



CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: PATTERNS AND TRENDS

THIRD SURVEY ON CORRUPTION
AS EXPERIENCED BY THE POPULATION

JULY 2024



the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million (19.5% of the population).

There are a number of reasons why the number of people aged 65 and over has increased. One of the main reasons is that people are living longer. The life expectancy at birth in the UK is now 78 years for men and 82 years for women. This is a significant increase from the 1950s, when life expectancy at birth was 71 years for men and 76 years for women.

Another reason why the number of people aged 65 and over has increased is that people are having children later in life. This means that there are more people in the 65-74 age group than there were in the 1950s. This is because people are having children at a later age, which means that there are more people in the 65-74 age group than there were in the 1950s.

There are a number of reasons why people are living longer. One of the main reasons is that people are eating healthier food. This means that people are getting more nutrients from their food, which helps them to live longer. Another reason why people are living longer is that they are exercising more. This helps to keep them fit and healthy, which also helps them to live longer.

There are a number of reasons why people are having children later in life. One of the main reasons is that people are working longer hours. This means that people are not having children until they are older. Another reason why people are having children later in life is that they are getting married later. This means that people are not having children until they are older.

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UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

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PREFACE

The third round of the Nigeria Corruption Survey marks a significant milestone in Nigeria's ongoing efforts to combat corruption. Conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and supported by the MacArthur Foundation and the Kingdom of Denmark, this survey provides a critical tool for evidence-based policymaking, enabling a comprehensive analysis of corruption trends and the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies.

Through these surveys, Nigeria leads in establishing international best practice in the periodic and scientific assessment of anti-corruption efforts, reinforcing the importance of evidence-based strategies in the journey towards a corruption-free society.

This survey round is particularly strategic as it was conducted during a period of governmental transition, providing vital insights into the state of corruption and progress made in mitigating its impacts. Building on lessons from previous surveys, this third round incorporates technological advancements and methodological improvements, such as the use of digital enumeration maps, to ensure greater accuracy and reliability of the data collected. Notably, it includes a Gender and Social Inclusion module, which allows for the collection of granular, disaggregated data by gender and disability status, providing greater understanding of how corruption affects different segments of the population.

The implementation of this survey has been a collaborative effort, involving extensive partnerships with relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) of government, as well as other law enforcement agencies within Nigeria. These partners were integral to the process from inception to execution, providing valuable contributions and support throughout. Such partnerships lend legitimacy to the process and ensure that survey findings are integrated into policy-making frameworks. Collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) has been equally crucial as they will help in the continuous engagement and advocacy of the results and its ultimate impact on citizens and communities – translating data to action!

The results from the third national corruption survey will help evaluate the effectiveness of previous anti-corruption efforts by presenting key residual gaps, and policy recommendations that will allow the government to design and implement more targeted and effective anti-corruption policies that will improve the lives of Nigerian citizens. The findings will also empower citizens to demand greater accountability and transparency from public officials and government and provide a roadmap for better policy reforms and institutional strengthening to enhance good governance in Nigeria.

As we present the findings of the third-round Nigeria Corruption Survey, we acknowledge the collective efforts and contributions of all partners and stakeholders. Their unwavering support has been vital in making this survey a success.



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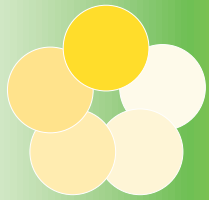
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Executive summary



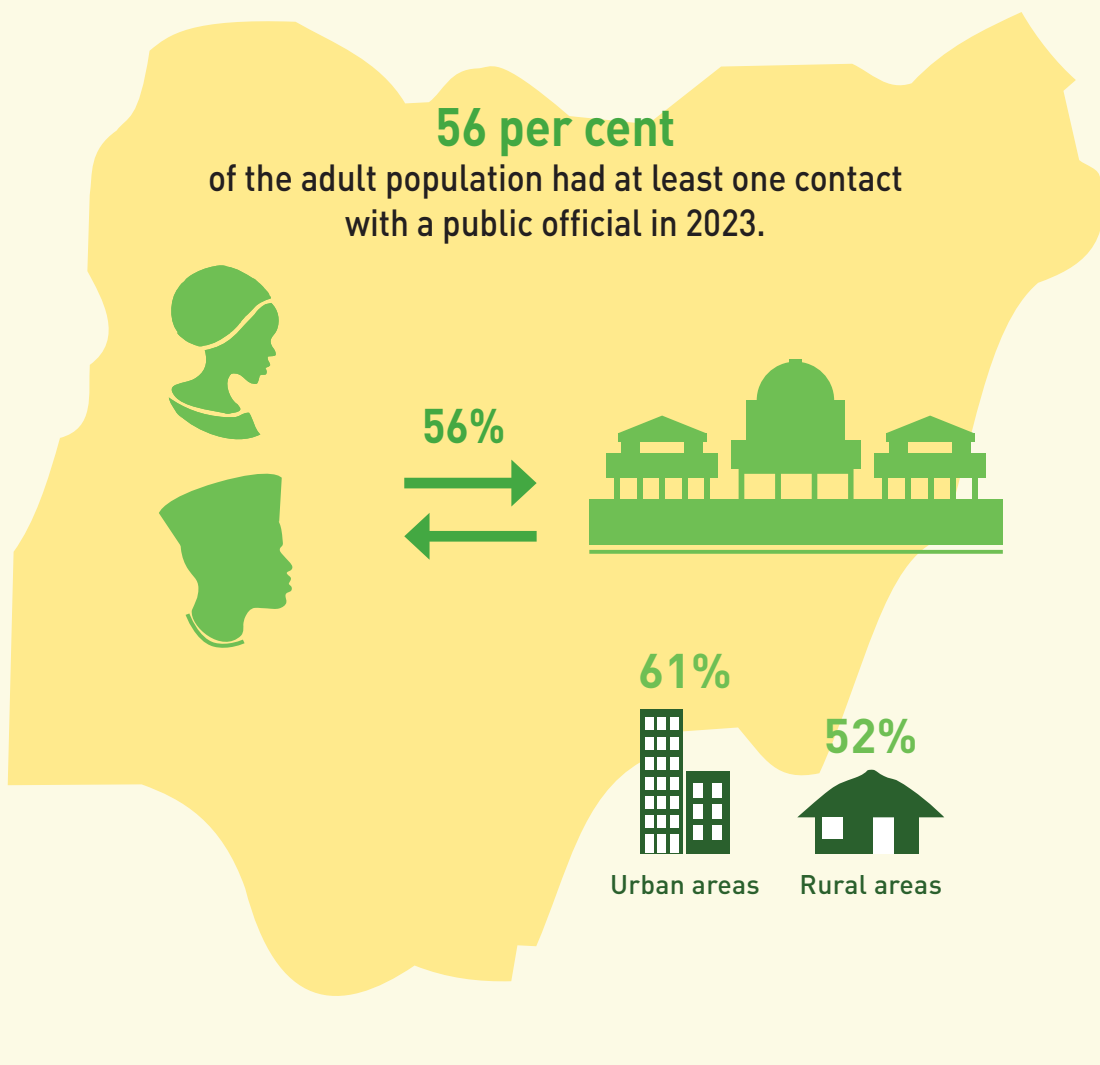
Scope of bribery



More than half of the population has contact with public officials, a decrease compared to four years ago.

In 2023, around 56 per cent of Nigerians had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. This represents a reduction in the contact rate since 2019 (63 per cent), which was observed across most types of public officials and across zones. Contact with public officials remains higher in urban areas (61 per cent) compared with rural areas (52 per cent).

In 2023, the largest share of Nigerian citizens had contact with health care professionals and public utilities officers, at 30 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. Police officers came third, with a contact rate of 20 per cent.

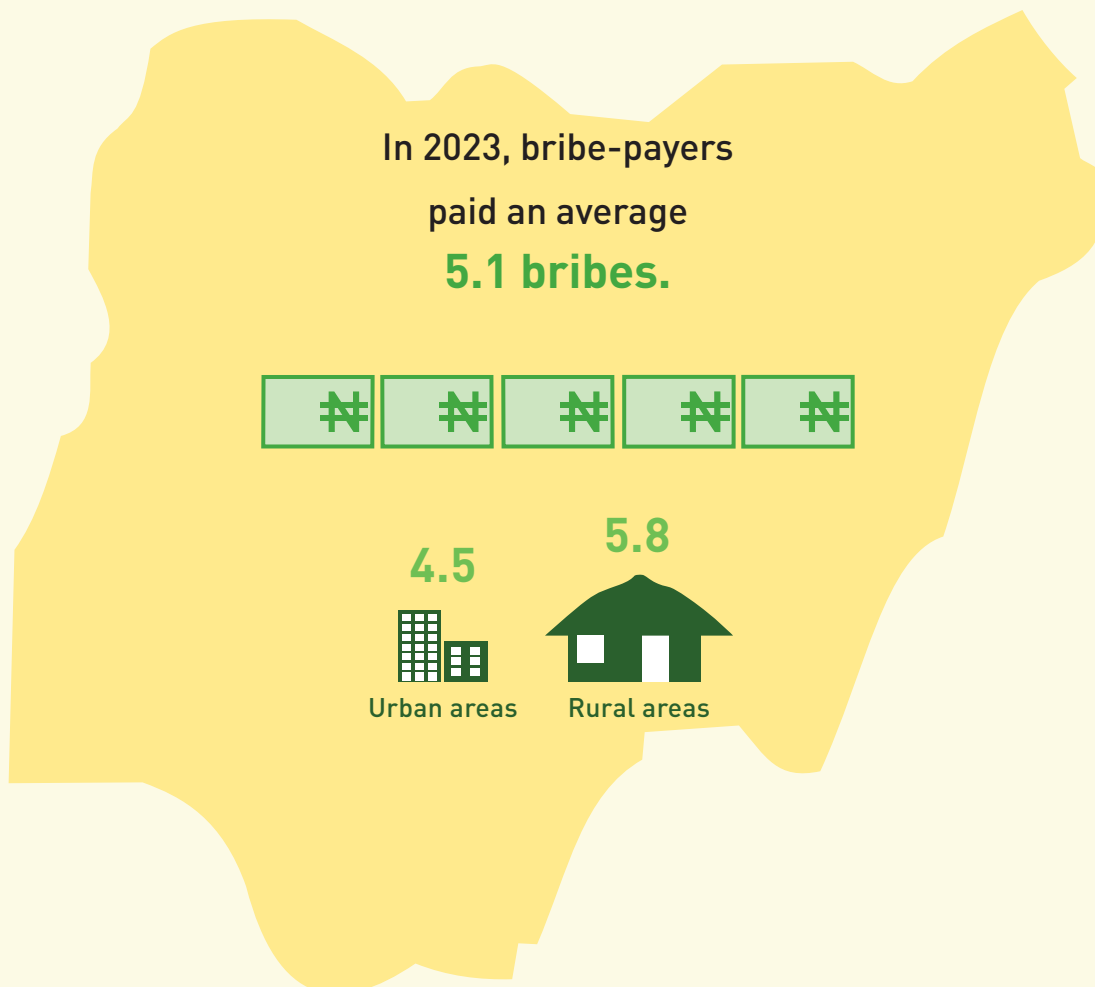




The frequency of bribe-paying has remained relatively stable compared with four years ago.

In 2023, 5.1 bribes were paid on average by each bribe payer in Nigeria in the 12 months prior to the survey. This represents a modest and statistically insignificant decrease in the frequency of bribe-paying from 2019, when on average 5.4 bribes were paid by each bribe payer. It is estimated that some 87 million bribes were paid in 2023 (compared with 117 million estimated in 2019) – the equivalent of an average of 0.8 bribes per each adult.

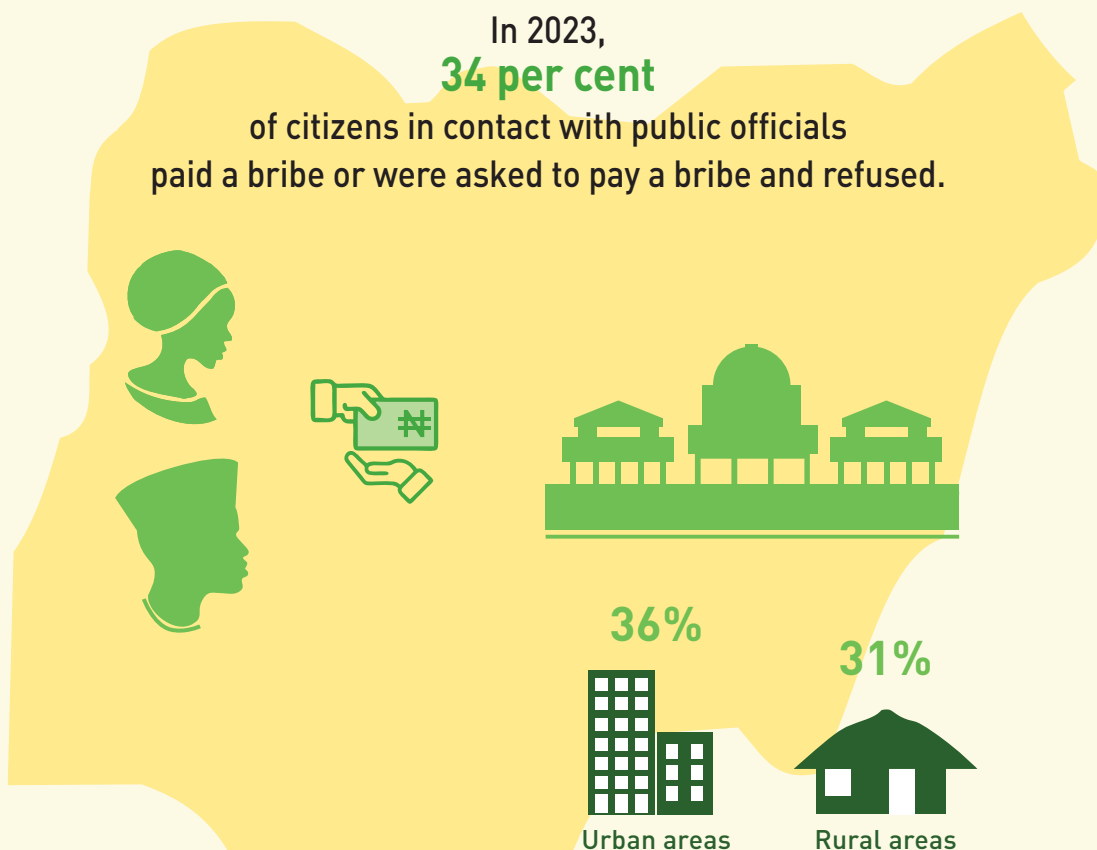
The frequency of bribery is, on average, higher in rural areas than in urban areas. In 2023, bribe-payers living in urban areas paid on average 4.5 bribes, while those living in rural areas paid on average 5.8 bribes.





