or woman.” (TAWJA 2020)

In this law, the sexual component is specified as one – and the gravest – form of sexual abuse: rape. The corruption component is present as the perpetrator holding a position of authority and taking advantage of this position and committing a crime. The positions of authority referred to include, but are not limited to, ‘official’ positions, and all the specified examples can be interpreted as entrusted authority, wide and well established. In one of the positions, (b), the victim is specified as being in a direct hierarchical relationship to the perpetrator. This law is also gendered: it specifies the perpetrator as a man, and the victim as a woman or a girl. However, what is not present in this law when compared to the anti-corruption law (and to the definition that we use in this study) is the “this for that” aspect of sextortion.

The punishment for the crime specified in the Penal Code is set at 30 years in prison or corporal punishment, and an order for compensation to the victim for the injuries suffered. The punishment for the crime referred to in the PCCA is fine of up to 5 million shilling (EUR 2000) or imprisonment up to three years.

Even if the concept ‘sextortion’ is not explicitly mentioned in the legislation, it occurs in government policy. For example, in the Tanzanian National Action Plan to end violence against women and children in Tanzania 2017/18-2021/22:

”(T)here is growing evidence that sextortion – extorting sexual favors in return for rendering public services – is becoming more common in workplaces, especially in workplaces that have a sole proprietor. Sextortion is even found in primary and secondary schools, health centers, and public service offices.” (NAP 2016: 2)

By the end of 2019, an investigation about sextortion in the education sector was initiated by the Ministry for Education. It is likely to assume that this initiative was taken in the wake of the above mentioned (and below elaborated) attention given to sextortion at universities. As of May 2020, the results of this investigation were not yet released.

Moreover, the Tanzania Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau recently introduced “gender desks” where victims of sextortion can meet female officers and file their cases, with the goal to “seek justice for the victims of sextortion with a view to end sexual harassment in the male dominated system” (IAWJ 2019).

Sextortion has also been brought up by the government of Tanzania in international fora. Already in 2013, the government organized a side event at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) titled “Ending Abuse of Authority for Purposes of Sexual Exploitation (Sextortion): The Experience of the Judiciary in Tanzania”, with opening remarks by John Hendra, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director Policy and Programme for UN Women. In his speech, Hendra stresses the importance of sextortion being illegal under the Penal Code as well as the Anti-Corruption Act (Hendra 2013).

In line with the initial argument of IAWJ at global level, that naming the concept is a prerequisite for addressing it, TAWJA underlines the importance of the presence of the concept sextortion in Tanzania, and argues that it should be strengthened. They are pushing for sextortion to be explicitly mentioned, preferably in both the PCCA and in the Penal Code, and today they are directing their efforts towards lobbying for a specific GBV act in which sextortion should be included.

“As an organization, we are pushing for a specific GBV act, we think that this would give us more clear cases. We argue that sextortion should be a specific act within such GBV act. A GBV act would pinpoint the source of the violence, make it visible. It would not leave as many loopholes. In the penal code there are different crimes that may be GBV. Rape, torture, murder – all can be a form of GBV. But if you are not saying that it is GBV it might not be visible. If we would have a GBV act under the penal code, this would be visible.” (Interview T1)

According to TAWJA, up until now Tanzania has seen nine legal cases of sextortion where the conditions were upheld, some to the high court, some to the court of appeal. Some of these cases, of particular interest for the scope of this study, are referred to in the sections below.

Wide range of sectors and all levels – but also particular vulnerability

In research and reports about sextortion, a recurrent observation and conclusion is that sextortion occurs in all sectors and at all levels. Our study in Tanzania shows a similar pattern. The interviewees’ definitions of sextortion above, as well as in Tanzanian legislation and policy, cover different positions of entrusted authority, and the stories about sextortion in our material show that sextortion takes place in a wide range of sectors, situations, relationships, and at all levels. For example, one of the above mentioned successful legal cases concern a case from 2009, where a police officer on duty at a police station raped a 14-year-old girl.

Onesphory Materu Vs. Republic (CA) at Tanga, Criminal Appeal No. 334 of 2009 where a police officer on duty at the police station raped a young girl of 14 years inside a police remand cell on a written promise that he would release her from custody. He also allowed her freedom to sit on a bench outside and get a glimpse of sunshine. When

he refused to release her as promised, the girl filed charges giving the 'release note' as part of her evidence of the illicit unfulfilled promise. (TAWJA 2014)

Another case, tried under the PCCA act, concerned a traditional healer who raped a woman on the premise that he could restore her menstrual period.

He led the victim to a secluded area, ordered her to undress, held her by the neck and inserted his penis into her private parts. The appellant gave a sworn testimony claiming that the complainant had consented to sexual intercourse. The issue before the court was whether the complainant had consented to the sexual intercourse by the traditional healer. It was held by the court that the victim had not consented to sexual intercourse with the appellant and that the appellant had abused his position of authority as a traditional healer in extorting sex. (Hashim Msuya 2017)

Our material does not contain stories about sextortion in migration contexts, but this has been recognized elsewhere. For example, the UN Women's programme on Women in Informal Cross Border Trade in Tanzania, which targets women traders, highlights the economic and sexual vulnerability and exploitation they experience, including appalling levels of rape, sexual exploitation and extortion (Hendra 2013).

Even though our material shows that sextortion occurs in a wide range of sectors in the Tanzanian context, for some people, and in some situations, the vulnerability and risk of being exposed to sextortion seems particularly high. One such example is the informal sector.

“In hotels for example, the employees often do not have any contracts. They work long hours without leave. If you need to take care of family matters or get any other favor you must have sex. Sextortion is used to justify lack of justice. If you don't have any contract, you need to pay for services with sex instead.” (Interview T9)

The risk of being exposed to sextortion in the informal sector is described as very high, or even as a necessity in order to enjoy the rights that you would have as an employee with a contract. This is also a question of gender. Even if globally, more men than women are working in the informal sector, women more often work in categories of work where they are vulnerable to abuse (ILO 2018). It is also – often in combination with gender – a question of poverty: poor people more often work in the informal sector and have less opportunities to choose.

“There are also economic factors here. Poor people have to pay with their bodies.” (Interview T10)

In a situation where you have no rights in relation to your employer, there are very limited, or no, possibilities to report sextortion. Moreover, sextortion includes no risk of consequences for the perpetrator: without a contract there is no formal right to violate.

Disabled persons were also pointed out as a group particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence in general, and also to sextortion, in Tanzania.

“This was the first time we heard about sextortion experienced by disabled persons. We had to be very careful on how to handle these stories. They were forced to have sex in order to get things done. (...) People were taking advantage of their innocence. They are considered pure, no one has touched them before. There are also superstitious beliefs about this, witchcraft. A woman and girl with a disability is considered pure. Particularly intellectually impaired girls. For women and girls with albinism there is a belief that you will get a fortune, be lucky, if you have sex with them. They are more at risk. Those in power are using this power, and they are saying to the women and girls that they will get something in return. Anything, even food assistance.” (Interview T10)

For disabled persons, also the obstacles to report sextortion include additional dimensions.

“For intellectually impaired women and girls, it is also very easy for the perpetrator to get away. Depending on the magnitude of their disabilities, they might fail to describe the perpetrator and the situation, hence they are more at risk of being exposed to sextortion and the perpetrators are likely not to be revealed (...) Sometimes disabled people also need assistance to be able to go somewhere, they can’t report by themselves.” (Interview T10)

Thus, even though sextortion occurs in a wide range of sectors and at all levels, it is important to take into consideration contexts and situations that increase the risks of exposure to sextortion, as well as aspects that add to the difficulties of making visible both victims and perpetrators of sextortion, and limit the possibility of reporting such cases.

Higher education: institutionalized

In Tanzania, as elsewhere, and as we shall see below, also in Colombia, sextortion in the education sector has primarily been discussed as a problem in universities.

“In universities we have had examples of sex for grades, of *ruswha ya ngono*, involving university staff and students. For example, threats of lower marks, or making it hard to pass if you don’t agree.” (Interview T3)

Many describe sextortion as something that is more or less taken for granted: if you want to have a university degree, “sex for grades” is a prerequisite.

“At university level in Tanzania, I would say that sextortion is almost institutionalized. You know that if you as a woman want to graduate from a

university education, submitting to sextortion is required.” (Interview T11)

“At university, the magnitude is huge. Almost everyone is involved. (...) It is normalized. I’ve been hearing about it for the last 20 years. It is a common practice. Some perpetrators brag about it. People are accused but nothing happens.” (Interview T6)

Louise Morley (2011), in a study focusing on the intersection of gender, poverty and age in universities in Ghana and Tanzania, did not set out to study gender-based violence. However, her interview data revealed “heterosexual harassment of women by men as a discursive and actual practice” (ibid.: 102).³⁷ She states that in her study, *quid pro quo* – sex for grades – was the most common form of harassment that women talked about. Some male lecturers “had a *droit de seigneur*, or patriarchal entitlement to the sexual favours of their female students” (ibid.: 103).³⁸

Lack of resources and quality at the university is also described as a problem when addressing sextortion.

“The focus here has been on sextortion at universities, among highly educated academics. If you would be consequent and lay off everybody guilty of sextortion, all those who are using their power position in that way, quite many would have to go. And in that sense, it is a problem that the quality of the universities in Tanzania is so low. There are not that many highly educated academicians to replace them.” (Interview T2)

³⁷ Worth noting is that Morley does not use the concept ‘sextortion’, although this – in our use of the concept – is indeed the topic of her article. Instead, she mainly talks about sexual harassment as a form of gendered violence.

³⁸ Morley also refers to another study (Manuh, Gariba and Budu 2007) that discusses “sexually transmitted grades” (Morley 2011: 103).

