Academic Study on the Potential Nexus Between Corruption and Migration:
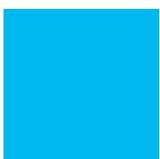
The Case of Forced and Irregular Migrants in Sweden

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring movement and the Syrian crisis one of the biggest migration crises in European history brought new challenges to the member states of the European Union. There were thousands of forced and irregular migrants who searched for asylum in many countries in Europe and many of them reached the borders of the European Union through illegal facilitation where corruption played a decisive role. This article explores the nexus between corruption and forced and irregular migration, and whether migration can potentially lead to the transfer of corrupt practices through the analysis of the case of irregular and forced migrants in Sweden. This qualitative study includes the outcomes of theoretical and empirical research and provides an analysis of the case of irregular and forced migrants in Sweden through the perspective of public servants and municipal workers who deal with these groups of migrants. Taking into consideration the fact that the research on the nexus between migration and corruption has a scarce character, this study adds to the existing research by focusing particularly on the actual experiences and observations of public servants and municipal workers in Sweden who work with migrants in this country of migrants' destination.

Contents

1.   Introduction

The European Union (EU) became attractive for third country national immigrants several decades ago, for example, labor migrants; immigrants from former EU countries´ colonies; and those migrants who immigrated to the EU through family reunion programs.

The rise of the Arab Spring movement and the beginning of the Syrian conflict started in 2011, less than two years after the beginning of the Eurozone crisis while EU countries were still coping with the aftermath of financial cuts.

Soon after 2011 a number of military conflicts, together with weakened democracy as well as political and economic instability in war-affected areas, reinforced a new flow of forced and irregular migrants to Europe with a large influx in 2015 when the European community faced an unexpected integration challenge with almost 1.2 million people applying for asylum in EU countries that year (Eurostat, 2016a). In fact, 333 350 asylum seekers were granted protection status in 2015 in various EU countries (Eurostat, 2016b).

This "refugee crisis" became one of the biggest in European history and coincided with the continuing Eurozone crisis, heavily affecting the immigrants´ first destination countries that had already dramatically suffered from the financial crisis, such as Greece and Italy, which consequently made other countries share the burden (Caporaso, 2017). Thus, significant differences in welfare provisions and reception programmes became decisive factors for many immigrants joining the secondary migrant movement within the European Economic Area (EEA) and seeking asylum in countries of "secondary migration" such as Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Norway, amongst others (Brekke, et al., 2014, pp.146, 154).

The lack of a common, clearly defined, integration policy within the Eurozone for a number of decades with regards to the different groups of immigrants into the EU has led to the national and sub-national responsibility for accepting and integrating large flows of immigrants (OECD, 2015b, p.300).

Additionally, the lack of common policy has also changed the views of many European citizens in a once multicultural, inclusive and democratic "European home." It has resulted in the creation of a differentiation between "first" and "secondary" migration countries that has also produced an impact on the refugees´ integration prospects as it has become interconnected with the place in the EU where they stay (Baker, 2017). Such a differentiation has also made many European countries redefine and reconsider their national immigration and integration policies.

With the rapid development of the "refugee crisis" in the EU since 2011, there are more and more forced and irregular immigrants starting to choose more realistic but riskier ways to reach Europe in parallel with the known and safer routes through family reunion or refugee resettlement programs (Siegel, 2015). Behind these risky routes is not only life threatening dangers that await immigrants but also the occurrence of wide-spread corruption that plays a significant role throughout the process of immigrants' journey and can affect immigrants even in the country of destination.

According to a Europol report in 2016, almost 90% of the refugees who arrived in Europe during one of the biggest refugee crises in history reached their countries of destination through the illegal operations of human smugglers (Europol, 2016, pp.2, 5). In fact, almost 2.2 million individuals were found to be illegally present within the EU borders in 2015 alone (European Parliament, 2017b). 439 505 migrants in 2017 were denied the ability to cross external borders of the EU (ibid.). These statistics from official reports demonstrate that migrants´ travelling to Europe often have an illegal nature and, as a consequence, can be linked to potential corrupt activities that may occur at different stages of migrants´ journey. Therefore, the purpose of the given academic study is twofold as it aims *to identify the nexus between migration and corruption during forced and irregular migrants´ migration journey to and in the country of destination, distinguished by democracy, the rule of law and transparency. May migration have a role of a potential channel for corruption to be transferred?*

The case of forced and irregular migrants who came to Sweden after the beginning of the Syrian crisis and the Arab Spring movement in 2011, which brought one of the highest migration influxes in Sweden´s history, has been chosen for this study that includes the outcomes of both theoretical and empirical research. This study will be investigated through the perspective of the Swedish public servants and municipal workers who deal with this group of migrants.

In the following pages, a broader overview on migrants´ typology and connection between migration and the international operation of criminals that is maintained by broad corrupt activities will be given. Then, the description of methodology applied in this study and an analysis of previous research that is touching on problems relevant to this study are provided. The next section presents the results of the study and its discussion. The last part of the article presents the summary of the main findings and the conclusion.

2.   Migrants, migration and corruption: an overview

2.1   Migration at a glance

Historically, migration flows to the modern territory of the EU have been formed by a number of nationalities that have arrived during different time periods. In the 1950's during the postwar period, more industrialised countries in the north of Europe attracted migrants from the agricultural south (Sturm-Martin, 2014, p.5). The UK and France have had a long experience of post-colonial migration during the post-war period (ibid.). Asylum seekers from African, Asian and Latin American countries started to arrive at European borders in the 1980s and 1990s, the flow of asylum seekers to Europe intensified due to the outbreak of war in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan (Bundy, 2016). Finally, the escalation of the Syrian crisis in 2011, followed by a number of systematic conflicts in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Libya and Somalia have brought countless flows of asylum seekers to European borders which broke records in European migration history (ibid.).

Over one quarter of all first-time asylum applications in the EU in 2016 were individuals from Syria, with individuals from Afghanistan and Iraq in second and third place respectively (European Parliament, 2017a). Syria has been in first place since 2013 with regards to the total amount of asylum seekers who have travelled to the European border through the Aegean Sea and applied for asylum in the EU (Eurostat, 2018).

Nationals from Iraq have contributed 7% of the total amount of first-time asylum applications to the EU and are followed by Afghan nationals who have also contributed 7% of first-time asylum applications (ibid.). Lastly, Nigerian and Pakistani citizens make up 6% and 5% of the total amount of first- time asylum applications respectively (ibid.).

Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are known on the international arena as countries where many civilians are threatened by war; extremist groups; violations of human rights; corruption and undermined democracy (Freedom House, 2018). But besides the groups of asylum seekers from these three countries, a large flow of economic migrants from North Africa and Pakistan, places that are currently not affected by war, were registered during 2016 as a part of the "refugee crisis" as asylum seekers in the EU on the pretext of being refugees (Salim, 2016).

2.2   Migrants' groups in focus

According to the definition provided by the European Commission, asylum seekers are "individuals who have requested asylum in a formal way in a second country due to a potential life-threatening danger existing in their home country" (European Parliament, 2017b). UNHCR defines another group of individuals who came to Europe in the aftermath of the Syrian conflict as refugees - individuals who escape persecution and war conflicts (UNHCR, 2016b).

The definition of forced migration is closely related to refugee migration and implies movement due to life-threating danger caused by natural disasters, armed conflicts or famine, amongst other reasons (IOM, 2011). Irregular migration, in its turn, is connected to illegal migration and signifies a migration movement "*that*

takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries" (ibid.). Irregular migration implies entering or staying in the country of destination without legal authorisation and crossing the border of the country of origin without administrative permission (ibid.).

It is important to note that due to the complexity, size and consequences of the "refugee crisis" and a prevalent illegal form of thousands of migrants´ entry into the EU, the terms of "refugee", "asylum seeker" and "irregular migrant" became a piece of one chain. Refugees and asylum seekers, who have been arriving to the EU since 2011, follow the carved routes of irregular immigrants and become subject to illegal and corrupt activities of international groups of human smugglers (Prabandari, et al., 2016). According to the new Post-Stockholm Programme adopted by the European Council in 2014, which built on the progress of the Stockholm programme that was designed for justice and home affairs for the period of 2010-2014, the term "irregular migration" does not mean necessarily "illegal" in the legal sense, and "irregular migrant" is a migrant who during any point of the migration process broke migration rules of entry process or residence (Kostas, 2017 p.424).