Bribery prevalence has remained relatively stable compared with four years ago.

Out of all Nigerian citizens who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, 27 per cent paid a bribe to a public official. In the context of comparable past estimates, this means that the prevalence of bribe payments in Nigeria has undergone a minor but statistically significant decrease since 2019, when it stood at 29 per cent.¹ When also accounting for instances where bribes were requested but citizens refused, more than one in every three interactions (34 per cent) between citizens and public officials in 2023 involved bribery.



¹ The data published for 2019 and 2016 were respectively 30.2 and 32.3 per cent, but this included a partial estimate of people who refused to pay a bribe. The 2019 and 2016 figures of respectively 29 and 31 per cent includes only people who paid a bribe. A full account of people refusing to pay requested bribes was included only in the 2023 survey and it is not possible to have comparable figures from the other two surveys of 2019 and 2017.

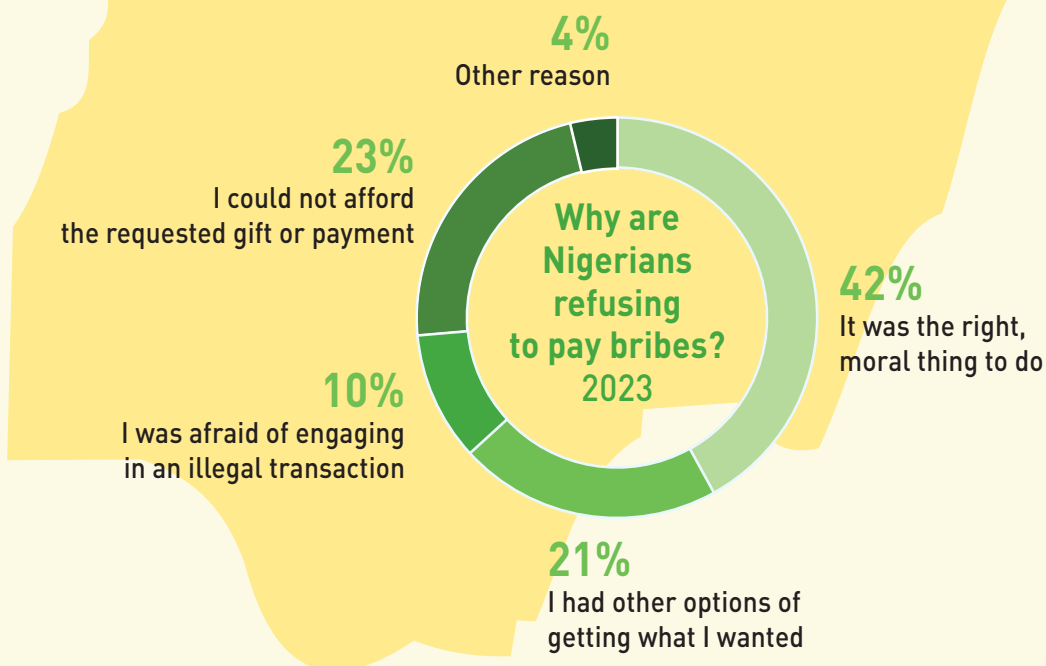


A large share of Nigerians refuses to pay bribes, increasingly without fear of repercussions.

70 per cent of Nigerians who were asked to pay a bribe in 2023, refused to do so on at least one occasion. The bribery refusal rate was found to be highest in the North-West (at 76 per cent), although all zones recorded refusal rates above 60 per cent.

Bribery is becoming less accepted in Nigeria. The share of citizens who think that bribery requests are acceptable in order to speed up administrative procedures decreased from 29 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent in 2023. Fewer citizens report suffering negative consequences after refusing bribe requests in 2023 (38 per cent) compared with 2019 (49 per cent). This suggests that Nigerians feel increasingly empowered to confront corrupt officials without fear of repercussions.

In 2023, a sizeable share of all bribe-refusers (21 per cent) indicated that their main reason for refusing a bribe request was because they had other options of getting what they wanted. The data also show that normative concerns (42 per cent) as well as cost of living pressures (23 per cent) play an important role in explaining why Nigerians refuse to pay bribes.



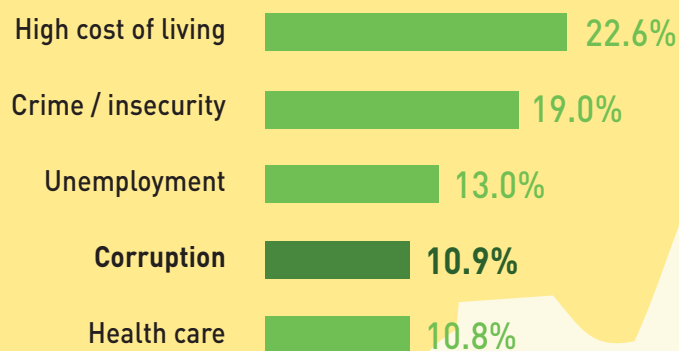


Corruption continues to rank among the most important problems affecting Nigerians.

As reported by Nigerians, corruption ranked 4th among the most important problems affecting the country in 2023, after the cost of living, insecurity and unemployment. This suggests relatively stable and high levels of concerns about corruption over time and compared to other concerns such as education or housing.

Nigerians' confidence in the government's anti-corruption effort has been declining over time and across regions. While in 2019, more than half of all citizens thought that the government was effective in fighting corruption, in 2023, the share declined to less than a third of all citizens. The downward trend in the citizens confidence is observable across the entire country, with all six zones recording reductions of more than 10 percentage points between 2019 and 2023 in terms of the share of citizens who thought the government was effective in fighting corruption.

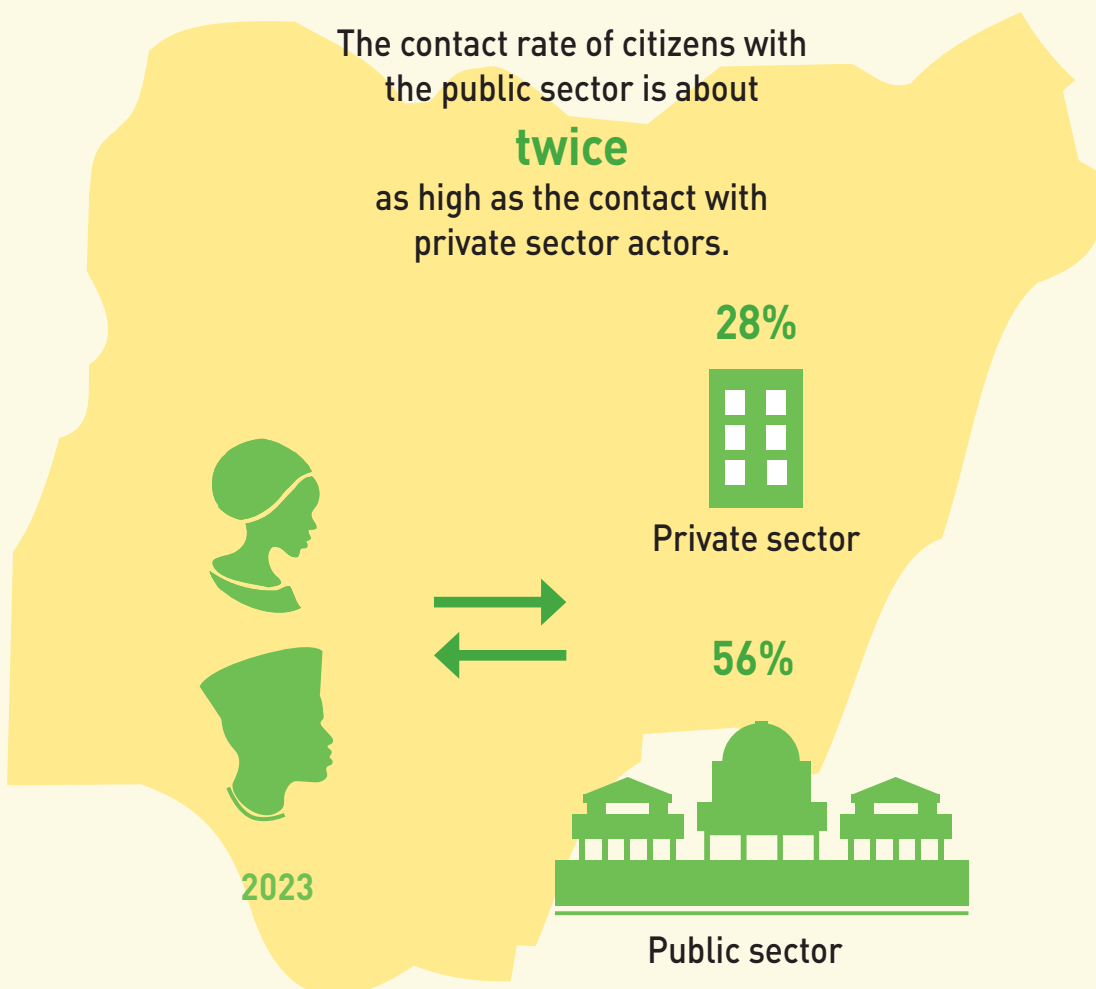
Most important problems affecting Nigerians in 2023

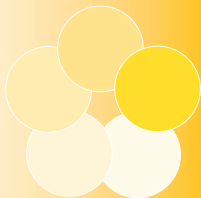




Private sector bribery is increasing, but continues to be less prevalent than in the public sector.

The prevalence of bribe payments to private sector actors (such as doctors in private hospitals and employees of private companies) increased significantly, from 6 per cent of citizens who had at least one contact with a private sector actor in 2019 to 14 per cent in 2023. The increase in private sector bribery between 2019 and 2023 was observed across all regions and all types of private employees. Despite this increase, the prevalence of bribery in the public sector remains approximately twice as high as in the private sector. Furthermore, the contact rate of citizens with the public sector is also about twice (56 per cent) as high as the contact with private sector actors (28 per cent).





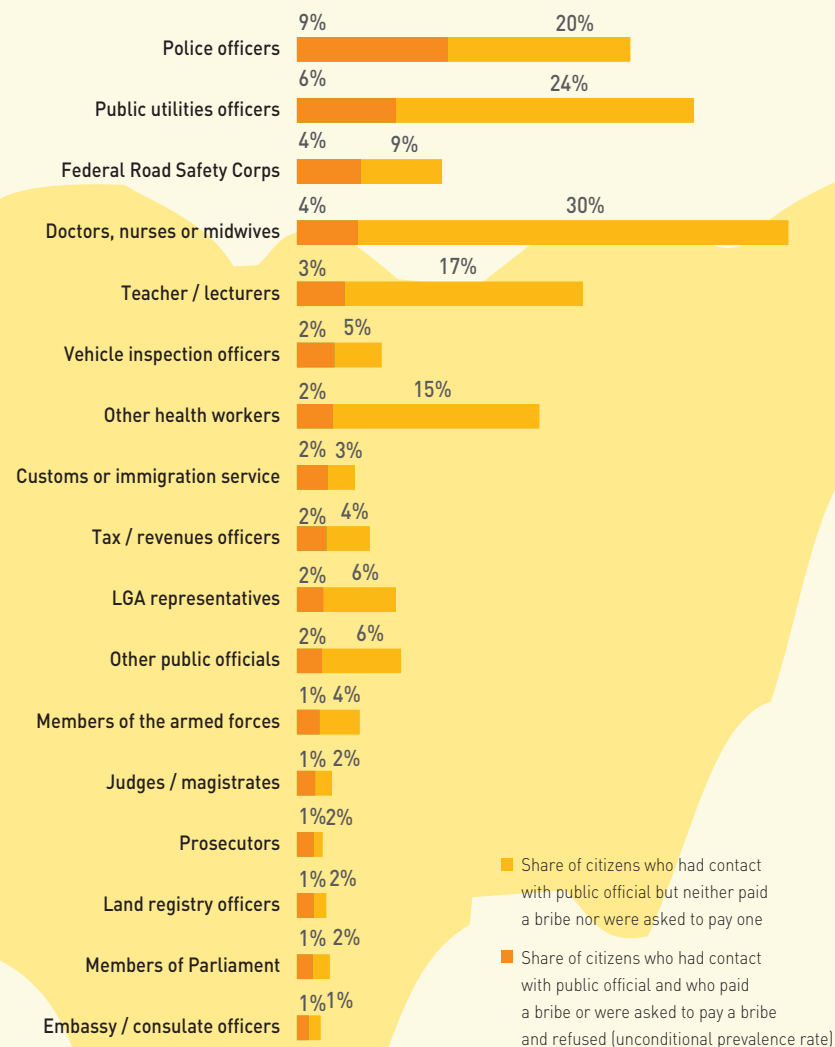
Who takes bribes?



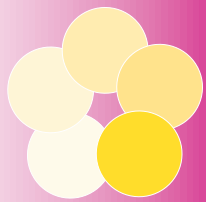
Bribery prevalence varies widely across different types of public official.

Several types of public officials who frequently encounter citizens have relatively small shares of interactions involving bribery (such as doctors, nurses, or teachers), while other types of officials who rarely encounter citizens (such as prosecutors or land registry officers) have relatively large shares of interactions involving bribery.

Share of citizens who had **contact** with public officials



Note: The contact rate by type of public official refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, irrespective of whether it involved bribery. The unconditional bribery prevalence by type of public official refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe but refused that type of public official.



How bribery works

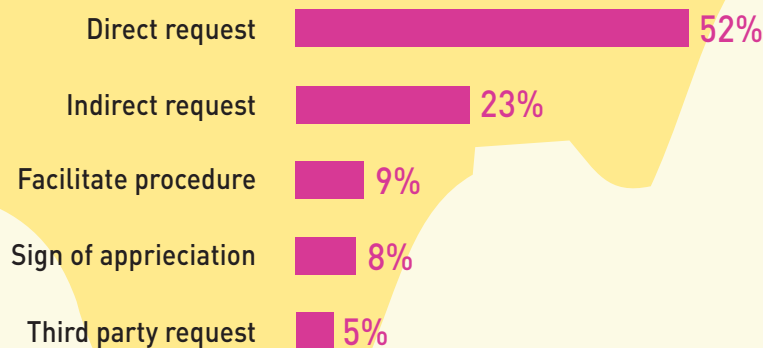


Public officials continue to be blatant about bribe requests, but less so than in the past.