As mentioned above, a couple of years ago a lecturer made visible sextortion at one of the Tanzanian universities. The resistance was hard at the beginning, but this gradually changed.

“I was a whistle blower at my university. In 2018, on the day when the president came to the university, I published a tweet about sextortion at the university, reported incidents of sextortion. The reaction at first was silence. And neglect: this is not happening here. But then it was everywhere. In social media, the national radio had a program about it. The management’s reaction changed, they started to talk about it as something they needed to change. Their version changed from denial to lack of channels to report.” (Interview T6)

The successful legal cases in Tanzania include a case from the university.

“A Lecturer of University of Dodoma (UDOM) Faculty of Social Science was arrested in late 2019 by the Anti Corruption Officers being in a hotel room with a student whom he demanded sex favors from a girl student so as to help her with the examinations.

The report followed the active participation of the students and other people in the Corruption Clubs within Universities and Secondary Schools hence the awareness has increased through the motto: ‘Vunja Ukimya, Kataa Rushwa ya Ngoni’ (Break the Silence, Refuse Sextortion)” (TAWJA 2020)

Worth noting is that this case took place after the described second wave of attention to sextortion in Tanzania, and the legal case was followed by students’ action.

Primary and secondary education: growing visibility

In primary and secondary education in Tanzania, sextortion seems to be much less visible than in higher education. However, there was a common view among our interviewees that this did not mean that sextortion is less widespread in primary and secondary education. They talked about how girls are abused and raped for services in schools at all levels.

Among the successful legal cases, there is a recent one from December 2019 concerning sextortion in a secondary school. This might give an indication of a growing attention and a will to deal with cases also at lower levels of education.

“Head Master of Serengeti Secondary School one Baraka Sami was arrested on 12/12/2019 being in a hotel room with a student whom he demanded sex before giving her the Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Exams. When he demanded so, a girl reported a matter at the PCCB and a trap was made and he was caught being with a girl and when he was searched, he was found with a Certificate intended to give to a girl after his mission.”
(TAWJA 2020)

Our material also includes examples of how organizations have dealt with sextortion in schools.

“We have a couple of cases from schools in refugee camps. Children reported that one class teacher was very powerful, setting the conditions. He was asking for sexual favors from students, to pass the exam, to do this and that. Many children were facing the same from this teacher. But we took action, and the teacher was removed. We are very firm on this.” (Interview T4)

Several point out that the trust in schools being a safe place for children is key, and that not only girls but also boys are victims of sextortion in schools.

“It is important that parents have trust in schools, that they know their children will not face gender-based violence at school. It is a social contract, they have a social authority. They must be safe in sending their children. Abuse and sextortion in schools also happens to boys, not only girls.” (Interview T9)

Transitions from one education level to the next make up key phases in education. During these transitions, the risk of being exposed to sextortion seems particularly high.

“Critical points are examinations, to move from one stage to another. There is a tough pressure on children to pass, at these stages children are really vulnerable. Teachers are asking for sexual favors in exchange for passing.” (Interview T4)

When interviewees talked about sextortion in primary and secondary education, a frequently stressed problem was transport to and from schools: how girls are abused by bodaboda (motorcycle taxi drivers). Even if this phenomenon is not sextortion in our definition of the concept (as a bodaboda does not hold a position of entrusted authority), it is worth mentioning. For many girls and young women, travelling with bodaboda is the only way to get to school. Thus, the bodabodas hold a “position” of dependence in relation to the girls, and as a prerequisite for access to education. The distance to school becomes a situation of particular vulnerability for girls.

“It occurs a lot in transportation, by bodabodas. Girls are promised food, transport, basic necessities in exchange for sex. We tell them not to agree. Or it may be in exchange for pads. Due to the menstruation taboo girls may not get pads from parents. We don’t address this as sextortion, but this is a reality.” (Interview T4)

Even though the school is a place where many girls, and also boys, face sextortion and other forms of abuse, school is also (compared

to for instance the home, or as mentioned on the road to school) a space where children at least on paper are protected.

“If abuse happens in school you can use educational policy. If it is outside it is more difficult, if parents do not take their child to school. In some areas it is impossible to talk about rape, you don’t speak up, it is too embarrassing. You are more protected as a student. It is not allowed to have sexual engagement with a student. You get 30 years in prison if you make a student pregnant. But at the same time the girl is not allowed to go back to school if they get pregnant.” (Interview T4)

In this quote, the interviewee brings up a problem that has been hidden for a long time, and, when talked about, is considered a sensitive topic in Tanzania, namely teenage girls’ pregnancies. Recently however, the discussion has changed. There are several examples of initiatives aiming to enable pregnant girls and young mothers to continue their education, for example in special programs at Folk Development Colleges run under the Ministry of Education.³⁹ This makes it possible for these girls to eventually go back to the ordinary education track.

Reporting: lack of safe systems...

The relative protection for students in schools is something that is possible to rely on and further develop in the work against sextortion. But even though there is legislation in place that can be used in cases of sextortion in Tanzania, and policy against abuse in schools, this is far from enough. For a start, the level of punishments creates problems.

³⁹ These colleges were established in collaboration with Swedish Folk High Schools already in the 1970s, with support from Sida. See Rogers (2017) and the website of Karibu Tanzania Organization, an NGO functioning as an umbrella. See: <https://kaributanzania.or.tz>

“There is a specific protection in schools. And the punishment for making a schoolgirl pregnant is hard. At the same time, it is challenging to report. It is difficult to name a person if you know they might get 30 years in prison.” (Interview T7)

This shows a dilemma in the reporting of sextortion that was frequently brought up in Tanzania. While the PCCA act has a punishment of up to five years in prison, the punishment stipulated in the Penal Act is 30 years imprisonment or corporal punishment in cases of rape by someone with entrusted authority in relation to the woman or girl victim of the rape. In turn, this dilemma is connected to what many point to as a gap between legislation and policies on sextortion and other forms of abuse, and the everyday life in schools.

“We need to establish systems within the system, make clear who is responsible for what and find monitoring mechanisms. Persons need to be held responsible, down to teachers’ level. Everyone must know who to turn to. Everyone in schools must know and understand their rights, and to know that if I report it will be taken care of. We need zero tolerance, safety, and knowledge.” (Interview T2)

The gap between legislation and policy is of course not limited to schools, and the lack of reporting systems close to people’s everyday lives includes all sectors and situations. A possible starting point might be to have sextortion explicitly named in codes of conduct for all professions.

“Apart from legislation, it is also important to have codes of conduct against corruption for different professionals. We need to have a system of reporting. It is good to have specific codes. Every sector has their own code, all kinds of corruption is unethical. In these, sextortion is not mentioned, but it would be good if it were.” (Interview T1)

...and well-grounded fear

Thus, lack of policy, codes of conduct, and reliable and systematic reporting systems close to people's everyday lives makes it difficult for people to report sextortion. But even when these are in place, or if they were in place, there are other obstacles. One of them is fear.

“We have policies against such practices, but because of fear and lack of knowledge they are not always used. Students fear reporting due to the power differences. They fear what may happen if they report.” (Interview T4)

And the fear is indeed well-grounded. In the above-mentioned case at a university, that sparked the second wave of attention to sextortion in Tanzania, the consequences were not only initial denial followed by recognition and initiatives, but also personal.

“The lecturer that was bringing up this issue faced a lot of threats. But many were also supporting her.” (Interview T4)

“Her case was very famous. She had to take a sabbatical, it had consequences for her work, it was really hard.” (Interview T7)

Not only formal reporting systems and mechanisms are necessary for victims of sextortion to be able to speak up, but also a supportive surrounding.

“It is important to support victims to be survivors. Legal protection is not enough. You also need feminist support to fall back on. I don't encourage women to get to this point, to reveal sextortion without backup.” (Interview T6)

Moreover, our interviewees in Tanzania give voice to an aspect of sextortion that was stressed in the introduction of this report, which has so far often been left out in research and reports, namely how the *quid pro quo* aspect of sextortion contributes to portraying the victim as complicit of the crime.

“For those who are ‘only’ abused, other things come to the fore. Also difficult. But those who have entered into something, agreed to something and got something in return, ‘I paid with my body and I continued’, it is even harder. ‘What did I agree to?’ The power here is key.” (Interview T2)

This complicity does not only involve the persons directly involved in the exchange, the perpetrator and the victim, but may also be expressed by the surrounding community.

“The shame is heavy in these cases. Especially for victims who couldn’t say no. They face – or are afraid to face – getting an image of being easy, people are pointing fingers at them. This happens all the time. It is not openly discussed. People are talking behind the women’s back. Important that it is explicit in policy. You are the victim here, it is not your fault.” (Interview T4)

When the victim is made complicit – in her own, the perpetrator’s and the surrounding community’s eyes – this also reduces the risks for the perpetrator. As mentioned above, students are particularly exposed in different transition phases in education. In the quote below the interviewee talks about the last in line of these: the transition between education and work.

“Graduate students are often victims. When you have a master’s degree, you may get a position as a government employee. When you study you need to pass. Then you need to get a job. Lecturers know that they need the degree, that you will lose your job. They know that they are safe, that this will never come out. If I am a married person and this comes out it is a disaster. And what will my employer say if they know I did not get my job because of qualifications? Who will give you a job after this, who will want that woman?” (Interview T6)

Here, the reduced – or even absent – risk for the perpetrator is clear. The price paid by the victim for reporting sextortion – or even the price for just interpreting what she has experienced as sextortion – is too high: she risks her future, her life.

Morley identified these patterns in her research about sexual abuse/sextortion at universities in Tanzania; how women rarely reported sex-for-grades, in fear of stigmatization and further victimization. The male students “accused female students of complicity in transactional sex, and attributed women’s academic success to favouritism and a form of reverse discrimination” (Morley 2011: 104). In this example, the normalization of sextortion is turned against the women. Instead of victims, they are seen as agents in a transaction of academic advantages. Sextortion is considered a prerequisite for women/girls who want to perform above their ability – not as a violation of women’s rights and bodies.