Since 2011, the amount of asylum seekers, refugees and irregular immigrants have overshadowed other groups of migrants such as labour migrants and those migrants who arrived in the EU due to family reunion. Such a shift in migration focus has also predetermined a change in current academic research trajectories.

2.3 Migration as a tool of profit and its connection to corruption

The process of human smuggling is maintained by well-organized, corrupt activities originating either in the immigrants' place of origin, during their transit, or at the destination country (UNODC, 2013, p.3). Criminals who are involved in human smuggling between countries very often take advantage of war, conflict, and the misery of migrants by offering the illegal facilitation of migration processes based on corrupt practices (OECD, 2015b). Human smuggling and human trafficking are two criminal activities that reached their height against the backdrop of the European "refugee crisis" and built their activities on the recruitment of "clients" - migrants, transferring them through transit routes and delivering them to the country of final destination (Shelley, 2014, p.6). However, despite the presence of corruption in both processes, there is a difference between human smuggling and human trafficking. While human smuggling refers to immigrants who have a form of agreement with those who facilitate their journey and usually become free after they reach the country of destination, human trafficking refers to migrants that are trafficked and often exposed to slavery if fallen victim to their traffickers (Shelley 2014, p.12).

According to the OECD definition, smuggling immigrants has a transnational character and always signifies an illegal act (OECD 2015a, p.2). In many cases, those individuals who give their consent to be smuggled through smugglers´ services can also become victims of human traffickers, as several interviewees in this qualitative study have noted. It may occur in situations when the fee for smugglers´ services is raised once a migrant has crossed the border of the country of origin, or arrived to the country of destination. In order to pay off the higher fee that the migrant cannot afford, he or she is often forced to engage in illegal labour or to provide sexual services, therefore falling into the category of a victim of human trafficking that does not necessarily have a transnational character (ibid.).

In many cases, migration routes used by human smugglers can originate in and across countries undermined by long-term political or military conflicts, a corrupt system, a weak rule of law, and the violation of human rights. These factors provide the basis for wide-spread bribery that can provide an additional income to public servants, border control guards, police, and immigration officials, amongst other relevant actors during the migrants´ journey (OECD, 2015c, p.3).

2015 saw the highest peak in migration flow to Europe with around 90% of migrants using facilitation services, supported by smugglers in order to reach Europe, whilst 3-6 billion EUR was the estimated profit associated with smuggling of migrants in 2015 beyond and within the EU (Europol, 2016, p.13). The most common services that human smugglers can offer to those migrants who want to reach the EU by means of illegal facilitation include illegal transportation and accommodation, fake immigration documents and falsified identity cards.

2.4 Main travel routes

The EU became a highly attractive geographical area for the operation of criminal networks and the development of corrupt practices in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and the Syrian crisis. For a deeper understanding of the broadness of the irregular migration's dimension, it is important to note that these criminal networks have created several extensive smuggling routes over sea, land and air that have helped to bring migrants to their first and second countries of destination.

The sea route that helps migrants to reach European countries consists of three different points of entry – the Eastern Mediterranean with the arrival point in Greece, the Central Mediterranean with the arrival point in Italy, and the Western Mediterranean route with the entry point in Spain (Europol, 2016, p.5). The Northern route via land is another popular route used by smuggling facilitators that transport irregular and forced migrants to the EU via Russia with an entry point in Norway (Europol, 2016, p.5). Smuggling of migrants by air is considered to be the most expensive way and is rarely used. However, if it takes place, the support of falsified documents and fake identities plays a key role in the smuggling process (Europol, 2016, p.6). According to the Europol report 2016 about migrant smuggling in the EU, 44% of criminal groups involved in smuggling to the EU consist of non-EU citizens, 30% of EU-nationals and 26% represent a mixed group (Europol, 2016, p.7).

Keeping in mind such a breadth of the criminal networks' geographical dimension, it is worth mentioning that the process of trafficking individuals, as well as the smuggling process, will not be as widespread as it is today without an influence of corruption that originates from cooperation of criminals and corrupt officials (OECD 2016, p.7). In some concrete cases corruption can occur, for instance, when migrants need *"to get a passport (Iraq)...to pay bribe to be put on the airplane (Iraq)...pay to local militias (mojahedins) to take you out of the country (Afghanistan), to pay at the boarders of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan to get out of the countries..."* (Interviewee 6).

3. Methodology and material

3.1 The choice of the method

This academic study is based on the qualitative research method that combines qualitative content analysis and open-ended questionnaires, which have been chosen as the most suitable as it allows for the study and analysis of the research question through the perspective of relevant interviewees - public servants and municipal workers in Sweden, thereby enabling the study of what they know about migrants´ subjection to corruption during their journey and after arrival to Sweden, and includes interviewees' own experiences and observations, based on their professional interaction with migrants. The data collection method used is considered to be the most suitable for the framework of this study due to its quickness, flexibility and the short time frame given for this research.

3.2 Sampling procedure: the choice of participants in the study and conduction of interviews

Qualitative content analysis and open-ended anonymous questionnaires create the methodological basis for this study. With the aim of collecting a broader interpretation of the investigated problem, the focus of this study is centered on two groups of interviewees chosen with the help of snowball sampling.
The first group of interviewees, representing public servants from several public authorities and municipal workers with regular or occasional affiliation to the forced and irregular immigrants in Sweden with between 1 to 28 years of work experience related to migration, was chosen with the aim of collecting specific opinions on the potential nexus between corruption and forced and irregular migration. The second group of

interviewees, representing experts on corruption from academia in Sweden was chosen in order to receive a more general perspective on potential challenges that the Swedish state may face in relation to corruption.

At the initial stage of the study there were 54 potential participants with relevant professional background contacted and invited for participation in the qualitative questionnaire. As a result, there were 23 interviewees who expressed their interest in the study and agreed to participate. The general tendency of cautious and reluctant attitudes towards the topic of the study was observed during the stage of communication with potential interviewees. However, those interviewees who agreed to participate were of the opinion that this study will be useful and contribute to existing research on the problem of corruption but they remained highly concerned about the confidentiality aspect.

Thus, due to the high sensitivity of the investigated topic, complete anonymity became central during the design of the anonymous questionnaire and its collection that was conducted with the help of internet-based platform *Survey Planet*, which allowed responses to be completely anonymous without providing any potential link to the personal data of the interviewees. Prior to participation, all the interviewees received a form of consent that informed them about the complete anonymity and respectful treatment of the collected data. Questions that may link interviewees with their name, age, place of work and profession, nationality or place of residence were excluded from the questionnaire in order to insure individuals´ complete anonymity.

Skype interviews were anonymized and references to anonymous questionnaires and Skype interviews have therefore a sequence of numbers based on the numerical order of the received answers. In the analytic section of this study, participants are called Interviewees.

3.3 The choice of interview and type of questions

The anonymous web questionnaire and questionnaire for the Skype interview consisted of 17 open-ended questions and 3 demographic questions in order to gather general characteristics of Interviewees such as gender, education and years of professional experience related to migration. The questionnaire´s content design was based on reviewed scientific literature and official reports relevant for this academic study. Additionally, the questionnaire was divided into 3 groups of questions that encompassed the Interviewees´ general perception on migration to Sweden and the potential occurrence of corruption related to migration in this country, awareness about corrupt practices that may occur in the migrants´ country of origin, and corrupt practices during their migration journey. More narrowly, the questions encompassed an awareness about corrupt behaviour and particular cases that may occur in the country of destination (in this case Sweden) in relation to migrants as well as the presence of anti-corruption prevention mechanisms in Sweden for fighting corruption in the public sector and in particular, corruption related to migration. The questionnaires for experts from academia consisted of 3 questions, focused on the most common types of corruption that are identified in Sweden and the existing anti-corruption prevention mechanisms.

3.4 Data analysis

The analysis of the data collected between 11 May-18 June 2018 with the help of 21 qualitative open-ended web questionnaires and 2 Skype interviews was conducted through several stages described below.