Bribery dealings can be initiated in different ways: with a direct request by a public official or indirectly. In 2023 in Nigeria, direct bribery requests by a public official accounted for 52 per cent of all bribery transactions, representing a decrease from the 60 per cent recorded in the 2019 survey. Indirect requests for a bribe accounted for 23 per cent of all bribery transactions, while spontaneous payments to facilitate or accelerate a procedure accounted for 9 per cent. Some 8 per cent of bribes were paid with no prior request from the bribe-taker as a sign of appreciation to a public official for services rendered.

Around 58 per cent of all bribes are paid before a service is provided by a public official, according to the 2023 survey, a proportion that is significantly smaller than the 67 per cent recorded in the 2019 survey. Conversely, 22 per cent of bribes were paid after the service in 2023, which is markedly higher than in 2019 (15 per cent). The shift towards more retro-active bribing, combined with indirect requests by public officials, may suggest that public officials are becoming less assertive in asking for bribes and could indicate a gradual shift in the power relationship between officials and citizens to the benefit of the latter.

In 2023,
more than a half
of all bribes paid to public officials were
requested directly by those officials.



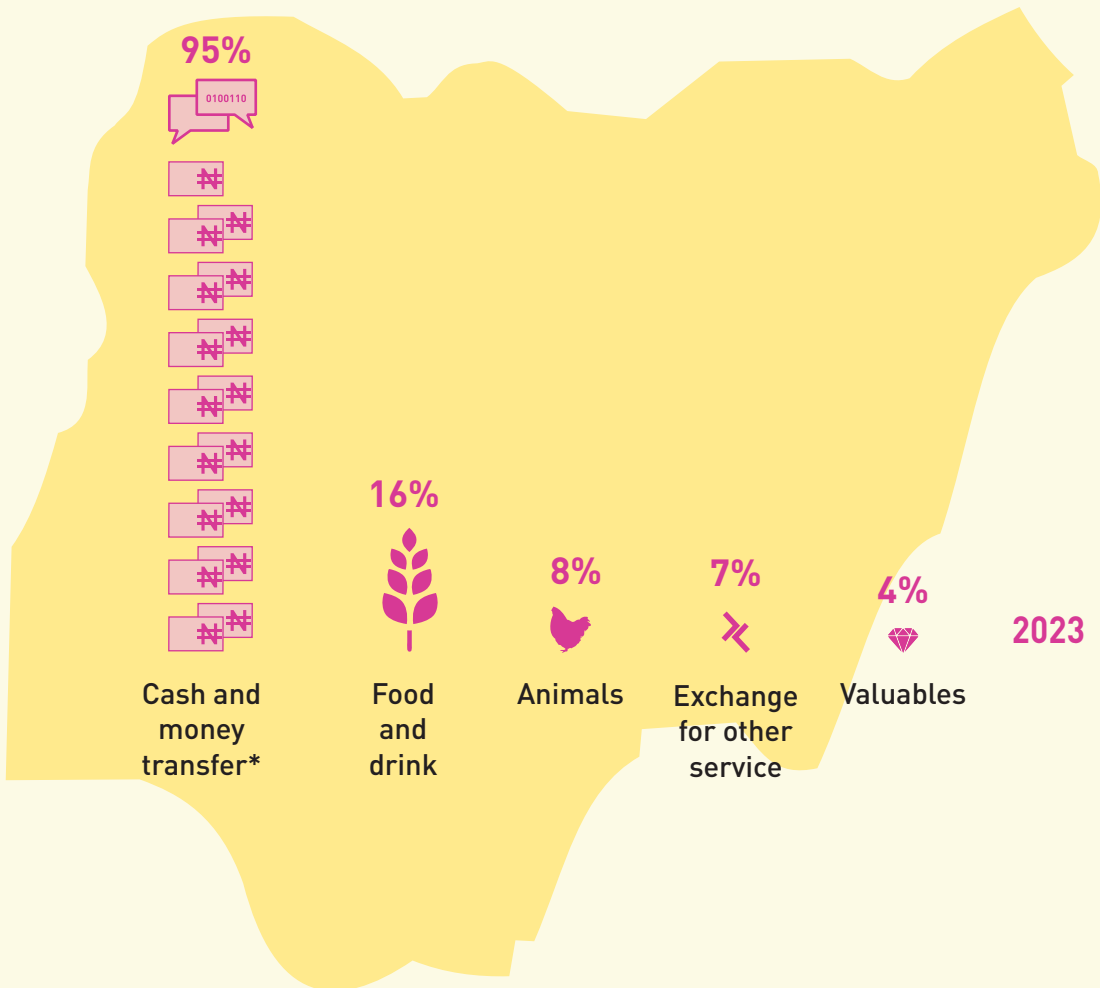
2023



Cash continues to be the dominant form of bribery.

More than 95 per cent of all bribes paid in 2023 were paid in monetary form (cash or money transfer), a slightly larger share than in 2019.

More than 9 out of 10 bribes are paid in cash or via money transfer.



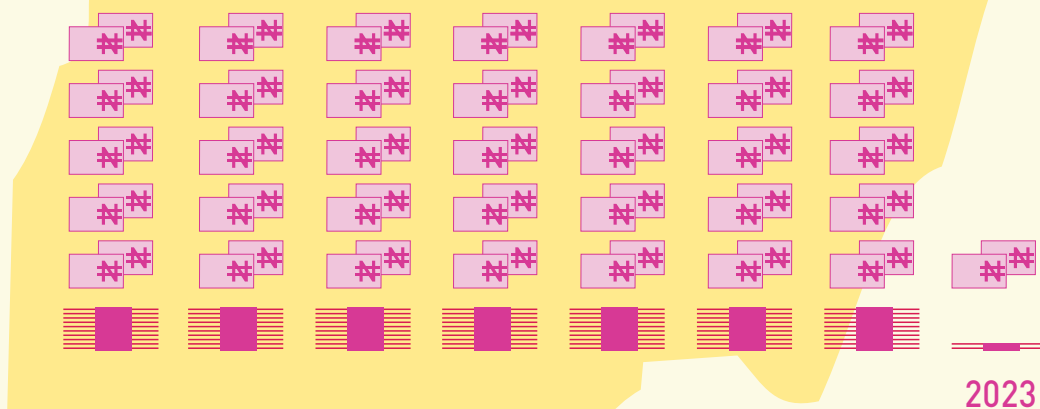
* Respondents could indicate that multiple payment forms were used in one instance of bribery, which means that the shares do not add up 100%.



More than NGN 700 billion in cash bribes were paid by citizens to public officials in 2023.

According to the 2023 survey, the average cash bribe paid was 8,284 Nigerian Naira (NGN). While the nominal average cash bribe size increased since 2019 (from NGN 5,754), this does not account for inflation. The inflation-adjusted average cash bribe in 2023 was actually 29 per cent smaller than in 2019 in terms of what could be bought with the money. Overall, it is estimated that a total of roughly NGN 721 billion (US\$1.26 billion¹) was paid in cash bribes to public officials in Nigeria in 2023, corresponding to 0.35 per cent of the entire Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria.

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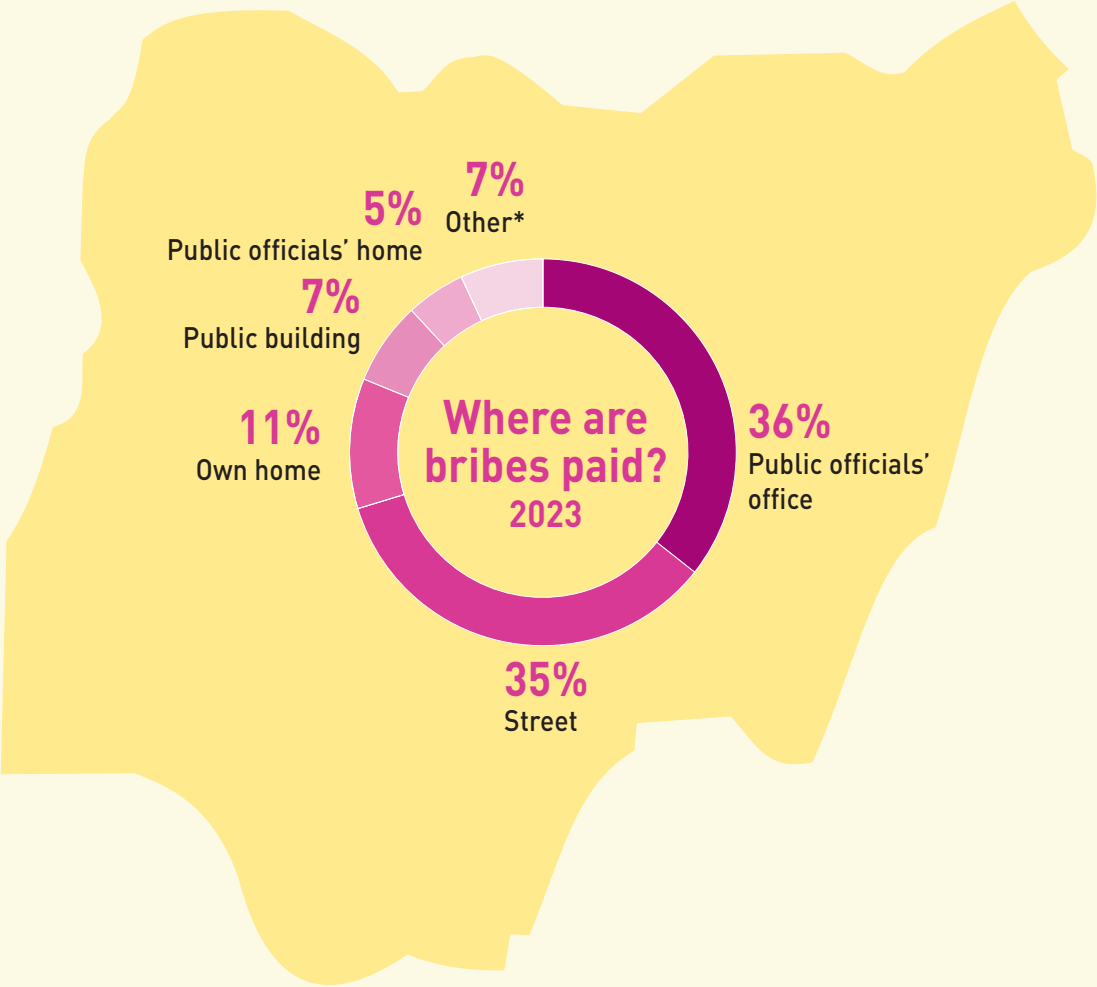


¹ Average central exchange rate over the reference period of the survey, from November 2022 to October 2023.

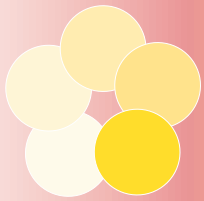


Most bribes are paid in the street or in a public official's office.

In 2023, bribes paid in a public official's office and in the street accounted for around 35 and 36 per cent of all paid briberies, respectively. 11 per cent of bribes were paid in the respondents' own home, while 7 per cent were paid in public buildings such as restaurants, malls, or stations.



* "Other" stating "Other location, Do not know and Not applicable".



How citizens respond to bribery



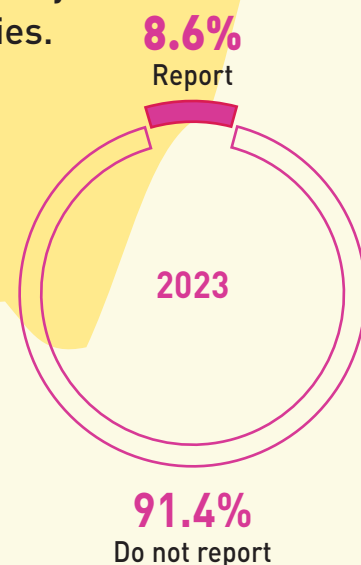
Nigerians are increasingly reporting bribe payments to official authorities.

In 2023, out of all citizens who paid a bribe, 8.6 per cent reported their experience to an official institution capable of investigating or otherwise following up and acting on that report. This represents a marked increase in the bribery reporting rate since 2019 when it stood at 3.6 per cent.

The increase is primarily driven by developments in the Northern zones, where the bribery reporting rate increased markedly from 4.7 per cent in 2019 to 13.4 per cent in 2023. In the Southern zones, the bribery reporting rate instead decreased moderately from 2.5 per cent in 2019 to 1.7 per cent in 2023.

The largest increases between 2019 and 2023 in the share of citizens who reported bribery cases were recorded by the police, anti-corruption agencies, and the media. Increasingly, Nigerians are also turning to non-traditional reporting mechanisms, with 68 per cent of those reporting bribery cases approaching both official authorities such as the police as well as non-official authorities such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the media.