Reflections on this shift of responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim is present also in our material:

“There is also another understanding of sextortion, that it is about women who are using men in positions of power to get advantages. That women are those who take the initiative to a relationship because they want something in return. But even if this would be the case, it is nevertheless the male teacher who is responsible.” (Interview T2)

This also illustrates what we in the introduction of this report refer to as the necessity of focusing on the person with entrusted authority, and the power that is embedded in this position of authority. Regardless of who initiated the *quid pro quo*, or if it was explicitly demanded or not, the responsibility lies with the person who holds the position of power. In primary and secondary schools this power relationship is naturally even more obvious, as the entrusted authority is given to an adult who uses this power in relation to a child.

“There is a culture that is built, diehard traditions. In cases of sextortion one must ask: is there a choice to refuse?” (Interview T7)

There are also other aspects of the normalization of sextortion that make obvious the risks for victims to report and the lack of risks for perpetrators to continue their abuse:

“People who do this know each other; they protect one another. There are networks, and it may even be a competition within these networks. When this is revealed, something that they have been practicing always is touched upon. There are networks of men in power. We see justified sexist statements, normalized assault. We have to start from a new angle.” (Interview T6)

According to this interviewee, not only a culture of sextortion as normalized makes it difficult – or even impossible – to make visible and report cases of sextortion, but also the links between perpetrators. If you, as a victim of sextortion, are challenging a “network of men in power” that among themselves are proud rather than ashamed of their abusive behavior (“competition within these networks”) if you make visible and report sextortion, it is easy to understand the choice not to do so. This adds another dimension to the advice by an interviewee above: do not report without “feminist support”.

Suggestions for improved action against sextortion

The presence of sextortion as a concept, and the ongoing discussion about sextortion as a practice in Tanzania, makes it possible to formulate suggestions for improvement. Our interviewees offered concrete suggestions, several of which have direct relevance for development cooperation.

When IAWJ first coined the term sextortion, it was testimonies from all over the world that showed similar patterns that pointed at the need for a concept to gather and label these experiences. In contexts like Tanzania where sextortion as a concept is present and

the conversation is ongoing, still the victims' stories should be the point of departure for taking action.

“We need to engage women, to have them tell their stories. Involve stakeholders, and go further. Involve employers and associations. We have to bring women's stories forward, make visible the conversation taking place in the room. Women in government offices should be present in these conversations, to be able to bring the stories forward.” (Interview T9)

As pointed out above, the gap between the policy and legislation level and people's experiences of sextortion in everyday life, hinders the possibilities to deal with sextortion. In the quote above, the sharing of stories is identified as something that might bridge this gap. Interviewees also identify interconnected measures and methods: citizen/community involvement and awareness raising. As sextortion is a sensitive matter, it is necessary to involve people in order to expose the problem, raise awareness, and counteract fear. At the same time, the grassroots work of changing behaviour at community levels depends on the willingness and concrete efforts to work also at a higher level towards an equal, transparent and accountable society. The interviewees stress the necessity of support structures that connect different levels. Reporting systems need to be in place, which includes different paths for reporting.

“We have child safeguarding policies and anti-harassment policies. But we also need to raise awareness, speak about the expected behavior, about what is a right service, and the duties of service providers. We need a reporting system where people can report face to face, but also online free numbers and suggestion boxes. We need a national hotline for all kinds of abuse. Somewhere where children can report anonymously. That can be linked to the nearest relevant office, answered by people with special skills, trained people, like social service.” (Interview T4)

But reporting systems also need to be safe in order for people to make use of them. This is particularly true when children are involved.

“At school level we need education, to raise awareness. Opinion boxes where you can report. Safe reporting mechanisms to minimize risk for girls’ school drop-outs.” (Interview T3)

A concrete initiative to change attitudes and make change on the ground, shared by one of the interviewees, was an initiative targeting bodabodas.

“We run a community dialogue project in which we recruit the men, the young boys who are motorcyclists, the bodabodas. (...) The bodabodas are often organized, and we invite the leaders and want them to be the girls’ ‘brothers’ instead of ‘boyfriends’. For example, they are in different ways included in our activities, to protect the girls. The idea is that they in turn will spread this, that they are important, that they gain status for protecting the girls instead of using them. This is our way of trying to do something, to make a change.” (Interview T2)

This initiative illustrates the necessity of preventive measures, and to also involve men and boys for sustainable change of attitudes. It is also a good example of how action against sextortion as a practice cannot stop at legislation, policy and regulation, but must reach the everyday lives of women and girls, and men and boys.

Concluding remarks

The interviews with Sida partners in Tanzania show that the concept of sextortion – *rushwa ya ngono* – is widely known. It is also, at least partly, addressed in legislation and policy. This is the result of a conscious strategy from local women’s rights actors, with both a push and back-up from global actors, financial support, and in

broad local coalitions with different stakeholders, including civil society, the UN, and the government.

However, even if sextortion is known, it is not necessarily recognized as a problem and a crime. Instead, in many situations it is a normalized behavior among men in positions of entrusted authority, in relation to women and girls – and in some cases also boys – who in different ways depend on them. Sextortion occurs in different sectors of society and at all levels, and some – for example poor people working in the informal sector, or disabled persons – are particularly vulnerable. In the education sector, which has been in focus in this study, sextortion has been made visible as a normalized part of higher education, but still remains largely invisible in primary and secondary education. However, our interviewees brought up several examples showing that sextortion is indeed a widespread phenomenon also at lower levels of education, and that transition phases between different stages of education are particularly critical.

Even though sextortion is partly addressed in legislation, policy, and regulation, there is a huge gap between this level and everyday life where sextortion occurs. Our study shows a great need of safe and reliable reporting mechanisms close to people, but also a well-grounded fear among victims and several risks and obstacles attached to reporting and thus making sextortion visible. The power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim of sextortion, and the shame embedded both in the sexual abuse itself, and in the *quid pro quo* aspect of sextortion, through which the victim is made complicit, are key aspects to understand and seriously address these difficulties.

From a multidimensional poverty perspective, sextortion in Tanzania is without a doubt a phenomenon that deepens poverty particularly for women and girls but also for some men and boys. Lack of material and non-material *resources* as well as of *opportunities and choices* increases the vulnerability of being exposed to sextortion, for instance when a woman does not have any other choice but to work in the informal sector and is forced to have sex in exchange for maternity leave due to a lack of work contract, or when a girl is forced to have sex in exchange for grades or transport to school.

Lack of *power and voice* hinders victims from making sextortion visible, for instance when no safe reporting mechanisms are in place, when the power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim makes reporting unthinkable, when disability hinders a victim from reporting, or when the victim is made complicit and the act not even considered a crime. Lack of *human security* is an aspect of all cases of sextortion, and as such a grave violation of bodily integrity and of human rights: to an individual when it actually happens, and to a group knowing that there is always a risk that it might happen.

We argue that in the case of Tanzania, the presence of sextortion as a concept is a prerequisite for its visibility, and for taking action against sextortion as a practice. Even though there is a long way to go, this creates a fertile ground for donors in general, and Sida in particular, to focus on and encourage actors in the Tanzanian society that are striving to take sextortion seriously, to act in accordance with and strengthen policy on sextortion, and bridge the gap between policy and everyday life by addressing and combating sextortion as a practice.

Turning back to the goals of the strategy for development cooperation in Tanzania, a strengthened work on sextortion would directly impact the increased capacity of, and reduced corruption in, Tanzanian public administration. As we have seen, civil society, and in particular women's rights organizations, are key actors in this work, and support of their work against sextortion increases awareness of human rights in Tanzania, and expands their capacity to demand accountability from stakeholders. In Tanzania, the education sector has been in focus for discussions on sextortion, and a further strengthening of this focus – not the least in primary and secondary education – would be a strategic contribution to the goal on improved education. In sum, strategically addressing sextortion in development cooperation would reduce poverty in all its dimensions in Tanzania, particularly for the main target groups of the strategy: women, children, and young people.

Colombia

The case study on Colombia takes as its point of departure the Swedish strategy for development cooperation with Colombia 2016-2020, focusing specifically on the strategic goals of greater access to transitional justice and respect for human rights, improved conditions for inclusive development, strengthened capacity to prevent and deal with the incidence of gender-related violence, and securing respect for human rights, gender equality and the rule of law in Colombia (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2016).

Background and focus

The more than 50 years long armed conflict that began in the mid-1960s between the state of Colombia, paramilitary groups and the two guerrilla groups: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)⁴⁰ and the National Liberation Army (ELN)⁴¹ included several different forms of gender-based violence. Violence against women constituted a ‘strategy of war’, where women’s bodies were both battleground and booty of war (see e.g. Casa de la Mujer 2019; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2012, 2015, 2018; Chaparro Moreno 2016; Corporación Sisma Mujer 2017; Grupo de Memoria Histórica de la Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación 2011; Sanchez et al. 2011; Wood 2016).

In 2016, a peace agreement was signed between the country’s largest guerrilla group FARC and the state of Colombia, starting what we here refer to as the post-conflict period. At the same time, the peace process began with the country’s second major guerrilla group ELN. When the peace process was formally announced in 2012, there were only men participating at the negotiation table. It was the strong advocacy on the part of the country’s strong and diverse women’s CSOs that made it possible for women to be included in the negotiation process. One of the main results of the participation of the women’s organizations in the peace process was

⁴⁰ Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, in Spanish.

⁴¹ Ejército de Liberación Nacional, in Spanish.

the inclusion of a gender perspective and a women's rights focus in the peace agreement.