The first stage included a critical assessment of the responses derived through 21 anonymous web questionnaires that were conducted by the author of the study with an aim to identify and exclude incomplete and irrelevant answers. During the second stage of the data collection two Skype interviews were conducted and summarized in written documents, which helped to extract the most relevant information for further analysis.

The third stage consisted of necessary comments that were written by the author of this study in relation to the relevant interview responses. During the fourth stage, the author conducted analytical reading of all relevant responses with an aim to single out all analogous and contrasting opinions provided by Interviewees in connection to 3 groups of questions described in the previous section. During this stage the most important meanings and direct quotations were identified, allowing the author to focus on the analysis of the relevant literature and the data collected through questionnaires.

Finally, several pairs of questions about the occurrence of corruption in migrants´ country of origin or information about countries of migrants´ origin were generalised, which allowed the author to put more focus on subjective observations of Interviewees. As the result, the author could study and assess what Interviewees know about the potential link between corruption and migration in the country of destination where they affiliate with this target group through work; as well as the occurrence of corruption during a migration journey and whether it can be

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linked to corrupt practices that can occur even after the journey ends.

It is important to note that during the analysis of interviewee responses and relevant literature, the lack of previous studies in relation to migration and corruption in the country of destination was observed, creating a significant limitation during the analysis of this particular problem. Hence why a part of the analysis was mainly provided by Interviewees' quotations rather than quotations from academic sources. In those parts of the analysis that focus on corruption prior to migrants' arrival to the country of destination (e.g. corruption during the migration journey), the author of this study refers primarily to the existing research and reports found on this problem due to the fact that Interviewees could provide mainly only their assumptions about this challenge.

4. Literature review

The nexus between corruption and migration started to attract the attention of researchers relatively recently, due to a considerable rise in the influx of migration to Europe. There were a number of cutting edge academic articles found with a focus on corruption as a push factor for migration. However, due to the novelty of the debate, a limited number of statements and studies using the application of mixed research methods, with differing levels of consistency, were found with regards to the potential nexus between corruption and forced migration. Below a brief overview of these literature sources is presented and summarised in Table 1.

There were three issues that were of particular interest during the literature review process in this study:

- Whether migration can be a channel through which corrupt practices may be transferred,
- Whether and how corruption can affect migrants during their migration route to the country of destination, and
- Whether migrants could be involved in, or subjected to, corrupt practices in the country of destination when their journey ends.

The possibility for corrupt attitudes and behaviour to be transferred to the country of destination is discussed by Dimant, et al. (2014). According to the authors, despite remaining corrupt behavior that migrants from highly corrupted countries might still have in the country of destination, it is the population´s behaviour and institutional regulations in the new country that play a crucial role (Dimant, et al.,2014). In addition, the authors present a hypothesis about the insignificance of migration on a designated countries' corruption level and suggest that there are potential positive effects of corruption connected to migration from a more corrupted country on the designated country that is less corrupt.

Åkesson, et al., (2017) focuses on the nexus between corruption and migration from a different perspective. The authors formulate the hypothesis about the potential nexus between corruption and migration through the perspective of the European Self that is perceived as developed and non-corrupt while the Other that is often, on the contrary, less developed and corrupt. The reversed processes of migration whereby Portuguese nationals have migrated during recent years to Angola with the aim of finding better employment or seeking economic opportunities is chosen for the analysis of the connection between "non-corrupt Self" and the corrupt "Other." This phenomenon counters the one from previous years when Angolan nationals were inspired to leave their corrupt and war-affected country and move to Portugal for better opportunities. Corruption, according to Åkesson, et al., (2017), is often presented as a characteristic of a less developed global South that is perceived as the Other, compared to the Western non-corrupt Self.

Based on qualitative interviews conducted with Portuguese and Angolans, the authors illustrate two different perspectives. On one hand, the corrupt behaviour shown in Angola by Portuguese nationals has a legitimized character that creates more similarities rather than differences between these two states. On the other hand, Portugal has been perceived by the northern European community not as the European Self but as

a corrupt Other. During the "refugee crisis" those forced migrants who arrived to Portugal as a first destination country (i.e. a country where migrants register for the first time after their arrival) tried to leave the country and reach countries of secondary migration (i.e. other countries of destination where refugees can seek protection) such as Sweden and Germany, due to the access to better integration and employment prospects (Radjenovic, 2017).

The interconnection between cultural norms and corrupt behaviour in a foreign country will be discussed further as a part of the analysis of collected empirical data in this paper; which was also highlighted by Fisman, et al., (2007) in the survey study about United Nations officials in New York City. It was found that the diplomats who come from highly corrupted countries collected a higher amount of unpaid parking violation tickets. A natural tendency in the diplomats´ behaviour to violate regulations for the sake of private gain in cases when enforcement is not considered is particularly underlined (ibid). In fact, those individuals who come from countries with low levels of corruption do not have a tendency to break the rules in these situations where there would not be legal consequences, and those individuals who come from corrupt countries may be involved in many violations (ibid.).

Moreover, those diplomats who are sent abroad behave in a similar way to state officials in their home country irrespective of the level of corruption (ibid.). A similar situation also occurred in Great Britain in the context of electoral fraud when a higher tendency for electoral fraud cases was recorded in areas where the community had a mixed ethnic character (Carl, 2017).

There is an opinion about the risk of migration flow becoming a channel through which corruption may be transferred (Carling, et al., 2015); it is

scarcely mentioned in other studies and is valuable for this qualitative paper in several ways. For instance, countries with high levels of corruption, such as Sudan, are characterized by high levels of emigration, whereas countries where concern about corruption problems is low, such as Singapore or Switzerland, have high levels of immigration. Corruption in connection to migration processes can affect states, migrants and communities on the local level in different ways. Finally, the authors highlight the following ways in which migration and corruption can be linked: corruption as a facilitating factor for illegal migration, corruption as a hindrance for the development of initiatives created by diaspora groups and investments done by migrants that are supported by remittances, corruption in the country of origin as an aspirational factor to migrate and a discouraging factor to return back, migration as a sustaining tool for corruption, and social norms and values as a reducing factor for corruption. This last factor has two different and contradicting trajectories. On the one hand, migration from countries with high corruption to countries with low corruption levels can provoke a critical view among migrants about the situation in their own country. On the other hand, it can have a negative impact by contributing to the transfer of corrupt practices or behaviour to the less corrupted destination states (Carling, et al., 2015).

In addition to the above mentioned scientific research, there are also three other reports that are of value for this paper. The reports "Unlawful influence on Swedish Migration Authority personnel" (Brå, 2016:14) and "Unlawful influence on public agency personnel" (Brå, 2016:13) were conducted by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) which highlight the subjection to unlawful influences, threats or improper offers experienced by public servants from the Swedish Migration Agency and a number of other public authorities in Sweden with

regards to their clients and authorities´ preventive work in such situations. These two reports are of value for this paper as they provide an example of existing challenges in interactions between individuals with both migrant and non-migrant backgrounds and representatives from the public sector in Sweden.

The third report, "Migrant smuggling in the EU" (2016) was undertaken by Europol and provides an accurate summary and statistics on the situation of the recent "refugee crisis" in the EU with a focus on smuggling migrants as the primary way for facilitating transportation of forced and irregular migrants to Europe where corrupt practices have played a crucial role. This report is particularly valuable for the analysis of empirical data in this study that focuses on migrants who arrived to Sweden in the aftermath of the Syrian crisis.

5.   Analysis

There were two main limitations encountered during the analysis of the collected empirical results. Firstly, the fact that there were 31 potential participants out of 54 contacted in total, who expressed an interest in participation, only 21 participants had filled in the questionnaire and only 2 participants agreed to participate in a Skype interview, creating a major external limitation. Secondly, the analysis of potential corrupt practices in relation to migrants in the country of their origin and during their migration journey is based on the assumptions provided by Swedish public servants and municipal workers and reflects only a one-sided opinion as it does not include the opinion of the migrants themselves.

The empirical foundation of this academic study consists of two elements – responses derived from the results of 23 qualitative interviews, and a qualitative review of the relevant scientific literature.