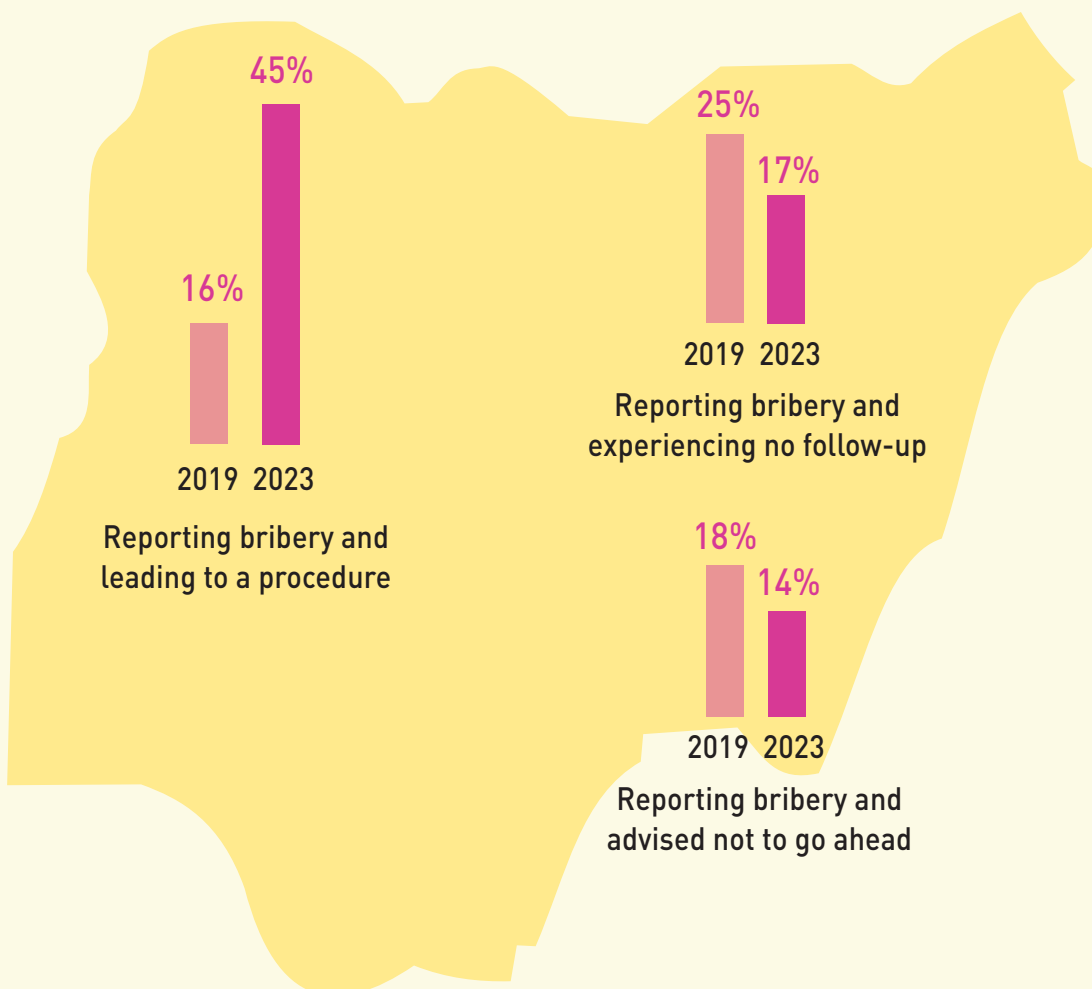
In 2023,
8.6 per cent
of people who paid a bribe actually
reported it to official authorities.

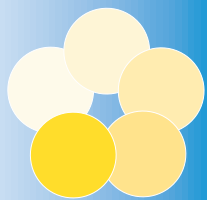




More formal procedures are initiated due to reporting, and fewer cases have no follow-up.

The share of bribery reports that lead to the initiation of a formal procedure against the public official increased nearly three-fold between 2019 and 2023, from 16 per cent to 45 per cent of bribery reports. The share of citizens who reported a bribery instance but experienced no follow-up after reporting went down from 25 per cent to 17 per cent, as did the share of citizens who reported a bribery incident and were advised not to go ahead with the report (from 18 per cent to 14 per cent).





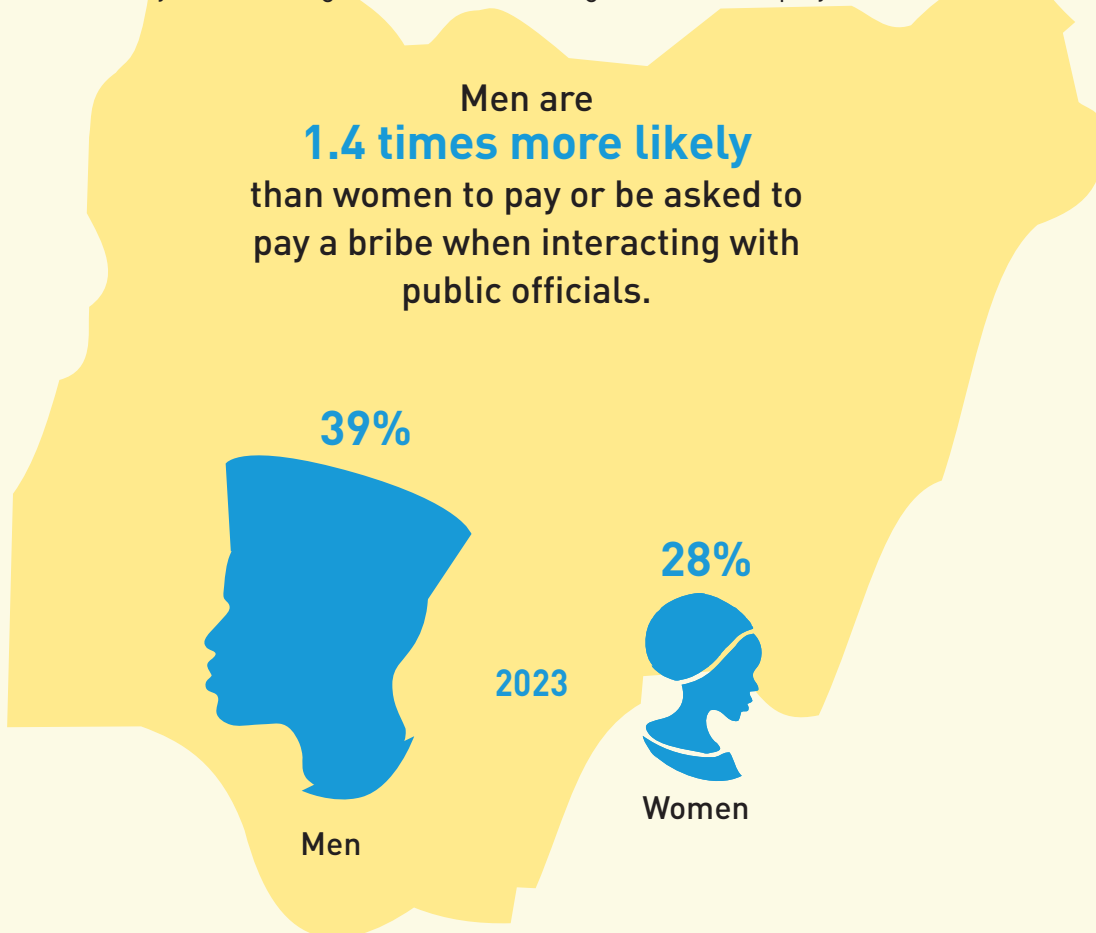
Gender and socio-demographic dimensions of corruption



Women are less exposed to bribery than men.

When in contact with public officials, women are less likely to experience bribery than men. In 2023, 39 per cent of all men who had contact with a public official either paid a bribe or were asked to do so but refused. The figure for women was significantly lower, at 28 per cent. This overall difference in bribery exposure between men and women is possibly driven by interactions with a few frequently contacted types of public official, in particular police officers, as well as some less frequently contacted types of officials such as Members of the Armed Forces and embassy and consulate officers, to whom men were more likely than women to pay or be asked to pay a bribe.

Women in Nigeria are less likely to engage in bribery than men irrespective of where they live, their age, educational background and employment status.





Female public officials are less likely than their male counterparts to solicit bribes.

The share of male public officials who solicit or receive unsolicited bribes when interacting with the public is nearly twice that of female public officials. An estimated 35 per cent of all male public officials who had contact with citizens in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey engaged in bribery (i.e. were either paid a bribe or requested a bribe but were refused), while a much smaller share of female public officials (19 per cent) requested or received a bribe.

The share of male public officials who solicit or take a bribe when interacting with the public is nearly **twice** that of female public officials.

35%



2023

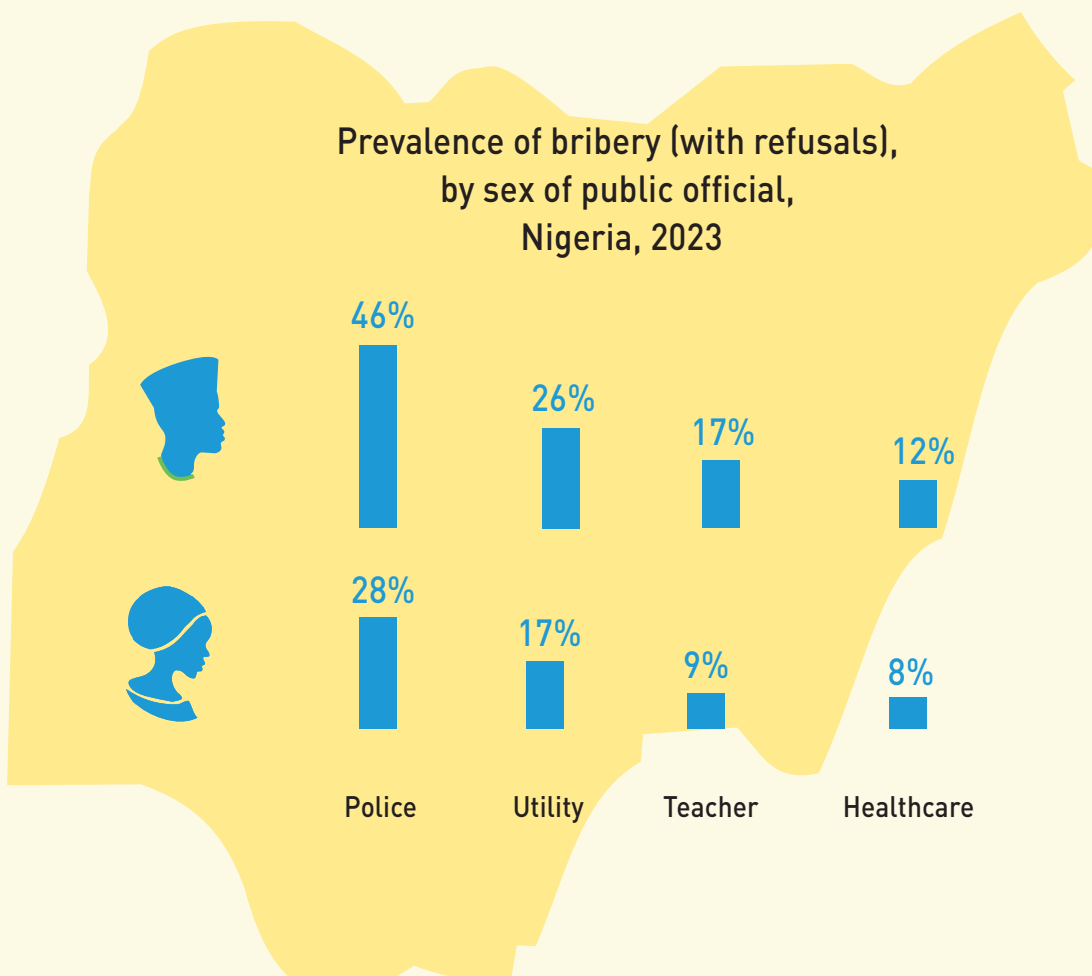
19%





Male-dominated professions are most at risk of bribery.

Public officials in sectors with a large share of female employees, such as education, are less likely to engage in bribery. However, male public officials are more likely to be involved in bribery irrespective of the sector.



Note: The prevalence of bribery by sex of public official is calculated by dividing the total number of adults who paid or were asked to pay a bribe to a (male or female) public official by the total number of adults in contact with a (male or female) public official in the 12 months prior to the survey.



Women are more exposed to sexual corruption than men.

Sexual corruption – the exchange of sexual favours or acts of a sexual nature in place of monetary bribes – affects women more than men in Nigeria. 5.3 per cent of all women interacting with public officials reported having been asked for sexual favours in the three years prior to the survey, while 4.8 cent of men reported experiencing such behaviour – a statistically significant difference.

A slightly larger share

of women interacting with public officials are asked for sexual favours.

4.8%



Men

5.3%



Women

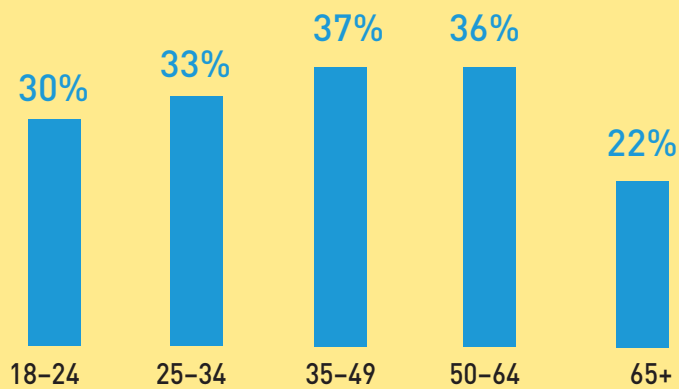
2023



Middle-aged citizens are most likely to experience bribery.

In 2023, Nigerians in the 35-49 and 50-64 age groups were most likely to pay bribes or be asked to pay bribes, with prevalence rates of 37 and 36 per cent respectively. Among all age groups, those aged 65 and older were least exposed to bribery (22 per cent).

Middle-aged citizens are most likely to pay or be asked to pay bribes.



2023

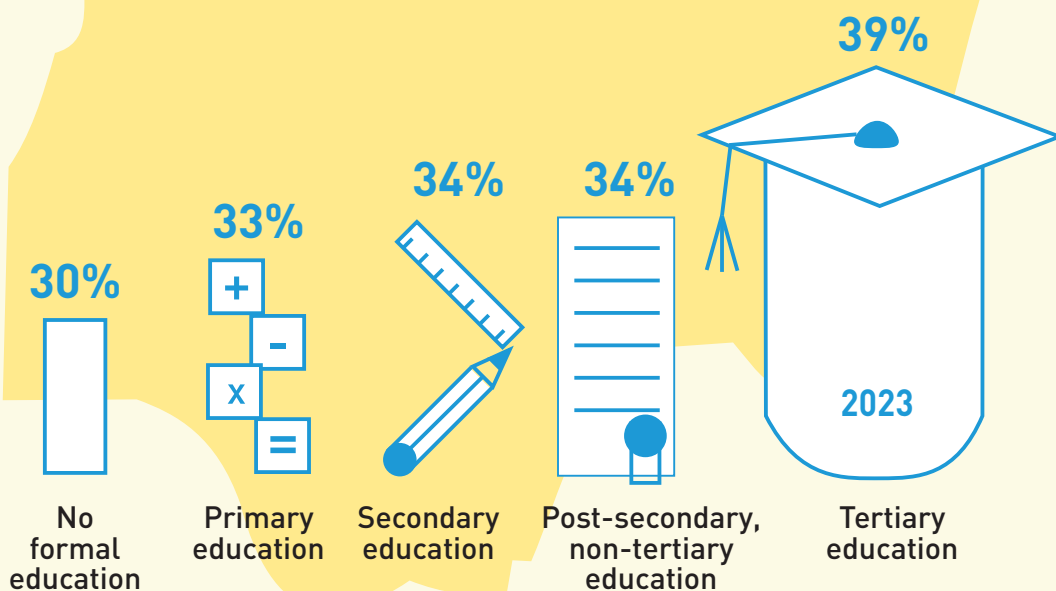


Highly educated people are most exposed to bribery.