This is the background to women's CSOs' work in Colombia today and this has an impact on the conditions for aid and development cooperation work (see e.g. Lemaitre Ripoll et al. 2019; Wills Obregón 2004). Swedish development cooperation aims to contribute to sustainable peace and human security in Colombia, in part by strengthening women's and girls' participation in the peace process and state building (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2016). Women's CSOs, human rights defenders, social leaders, indigenous people, and afro-Colombians fighting for reparation and the right to land are still among the most vulnerable groups in post-conflict Colombia, as the root causes of the conflict (i.e. social, economic and environmental injustices) persist alongside weak presence from the state and widespread corruption (ibid.).⁴²

Sexual violence and corruption are intertwined in Colombia. Abuse of power and certain types of sexual violence are normalized to a very large extent, and there is high impunity for cases of sexual violence. In Colombia, the continuum of gender-based and sexual violence permeates all spheres of life, all aspects of society and all relations that women live in/are part of, both public and private, it permeates social divisions and institutions, not only during conflict but also in times of peace (Corporación Sisma Mujer 2017; Casa de la Mujer 2019).

Gender equality and anti-corruption work are central to Sweden's development cooperation with Colombia. The Swedish strategy for development cooperation with Colombia 2016-2020 is based on and characterized by a rights perspective, which means that human rights and democracy are to be seen as fundamental to development (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2016). Moreover, gender

⁴² There are several studies on the Colombian context in general, and in relation to the armed conflict in particular, on the specific vulnerabilities that have faced and still face Afro-Colombians and indigenous communities. Particularly vulnerable in the Colombian context are also LGBTI persons. Further studies on sextortion will need to take these aspects into consideration. See e.g. Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (2012, 2015, 2018), Goldscheid (2020), Maier (2020).

equality and the rights of women and girls are seen as both goals in themselves, and as prerequisites and means for achieving sustainable development. Sweden's development cooperation with Colombia therefore aims to strengthen women's and girls' participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and state building, and to protect human rights and CSOs (ibid.).

Sweden cooperates with a number of CSOs, government agencies and institutions, and with international bodies such as UN Women and the UNDP in Colombia. Some of these organizations have been key for this study in exploring the occurrence and incidence of sextortion, and to analyze its different aspects and dimensions in order to propose recommendations. The Embassy of Sweden in Bogotá facilitated contact with a number of Sida's partners in Colombia. For this study we interviewed Sida's partners that work with women's rights, gender-based violence, sexual violence during the armed conflict, access to ordinary and transitional justice,⁴³ prevention of sexual violence and abuse, women's participation in the peace process, corruption, and security. These Sida's partners are key to Sida's work for sustainable development in Colombia, with a focus on gender equality, human rights, democracy, security, and anti-corruption. Gender equality is a central element in the Swedish development cooperation with Colombia. Sweden cooperates, for instance, with the Colombian police to include gender equality work within the police force. For this study we have also interviewed other actors to further explore the Colombian development context, peacebuilding process, and sextortion. We have talked with scholars and practitioners working with migration, gender, and peacebuilding in Colombia. We have also interviewed experts working with sextortion at a regional and global level.⁴⁴

⁴³ Transitional justice refers to the different judicial and non-judicial mechanisms for peace included in the Integrated System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition created by the Peace Agreement in 2016. The processes that have taken place under Colombia's Justice and Peace Law (Law 975/2005) are also considered part of the transitional justice system. Ordinary Justice refers instead to the ordinary courts of justice.

⁴⁴ See "Material and method" in Section 1 above, and Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviews, workshops, and consultations.

As compared to the case of Tanzania, the concept of sextortion is not well known in Colombia, and this is why an explorative approach has been necessary in this case study. Almost all of Sida's partners that were interviewed for this study could, however, refer to examples of sextortion from a number of sectors. Below, we present examples from some of these sectors and the patterns and dynamics of sextortion in the Colombian context, but first we make a note on legislation and policy relevant for cases of sextortion in the Colombian context.

Legislation and policy

As mentioned above, the impunity for crimes of sexual violence in general is high in Colombia, with some sources suggesting that “sexual-related crimes in Colombia have an impunity rate of more than 98%” (ABColumbia et al. 2013: 15). There are many factors contributing to this, “including an overburdened and inefficient judicial system, patriarchal attitudes, high levels of corruption, and intimidation and violence against judges, lawyers and witnesses” (ibid.).

If we consider sexual harassment legislation in Colombia, penalties for sexual harassment can occur both under criminal and labor laws.⁴⁵ Under criminal law “[a] person found guilty for acts of sexual harassment could be condemned to one (1) to three (3) years of imprisonment” (ILN 2018: 4). Under labor law “[a] company is entitled to terminate the labor contract with fair cause to the employee that is committing acts of sexual harassment. The victim could also present a claim before the Labor Ministry. This entity could impose fines to the aggressor and even to the employer if it is proved that the company tolerated this behavior” (ibid.). This sexual harassment legislation does not, however, consider corruption elements (*quid pro quo*) in their definitions and specifications, even though, as part of the ILO, Colombia has been using ILO's

⁴⁵ Art. 210 A Penal Code and Art. 2 and 7 Law 1010/2006 respectively. See Art. 210 A Penal Code, available at https://leyes.co/codigo_penal/210-A.htm, accessed 29 August 2020, and Law 1010/2016, available at https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/2006_col_ley1010.pdf, accessed 29 August 2020.

definition of sexual harassment, which does include a *quid pro quo* element (ILO 2017).⁴⁶

In the case of anti-corruption legislation, penalties for corruption are usually stricter than those in sexual harassment cases in Colombia. But anti-corruption legislation does not take into account sexual favors as a possible currency of a bribe.⁴⁷ A person found guilty of bribery could be sentenced to 6-12 years in prison. However, there are many factors that play into the length of a penalty in corruption cases, and in practice, penalties are usually not that strict.⁴⁸

Sextortion in Colombia

The perceived level of corruption in Colombia is high. In the 2018 Transparency International corruption perception index, Colombia scored 36 of 100 and ranked 99 of 180. In addition, in September 2019, TI published the 2019 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in which they for the first time included a question about sextortion (Transparency International 2019a).⁴⁹ There, TI inquired about sextortion in regard to public services/public officials:

⁴⁶ See also Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Sexual Harassment at Work Fact Sheet. ILO, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_decl_fs_96_en.pdf, accessed 29 August 2020.

⁴⁷ See Law 1474/2011 “The Anti-Bribery Statute”, available at <https://www.alcaldiabogota.gov.co/sisjur/normas/Norma1.jsp?i=43292>, accessed 29 August 2020.

⁴⁸ <https://actualicese.com/penas-contralos-corruptos-legislacion-colombiana-deja-mucho-que-desear/>, accessed on 22 January 2020; see also <https://globalcompliancenews.com/anti-corruption/handbook/anti-corruption-in-colombia/>, accessed 29 August 2020.

⁴⁹ See also https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/women_and_corruption_GCB, accessed 29 August 2020.

Sextortion is a form of corruption which occurs when a public official says that they will give a government benefit (such as quicker service, approval of documents, a job or promotion, or avoiding a fine or imprisonment) in exchange for sexual favors such as sexual activity, inappropriate touching, exposing body parts, or posing for sexual photos.

How often, if at all, do you think that this occurs in this country? Do you think it happens...?⁵⁰

The GCB report shows that one in five persons in LAC has experienced sextortion when accessing a government service, or knows someone who has. Barbados has the highest percentage, 30%, and Chile and Panama the lowest, 14%. In Colombia, the percentage of people who report to have experienced sextortion or know someone who has is 16%.⁵¹ The results from the GCB for LAC show that women in particular are coerced into providing sexual favors in order to receive public services, including health care and education (Transparency International 2019a: 21). Importantly, TI inquiries about the respondents' perception of the occurrence of sextortion, and their first-hand experiences.

Previous studies such as Grönwall et al. (UNDP-SIWI 2017) point to the links between corruption, power, and inequality in the Colombian context. The authors show how corruption particularly affects poor households that rely more on public services (ibid.: 5). Moreover, in the Colombian context, as elsewhere, Grönwall et al. show that gendered roles and responsibilities, e.g. responsibilities for household chores, make women subject to diverse forms of corruption. In Bogotá, for instance, there were reports on male staff having solicited sexual favors from women to provide them with water services (ibid.: 16).

Below, we present examples of sextortion from sectors relevant for Sweden's strategy for development cooperation with Colombia:

⁵⁰ Q.18, GCB – LAC Region 2018, Methodology and Data.

⁵¹ Colombia, together with Peru, has the highest percentage of citizens who consider government corruption to be a big problem in their country (94 and 96 % respectively) (Transparency International 2019a: 10).

security, education, and access to justice. These sectors are key to the strategic goals of the Swedish strategy, in particular greater access to transitional justice and respect for human rights, improved conditions for inclusive development, strengthened capacity to prevent and deal with the incidence of gender-related violence, and securing respect for human rights, gender equality and the rule of law in Colombia (see Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2016). The occurrence of sextortion in these sectors threatens gender equality, democracy, and human rights, which are priority areas for Swedish development cooperation with Colombia. We also include examples from migration, due to the new situation following the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela that developed only after Sweden's current strategy for development cooperation with Colombia was established. The migration sector is also relevant as Sweden cooperates with actors in Colombia that work to prevent and deal with the incidence of gender-related violence at the border with Venezuela. Sida's partner organizations that were interviewed that work with gender-based violence had also ongoing work and projects in those areas.