To give a better understanding of the analysis of collected empirical results, based on the perspective of the Swedish public servants; workers from municipal organisations and the experts on corruption from Swedish academia; broader information about a country – Sweden where the qualitative study was conducted; and information about the most common countries of migrants´ origin that this study mainly focuses on were included in this part of the study.

5.1   Countries in focus

Sweden is a special case on the list of preferred destinations for immigrants in Europe that brings an interesting perspective to this study. First of all, Sweden is well known in the international arena for its "principle of publicity" or transparency principle, and ombudsman system, widely applied in a society that is often perceived as "the see-through society." Such openness puts the Swedish state on the list of top ten countries with low levels of corruption and serves as an important tool for the prevention of various types of wrong-doing. Sweden is ranked 8 out of 180 on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2017 (Transparency International, 2017). In addition, Sweden has been known for decades for its focus on humanitarian migration and international humanitarian aid support in developing countries which has placed this state on the list of the world´s top seven humanitarian donors (Sida, 2017). Interviewee 12 explains more about the Swedish image in relation to migration *"…Sweden during a long period of time has had a good reputation as a serious and helpful country when it comes to migration."*

In fact, 2015 saw Sweden accept the highest number of asylum applications in Northern Europe and registered 163 000 asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq along with stateless forced migrants (Karageorgiou, 2016).

Table 1. Summary of the academic work about the nexus between corruption and migration.

The author and publishing year	The title	Research focus and main arguments
Dimant, E., Krieger, T. and Redlin, M., 2014	A Crook is a crook…But is he still a crook abroad? On the effect of immigration on destination-country corruption.	**Research focus:** migration from a general perspective and corruption. **Main arguments:** 1.) The population´s behaviour and institutional regulations in the country of destination play a crucial role in the decrease of corrupt practices in relation to migrants; 2.) The impact of migration on the destination country corruption level is insignificant; 3.) There is a potential positive effect of corruption connected to migration from a more corrupted country on the destination country that is less corrupt.
Åkesson,L.and Orjuela.,C, 2017	North-South Migration and the Corrupt Other: practices of bribery among Portuguese migrants in Angola.	**Research focus:** Portuguese migrants in Angola. **Main arguments:** 1.) North-South migration perspective: non-corrupt European Self and the less developed and more corrupt Other; 2). Phenomenon of reversed migration: corrupt behaviour of Portuguese nationals in Angola has a legitimized character; 3.) There are more similarities than differences between the European Self and the Other.
Fisman, R. and Miguel, E., 2007	Corruption, norms, and legal enforcement: evidence from diplomatic parking tickets.	**Research focus:** cultural norms and corrupt behaviour in the country of destination (case of United Nations officials in New York City). **Main arguments:** 1.) Diplomats from highly corrupted countries conduct more parking violations; 2.) Individuals from countries with low levels of corruption do not break the rules in the situations that do not imply legal consequences, and vice versa; 3.) Diplomats behave abroad in a similar way to state officials in their country of origin irrespective of the level of corruption.
Carling, J., Paasche, E. and Siegel., M., 2015	Finding Connections: the nexus between migration and corruption.	**Research focus:** economic and forced migration and corruption. **Main arguments:** 1.) Corruption facilitates illegal migration; 2.) Corruption in the country of origin hinders initiatives of diaspora groups; 3.) Corruption in the country of origin aspires to migrate and discourages returning back; 4.) Migration is a sustaining tool for corruption; 5.) Social norms and values in the country of destination have a two-fold impact on corruption in relation to migrants.

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), 2016:13	Unlawful influence on public agency personnel. A follow up.	**Research focus:** survey with employees from 12 Swedish authorities and 2 unemployment funds during the summer 2015. **Main arguments:** 1.) The Police Authority and the Migration Agency are the most exposed when it comes to vandalism; 2.) The percentage of respondents who received improper offers is greatest at the Migration Agency (7%); 3.) Exposedness to improper friendships is the greatest at the Migration Agency (6%).
The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå), 2016:14.	Unlawful influence on Swedish Migration Authority personnel.	**Research focus:** survey with personnel from Swedish Migration Authority in 2017. **Main arguments:** 1.) One-half of participated employees mentioned exposedness to some form of unlawful influence during the most recent 18 months; 2.) Employees are exposed to threats and harassment from applicants; 3.) Improper offers include money, meals of gifts.
Europol, 2016.	Migrant smuggling in the EU.	**Research focus:** "refugee crisis" and human smuggling. **Main arguments:** 1.) 90% of irregular migrants who arrived to Europe in 2015 used services of human smugglers; 2.) 230 locations in and outside EU where illegal facilitation of migrant smuggling occurred were identified; 3.) Corruption is the main facilitator in human smuggling.

Sweden registered 13% and Germany 30%, respectively, out of all asylum applications in the EU in 2014 (Karageorgiou, 2016). Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq are ranked by Transparency International in 178, 177 and 169 places, respectively (CPI Transparency International, 2017). Additionally, these three countries have been undermined by prolonged armed and political conflicts that have also resulted in a massive displacement of civilians, violation of human rights, corruption and a drastic decrease of democracy. Such a big discrepancy between profiles of the above mentioned countries brings an additional challenge of studying corrupt practices that may potentially occur at any point of a migrants´ stay or movement irrespective of the country.

In 2013, with an escalation of the Syrian conflict, Sweden became the first country in the world that started to grant permanent residence permits to all Syrian asylum seekers (Scarpa et al., 2018, p.199). In 2014, the nationalist party of Swedish Democrats who promote criticism of multiculturalism won 13% in the Swedish national election, thereby securing third place in Parliament (Groll, 2014). In 2015, Sweden became the first country in the EU that introduced identity and document checks at the border with Denmark, which had not happened since the 1950s (Scarpa et al., 2018, p.200). Such a policy change also contributed to the strengthening of punishing measures against human smuggling (ibid.). In addition, after this policy change in permanent residence permits for refugees, who reached Sweden beyond the common EU refugee quota, were changed into temporary ones (ibid.). Interviewee 1 argued that this change in Sweden with relation to migration might have been influenced by the right wing party: "... *recently, Swedish politics has changed quite a bit. It could be because the party of Swedish Democrats have received many mandates in Parliament.*"

5.2 Openness against corruption

According to the European Commission, the principle of public access to information plays an inseparable role in the legal order, political life in Sweden and the Swedish constitution (European Commission, 2014, p.7). This distinctive feature entitles citizens and representatives from the Swedish media to access the information about the activities of the state and municipality. More specifically, it implies that citizens have a right to read the official documentation of Swedish public authorities, and state employees are not entitled to hide information from those who request it (ibid.). Furthermore, those individuals who are employed by the state have a right to disclose information to the media for publishing or even to publish information personally, and lastly, the public as well as the media in Sweden have a right to visit the meetings where decision making takes place (ibid.). Such openness makes the level of corruption, its perception and actual experience, low (European Commission, 2014, p.3). This factor of openness in the public sector is important for the analysis of this paper, as presence of openness foresees an easier disclosure of potential corrupt practices in relation to migration in the country of destination. At the same time, according to the experiences of Interviewees in this study, corruption that as well may occur in relation to migration takes place in the country of destination in spite of the presence of such strong anti-corruption tools as openness and transparency.

Despite abovementioned characteristics, the Swedish state has received criticism and a number of recommendations from the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in relation to the improvement of the Swedish institutions´ ability to detect public corruption, and weak transparency when it comes to financing of political parties' activities (European Commission, 2014, p.5).

5.3 Corruption and the decision to migrate

Prior to the investigation of the formulated research objective that is two-folded and focuses on identification of the nexus between migration and corruption, as well as on answering the question of whether migration can transfer corrupt activities, it is important to study the role of corruption in forced and irregular migrants´ decision to migrate.

One of the definitions of corruption implies *"the abuse of a trust, generally one involving public power for private benefit which often, but by no means always, comes in the form of money"* (Johnston, 2005, p.11). Yet corruption in its various expressions and forms has been a notion that has known no border limitations. One should, however, make a distinction between corruption in poor and rich countries. A poor country citizens are the most vulnerable to corrupt practices as they are often forced to illegally pay for access to services and resources that are otherwise free for citizens in rich countries and are a part of their rights as a citizen (Graycar, et al., 2015, p.586). Corruption in rich countries differs from that in poor countries and often implies unauthorized influence, cronyism or lobbying, among other procedures (ibid.).