With a prevalence of bribery of 39 per cent, people with a master's degree and/or a bachelor's degree are much more likely to pay or be asked to pay a bribe than those with no formal education. According to the 2023 survey, people with the highest level of (tertiary) education were 1.3 times more likely than people with no formal education to have paid a bribe, or been asked and refused to pay a bribe, when in contact with a public official.

The gap in bribery prevalence between citizens with no formal and those with tertiary education has decreased significantly, from 18 percentage points in 2019 to 9 percentage points in 2023. This can be attributed to a marked increase in bribery requests made to citizens without formal education.

People with the highest level of education are **1.3 times** more likely to pay bribes than people with no formal education.



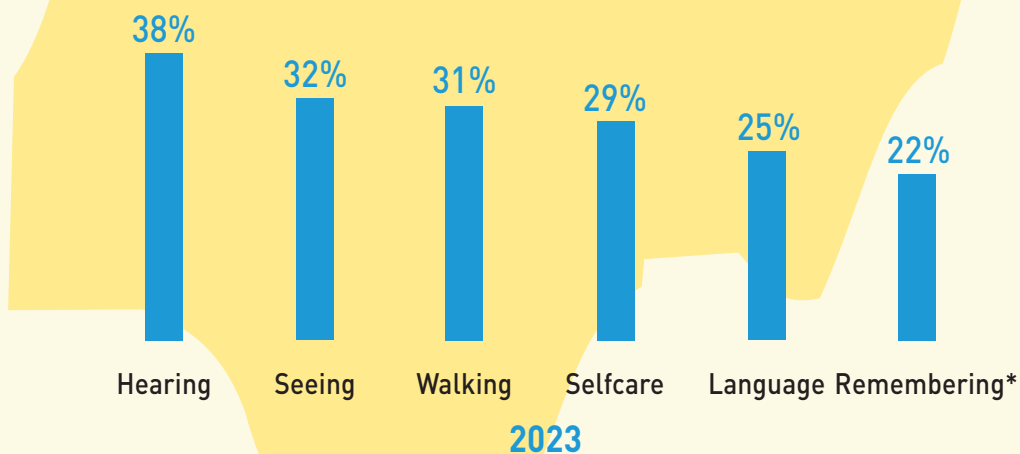


Bribery represents a unique challenge for people living with disabilities.

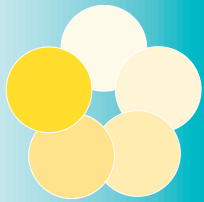
People living with disabilities were found to be no less likely to pay or be asked to pay a bribe when interacting with public officials than people without disabilities. 34 per cent of people living without disabilities were exposed to bribery in 2023, whereas the figure was 32 per cent among people living with disabilities. The rate of contact with public officials is about the same regardless of the type of disability. However, given the unique challenges people living with disabilities face, having to pay bribes when accessing public services represents a greater burden for this population group than for those who live without any disabilities.

People living with certain types of disability (such as those related to seeing, hearing, and walking) may be somewhat more exposed to bribery experiences than people living with other types of disability (such as those related to memory loss, selfcare and language) although estimates are subject to uncertainty given the small samples involved.

Bribery prevalence among people with disability is **similar** to the one among the general population.



* Disability status is based on the Short Set data collection tool developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and classifies a respondent as living with a disability if they reported having "a lot of difficulty" doing one of six activities across different domains of functioning or if they reported that they "cannot do at all" one of these activities.



Corruption in public sector recruitment



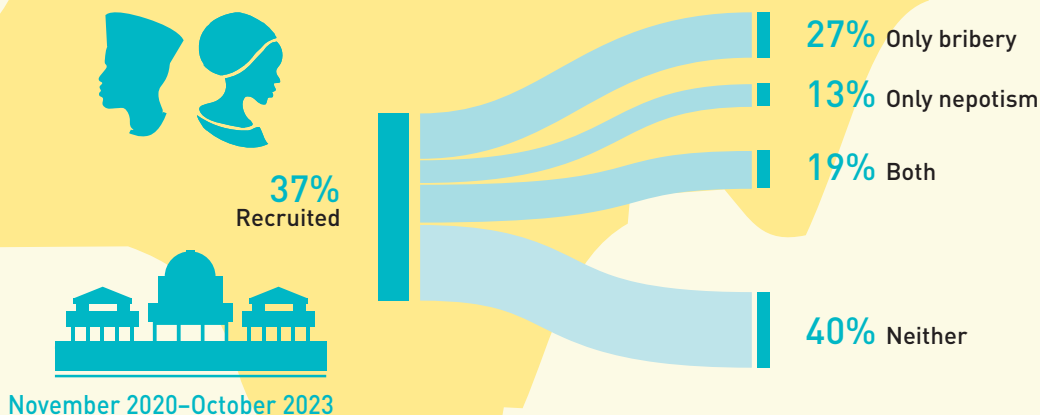
Nepotism and bribery in public sector recruitment on the rise.

The selection process used to recruit public officials plays a crucial role in shaping the culture of integrity that should drive the civil service as well as ensure that new recruits have the highest standards of professionalism and merit. However, the 2023 survey findings indicate that the public sector recruitment process requires closer monitoring, as almost half (46 per cent) of people who secured a job in the public sector in the last three years prior to the survey admitted that they paid a bribe to facilitate their recruitment – about 1.5 times the share found in the 2019 survey (31 per cent).

The 2023 survey also found evidence that a considerable number of people recruited into the public sector secured their posts with the help of a friend or relative, many in addition to paying a bribe: of all successful applicants in the last three years prior to the 2023 survey, 32 per cent were helped by friends or relatives. Overall, in the three years prior to the 2023 survey, around 60 per cent of public sector applicants in Nigeria were hired as a result of nepotism, bribery or both – about 1.2 times the share found in the 2019 survey.

6 out of 10

successful candidates for posts in the public sector admitted using either nepotism, bribery or both to improve their chances of recruitment.

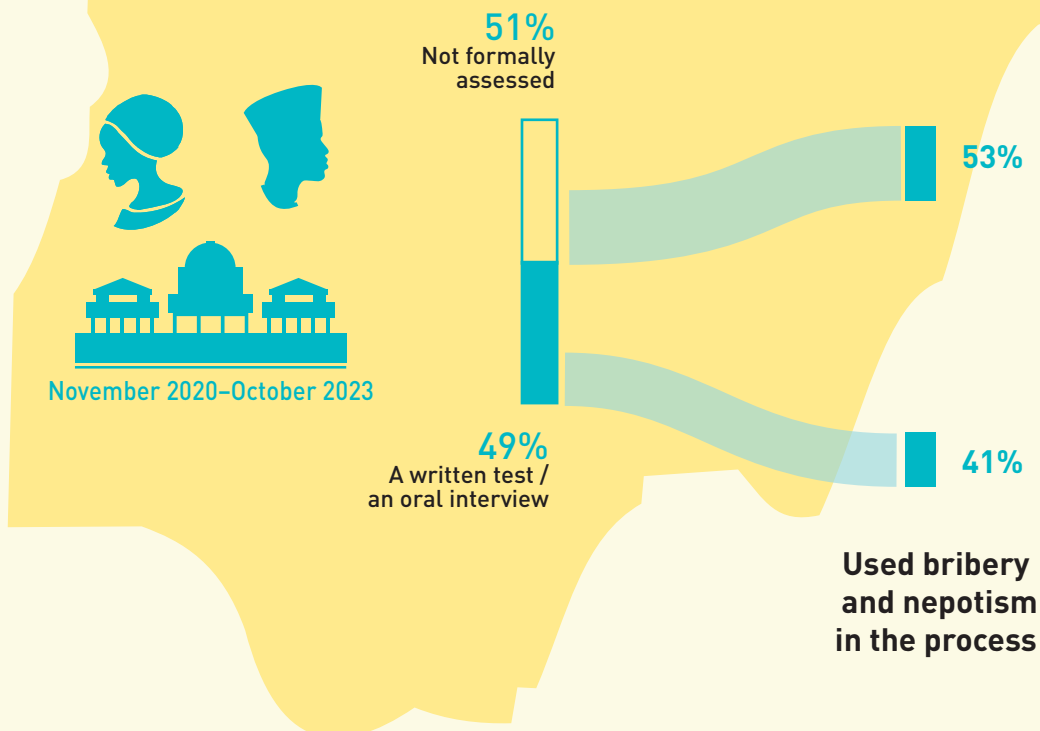




A transparent assessment procedure has reduced corrupt practices in public sector recruitment.

The 2023 survey data show that approximately half (49 per cent) of those who secured a position in the public sector in the three years prior to the survey passed a written test and/or oral interview during the recruitment selection process. Importantly, the data suggest that the means of selection had a role in facilitating or preventing the use of illegal practices during recruitment. Among those who underwent an assessment procedure (written test / oral interview), 41 per cent made use of bribery, while the share was as much as 53 per cent among those who were not formally assessed.

The use of bribery is **lower** when the recruitment process includes a written test and/or oral interview.







Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In 2016 and 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) collaborated with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to conduct two comprehensive corruption surveys in Nigeria, interviewing more than 33,000 households in each survey wave, and covering all 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory. The findings from the 2016¹ and 2019² surveys provided valuable and reliable information on patterns and trends in citizens' everyday experiences of corruption and complemented other efforts aimed at deploying the use of data and statistics to enhance understanding of the nature and magnitude of corruption in Nigeria.

To measure if progress has been made in the fight against corruption since the 2019 survey, and to determine which areas need more effort, the Government of Nigeria decided to carry out a third corruption survey in 2023, using the same methodology and coverage as in 2016 and 2019. This report details the result of the third survey, with an emphasis on current corruption patterns, and trends over the four-year period from 2019 to 2023. In doing so, it effectively highlights both: areas of progress and areas that continue to present grave concerns. With a special focus on gender equity and social inclusion, the report also provides essential data for more targeted interventions to curb corruption affecting marginalized groups such as women, youth and persons living with disabilities.

The implementation of the survey and work on the preparation of this report were made possible with the financial support of the MacArthur Foundation.

1 UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria – Bribery: public experience and response* (Vienna, 2017).
2 UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria – Bribery: public experience and response*. (Vienna, 2019).

Measuring corruption through experience-based corruption surveys

As acknowledged by international statistical standards, the effective measurement of patterns of and trends in bribery and other forms of corruption requires experience-based sample surveys to be conducted.³ Experience-based surveys can avoid the pitfalls of both administrative data on corruption (namely the pervasive undercounting of undetected and unreported cases) and the shortcomings of perception-based corruption studies (which by definition capture opinions rather than the actual phenomenon). When well-designed and implemented to the highest standards, experience-based surveys on corruption can measure both levels of and trends in bribery and forms of corruption.

The importance of monitoring trends and patterns of corruption through experience-based surveys has been recognized by the international community in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴ Under Sustainable Development Goal 16 on “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”, the main indicator chosen to monitor progress towards target 16.5 (“Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms”) among the population is indicator 16.5.1 (“prevalence of bribery”), which is one of the main indicators examined in this report and is therefore instrumental to the monitoring of the achievement of the target.

The administrative bribery covered by the 2016, 2019 and 2023 surveys is the type of corruption that most affects the daily lives of ordinary citizens in Nigeria. By affecting a significant portion of their interactions with public officials, the compounded effects of administrative bribery can be just as destructive to society as higher profile, grand corruption schemes that misappropriate public funds. Recurring requests for bribes erode the rule of law, disrupt the fair allocation of resources and reduce accessibility to public services. Bribery also places a heavy burden on particularly vulnerable groups such as women, youth, or persons living with disabilities, and it has a toxic effect on the fair and efficient functioning of the public administration. Given the pervasiveness and persistence of bribery in Nigeria, as evidenced by the 2016, 2019 and 2023 surveys, it is a form of corruption that seriously threatens the integrity of public services and thus Nigerian citizens’ faith in the administration and the Government.

3 For more information, see: UNODC, *Manual on Corruption Surveys* (Vienna, 2018); UNODC, *Statistical framework to measure corruption* (Vienna, 2023)

4 United Nations General Assembly, Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1 of 21 October 2015.

The 2023 corruption survey in Nigeria

Like the 2016 and 2019 corruption surveys, the 2023 survey was implemented by NBS in partnership with UNODC. Following the process and methodology adopted in 2016 and 2019, the 2023 survey is based on data collected in a large-scale household survey (33,035 households) on corruption conducted in October/November 2023. Approximately 900 interviews were conducted in each of the country's 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory. Therefore, the results on the prevalence of bribery are representative of the country as a whole and at the zonal and state level. As part of the activities aimed at ensuring the integrity and accuracy of data, a quality assurance programme of the whole survey process was designed by NBS and UNODC and implemented by an independent party: Practical Sampling International (PSI), a Lagos-based consultancy group, which specializes in sample surveys. PSI carried out quality assurance on a random sample of interviews conducted in different languages across the states of Nigeria.

A National Steering Committee (NSC), composed of key anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria was established and involved from the outset in the overall guidance of survey implementation. For additional inputs, the NSC included several civil society organizations active in anti-corruption advocacy and research. In addition, a National Technical Committee (NTC), consisting of a sub-set of the NSC, selected anti-corruption agencies and civil society organizations, UNODC, NBS and other relevant organizations was established. The NSC provided oversight for the launch and validation of the survey activities while the NTC was provided operational and technical support to the design planning and implementation of the survey. This includes a review of the survey methodology and design as well as providing technical input and advice to key stages of the survey preparatory work, testing of instruments, and fieldwork while ensuring comparability with the 2016 and 2019 surveys.⁵


⁵ For the first time, the 2023 survey allowed respondents to report whether they refused bribery requests in the past 12 months separately for each type of public official. This allowed for a more accurate measurement of bribery refusals, a key part of the prevalence rate (SDG indicator 16.5.1). In addition, the 2023 survey also included new survey questions on the location of bribery, the gender dimensions of bribery, and items to measure respondents' disability status.



The conduct of a methodologically sound survey that is representative of the general population can contribute much to the comprehensive examination of the extent and nature of corruption. By generating actionable data on patterns and modalities of bribe-paying, by highlighting particular areas of vulnerability to bribery in the public administration, and by examining inadequacies in the State response to corruption, experience-based corruption surveys, such as the one presented in this report, can provide concrete guidance for the design of anti-corruption strategies and policies. In addition, the third corruption survey conducted in Nigeria in 2023 enables the measurement of corruption trends since 2016, highlighting the geographical areas, State institutions and administrative procedures, both where improvements could be achieved and where significant improvements have been noticed. This helps identify the good practices that have contributed to the observed differences in outcomes and points to areas where greater effort is needed. In this way, this report charts the way ahead for the fight against corruption in Nigeria in the years to come.