The examples and stories below were presented by Sida's partner organizations that work with areas such as security, women's rights, corruption, gender-based violence, sexual violence during the armed conflict, access to ordinary and transitional justice, prevention of sexual violence and abuse, and women's participation in the peace process. Examples were also presented in the interviews with migration scholars and civil servants within the transitional justice system in Colombia, in particular the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP)⁵² and the Agency for the Assistance and Reparation to Victims (UARIV).⁵³

⁵² The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, in Spanish) is the justice component of the Integrated System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition created by the Peace Agreement in 2016.

⁵³ The Agency for the Assistance and Reparation to Victims (Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas, in Spanish) was created in January 2012, by Law 1448/2011, also known as the Victims and Land Restitution Law. This law establishes measures to assist and repair the damages the conflict caused to people in Colombia, including victims of gender-based violence.

A case of sextortion at the police academy

The “Fellowship of the Ring” was a case that took place within the police force in Colombia, and was brought up by all Sida partners that we interviewed for this study. This case developed into a massive scandal that received even international attention. In 2016 The Guardian reported:

“The scandal so far has claimed the head of the police chief, a deputy minister and a prominent journalist and unveiled a web of corruption, sexual harassment and influence peddling that has eroded the public confidence in the police.”⁵⁴

The case revolved around a sexual exploitation network run by senior police officials. Between 2004 and 2008 students (cadets) at the Police Academy were forced into providing sexual services to congressmen and police officers in exchange for gifts, permits for family visits, money, promotions, promises of future career favors, and other benefits. The case included both a sexual component and a corruption component: The senior police officials abused their entrusted positions to obtain sexual benefits from the cadets for themselves and for the congressmen. In exchange for this, the cadets would receive different kinds of benefits within the police institution: preferential treatment and promotions or promises of future promotions.

The case received attention only in 2016, but the events date back to 2004-2008 which means that there was an extended period of impunity for those responsible. In 2016 it finally led to the resignation of the director of the national police, Rodolfo Palomino, and the country's deputy interior minister Carlos Ferro (who was a senator during the period 2004-2008).

The case also included the death of a young woman cadet in 2006 at the same police academy, who was reported to have knowledge of the sexual exploitation network, and the rape of a young male cadet by a Colonel in 2005 at the same police academy. The latter

⁵⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/06/colombia-police-male-prostitution-ring-allegations-scandal>, accessed 29 August 2020.

cadet was in 2016 the whistle-blower in the case. The cadet on a number of occasions reported that he was offered promotions and future career possibilities within the police force by his superiors in exchange for sexual services.⁵⁵ The case was reported by the newspapers as a “homosexual male prostitution” network.⁵⁶ For our analysis, however, it is clear that this was not a case of individuals buying/selling sexual services. Rather, senior police officials were abusing their entrusted power positions to obtain sexual benefits for themselves or for the congressmen, in exchange for benefits within the police institution where they hold/held office: permits and (promises of future) career opportunities. These state functionaries made use of the imbalance of power within the institution to coerce the cadets, through the use of resources that were available to them by virtue of their entrusted positions. I.e., they would not have been able to offer benefits outside the scope of their entrusted positions in the police force.

Sextortion in education

One of Sida’s partners working with gender-based violence, sexual violence during the armed conflict, access to ordinary and transitional justice, and prevention of sexual violence and abuse, in our interview shared examples of sextortion in schools, i.e. sex for grades. This organization arranges and coordinates awareness-raising activities at schools as part of their work to prevent sexual violence.

“We have identified cases of girls and boys being abused by the teacher in exchange for passing a course. For instance, this girl that was not doing well at school, [...] her teacher told her ‘come to my house’ and he would touch her in intimate parts and so she could pass the course. We have identified cases like that where there is an exchange of sex for passing a course.” (Interview C13)

⁵⁵ See “Ányelo Palacios en Palabras Más”, May 13 2016, accessed 29 August 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7Nv5DEiYpU>.

⁵⁶ <https://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/cronologia-del-escandalo-de-la-comunidad-del-anillo-en-la-policia-CB3614884>, accessed 29 August 2020. See also interview C16.

This organization identified such transactional aspects, *quid pro quo*, in many cases of sexual violence and abuse within education; teachers that through coercive pressure abused their entrusted positions for personal benefit (sexual favors).

Sida's partner organizations also described great difficulties when trying to report such cases to the police. The stigma, silence, and degree to which sexual abuse is normalized added to the transactional aspect of these cases (the perception that these victims of sextortion "get" something in return), which makes it very difficult for victims to come forward and report (see discussion below).

Several interviewees shared a concern that victims of sextortion, within education and in general, would be blamed for the act. Along the same line of discussion as in the case study of Tanzania, if a woman was perceived as or presumed to be consenting to the transaction, the power imbalance of the situation was downplayed, and instead, the victim would be held accountable because "she consented". The abuse of power is reinterpreted as a situation in which the victim "could have said no" and is thus considered complicit to the act:

"Sextortion has a complicated aspect in that if a woman 'volunteers', that she agreed because she needed to cross the border, for instance, or the woman needed to avoid getting the water cut off because she needs to feed and take care of her children, those are situations of strong pressure on women. But often those situations of pressure are not enough for the woman not to be stigmatized by society, because there is still a tendency to blame women, to hold the woman accountable for what the man does. And it is even more so if we talk about something that has a sexual element, because we still have this idea since the beginning of time, with Eva, that women are the ones who 'incite men to sin'. [...] As long as we live in this context of patriarchal structure, which is the base of women's sexual exploitation, this will continue." (Interview C10)

There have also been cases of sex for grades at university level in Colombia. One of the cases occurred at the National University of Colombia, and included elements of both *quid pro quo* and sexual abuse (interview C14). The professor first sexually harassed the student, and then went on to try to make her an accomplice by offering something in return, abusing his position and leverage. The student, Lizeth Lorena Sanabria, reported that the professor had told her: “OK, calm down, we can talk, we can reach an agreement: I really will help you with your thesis work, but you need to be good to me”.⁵⁷ The student stated that: “I had to yield my sexual dignity in exchange for his academic tutoring, through force and subjection”.⁵⁸

A journalist investigation by Vice Media Colombia also reported cases of sextortion at the Santander Industrial University (UIS), one of the most respected engineering schools in Colombia:

“The statistics at this school in particular are especially alarming. In 2014, an investigation concluded that one in every three women at UIS had been a victim of sexual violence. Half of those cases were said to have occurred on the university campus, and the majority involved degrading, sexist comments made toward women, as well as *sexual innuendos on the part of professors dangled in exchange for better grades.*” [emphasis added].⁵⁹

This corruption element, i.e. the transactional aspect of sextortion, as well as the power imbalance between perpetrator and victim, seem to be present in many situations reported as sexual violence,

⁵⁷ <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/estudiante-de-la-universidad-nacional-denuncia-a-director-de-maestria-por-acoso-sexual-210168>, accessed 29 August 2020.

⁵⁸ <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/estudiante-de-la-universidad-nacional-denuncia-a-director-de-maestria-por-acoso-sexual-210168>, accessed 29 August 2020.

⁵⁹ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/8x54bg/inside-the-culture-of-sexual-abuse-at-colleges-across-colombia. Original article: https://www.vice.com/es_co/topic/acoso-sexual-en-la-u, accessed 29 August 2020.

harassment and abuse at universities, as well as in schools, as mentioned above. Lately, sexual harassment and abuse at universities has received some attention in Colombia, while cases of sextortion in schools – or in general – are still not on the agenda (See for instance Fuentes 2019). The vast majority of the interviewees in this study recognize that there is a corruption component in many of the sexual harassment cases in the education sector (i.e. cases of sextortion), and that more awareness on the issue is necessary.

Obstacles when accessing justice

Sida's partner organizations talked about how victims of sexual violence face multiple barriers when accessing justice, both ordinary justice and transitional justice. The impunity in cases of sexual violence is high, and the tolerance for violence against women on the part of public functionaries (state institutions), public opinion, and society in general is also high, even if there has been a slightly positive change between 2009 and 2014 (Proyectamos Colombia 2015).

The armed conflict forms a recent context for current instances of sextortion. During the armed conflict, a great number of reported war crimes included sexual violence with transactional aspects, such as rapes in exchange for protection (interviews C3, C4, C14 and C17). As one of our interviewees pointed out:

“Cases of sexual slavery during the war [in Colombia] will help you analyze cases of sextortion in other institutions because the patterns are the same. It is a context in which the power of the perpetrator is acknowledged by the whole group, by an armed group or by the institution where he works. There is an element that legitimizes the violence, that shows the woman that ‘you don't count’ and ‘that's nothing’, and then the victim is morally disqualified by saying that ‘she wanted it’. Those patterns are present in war and in institutions like the police, the military, universities...” (Interview C11)

This logic is relevant for understanding cases of sextortion also in the post-conflict context. One Sida partner organization that was interviewed in Bogotá for this case study, has long experience working with sexual violence and access to both ordinary and transitional justice. This organization referred to cases of sextortion in access to justice in the post-conflict context. One of the interviewees retold a case of sextortion within ordinary justice that went unreported: “this woman told me how the district attorney tried to sexually abuse her in exchange for helping her with her file when she went to report sexual violence” (interview C13).

When it comes to transitional justice, this same women’s organization has experienced numerous obstacles when trying to report instances of sexual abuse. In 2011, the organization started organizing community-based activities in order to collectively fill in complaints from victims of sexual violence in conflict in different municipalities around the country. This strategy was developed to avoid irregularities and make possible for women to report cases of sexual violence.⁶⁰

A common irregularity witnessed by this women’s organization was that the complaints were made to disappear (interview C13). The organization reported that women would have a photocopy of the complaint with them, but the file did not exist in the system. There were also issues when the women were going to the local offices to report cases of sexual violence during conflict: many times, the person taking the complaint was a friend of the perpetrator (interview C13). According to one women’s rights organization, this situation has changed somewhat in the last years within the transitional justice system, where functionaries are better trained to deal with sexual violence cases.