There are academic studies indicating that corruption in the migrants´ country of origin is a push factor that affects individuals´ migration aspirations (Lapshyna, 2014; Cooray, at al., 2014). A correlation between corruption and the decision to migrate has been highlighted by a number of researchers but evidence is still somewhat scarce (Dimant, et.al., 2013). However, corruption as a driving factor for migration is not the same for all types of migrants (Poprawe, 2015, p.339). Thus, if the level of corruption in the country is high, it can result in shaky working or business conditions and may

be quite relevant to a group of highly skilled or labour migrants who can find more favorable working conditions abroad. This paper focuses on the forced and irregular migrants, who are not driven to migrate to Sweden due to the corruption in their country of origin in the first place, as Interviewees in this study also noted. Forced and irregular migrants, on the contrary, are driven to leave their county by armed conflicts, lack of security and violation of human rights whereas corruption plays a minor role for them (Moore, et al., 2004, p.742).

The combination of different complex factors that include political and personal security, repression, and weak governance is often linked to the forced migration process (Merkle, et.al., 2017, p.26). Consequently, in those states where citizens have a limited civic freedom, the migration process can rise in connection to liberalisation movements (ibid.). According to the UNHCR, in 2016 there were around 65.6 million forcefully displaced individuals likely influenced due to the Syrian crisis between 2012-2015, and political conflicts in Iraq and Yemen, amongst others states (UNHCR, 2016a).

The collected empirical data has further shown that some Interviewees have awareness about the recurrent corrupt behaviour that exists in the migrants´ countries of origin, which they have experienced through direct contact with these migrants. Interviewee 8 mentioned a story told by migrants regarding corrupt officials: "*All the boys I work with that came here as unaccompanied minors have a story where the Taliban, politicians and leaders behave themselves only in a corrupt way…*" Interviewee 3 contributed to the above mentioned experience with a following argument "*Oh yes, differences between the counties of origin and Sweden are enormously big. Previously, Sweden had an extraordinary low corruption index and many of the countries of origin were placed respectively lower in this scale. I*

have often discussed it in long conversations with youngsters whom I was in contact with and who were open for this kind of conversation…"

The situation with corruption in the country of origin may push migrants to apply the same tactics in the country of destination in order to receive services they might not be eligible for: *"…it has happened that clients wanted to receive some kind of help and after receiving a refusal they have asked me if I could abandon the law and to make an exception because we share the same origin and come from the same geographic area. It has also happened that clients have described how differently things can work in their home countries and that they are corrupted."* (Interviewee 2).

Identifying the place of corruption in the migration process of forced and irregular migrants, it was found, that corruption plays a facilitative role in relation to forced and irregular migration flow where smuggling of human beings regularly takes place and is characterized by various types of corruption in general, and widespread bribery in particular, that may occur at any stage of the migration journey (OECD, 2015c, p.3). This finding was even supported by the opinion of 2 Interviewees where one has indicated that *"…corruption is a means in order to migrate rather than a reason…"* Law enforcement officers, military officers, naval and border security and representatives from consulates and embassies are the most common actors involved in bribery on the migration route (Europol, 2016, p.12).

5.4 Beyond the democratic wall: what public servants know?

According to previous research and empirical results collected with a help of the questionnaire, corruption plays the role of "greasing the wheels" during the migration route of those individuals who

decide to use the services of human smugglers. Many forced migrants turn, however, to the services of smugglers in the absence of accessible legal ways to migrate; poor economic conditions; fear of persecution; financial inability to afford the legal channels of migration or political instability in the home country, amongst other reasons (UNODC, 2018, p.38). For instance, migrants from Syria are eligible for international protection, but in reality they do not have easy access to cross the European border in a legal and safe way, which makes them often turn to the services of smugglers (ibid.).

There is a wide spectrum of corrupt practices from petty corruption in order for migrants to get access to the border, to grand corruption with involvement of government officials from the consular and migration authorities who cooperate with smuggling networks (UNODC, 2018, p.51); Interviewee 2 stresses on that notion: *"…I have heard about one family that wanted to apply for a passport in their country of origin as their son has applied for a family reunion here in Sweden but they were forced to wait an unreal time for passports to be issued. Then it may mean that an officer involved wants to have a bribe."*

Despite the rights to protection stated in the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air that is a supplementary part of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the migrants´ rights have been repeatedly violated and many migration routes have become fatal or have led to torture or sexual and labor exploitation (UNODC, 2018, p.42). It is also common that forced and irregular migrants may be trafficked along the smuggling routes or even continually exploited after their arrival to the destination country and, according to 2 Interviewees in this study; it is under-aged migrants and women who are mostly at risk of falling into this group.

13 out of 21 Interviewees from Sweden who either deal with migrants on a daily basis, or have occasional professional contact with them, stressed the fact that irregular and forced migrants who reached Sweden, came with the help of corrupt practices occurring in the context of the smuggling process. Interviewee 8 explained that *"...almost everyone I know has been corrupted in order to do certain things to survive themselves when sometimes it was about everything from killing and smuggling to violence with an aim to be able to survive but not about money."*

An idealized picture of the country of destination that is free from corruption was presented by several Interviewees. Interviewee 3 noted that corruption in relation to migration typically exists beyond the border with Sweden *"...the whole market around migration from the country of origin until our country´s borders is, de facto, corrupt. Everything from managing parents through bribes, black payments and offers about the "right story" up to the journey itself. I have more stories like this than I can recall..."* Interviewee 15 also acknowledged similar problem when *"...many were offered help in order to come to Sweden in an illegal way through smuggling. Some of them who were imprisoned on the way, for example in Greece (that is considered corrupt), would pay in order to be freed from prison. Individuals from police that are corrupt have freed persons in exchange for things or services..."*

Consequently, migrants who come to Sweden experience various types of corrupt practices or are subjected to corrupt behaviour of civil servants on different stages of their journey that lead to the country of destination where the situation with corruption is different. In addition, Interviewee 12 explained that *"...many stories from refugees include corruption where other people have taken advantage of their (refugees´)*

vulnerability. Even other refugees have demanded money in order to progress in their own escape..."

5.5 Reaching a safe heaven

The quality of Swedish democracy is ranked, according to the latest Global Democracy Ranking, published in 2016, in 3rd place among the total number of 112 countries presented in the ranking list where position 112 indicates the lowest democracy rate and position 1 signifies the highest one (Global Democracy Ranking, 2016). A Eurobarometer study on corruption from 2017 placed Sweden as one of the countries in the EU where low amount of citizens think that corruption in the country has a widespread character (European Commission, 2017). High respect for democratic values, high levels of trust and living standards, along with a culture with a long tradition of openness are the prerequisites for the low levels of corruption that Sweden has developed over many decades (Transparency International Latvia, 2016, p.51).

According to the poll on corruption from 2014, less than 1% of individuals in Sweden were asked to pay a bribe during the last 12 months compared to 4% of the EU average (European Commission, 2014, p.3). After a recommendation by GRECO, Sweden established the National Anti-Corruption Unit of the Office of the Prosecutor General in 2002; and in 2012, Sweden established the National Anti-Corruption Police Unit in order to support investigations and foreign bribery cases (ibid.).

In 2011, Sweden conducted a national integrity system assessment which showed that Swedish cultural orientation is linked to strong trust on an inter-personal level, high level of secularity, and general positive opinion about foreigners and ethical minorities (Andersson et al., 2012, p.20). Therefore, with regards to the question of whether the Swedish state is

seen as attractive from the migrants´ perspective, 18 public servants and municipal workers out of 21 who agreed to participate in this study, gave a positive reply.