1





*The scope of
bribery*

This chapter provides an overview of the prevalence and frequency of bribery in Nigeria, at the national, zonal, and state levels, and tracks trends since 2016, when the first national corruption survey was conducted in Nigeria. It also looks at the extent of contact between citizens and public officials across Nigeria – a precondition for public sector bribery to occur. It concludes with an analysis of bribery in the private sector and an investigation of perceptions among Nigerians¹ regarding corruption and anti-corruption efforts.

Citizens' contacts with the public sector

Interactions with public officials form an integral part of daily life in Nigeria. Be it encountering a police officer on the road, attending a doctor's appointment at a public hospital or enrolling one's children in a public school, a large part of the population of Nigeria has regular interactions with public officials. The extent of these encounters is measured using the "contact rate", which is an important concept when analysing the experience of bribery among the population. This is because public officials can only seek undue remuneration for services when they come into direct or indirect contact with citizens.

What is the contact rate?

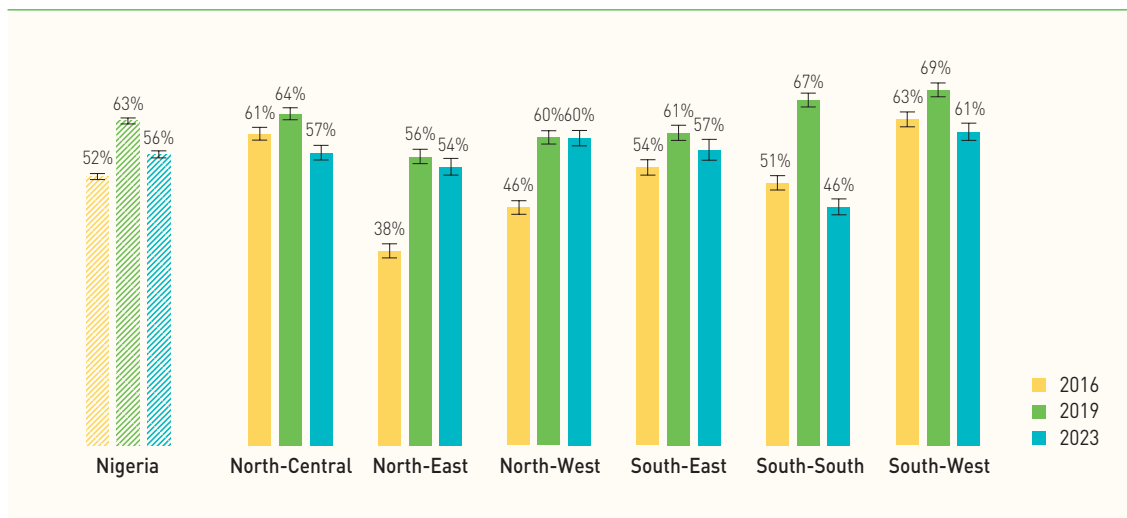
The share of the adult population who interacted with a public official at least once in the past 12 months.

In 2023, around 56 per cent of Nigerians had at least one contact with a public official. This represents a significant reduction in the contact rate since the second corruption survey was conducted in 2019, when the contact rate stood at 63 per cent.² Nonetheless, the level of contact with public officials observed in 2023 was still higher than in 2016, when the contact rate stood at only 52 per cent (Figure 1).³

Significant reductions in levels of contact with public officials between 2019 and 2023 were observed across all geographical zones, except for the North-West zone, where the contact rate remained stable at 60 per cent between 2019 and 2023 (Figure 1). The most significant reduction in the contact rate between 2019 and 2023 was recorded in the South-South zone, where in 2023, only half of the adult population reported having had any contact with a public official in the past 12 months.

- 1 The target population of the survey was all residents of Nigeria aged 18 and older. All data in this report refer to adult residents of Nigeria, who are also referred to as "residents", "citizens" and "Nigerians".
- 2 As shown in more detail in the next chapter, the reduction in the national contact rate is partly attributable to strong reductions in citizens' contact with police officers, public utility officers and health care workers. Other types of public officials also recorded reduced contact rates, but the changes between 2019 and 2023 were less pronounced.
- 3 The lower national contact rate in 2016 is partly attributable to significantly lower contact (compared with 2019) between citizens and police officers, public utilities officers, and Federal Road Safety Corps officers, among others.

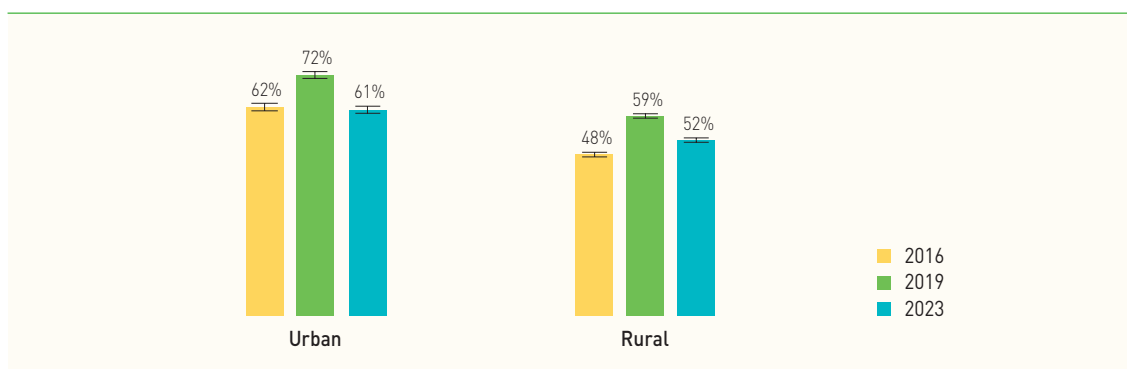
Figure 1: Contact rate in Nigeria and by Zone, 2016–2023



Note: The contact rate refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

Reductions in the contact rate with public officials between 2019 and 2023 were not only observed across geographical zones, but also across rural and urban areas, with a particularly pronounced decline of 11 percentage points in urban areas, compared with a somewhat smaller decline of 7 percentage points in rural areas (Figure 2). Despite the larger decline in urban areas, the contact rate remains significantly higher in these areas compared with rural areas.

Figure 2: Contact rate, by area, 2016–2023



Note: The contact rate refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

Prevalence and trends in bribery in the public sector

The importance of measuring the experience of bribery among the general population was recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under Goal 16, on promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all, Target 16.5 seeks to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms. Indicator 16.5.1 on the prevalence of bribery is measured as the proportion of adult citizens who paid at least one bribe to a public official or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but refused to pay, in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all citizens who had at least one contact with a public official over the same period.

What is the prevalence of bribery?

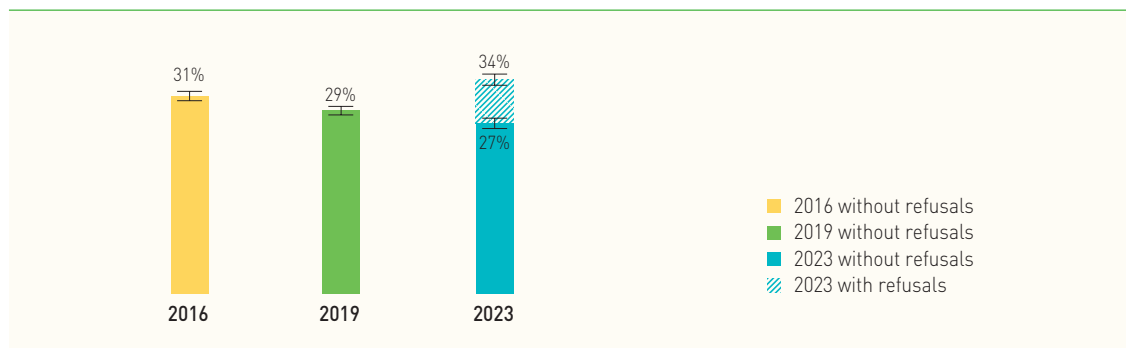
The share of adults who had contact with a public official in the previous 12 months and paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe but refused to do so.

This means that over-time trends in the overall prevalence of bribery can be influenced by changes in three different parameters:

1. the number of citizens who have contact with a public official,
2. the number of citizens who pay a bribe,⁴ and
3. the number of citizens who are asked to pay a bribe but refuse.

Of all Nigerians surveyed in 2023 who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, an estimated 27 per cent paid a bribe to a public official. This means that the prevalence of bribe payment (excluding refusals) in Nigeria underwent a moderate, yet statistically significant⁵ decrease since 2019, when it stood at 29 per cent, continuing the moderate downward trend observed since 2016, when the prevalence of bribe payment (excluding refusals) stood at 31 per cent (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Bribery prevalence in Nigeria, with and without refusals, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery without refusals refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery with refusals refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

For the first time, the 2023 survey allowed respondents to report whether they refused bribery requests in the past 12 months separately for each type of public official. By contrast, the 2016 and 2019 surveys only asked whether there had been *any* bribery refusals in the previous

- 4 A bribe payment can be made following a request by that public official or at the initiative of the citizen (e.g. as a sign of appreciation).
- 5 The decrease in the prevalence of bribery payments without refusals between 2019 and 2023 is statistically significant at 99 per cent. A statistically significant difference or change is one where the resulting difference or change observed using a sample has a high probability (in this case over 99 per cent) of reflecting a real change in the population from which the sample was drawn.



12 months, which likely resulted in an undercounting of bribery refusals. While both approaches to eliciting information about bribery refusals allow the identification of respondents who had *at least one* bribery refusal in the past 12 months, the more detailed follow-up questions about each type of public official used in the 2023 survey resulted in a much more accurate and complete capture of bribery refusals in Nigeria. As a result, the bribery refusal rates measured in 2023 cannot be directly compared to bribery refusal rates from 2016/19 and the latter are therefore omitted from the analysis.⁶

When accounting for instances where public officials asked for bribes *but citizens refused the request*, the overall bribery prevalence (including refusals) in 2023 is estimated to stand at 34 per cent (Figure 3). This means that, in 2023, roughly one in every three interactions between citizens and public officials involved bribery. Figure 3 also shows, however, that a substantial proportion of bribe requests in 2023 were refused by citizens – a dynamic that is explored in more detail in the next section.

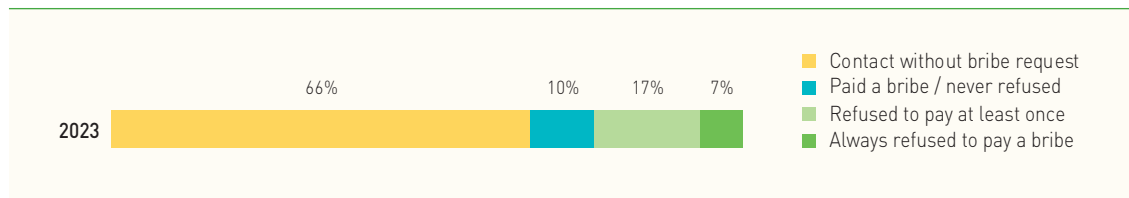
Overall, the findings from the 2023 survey suggest that the prevalence of bribery has remained relatively stable in Nigeria, with bribe payments only decreasing moderately between 2019 and 2023. Furthermore, the findings suggest that public officials in Nigeria continue to be blatant in asking for bribes – as one in three encounters with public officials involve a bribe request. The fact that a substantial proportion of bribe requests in 2023 were refused by citizens highlights the importance of accurately and comprehensively measuring bribery refusals – which was done for the first time in the 2023 survey – and reveals that many Nigerian citizens are indeed confident in refusing to pay bribes when requested to do so by public officials. This finding may indicate that Nigerians are becoming less tolerant of corruption and more assertive of their rights in their interactions with public officials. The next section provides evidence in support of this hypothesis, and explores possible reasons why Nigerians are refusing to pay bribes.

Why are Nigerians refusing to pay bribes?

To understand the reluctance of Nigerian citizens to comply with bribery request by public officials, it is useful to examine the citizens who had contact with public officials. This means looking at the respective proportion of citizens who always paid bribes when requested, those who refused to pay a bribe on at least one occasion, and those who always refused to pay a bribe. Figure 4 shows that those who fall into the latter two categories (who refused to pay at least once and who always refused to pay a bribe) jointly account for 20 per cent of Nigerian citizens who had contact with public officials in 2023, while the share of those who always complied with bribe requests (the “never refusers”) only make 10 per cent.

⁶ The data published for 2019 and 2016 were respectively 30.2 and 32.3 per cent, but this included a partial estimate of people who refused to pay a bribe. The 2019 and 2016 figures of 29 and 31 per cent includes only people who paid a bribe.

Figure 4: Proportion of Nigerian citizens who had contact with public officials without a bribe request, who always paid bribes when requested, who refused to pay a bribe on at least one occasion and who always refused to pay a bribe, Nigeria, 2023



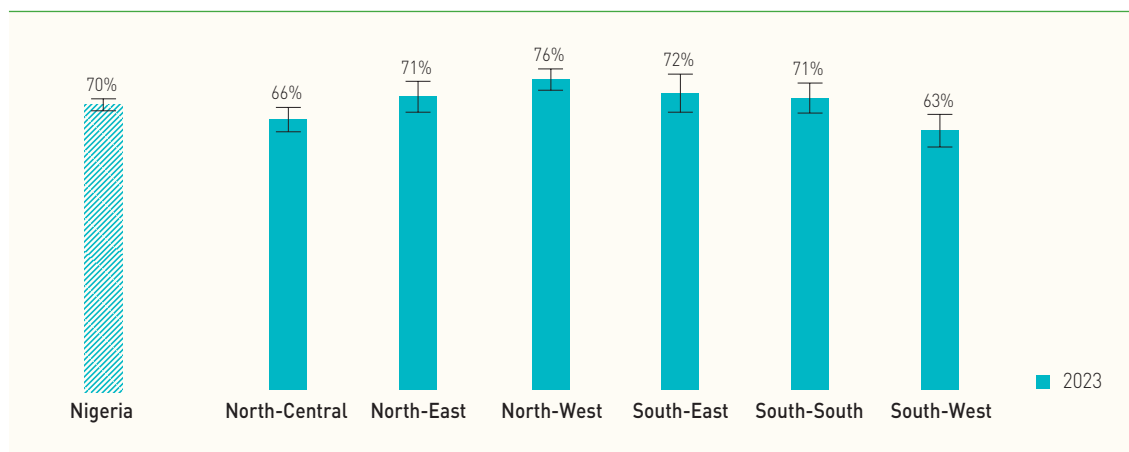
Another way to quantify Nigerian citizens' inclination to refuse bribes, is to look at the bribery refusal rate, which is defined as the number of people who refused a bribe payment at least once (including those who refused always and those who refused sometimes but paid on other occasions) as a percentage of all those people who were asked to pay a bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey (irrespective of whether they complied or refused).