⁶⁰ Research found that for the period 2001-2009, 82.15% of women victims of sexual violence in the context of the Colombian armed conflict did not report the abuses committed against them (Sánchez et al. 2011). Women victims of sexual violence still find it very difficult to report, and they meet many obstacles in their encounters with the authorities, both within the transactional justice and within the ordinary justice system (interviews C13 and C14).

The importance of safe reporting mechanisms was brought up by Sida's partner organizations. One of the interviewees involved in anti-corruption work said:

“In Colombia, in many situations, you can get killed for talking. [...] We see the difficulties when it comes to reporting corruption, it is not easy to report, it has to be anonymous, protected, supported, it is very difficult and nobody likes when someone reports corruption. [...] If you add the sexual element to that [...] There is fear and stigma. [...] We need to think of those who report, how we can protect them. I think it is very important to talk about whistle-blower protection mechanisms. Here [in Colombia], that is non-existent. And we think that having safe reporting mechanisms in place is crucial because reporting is one of the most powerful tools in the fight against corruption.” (Interview C5)

This context of extreme impunity in access to justice, threatens the achievement of the goals set in the Swedish strategy for development cooperation with Colombia; i.e. greater access to transitional justice and respect for human rights, and strengthened capacity to prevent and deal with the incidence of gender-related violence.

Sextortion in migration and among displaced persons

The Swedish strategy for development cooperation with Colombia aims to contribute to human security, peacebuilding, and sustainable development, and Sida is in particular expected to contribute to strengthened democratic implementation of the peace agreement (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2016). The challenges to this are many in post-conflict Colombia. In a recent UN report on conflict-related sexual violence, it is argued that sexual violence is not only a push factor for forced displacement in for instance Colombia, but continues to be a risk in transit and displacement settings: “Many

women and girls were subjected to sexual extortion by camp officials or by migrant smugglers in exchange for their assistance” (United Nations 2018: 15). Also, fear of rape “was a factor inhibiting the return of displaced communities to their homelands” (ibid.: 6).

Apart from the post-conflict context with its very particular characteristics, throughout the period of this study, Colombia was facing major migration challenges arising from the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela since 2015. Migration thus constitutes a “new context” that overlaps with the post-conflict context and that needs to be taken into consideration when studying sextortion in the Colombian context.

People crossing the border from Venezuela and internally displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to sextortion and sexual exploitation. In the Santander and North Santander departments but also in Soacha (Department of Cundinamarca), which are regions with high presence of both migrants from Venezuela and internally displaced persons, the prevalence of sexual exploitation was reported to be huge according to Sida’s partner organizations working on gender-based violence in those areas.

At the border between Colombia and Venezuela, women migrants are often forced to pay with their bodies to cross the border, while men are more likely to be asked for monetary bribes (interview C14). The vulnerability and poverty among migrants from Venezuela (including migrant children) and internally displaced persons is high, and it often takes the form of sexual exploitation in exchange for access to food and medicine.

Concluding remarks

The interviews with Sida’s partners and other key actors within development and peacebuilding work in Colombia show that even if *the concept* of sextortion is not well known, *the practice* of sextortion occurs in a number of sectors in the society. Sextortion in Colombia takes place in a context where the normalization of both sexual abuse and corruption, and the high impunity in cases of sexual

violence and corruption, are among the greatest obstacles to development.

Our study includes examples of sextortion from a wide range of sectors, including security, education, and justice, and also migration. In the security sector we have seen how senior police officials have abused their entrusted power positions to obtain sexual benefits from cadets at the police academy in exchange for benefits within the institution in which they hold office: permits and (promises of future) career opportunities. These state functionaries made use of the imbalance of power within the institution to coerce the cadets through the use of resources that were available to them by virtue of their entrusted positions.

In the education sector, sextortion occurs at different levels. In primary and secondary schools, girls and boys are abused by teachers in exchange for passing a course. In higher education, one of the cases that came to the fore concerned a master's student that was being pressed "to yield my sexual dignity in exchange for his [the professor's] academic tutoring, through force and subjection".⁶¹

When accessing justice, the barriers and difficulties are many both within the ordinary and the transitional justice system, although women's organizations have experienced a positive change in the last years within the transitional justice system with functionaries that are better trained to deal with sexual violence cases. The lack of safe reporting mechanisms is, however, still a prevalent problem in post-conflict Colombia.

In situations of migration, for example at the border between Colombia and Venezuela, women migrants are often forced to pay with their bodies to cross the border. Migrants from Venezuela, but also internally displaced persons who have very limited access to resources of all kinds, are also sexually exploited in exchange for access to food and medicine.

⁶¹ <https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/estudiante-de-la-universidad-nacional-denuncia-a-director-de-maestria-por-acoso-sexual-210168>, accessed 29 August 2020.

When approaching sextortion in Colombia from a multidimensional poverty perspective, as in Tanzania sextortion has an undeniable impact on all dimensions of poverty for women and girls, and in some cases also for men and boys. In Colombia, lack of material and non-material *resources* and of *opportunities and choices* increases vulnerability for being exposed to sextortion, for instance in situations of migration where women are forced to have sex in exchange for crossing the border or for food and medicine, or when a senior police official demands sexual favors from a young male cadet to be able to continue his job path, or when sex is demanded in exchange for grades in schools and universities. In the context of extreme impunity in access to justice, lack of *power and voice* makes it more or less impossible for victims of sextortion to report and make visible the violations they have experienced. The risk of being further violated by the police and other authorities, and the lack of a concept describing sextortion further adds to the lack of power and voice of victims. And as noted: lack of *human security* is an aspect of all cases of sextortion, and as such a grave violation of bodily integrity and of human rights: to an individual when it happens, and to a group knowing that there is always a risk that it might happen.

It is important that donors in general and Sweden in particular work with awareness and training activities to start naming and making visible a phenomenon that, even if not known as a concept, is, in many contexts and situations, normalized and institutionalized as a practice in Colombia. Turning back to the goals of Sweden's strategy for development cooperation in Colombia, adding efforts aimed at developing an understanding of sextortion as a phenomenon and a concept and addressing sextortion as a practice would be an important contribution to the already existing and well-developed Swedish support to gender equality in Colombia. It would particularly contribute to the goals of strengthened capacity to prevent and deal with the incidence of gender-related violence, and to the securing of respect for human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law in Colombia. Making visible the links between gender-based violence and corruption through a focus on sextortion, would also contribute substantially to the strategic goals of greater access to transitional justice in Colombia.

Tanzania and Colombia: sextortion as concept and practice

In Tanzania as well as in Colombia, cases of sextortion occur across sectors and at all levels of society. In both contexts, interviewees for this study have shared examples of sextortion with a great variety of actors involved. In all the cases collected through the study the perpetrators have been men, entrusted with authority as for example primary and secondary school teachers, professors, religious leaders and traditional healers, all kinds of employers, police officers, border authorities, or doctors. In most cases the victims have been women or girls, but there are also examples of how men – particularly boys and young men – have been subject to sextortion.

In addition, in Colombia recent numbers show that the prevalence of sextortion is high. According to TI's GCB for LAC, the percentage of people who report having experienced sextortion or know someone who has is 16%. The results from the GCB for LAC show that women in particular are coerced into providing sexual favors in order to receive public services, including health care and education (Transparency International 2019a: 21). This percentage acquires even more relevance if we consider that this survey uses a narrower definition of sextortion which includes only government officials, leaving aside other actors with 'entrusted authority' (ibid.). Based on our study, supplemented by previous research, we conclude that sextortion as a practice is indeed widespread in both Tanzania and Colombia.

Our study shows that in both Tanzania and Colombia, sextortion is not only present across sectors, but in many situations, sextortion is also normalized and institutionalized; a practice that is taken for granted and considered an expected aspect of everyday life. For instance, in education we have found many examples of sextortion at different levels, and particularly in Tanzania sextortion is described as more or less a prerequisite for women who are aiming to graduate from university. Throughout the education system, the transition from one level to the next seems to be instances where men entrusted with authority are particularly prone to abuse their entrusted positions, and sextortion is likely to take place. Other

situations in which the circumstances are aggravating and the risk of being exposed to sextortion increase include for instance poverty, employment in the informal sector (“sex instead of contract”), and migration/displacement, all in which women are particularly vulnerable.

The fundamental difference between Tanzania and Colombia, which was anticipated beforehand and has been confirmed, concretized, and strengthened through our study, is that sextortion as a concept is absent in Colombia and present in Tanzania. This difference has a number of implications.

The fact that sextortion lacks a name in Colombia, surely contributes to its invisibilization. All our interviewees, however, were familiar with the practice of sextortion, and shared a number of examples with us, as this phenomenon is indeed present in many sectors where power collides with vulnerability and dependency. Besides, as argued above, the armed conflict forms a recent context for current instances of sextortion. The abuse of an entrusted position for personal benefit in the form of sexual acts was an extended practice during the conflict, contributing to a normalization of the occurrence of sextortion in the current post-conflict context. Moreover, within the context of institutionalized corruption in Colombia, several of our interviewees referred to the phenomenon that women were expected to pay with their bodies what men might be able to pay with money (e.g. when accessing justice or crossing borders).

In Colombia, the combination of a *normalization of sextortion as a practice* and the *absence of sextortion as a concept* has implications for the invisibilization of sextortion. A phenomenon that it is not clearly named, and at the same time is a normalized practice, tends to become self-perpetuating.

In Tanzania, an obvious implication of the presence of sextortion as a concept, is that it is recognized as a phenomenon. The fact that all interviewees in Tanzania were familiar with the concept and had a similar definition of it, made it possible to inquire about sextortion in different ways than in Colombia, where the interviewees were approached about a phenomenon that did not have an established denomination. The familiarity with the concept and the similarities

in how it was defined also shows that there is an awareness of the existence of sextortion as a practice in Tanzanian society.