16 participants in the study mentioned that Sweden might also be an attractive country to migrate to because of its generous and well-functioning welfare system: *"refugees know through the information from relatives and friends that we have a good system of social insurance that applies to everybody who lives in the country. Schools and health care are equally available to all people."* *(Interviewee 12).* Interviewee 7 even mentions that the trusting nature of Swedish society may be attractive for migrants: *"…it is even the Swedish model that attracts people. The society is built to a large extent on trust and shared values, which benefit society as a whole."*

However, Interviewee 17 contradicts previous interviewees and confronts with an opinion that *"…there was a myth created about Sweden as a dream country where everything is perfect and free of problems."* Here Interviewee 17 relates the colorful picture that migrants usually get from smugglers about the country of destination prior to embarking on their journey.

Interviewee 15 also expresses a rather sceptical opinion with regards to Sweden still being an attractive country from migrants´ perspective: *"I think that Sweden was an attractive country, taking to consideration what the country´s asylum legislation looked like. Nowadays it is more restrictive, which is also visible as migration has decreased during the last year…"*and Interviewees 1, 3, 5 and 10 provide an analogous opinion.

Looking back in history, Sweden has been known since the 1970's as a country that has attracted labour migrants, and later on, forced migrants and asylum seekers

from Latin America; the Balkan countries; and, at a later stage, migrants from Middle East who wanted to escape dictatorship and political oppression. The current trajectory in Swedish politics, caused by the previous avoidance of the political elite of the question of asylum politics, affected the general image of Sweden and *"…it has primarily led to the growth of racist / nationalistic streams/ parties and more widespread "popular scepticism" towards migrants. This, I believe, has echoes in the vision of Sweden as a country of destination."* (Interviewee 3).

5.6 Does corruption know no borders?

The intent of the first objective for this paper was to identify the nexus between corruption and migration, focusing on the migrants´ migration journey and upon arrival in the country of destination, seen through the perspective of public servants and municipal workers in Sweden. In the previous part of the analysis it was found that corruption plays a facilitating role during migrants' journey but it is not a driving factor for migration aspirations of forced and irregular migrants, as it can be for other groups of migrants.

Previous research also indicates that corruption in the country of destination in relation to migrants is very scarcely investigated, and demonstrates that usually corrupt practices have a tendency to occur in the context of departure from the country of origin, as well as during the transit way to the country of destination (Merkle, et.al, 2018, p.4). As mentioned further by Merkle, et.al (2018, p.4), there were some indications given by migrants in the study on corruption, gender and migration about the occurrence of corruption in the country of destination, that were based on migrants' general sceptical attitude and the lack of trust with regards to public officers in a new country without an indication of any concrete experience of corrupt behaviour or

practices. It was noticed that a strong mistrust in public authorities and a biased way of thinking about the fact that contact with authorities may imply unlawful payments in exchange for services were carried by migrants throughout their journey.

Such tendencies were repeatedly observed by Interviewees from Sweden who participated in this study and argued, that such a deeply rooted mistrust is linked to migrants' stereotypic perception of corrupt behaviour as a social norm and that it often continues to exist even after the arrival to the country of destination. Having in mind the fact that the country of migrants' destination, chosen for this qualitative study, is characterized by advanced democracy which far exceeds in comparison to other countries in relation to the prevention of corruption; it will be of particular interest to investigate whether corruption in connection to migrants can potentially occur after their journey ends in Sweden, and whether corrupt activities are observed in practice by public servants and municipal workers in relation to forced and irregular migration in Sweden.

5.7 Vicious circle

The level of general awareness about potential corrupt behaviour or practices that occur in Sweden, which can be considered as corruption linked to migration, brought controversy to the interviews´ results. For example, Interviewees 6, 7, and 9 stated that they cannot provide any concrete example of such practices. Interviewees 2 and 6 could only refer to the news they have heard in the media about *"...officers from the Swedish embassies, that were close to Syria, who gave a priority for interviews in exchange for a big sum of money for persons/families who had ongoing family reunion cases..."* (Interviewee 2).

An occurrence of sexual exploitation that refugees are subjected to in the country of destination, can take place, which indicates that there is a presence of human trafficking, where female and under aged migrants can be affected in the first place: *"...when one has paid to smuggler in order to come to Sweden and at the same time has not received what was promised but instead was forced to sell sex and/or pay more as it was decided from the beginning."* (Interviewee 15) and that "*it can be related specifically to women when they can be forced to prostitution in case they could not afford to pay to smuggler...*" (Interviewee 13). Sextortion as a form of corruption related to gender primarily affects female migrants when they are forced to pay with their bodies during different stages of migration journey (Merkle, et.al, 2018).

Interviewees 3 and 19 had, on the contrary, a good awareness of certain behavior that occurs in Sweden and can be linked with corruption: "*At the asylum for those who received a permanent residence permit I have experienced that certain personnel bends the rules both because of convenience and in order to avoid complaints...to bend the rules in the asylum, as well as certain staff's passivity, can be perceived, on my opinion, as corruption...*" (Interviewee 3).

The question of temporality, focused on the process tracing of potential changes that have been occurring throughout the years in Sweden in relation to the development of corrupt practices and the migration flow, was included into the questionnaire. This allowed the ability to define whether and how the "refugee crisis" that started to develop in 2011 could potentially increase or, on the contrary, decrease corrupt practices related to migration in Sweden.

The situation took a turn for the worse since 2015 when a record inflow of irregular and forced migrants were

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registered in Europe and Sweden, which was also noted by 6 Interviewees: *"...drastic changes were needed, but those changes that were done made many to end up in a vulnerable situation. Before 2015 there was stability and a long term vision in asylum process when the regulations were followed very well..."* (Interviewee 10). Interviewee 5 added with confidence that *"...this (corrupt) behaviour has increased, mainly since 2015 when a big wave of newcomers came. That time there were many who needed accommodation and also many who took a chance/opportunity to earn big money at the state´s expense. There were even many who rented out accommodation directly to ( ) and earned high amounts."* In fact, the year 2015 was frequently mentioned throughout the questionnaire within the context of the peak of the crisis and perceived by many Interviewees as a turning point in migration politics, as it decreased quality of asylum process management and administration, and implementation of general restrictions for migration to Sweden, done in response to the crisis' escalation.

Interviewee 19 demonstrated, however, an opposite opinion and described that *"automatization and a modern computer system make all decisions to be reviewed several times. The most authorities have their own computer systems, which control that officers cannot "touch" a case in which they are themselves involved."*

5.8 Migrants and unlawful influence

The report on unlawful influence on Swedish Migration Authority personnel denoted that during the second part of 2015, the flow of migrants has increased; the recruitment of additional personnel to the Authority was raised; the accommodation access for migrants became tighter; and the case management time was prolonged drastically. This was of particular importance to the

investigation of the authority´s exposedness to unlawful influence, and to the necessity of which preventive measures could be taken (Brå, 2016:14, p.26, 27). The study within this report showed that the Swedish Migration Authority is ranked in fourth place among thirteen Swedish authorities and two unemployment funds in regards to the risk of exposedness to unlawful influence due to the fact that this authority, alongside the authority for Social Security and authority for Public Employment daily grants important decisions about individuals' lives and financial support (Brå, 2016:14, p.30, 31).

The second report about the unlawful influence on public agency personnel from the twelve authorities in Sweden mentioned an important interconnection between how the work at the public agencies in Sweden is performed and what the risks are for unlawful influence (Brå, 2016:13, p.14). Factors such as long waiting periods before granting a decision to an applicant, decision formulation protocol, and application of four eyes principle can affect or reinforce opportunities for unlawful influence (ibid.). However, the report does not provide a clear picture on the motives of unlawful influence that can, for example, be caused by frustration of individuals related to the long waiting periods for decisions, or actual intention to influence the process of an authority's decision making (Brå, 2016:14, p. 24). In addition, the report does not specify which groups of clients usually expose public servants to unlawful influence, which makes it difficult to assume whether it is migrants who try to influence public servants or not, and if so, what type of migrants.