What is the bribery refusal rate?

The share of adults who were asked to pay a bribe by a public official in the previous 12 months and refused a bribe payment on at least one occasion.

In 2023, when faced with a bribe request, approximately 70 per cent of Nigerian citizens who were asked to pay a bribe, refused to do so on at least one occasion (Figure 5). Bribery refusal rates were relatively similar across geographical zones within Nigeria, ranging from 63 per cent in the South-West to 76 per cent in the North-West in 2023 (Figure 5).⁷

Figure 5: Bribery refusal rate in Nigeria and by zone, 2023



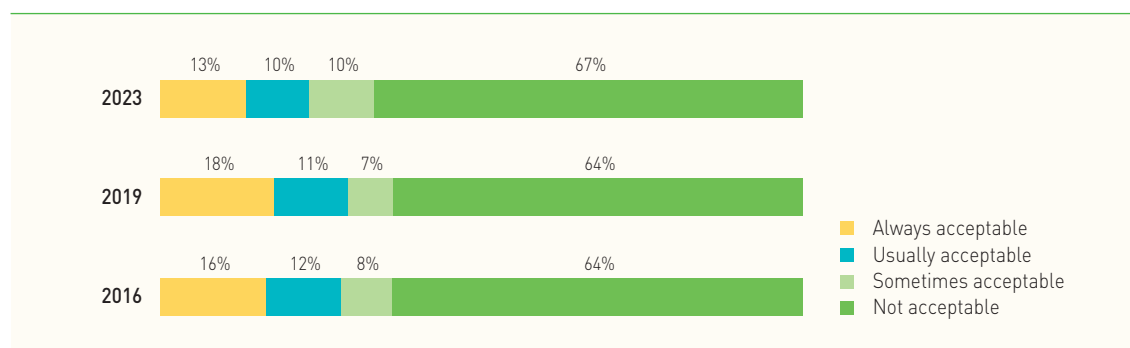
Note: The bribery refusal rate refers the number of people who refused a bribe payment at least once (including those who refused always and those who refused sometimes but paid on other occasions) as a percentage of all those people who were asked to pay a bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey (irrespective of whether they complied or refused). The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports.

⁷ In 2023, there was only moderate variation across type of public official requesting bribes in terms of the bribery refusal rate, with the lowest rate observed among teachers/lecturers (67 per cent) and the highest rate observed among Members of Parliament (83 per cent).

While a trend analysis of bribery refusal rates is not possible due to the change in methodology to more comprehensively capture refusals in the 2023 survey, the moderate decline in the share of citizens who had contact with public officials and who actually paid a bribe, may indicate that Nigerians are increasingly confident in refusing bribe requests.

This hypothesis finds some support in the available trend data. For example, Figure 6 shows that the share of Nigerians who think that bribery requests are “always acceptable” or “usually acceptable” in order to speed up administrative procedures, decreased significantly from 29 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent in 2023,⁸ suggesting a gradual change in social norms around the acceptability of bribery in Nigeria.

Figure 6: Percentage distribution of respondents who think that it is acceptable for a public officer to ask for a bribe to speed up administrative procedures, Nigeria, 2016–2023



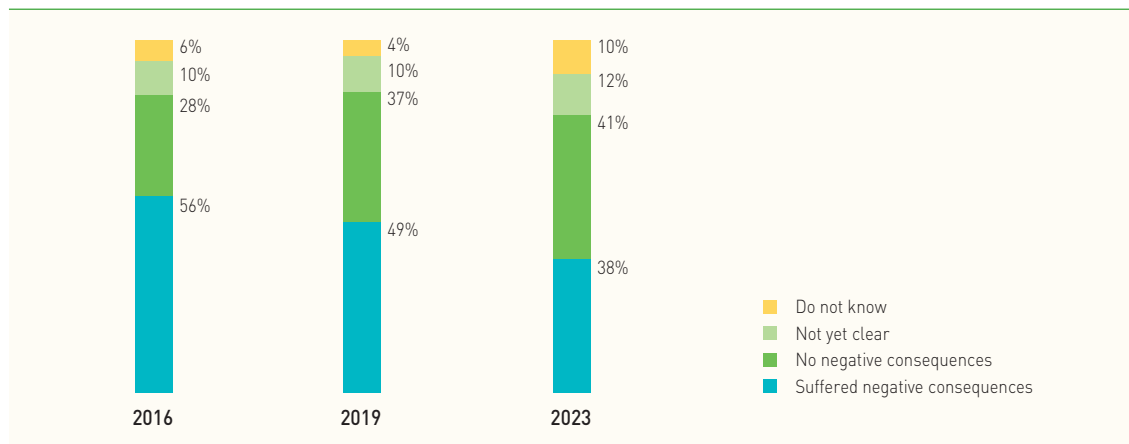
Note: The survey question wording was: What is your opinion about the following behaviour? Is it 1) Always acceptable; 2) Usually acceptable; 2) Sometimes acceptable; or 3) Not acceptable for a public officer to ask for a bribe to speed up administrative procedures?

Additional evidence in support of the hypothesis that Nigerians are increasingly willing to refuse bribery requests by public officials comes from an analysis of changes in the share of bribe-refusers who report suffering negative consequences because of their refusal. This decreased significantly from 49 per cent in 2019 to 38 per cent in 2023 (Figure 7). Similarly, the share of bribe-refusers who report no negative consequences because of their refusal increased from 37 per cent in 2019 to 41 per cent in 2023 (Figure 7).⁹ Taken together, these findings suggest that Nigerians may feel increasingly empowered to confront corrupt officials without fear of repercussions.

⁸ The change between 2019 and 2023 in the share of respondents who think that bribery requests are always or usually acceptable in order to speed up administrative procedures is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.

⁹ The change between 2019 and 2023 in the share of bribe-refusers who report no negative consequences because of their refusal is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

Figure 7: Percentage distribution of reported consequences among respondents who refused to pay a bribe, 2016–2023

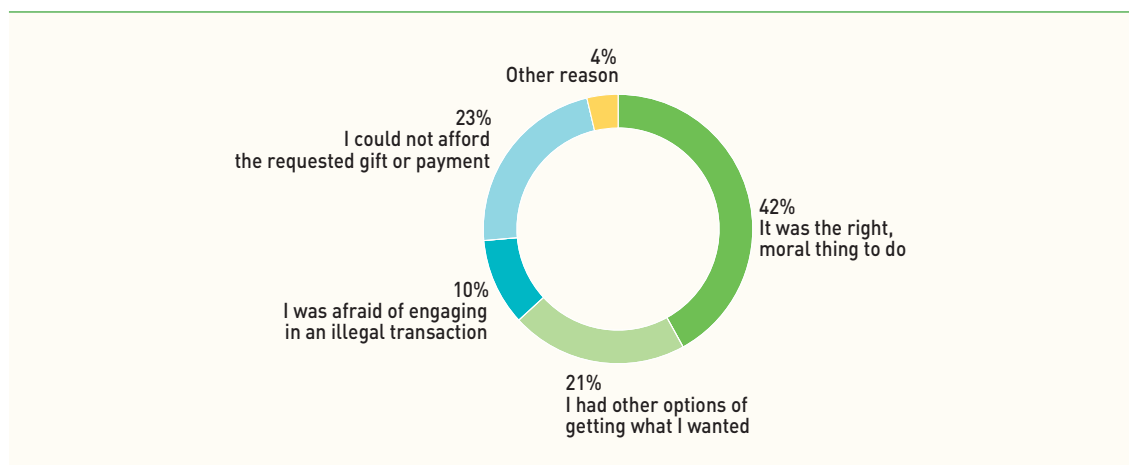


Note: The survey question wording was: The last time a public official asked you for a gift or payment that you did not give, what happened as a consequence? 1) You suffered negative consequences; 2) There were no negative consequences; 3) It is not clear yet if anything will happen as a consequence; and 4) Do not know.

Another interesting piece of evidence is found in the data on the main reasons for why Nigerian citizens refuse bribery requests.¹⁰ In 2023, a sizeable share of all bribe-refusers (21 per cent) indicated that their main reason for refusing a bribe request was because they “had other options of getting what they wanted”. This indicates that a significant proportion of bribe requests are refused because citizens are able to by-pass corrupt officials in accessing and utilising public services.

Among all the other reasons cited, (see figure below) it is interesting to note that by far a large majority (42 per cent) said they refused a bribe request because “it was the right, moral thing to do”, suggesting that normative concerns play an important role in explaining why Nigerians refuse bribe requests. The data also highlight other important reasons behind bribery refusals in Nigeria, such as pressures related to high cost of living (“I could not afford the requested gift or payment”) at 23 per cent (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage distribution of main reason for refusing bribe request, Nigeria, 2023



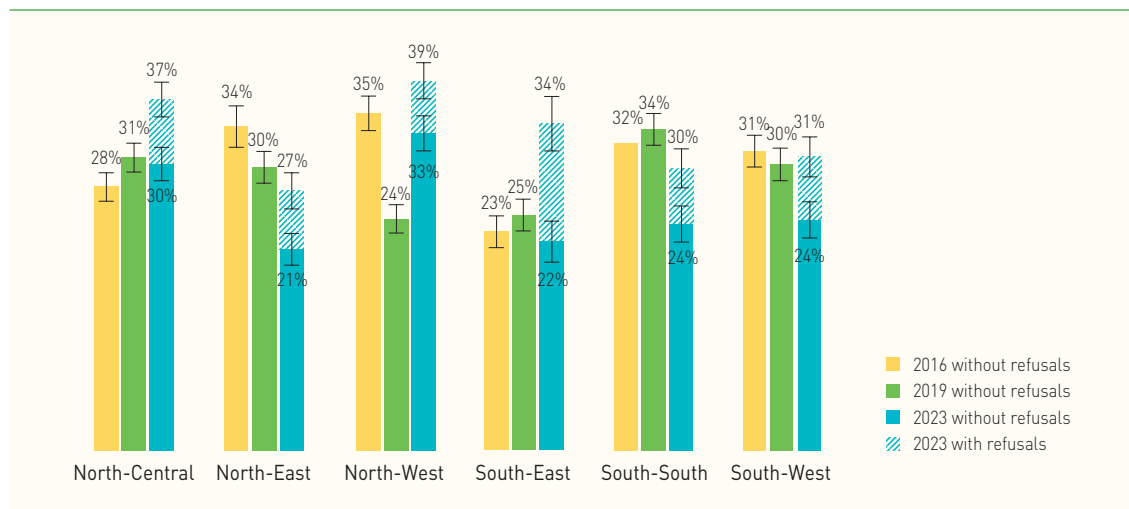
Note: The survey question wording was: The last time a public official asked you for a gift or payment that you did not give, what was the main reason why you refused? Only one answer option was allowed.

¹⁰ Information on the main reasons why Nigerians refuse bribery requests is unfortunately not available for previous survey rounds, making it impossible to discuss trends.

Geographic dimensions of bribery in the public sector

Substantial variation in prevalence of bribery and trends thereof, can be observed at the zonal level (Figure 9). The North-East, South-South and South-West zones stand out as recording significant decreases in the prevalence of bribe payment (without refusals) between 2019 and 2023. By contrast, the North-West zone recorded a significant increase in the prevalence of bribe payment (without refusals) over the period 2019–2023, while only minor changes were observed in the North-Central and South-East zones (Figure 9).

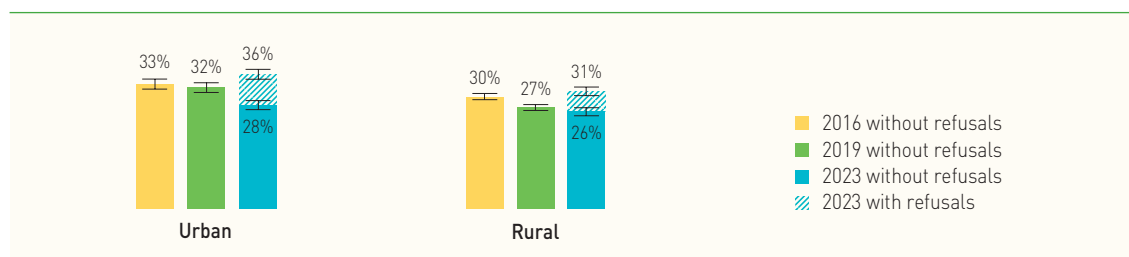
Figure 9: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by zone, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery *without refusals* refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery *with refusals* refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

In 2023, the North-West stands out as recording the highest overall bribery prevalence among all zones, estimated at 33 per cent without refusals (and 39 per cent with refusals). This development represents a drastic reversal in the North-West, as it recorded the lowest bribery prevalence among all zones in 2019 (at 24 per cent without refusals).