The general awareness of sextortion in Tanzania can be traced back to a conscious and systematic mobilization by women's rights actors, in broad coalitions that also include the UN, development actors, and the government. Sextortion as a concept occurs in government policy in Tanzania, mentioned for example in the National Action Plan to end violence against women and children. And, even if the concept is not explicitly mentioned in legislation, there are several forms of legislation that are applicable to sextortion as a practice. This constitutes a framework which opens up for making visible sextortion as a practice, prosecuting cases of sextortion, and convicting perpetrators.

Thus, the *presence of sextortion as a concept* in Tanzania gives *tools to work against the normalization of sextortion as a practice*. However, our study shows that this is far from enough. The gap between policy and legislation on the one hand, and experiences of sextortion in everyday life on the other, is huge in Tanzania. In the education sector for instance, sextortion as a practice has partly been made visible and recognized as a problem in higher education, but in primary and secondary education it is still fairly invisible. The lack of trust in schools and workplaces, and lack of codes of conduct and safe reporting mechanisms close to people, contributes to this gap. The explicit inclusion of sextortion in policy and regulations at all levels is a prerequisite for bridging this gap. If the gap between high-level policy and the possibility to make sextortion visible in everyday life remains, the good intentions are empty or even counterproductive.

Moreover, to have reporting systems in place is not enough; the normalization of sextortion is deeply rooted. Our study shows that fear is frequently referred to as an explanation of why victims do not report sextortion, and the embedded power imbalance – a combination of gender asymmetry and the hierarchy of an entrusted position – contributes to victims' view that the consequences of reporting are too dangerous for them to be able to speak out. This fear seems well-grounded; concrete stories about sextortion show lack of support – or even resistance - from the surroundings, as well

as connections between perpetrators (“networks of men”). Moreover, the *quid pro quo* aspect of sextortion, in combination with the power imbalance, are used to portray the victim as complicit in the act. This framing of the victim as complicit implies that the risk for perpetrators is reduced or even non-existing, as the price for the victim for reporting is too high.

In both Tanzania and Colombia, there is no doubt that all dimensions of poverty – material and non-material resources, opportunities and choices, power and voice, human security – are relevant both as aggravating circumstances for being victim to sextortion, and in the sense that sextortion deepens all these aspects of poverty. Sextortion is in itself a violation of human rights, as it hinders the right to bodily integrity of the person victim of sextortion. It also violates and hinders the access to a wide range of other rights. In our study this includes for example fundamental rights to education, to decent work, and access to justice. Other studies have shown how sextortion hinders the right to health, water and land (see e.g. Feigenblatt 2020; IAWJ 2012; UNDP-Huairou Commission 2012; UNDP-SIWI 2017; Transparency International 2019a). Thus, in every way sextortion needs to be addressed as a serious obstacle to sustainable development.

Our study shows that the dynamics of sextortion is relevant for all parts of Sweden’s development cooperation in Tanzania and in Colombia. All actors involved in development cooperation in the two countries should take sextortion into consideration. However, the presence of sextortion as a concept in Tanzania, and dito absence in Colombia, presents different premises for this work. While in Colombia it is important to start working towards an awareness of sextortion, in Tanzania it is possible to build on the presence of sextortion as a concept. At the same time, in both contexts, it is necessary to recognize and address deep-rooted patterns, norms for gender and sexuality, and power relations that makes the practice of sextortion possible.

Section 4: Conclusions and recommendations

In this final section, we draw conclusions from our study, point at practical implications for development cooperation, and give recommendations for strengthened work against sextortion.

Conclusions

Our study adds to previous empirical knowledge presented in research and reports from different sectors, levels, and regions, which has shown that sextortion as practice is widespread all over the world. Our study also shows that in many contexts and situations, sextortion is normalized and institutionalized; a taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life.

At the same time, sextortion is still largely unknown, both as a concept and as a practice. Knowledge is still sparse, and there is a lack systematic research on sextortion. However, there is an increased visibility of sextortion, particularly through initiatives primarily from international CSOs and policymakers, but also a growing attention in research.

There are also emerging initiatives to build a systematic knowledge regarding the scale of sextortion, through the initiative from Transparency International to include sextortion in their Global Corruption Barometers for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. However, the definition of sextortion that is used in these surveys is narrower than those used by other reports and in this study, as it only includes government officials. Our study clearly points out that this is a too narrow understanding of sextortion that misses a large part of the cases of sextortion that may occur in a society. Thus, if the scale of sextortion continues to be measured with a definition that is too narrow, we risk a systematic underestimation of the problem at global and national level.

This is an example of the importance of a continued scholarly as well as practical engagement with the definition of sextortion, and the need for an agreed upon definition. Many policy reports use the definition of sextortion developed by the IAWJ as their point of departure. This definition has proved useful also for this study, through its emphasis on the combination of a sexual component (implicit or explicit request or demand to involve in an unwanted sexual activity) and a corruption component (1. abuse of authority, 2. *quid pro quo*, 3. psychological coercion).

However, our study and in particular our case studies on Tanzania and Colombia, shows that there are some aspects of sextortion that need special attention.

First, when defining and addressing sextortion the *power asymmetry* between the actors involved must be in focus. In most cases, this power asymmetry runs along several lines – in addition to the power attached to a position of entrusted authority, in cases of sextortion there are often also hierarchies regarding gender, and in some cases for example age, or class. With these power asymmetries follows that accepting sexual favors in exchange for something within their power to grant or withhold, corrupts this position of entrusted authority. This constitutes sextortion, regardless of whether it was explicitly demanded or not.

Second, the *transactional aspect*, that distinguishes sextortion from other forms of sexual harassment and abuse, has the effect of *framing the victim as complicit*. In the eyes of the perpetrator, and perhaps also in the eyes of the victim and the surroundings, the transactional aspect contributes to legitimizing the sexual favors obtained.

Thirdly, the *combination of the power asymmetry and the transactional aspect* has different implications for the perpetrator and the victim. For the perpetrator, it seems to be a risk-reducing strategy. By making the provider of sexual favors complicit, and by using a *quid pro quo* argument in lieu of physical coercion, the risk of being reported is minimized. For the victim, the *quid pro quo* limits the room for manoeuvre, in the form of a Catch 22: if refusing to give the sexual favor that is demanded, the consequences are already made explicit (loss of promotion, grade etc.), while if entering such a transaction, the victim risks rendering herself complicit.

In the first part of the report, we formulated our own suggestion of a definition of sextortion. This definition builds on previous research, and adds aspects of sextortion that we have found particularly important to highlight in order to capture why sextortion is often made invisible, and to contribute to its and enable to seriously address sextortion. The definition that we suggest is, as noted in the first section, the following:

Sextortion is a form of corruption and gender-based violence. It occurs when a person with entrusted authority abuses this authority to obtain a sexual act in exchange for a service or benefit which is within their power to grant or withhold.

Sextortion is a corrupt conduct in which the currency is sex, and a sexual conduct involving coerced *quid pro quo* (this for that). The responsibility for sextortion always lies with the actor that abuses their entrusted authority (the perpetrator), and the transactional aspect of sextortion adds to the shame, fear, and invisibility by making the victim appear ‘complicit’.

Sextortion is a violation of human rights and an abuse of power, and must be understood in the context of gendered power relations and norms.

Our study shows that the presence or absence of sextortion as a concept makes a difference for the possibility to address and take action against sextortion. The example of Tanzania makes clear that if there is a common understanding of sextortion, the prerequisites for addressing sextortion as a practice are substantially improved.

Without the presence of sextortion as a concept, the above-mentioned aspects and implications of the combination of the transactional aspect and the power asymmetry are likely to remain invisible. The lack of sextortion as a concept means that it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to formulate legislative and policy tools that target sextortion. Without the concept, sextortion as practice remains invisible.

Having said this, we do not argue that the very concept ‘sextortion’ should necessarily be used in every context. Depending

on language, but even more so on the prerequisites in a specific context, other concepts or descriptions might be more appropriate. What we stress is not the concept per se, but the possibility to make visible, seriously discuss, at all levels address and bring to justice cases of the phenomenon that we here label sextortion.

As sextortion tends to fall between lines of responsibility, it is necessary to address sextortion *both* within the GBV/SEAH agenda, and within the anti-corruption agenda, and in collaboration between the two.

Wherever it occurs, sextortion is in itself a gross violation of human rights. The act itself violates the victim's right to bodily integrity. Our study also shows that the consequences of sextortion hinders the victim's rights in different spheres of life, including the right to education, decent work, and access to justice. All aspects of a multidimensional perspective on poverty are both aggravating circumstances for being exposed to sextortion, and sextortion deepens poverty in all its dimensions. Sextortion hinders sustainable development in all sectors, at all levels, and in all contexts.

Thus, sextortion must be dealt with throughout development cooperation. If not, sextortion will continue to be a normalized part of everyday life and fall between lines of responsibility, cases of sextortion will go unreported, redress for victims will not be provided, and impunity for perpetrators will prevail. When a consistent understanding and definition of sextortion is absent, when the anti-corruption and GBV/SEAH development agendas function as silos, or when there is a lack of policy and regulations, it is difficult or even impossible to work against sextortion. Therefore, sextortion must be consciously and systematically addressed from different angles in development cooperation, and we need more knowledge and awareness about the specific challenges in this work. Our recommendations aim at contributing to this.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions from the review of existing knowledge, gaps, and dilemmas, and

from the case studies of Tanzania and Colombia that are presented in this report. In addition, and with the aim of making the recommendations as relevant and useful as possible in development cooperation practice, our own conclusions have been tried out and elaborated on in consultations with thematic and geographical experts at Sida Stockholm, the Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam and Bogotá and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The recommendations concern development work at all levels: national, regional and global, and all stages: policy, practice and implementation. The recommendations do not constitute an exhaustive check-list, but should rather be read as suggestions and sources of inspiration for a strengthened development work on sextortion. By formulating a wide range of recommendations we want to underline that in order to be able to efficiently address sextortion, it is necessary to connect different levels and stages – with the ultimate goal of developing measures that make a difference in everyday life.