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention also refers to the studies about unlawful influences that were conducted in previous years in Sweden; pointing out that Swedish public agencies primarily focused on their preventive work against

threats and violence that clients often express towards public servants but not on corruption cases that may bring more serious consequences (Brå, 2016:14, p.14). In fact, threat and violence attempts are often targeting public servants in Sweden, Interviewee 3 pointed out one example: *"I have seen several times when public officers from the social service were partial in their decision making process because they were threatened by unaccompanied minors who wished to be moved to certain places."*

The results of the study conducted with around 45 500 public servants by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention in 2015 further demonstrated that public servants from such Swedish authorities as the Migration Authority, the Prison and Probation Service, and the authority for Public Employment are approached more often than public servants from other authorities with inappropriate offers. Examples come in the form of dinner invitations, attempts of nepotism (especially if a public servant speaks the same language or comes from the same geographic area as an applicant), presents or money from individuals who are in a vulnerable situation and depend on the public servant's decision that might impact their life conditions are just a few examples (Brå, 2016:14, p.52; Bra 2016:13, p.29; *Brå,* 2016:13, p.75).

In spite of a careful choice of words and formulations provided in the responses related to the concern of being identified, there are still several Interviewees who provided their subjective opinions based on what they have experienced through work. Interviewee 7 verifies that *"I have experienced it myself. (   ) has asked me to look in the case of one acquaintance in exchange for money. I have explained what it can lead to and that there is zero tolerance for it at my work. It was about to grant a more beneficial decision in one case."* Interviewee 2 shares a similar experience at work when *"…I was offered*

services from my clients so in return I could help them with different things e.g. economic. It was not offered directly but suggested through hints." Interviewee 13 added that *"it is very common when an asylum seeker threatens a public officer with a suicide that is interpreted as an attempt to influence an officer…"*

5.9   Corruption as a delicate topic

Due to the general sensitivity of the problem, investigated in frames of this academic study and particularity of certain questions, an occurrence of self-criticism among Interviewees, participated in an anonymous questionnaire, was noticed. It was connected to the question about Interviewees' awareness about the cases or allegations in Sweden where public officials might have used their position to request or receive an offer from migrants in exchange for acting or refraining from acting in the exercise of their functions.

Studying an area involving corruption is especially difficult as the self-censure of interviewed participants can occur which can lead to a complete denial to reply to the question or evoke a reply that is considered the most expected, but not necessarily the most subjective one (Brå, 2016:14, p.18). It can be observed through responses of 7 Interviewees, who referred to the known cases of bribery in the public authorities in relation to migrants that appeared in the Swedish national media in different years, that this was the only information they knew: *"I do not have my own experiences of such behavior from my work as a public servant. But I have read about cases, especially about public officers from the Migration Authority who 'sold' residence permits…"* (Interviewee 5).

Only Interviewees 2 and 7 could relate to their own experience when they were offered inappropriate offers in exchange for facilitation or help with processing of a case and Interviewee 15 added that *"I can*

imagine that it happens..." referring indirectly to the cases when public servants might have used their position to accept inappropriate offers. Interviewee 19 was, however, aware about the situation that happened within the Interviewee's organization when "*...a lower qualified personnel from (   ), who worked with housing, could sometimes prioritize certain asylum seekers in exchange for economic profit when it came to granting accommodation.*"

5.10 When the ethnic norms clash

It is worth mentioning that there are many migrants who come from societies where the authorities do not work for the interests of citizens and, therefore, the contacts with public servants often imply some form of gift that the citizen brings as a gratitude for the received service, and that is not considered by these individuals as corruption (Brå, 2016:13, p.121). When such behaviour occurs in the country of destination, it can be challenging for public servants to draw a line between a gesture of gratitude and an actual attempt of inappropriate behaviour: "*...we, who conduct oral investigations, observe from time to time how applicant tries to come in contact with us, employees, and it can be through a chocolate bar as a gratitude, we will however accept a chocolate and later will share it with other employees as it is rather not OK to deny completely.*" (Interviewee 16).

A shared ethnic background between the influencer and a public servant can lead to a risk factor, as the influencer can eventually try to take advantage of the ethnic connection, in certain ethnic groups it can be more common to use one's professional position for relatives to personally benefit (Brå, 2016:14, p.52; Brå, 2016:13, p.86). The study in the abovementioned report further shows that there were many authorities' employees with non-Swedish background, who stressed that they become particularly

careful when they come in contact with clients, who share the same ethnic background, as they feel concern expressed by their manager or colleagues about the actual threshold of their loyalty (Brå, 2016:13, p.86).

The question about different levels of ethnic loyalty between the societies is interconnected with a level of trust between citizens, which is also clearly demonstrated in the experiment conducted with Swedish and Romanian students with a focus on social trust and corruption. Swedish students were asked, in Swedish, about whether most people can generally be trusted and the result showed that 60% of students agreed with this definition (Rothstein, 2011, p.171). When the same experiment was performed with Romanian students, in Romanian, there were only 16% who indicated that they can trust other people (ibid.).

In fact, Interviewees 2, 7, 10, 12, 16 and 17 mentioned a similar tendency observed by them about a link between different levels of loyalty and an ethnic background that may play a crucial role in interactions between a public servant and a client in Sweden. These Interviewees have even mentioned cases when they were approached by their countrymen with an improper offer due to the common ethnic link that could help to facilitate the decision to provide a service. Some of these Interviewees related such migrants' behaviour to the low trust in the state systems they come from that make migrants assume the system in Sweden functions in a similar way: "*it can be noticed that they come already with an inherent scepticism and lack of trust in the authorities*" (Interviewee 10).

5.11 Migration and corruption: the local glimpse

This study showed that public servants' and municipal workers´ awareness about corrupt activities of illegal networks in

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Sweden, where migrants can be unintentionally or intentionally involved, is very different. For many migrants, contact with smugglers continues even in the country of destination when they can be forced to work if they have not paid enough for their illegal journey to Sweden. In such cases, unaccompanied minors, who belong to particularly vulnerable group, and women, who are often forced into prostitution, are especially at risk. There are many newcomers, especially youngsters, who are involved in selling drugs, and besides that, there are some immigrants who became smugglers in Sweden and may go to the countries that are close to Syria and smuggle refugees for money, which was sharply noted by 6 Interviewees.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the analysis in this qualitative study is based on empirical data derived from a total amount of 21 public servants and municipal workers, who expressed interest in participating in the questionnaire, which limits an empirical scope to only personal opinions, observations and experiences from this small amount of Interviewees. However, this limited amount of collected opinions of a bipolar character in combination with a relevant academic literature analysis, that is scarce, helps to touch on the second part of the first research question about the interplay between migration and corruption in the country of destination, Sweden, and the second research question on whether migration can lead to a transfer of corrupt practices.

The outcome of the empirical research in this study shows that corrupt behaviour can start already at the initial phase of the asylum application where migrants can be perceived by public servants as initiators of corrupt practices. Though it is *"understandable,"* as per definition of Interviewee 3, due to the individual's lack of social trust in the authorities that widely prevails in the country of origin; and due

to the limited opportunities for education or work, which are not the same for all individuals in the countries of migrants' origins, which sometimes are only accessible to elites. This behaviour is also more common for those migrants who belong to minority groups in their country of origin and do not have the same access to resources compared to the majority of the population that was noted by Interviewee 12. Therefore, these migrants are forced to adapt by developing particular behavioral patterns supported in their country of origin in order to survive. Often such behavioural patterns can have a corrupt nature that is carried along the migration route to the country of destination where migrants can potentially apply the same behaviour due to the developed biased attitudes and views.

Undermined democracy and weak rule of law in the country of origin contribute as well to a specific type of survivalist behaviour among migrants: *"...unaccompanied minors here (in Sweden) had hard times to accept rules, policies, understand that there is a framework of laws what they have never done before... they were looking for a shortcut, for an easy way that is corruption; it caused so much anger, they were escaping school..."* (Interviewee 21).

Two main limitations expressed through an inconsistency in responses from collected questionnaires and the lack of previous research, aiming to explore potential transfer of corrupt practices through migration, do not allow a comprehensive answer on the second objective of this paper that aimed to study whether migration can lead to corruption transfer. Nevertheless, the collected empirical data shades the light on the fact that migrants´ behaviour of potential corrupt nature in the country of destination, when migrants can have a role of initiators, is linked to the embedded lack of trust in the state that has roots in

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their country of origin that can be carried throughout migration journey.

At the same time, migrants are not only seen as potential initiators of corrupt behavior, but also victims of corrupt practices in the country of destination, irrespective of the fact whether they carry with them a corrupt behaviour or not.