We identify five clusters of recommendations about how development work can address sextortion: First, we stress the importance of introducing and using a clear definition of sextortion that is fit for purpose in development cooperation. Second, we see the need to always link anti-corruption and GBV/SEAH in policy as well as practice, and to make sure that there are resources available for this overarching work. Third, we stress the need to promote policy and regulation of sextortion at all levels. Fourth, sextortion should be systematically addressed in development practice. Finally, we see a need to increase knowledge and awareness among development actors.

Introduce and use a definition of sextortion fit for purpose

- Include a clear and efficient definition of sextortion as a specific form of corruption and of gender-based violence in both anti-corruption policy and in GBV/SEAH-policy at all levels. We suggest the definition that we have put forward in our study.
- When using the concept of sextortion at a country level, be aware that it may be interpreted in different ways in different contexts. Always communicate with local organizations working with anti-corruption and with gender-based violence.

Link anti-corruption and GBV/SEAH in policy and practice

- Include sextortion as a specific form of corruption in policy and work against corruption at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida. Implement this parallel with a mainstreaming of gender in anti-corruption work.
- Include sextortion as a specific form of gender-based violence in policy and work against GBV/SEAH at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida.
- Make sure that resources are provided to implement these cross-cutting policies.
- Create concrete, stable, and well-resourced links between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida's work on anti-corruption and GBV/SEAH in order to make sure that the expertise in both these development fields is combined when sextortion is addressed. Build on the initiatives that Sida has already taken in bridging the gaps between the GBV/SEAH and anti-corruption agendas.
- In addition to being addressed within the framework of these two specific development agendas, make sure that cross-policy sector discussions continuously take place, as sextortion is a problem that constitutes an obstacle to sustainable development in all sectors, aspects, and levels of development cooperation. Select one or two sectors to be pioneers in this work, for example education and/or health.

Promote policy and regulation of sextortion at all levels

- Add sextortion to the goals on anti-corruption and gender-based violence in relevant country strategies.
- At country level, promote sextortion to be included as a specific form of corruption and of gender-based violence in regulations and legislations.
- Bring up sextortion in dialogue at all levels (local, regional and global) and among all kinds of stakeholders (CSOs, private sector, donors, governments, multilaterals), and collaborate with other donors to find fruitful strategies in the work against sextortion.
- Promote the inclusion of sextortion in key OECD/DAC recommendations on GBV/SEAH (*Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response*).
- Promote a gender perspective, the inclusion of sextortion and of corruption as an obstacle to sustainable development in the OECD recommendations on corruption and anti-corruption (*Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response*).

Systematically address sextortion in development practice

- The work against sextortion must be context-specific and tailor-made depending on the prerequisites of national legislation, policy, and public awareness. Build on the knowledge of local organizations working with anti-corruption and with gender-based violence.
- Support initiatives that aim to bridge the gap between policy/legislation and implementation in cases of sextortion, including the development of safe reporting mechanisms available in proximity to everyday life.
- Support organizations working with victims of sextortion, including safe and gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms and whistle-blower protection mechanisms, in particular CSOs including women's and LGBTIQI rights actors.

- Support initiatives that aim at developing and implementing measures to prevent sextortion.
- Involve trade unions at all levels. Codes of Conduct of professions such as lawyers, teachers, public administration officials, doctors and other health personnel, police, border authorities etc should explicitly include sextortion as abuse of entrusted position.

Increase knowledge and awareness about sextortion

- Raise/promote/increase awareness within Sida, and urge other development actors to do the same. Sextortion should be included in internal courses and courses for partners on anti-corruption, on gender and corruption, and on GBV/SEAH.
- Support initiatives that raise/promote/increase public awareness about the problem of sextortion at country level, in particular CSOs including women's and LGBTQI rights actors.
- Support and promote development of new knowledge about sextortion in all sectors. From a development cooperation perspective, areas of particular concern for further exploration are education, especially at lower levels (with a combination of a corruption, gender-based violence and children's rights perspectives), the health sector, migration and the justice system.

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Appendix 1

Interviews, workshops, and consultations

Table A1: Interviews, workshops, and consultations

Global	
Nancy Hendry	International Association of Women Judges (two interviews)
Marwa Fatafta	Transparency International
Pilar Avello and Jenny Grönwall	Stockholm International Water Institute
Anna Collins Falk	The Swedish Gender Equality Agency, former UN Women

Latin America and the Caribbean	
Woman	Transparency International LAC

Tanzania	
Woman	Sida Stockholm (two interviews)
Woman	Civil Society Organization (two interviews)
Woman	Civil Society Organization
Woman and Man	Civil Society Organization
Woman and Man	Civil Society Organization
Woman	Researcher
Woman	Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam
Man	Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam
Two women	Civil Society Organization
Two women and one man	Civil Society Organization
Woman	United Nations
Woman	Researcher

Ctd. on next page

Table A1 ctd.

Colombia	
Woman	Sida Stockholm
Woman	Embassy of Sweden in Bogotá
Man	United Nations
Woman	United Nations
Three women	Civil Society Organization
Woman	Civil Society Organization
Woman	Civil Society Organization
Woman and Man	Civil Society Organization
Woman	Public servant
Woman and Man	Public servants
Woman	Researcher

Workshops	
Two workshops with 30 participants (women and men) from the Embassy and Sida partners (Civil Society Organizations)	Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam
Workshop/training with 31 participants (women and men) from Civil Society Organizations in Sweden and Internationally, and Swedish Universities	Sida Partnership Forum, Härnösand, Sweden

Consultations with thematic and geographical experts	
Woman	Sida Stockholm
Woman	Sida Stockholm
Woman	Sida Stockholm
Woman	Sida Stockholm
Woman	Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam
Woman	Embassy of Sweden in Bogotá
Two women	Ministry for Foreign Affairs

In sum:

Global: 5 interviews with 5 interviewees (IAWJ, SIWI, TI and UN Women). These interviews refer to both the case studies and the study as a whole, including the theoretical discussion.

Latin America and the Caribbean: 1 interview (TI-LAC). This interview refers to LAC and the case study Colombia.

Tanzania: 14 interviews with 17 interviewees

Colombia: 11 interviews with 15 interviewees

Workshops: 61 participants

Consultations: 8 persons

Total: 31 interviews with 38 interviewees, workshops with 61 participants and consultations with 8 thematic and geographical experts.

Interview guide

Questions Colombia and Tanzania

1. Could you please tell me briefly about your organization and your own role in it?
2. Have you come across the concept of sextortion in your work?
3. If so: How would you define sextortion?
4. If not: Have you ever heard of people being asked sexual bribes/sexual favors in exchange for a benefit or a service? For example, I have heard cases such as: an immigration officer that demanded sex in exchange for approving a refugee application/granting a work permit, a government official that demanded “going out on a date” and have sex in exchange for granting compensation benefits, or an employee at a public hospital that requested a patient to show private body parts in exchange for skipping the waiting list to a doctor’s appointment, a teacher that extorted oral sex from a female student in exchange for high marks in his class, water vendors asking for

sex in exchange for water, a police officer that extorted oral sex to illegal street vendors in exchange for letting them work...

(Note: If the interviewee is from the corruption field, it might be necessary to stress on the idea of sex as the currency of the bribe. If the interviewee is from the GBV field, it might be necessary to stress the *quid pro quo* aspect, the fact that there is a transaction element: sexual act for a benefit)

5. Could you please tell me about cases of sextortion that you have come across in your own work? / Could you please tell me about the cases you have heard of?
 - 5.1 Follow-up questions: What happened? Who was involved? What was done when this happened? / How was the case handled? Who handled the case? Do you know if this was a one-off instance or something more prevalent and widespread as a phenomenon?
6. Have you as an organization been directly involved in any case of sextortion?
7. If you would come across a case of sextortion, what would you do?
8. Do you consider there being a stigma around this issue?
9. Would you say that there is a public awareness of sextortion in Colombia/Tanzania?

Extra questions Colombia

1. Could you please tell me about your organization and its role in the peace process? What were the biggest challenges? What challenges still remain?
2. What aspects of the Colombian context do you think are the most relevant when it comes to questions of gender-based violence and different forms of corruption?
3. In the case of the compensation to victims of the conflict have you ever heard of persons being asked sexual favors when they are going through the process for compensation/restoration?
4. In the case of people crossing borders/displaced persons, have you ever heard of people being demanded sexual favors in exchange for health services/residence permit/work/housing?

Extra questions Tanzania

1. Have you heard of any cases of sextortion that have been brought up in the media?
2. If so, are there any specific sectors that are particularly highlighted?
3. In Tanzania, sextortion is a crime in both the Penal Code and the Anti-corruption Act. Do you know of any cases that have been brought to court?
4. Would you say that there is a public awareness of sextortion in Tanzania? If so, in which sectors is sextortion highlighted?
5. If you would come across a case of sextortion, what would you do?

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Sextortion is a form of corruption and gender-based violence. This report discusses the concept of sextortion and presents case studies from Tanzania and Colombia as well as recommendations on the work against sextortion in development cooperation.

Sextortion är en form av korrupktion och könsbaserat våld. Denna rapport diskuterar begreppet sextortion, presenterar fallstudier från Tanzania och Colombia, samt ger rekommendationer om arbetet mot sextortion inom biståndet.