As noted by 6 Interviewees, migrants can be offered to receive a priority in the queue for housing in exchange for illicit financial compensation, facing a choice of paying for an overpriced second-hand accommodation with very bad conditions, or becoming victims of dishonest employers who may take advantage of their vulnerability, or even being sexually abused at the facility for migrants. These examples further indicate that despite the openness and transparency in the country of destination and its public sector, corrupt practices occur there and migrants can become victims of these practices.

According to Bergh, et.al (2016) there is a number of surveys and studies that independently demonstrate that Swedish citizens more often perceive public officials and politicians as less impartial and more corrupt which has increased over time; this made the country stand out compared to its Nordic neighbours when it comes to mistrust for the public sector despite high scores of being a "clean" country in the international context (Bergh, et al., 2016, p.9). The repetitive reference given to Sweden as a country with a low level of corruption in many well-known rankings, and the rare cases when corruption was punished, led to overlooking this problem and a lack of gathered knowledge on this issue (Bergh, et al., 2016, p.11).

5.12 To cure the incurable

These are citizens' own experiences and experiences of other individuals, who live in the country, based on contacts with

authorities and public sector organisations that affect social capital and trust (Linde, et al., 2013, p.587). If citizens think that there are many people in the country who are engaged in corrupt activities, it can become an initial stage in the process of changing norms and attitudes about what can be acceptable and normal (Oscarsson, 2010, p.255). In case it happens, an individual can perceive that it is costly not to take part in the corrupt activities (ibid.).

Many studies indicate that necessity to investigate and study corruption and its prevention in low-corrupt countries such as Sweden, has not been previously given enough importance and attention since the country continuously scores high in international rankings as being "clean" from corruption (Bergh, et al., 2016, p.12). This high ranking, however, does not automatically imply that the system of corruption control is good enough and that the state is free from corrupt practices (Erlingsson, et al., 2011, p.7).

In support of these literature findings the derived responses about the existing anti-corruption prevention mechanisms in the public sector in Sweden and its effectiveness in fighting corruption, especially in relation to the migration flow showed, that not all Interviewees who represent the public sector and have experience in work with migrants, are aware about concrete preventive anti-corruption mechanisms, and more specifically, in relation to the migration flow into Sweden. There is only one Interviewee, Interviewee 5, who referred to a concrete practical example when " *one proposal came last week from a representative from a municipal housing company, who called for an opportunity to limit second hand rent. It is a good proposal that could prevent those problems we see today with a trade of addresses and tenancy agreements..."* As previously mentioned in this chapter of analysis, a high demand for housing for refugees in Sweden led to the increased

illegal practices that often benefit from migrants' vulnerability.

4 Interviewees could not recall, however, any anti-corruption prevention mechanisms in the public sector, while the rest of Interviewees provided more general, but at the same time controversial responses.

When exploring the anti-corruption mechanisms in the responses on the questionnaire of this paper, it is necessary to point out that in the Swedish authorities an investigation obligation is put into effect and requires a thorough reviewing of every single case prior to granting the decision and *"...implies that one should be attentive for potential indicators of corrupted behaviour. In case there is a necessity, it should be reported internally and forwarded to other authorities that will proceed with a question of investigation."* (Interviewee 13).

Another perspective about the universalistic and inclusive vision of all individuals in Sweden as equal regardless of background, which predominates in many social groups in Sweden, does not single out the group of migrants or any other group from the context of crime and corruption. This fact can also explain why the majority of the Interviewees in this study were not aware of anti-corruption prevention mechanisms in relation to migration flow to Sweden: *"...in Sweden we used to focus on society as a whole and not emphasize a specific group of people. Corruption exists among all types of people and should therefore be combated in the same way."* (Interviewee 11).

The negative consequences of a high peak of migrants in 2015 in Sweden have impacted the quality of case management, which has led to certain potential risks as, for example, the higher risk of partiality of public servants that intensified since 2015: "...*the time will come again when it (control system) will be restored and*

effective again, but there is a necessity of the individual control of each officer's work, where many things are given to officer for evaluation and counselling of those who are in asylum process." (Interviewee 10).

Aiming to find out about the potential challenges Sweden may face in relation to corruption, the responses of 2 Interviewees – experts on corruption from Swedish academia were included in this paper. On the one hand, both experts expressed a similar opinion about higher risks for corruption that exist on the local level of government and municipalities, compared to other areas. On the other hand, they could not specify cases of corruption in Sweden in relation to migrants. These Interviewees only noted, that when it comes to corruption related to the migration flow "*there is not much empirical evidence for this*" and "*it is difficult to say if it is common or not without doing a survey*" (Interviewee 23 and 22).

Both experts further argued that bribery of public officials in Sweden is quite uncommon as such; the more common procedure is getting favours with the help of contacts, networks or friendships that can also be used on the local level to create conflicts of interest between public and private sectors, for example, in procurement or building permits. When it comes to important control mechanisms, according to an expert - Interviewee 22, the sanctions and rules against conflicts of interest for representatives from the local municipalities in Sweden should be strengthened. Finally, when it comes to the state agencies, where the clients, including immigrants, are desperately dependant on the agency's decision that can create the risk for corrupt practices, the importance of specific training and clear guidelines for officers should be prioritized.

6.   Conclusion

In the aftermath of the political instability and armed conflicts, caused by the Arab Spring movement and the Syrian crisis, one of the biggest migration inflows in European history brought many unexpected challenges to the countries of the European Union. The lack of common integration policy within the EU made differentiation on the countries of the "first" and "secondary" migration, which has led to a disproportionate quantity of asylum applications and made some countries become more attractive to migrate to then others. There were thousands of forced and irregular immigrants who have travelled to the borders of the European Union by means of illegal facilitation where corruption played a central role, with an aim to search for asylum.

This paper provided an analysis of the case of irregular and forced migrants in Sweden through the perspective of public servants and municipal workers who deal with these groups of migrants. The analysis in this study, which is based on the qualitative research, aimed to identify the nexus between corruption and forced and irregular migration, as well as whether migration can potentially lead to the transfer of corrupt practices. The existing research about the link between corruption and forced and irregular migration has a scarce character and mainly illustrates interplay between corruption and migration in the country of migrants´ origin and during the migration route. This study aims to add to the existing research by narrowing its focus on the actual observations and opinions of public servants and municipal workers who deal with these groups of migrants in the country of migrants´ destination – Sweden. In spite of being limited to observations and opinions of only 23

participants in this study, the outcome of theoretical and empirical research demonstrates several important points.

First of all, corruption played a key role during the migration route of those forced and irregular migrants who reached Sweden during the "refugee crisis," whereas it plays a minor role for them in the decision to migrate from their country of origin. Secondly, the link between corruption and migration does not end upon arrival to the country of destination, where the level of corruption is perceived to be low. Studying the nexus between corruption and migration in the country of destination through the perspective of public servants showed that migrants can have a role as both victims and initiators of corrupt behaviour in the country of destination. It was noticed that migrants' potential corrupt attempts in the country of destination are interconnected with their general lack of trust in the state that originates in the country of migrants´ origin, and is maintained during the migration routes where different types of corruption connected to public authorities and officials facilitate migrants´ journey. At the same time, migrants can be subjected to corruption in the country of destination, e.g.to become victims of unserious landlords or employers, and often victims of human traffickers. The risk for corrupt practices can occur in those cases where migrants´ situation depends on the decisions of the public servants and authorities in the country of destination.

Based on the findings of the theoretical an empirical research in this paper, the policy implications on the national level should put more focus on the reinforcement of stronger anti-corruption mechanisms in those situations, when dependency

between public servants and individuals in need, irrespective of their background or origin, occurs. It can be done, for instance, though an obligatory implementation of the four eyes principle prior the authority's decision is made, and improvement of authorities´ automatization systems and control, which will allow to process certain categories of cases automatically and will help to reduce the waiting time for the decision. Furthermore, the continuous education of public employees with focus on corruption risks and preventive mechanisms should not be underestimated.

Finally, a stronger emphasis on knowledge about legal mechanisms, core values of the democratic state and responsibilities and rights of its citizens should be given during the design of social orientation courses that will help newcomers to rebuild social trust vis-à-vis their new home.

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