Figure 10: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by urban and rural area, 2016–2023

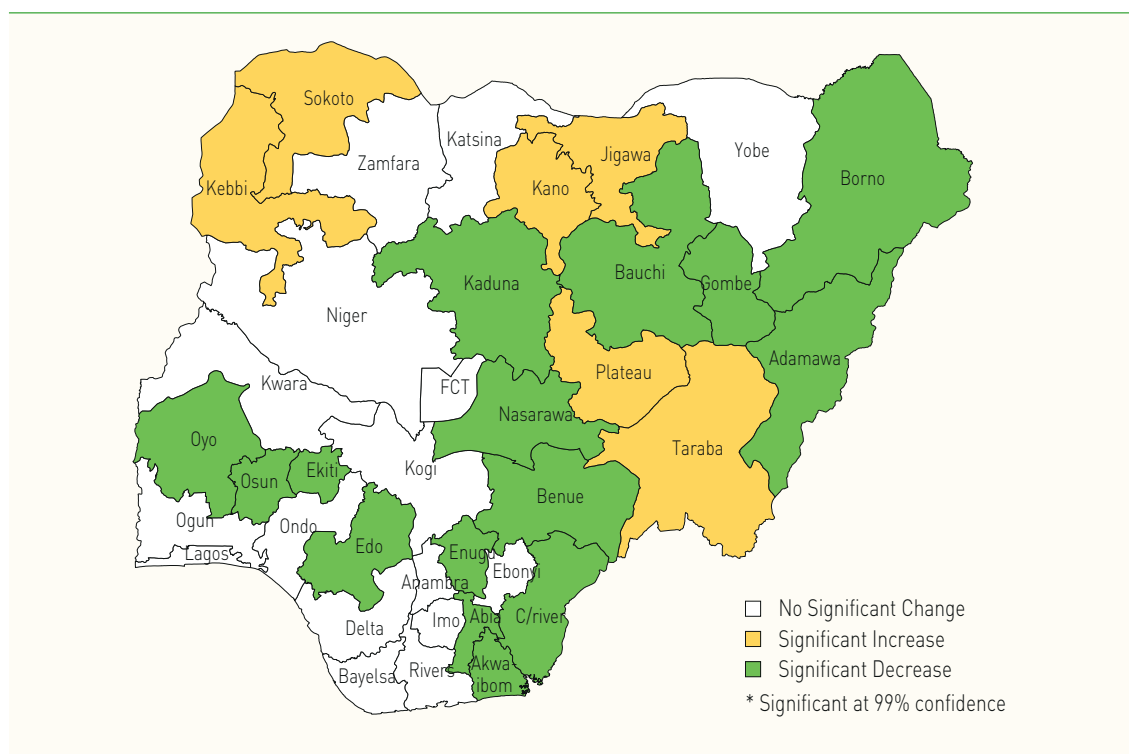


Note: The prevalence of bribery *without refusals* refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery *with refusals* refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

As in many other countries, a citizen's place of residence in Nigeria is strongly associated with his or her risk of being exposed to bribery. In 2023, the prevalence of bribery (including refusals) among Nigerians living in urban areas (36 per cent) was around 5 percentage points higher than among those living in rural areas (31 per cent). While this difference shows that in densely populated areas, public officials may be more blatant in requesting bribes, it also shows that in urban areas, citizens are more likely to refuse bribery requests compared with rural areas (Figure 10). This is because, despite the difference in levels of bribery requests, the prevalence of actual bribe payment (excluding refusals) is approximately equal in urban and rural areas (at 28 and 26 per cent respectively).

Of the 37 states in Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 21 recorded statistically significant¹¹ changes in the prevalence of bribe payment (excluding refusals) from 2019 to 2023, of which 6 experienced significant increases, while 15 experienced significant decreases (Figure 11). Ordered from the largest to the smallest decrease, those 15 states comprised Gombe, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Akwa-Ibom, Abia, Oyo, Cross River, Kaduna, Benue, Borno, Adamawa, Osun, Nasarawa, and Bauchi. By contrast, six states experienced statistically significant increases from 2019 to 2023 in the prevalence of bribe payment (excluding refusals). Ordered from the smallest to the largest increase, the states were Jigawa, Plateau, Taraba, Kebbi, Kano, and Sokoto.

Figure 11: States with a statistically significant increase or decrease in bribery prevalence (without refusals), 2019–2023

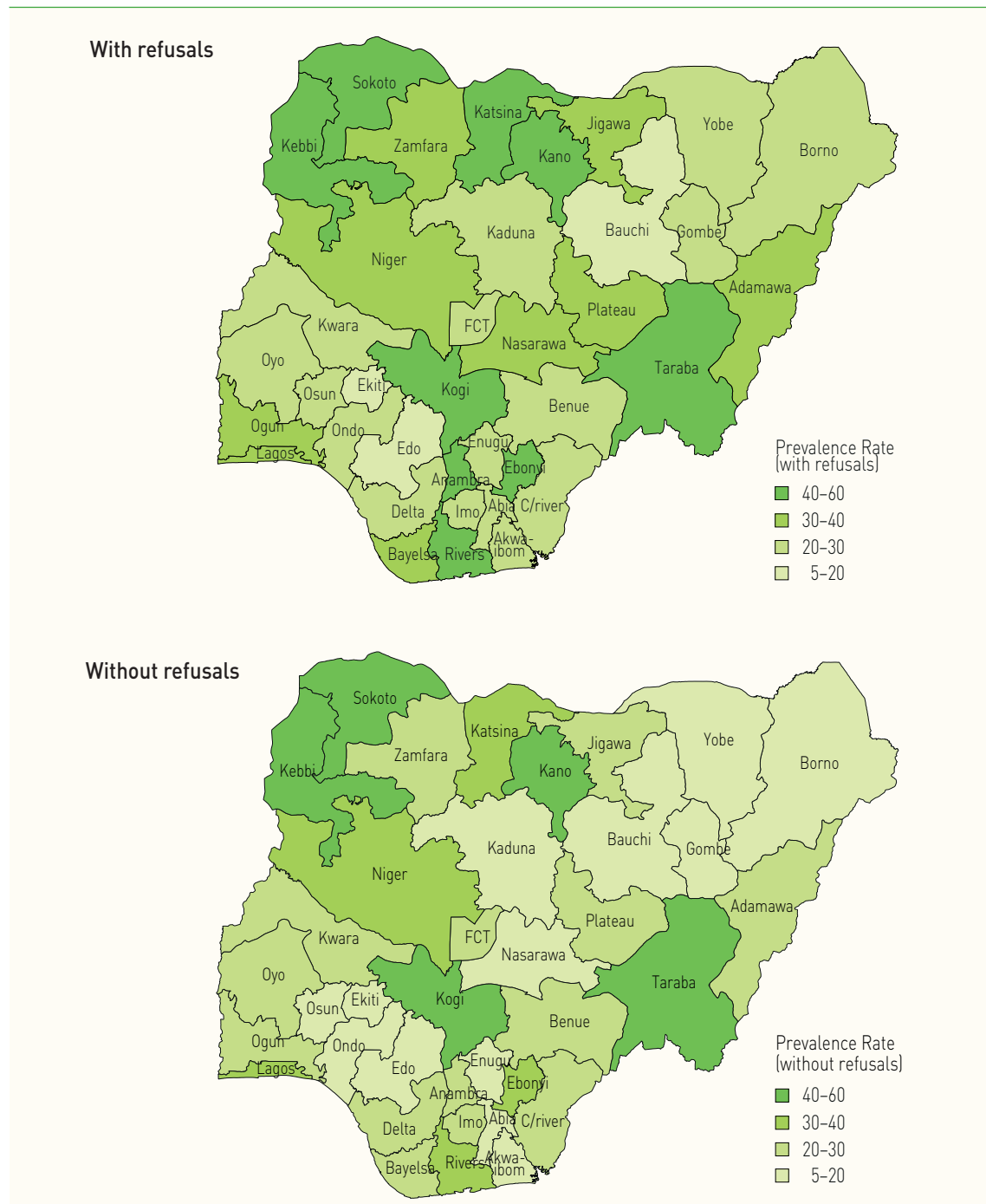


Note: The prevalence of bribery without refusals refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. Highlighted states recorded a change in bribery prevalence without refusals between 2019 and 2023 that is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence ($p < 0.01$).

11 Statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.

Figure 12 compares the geographical distribution of bribery prevalence (with and without refusals) by state in 2023. The figure shows that there are states with relatively high and relatively low prevalence rates across all the zones of Nigeria. Nonetheless, some patterns can be observed. In the North-West, for example, there is a notable concentration of states with very high bribery prevalence rates that exceed 40 per cent in 2023, while in the North-East, there are several states with a relatively low bribery prevalence rate below the 20 per cent threshold in 2023, in particular when bribery refusals are excluded from the calculation.

Figure 12: Prevalence of bribery with and without refusals, by state, 2023

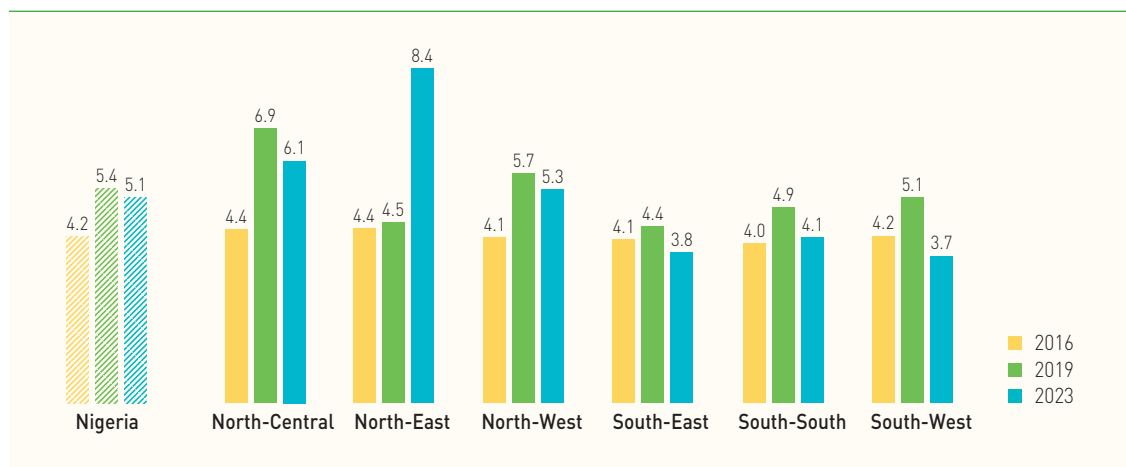


Note: The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period.

Frequency of bribery in the public sector

Looking beyond the prevalence of bribery, it is useful to analyse the frequency of bribery payments in order to establish the scope of bribery in Nigeria. This is important because those citizens who are asked to pay bribes are often exposed to multiple requests by public officials.

Figure 13: Average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer in Nigeria and by zone, 2016–2023



Note: The average number of bribes refers to the average number of bribes paid by all bribe-payers, i.e., those who paid at least one bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey.

In 2023, an estimated 5.1 bribes were paid on average by each bribe-payer in Nigeria. This represents a negligible and statistically insignificant decrease in the average number of bribes paid compared with 2019, when 5.4 bribes were paid on average by each bribe-payer. However, the national estimate hides significant variation in trends by zone. For example, it is noteworthy that in the North-East – the zone with the lowest bribery prevalence in 2023 (at 27 per cent with refusals and 21 per cent without refusals) – the average number of bribes paid nearly doubled from 4.5 in 2019 to 8.4 in 2023,¹² while all other zones recorded modest declines in bribery frequency (Figure 13). This implies that, in the North-East in 2023, bribery cases were concentrated among relatively few citizens, who were repeatedly requested to pay bribes throughout the year, perhaps even by the same officials.

¹² The increase between 2019 and 2023 in the average number of bribes paid in the North-East zone is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.



Measuring the frequency of bribery in the public sector

The frequency of bribery payments can be operationalized as the average number of bribes paid by all bribe-payers, i.e. those who paid at least one bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The simple average is susceptible to be influenced by outliers (for example, respondents who report having paid more than 50 bribes in the last 12 months) and can be misleading as a measure of central tendency in skewed distributions such as the number of bribes paid per bribe-payer. It is therefore advisable to either remove such outliers or to restrict answer options available to survey respondents. In the 2023 survey wave, respondents were asked how many times they had to give a bribe in the last 12 months, but the highest possible response option was restricted to “10 times or more”, while in previous survey waves no such upper limit was imposed. The average number of bribes paid in this report has been standardized across survey waves, meaning that the “10 times or more” response was imposed on 2016 and 2019 responses before calculating the average.

The average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer is therefore comparable across survey waves, but may deviate from the averages published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. Using this standardization, the average number of bribes paid is generally lower than the averages published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports, as it is less affected by outliers.

The national average of 5.1 bribes paid per bribe-payer translates into an average of 0.8 bribes paid per adult Nigerian in 2023. Given that the adult population in the country is estimated to stand at around 111.5 million,¹³ a back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that approximately 87 million bribes were paid in Nigeria in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, showing the magnitude of administrative bribery in the country. This compares to the estimated 117 million bribes paid in 2019, which also reflected a higher contact rate with public officials and a higher prevalence of bribery (without refusals) during the year prior to the survey.

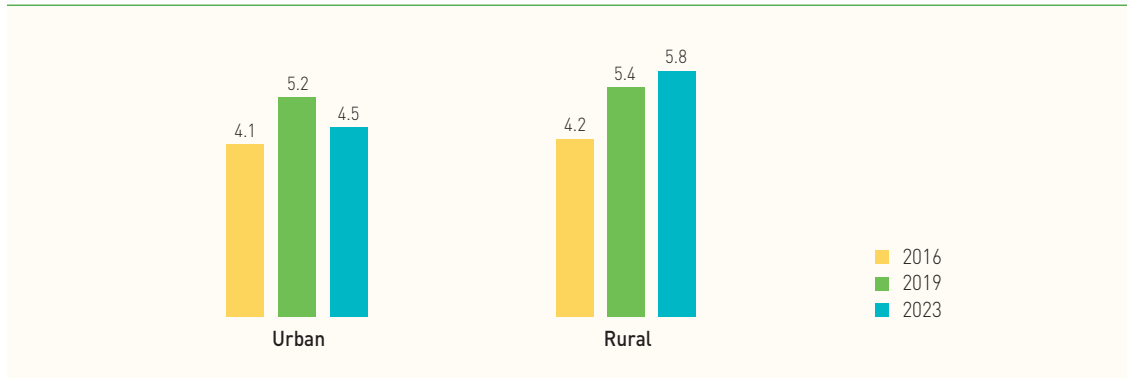
In contrast to the prevalence of bribery, which tends to be higher in urban areas than in rural areas, the frequency of bribery is, on average, higher in rural areas compared with urban areas. In 2023, bribe-payers living in urban areas paid on average 4.5 bribes, while those living in rural areas paid on average 5.8 bribes (Figure 14).¹⁴ There also appear to be diverging trends between urban and rural areas, with urban areas recording a modest reduction in the frequency of bribery between 2019 and 2023, while rural areas recorded an increase (Figure 14).¹⁵

13 The adult population estimate for 2022 (the latest year available) was provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria.

14 The difference in the average number of bribes paid between urban and rural areas is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.

15 While the reduction on urban areas is statistically significant at 98 per cent confidence, the increase in rural areas is not statistically significant at conventional confidence levels.

Figure 14: Average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer, by urban and rural area, 2016–2023



Note: The average number of bribes refers to the average number of bribes paid by all bribe-payers, i.e., those who paid at least one bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey

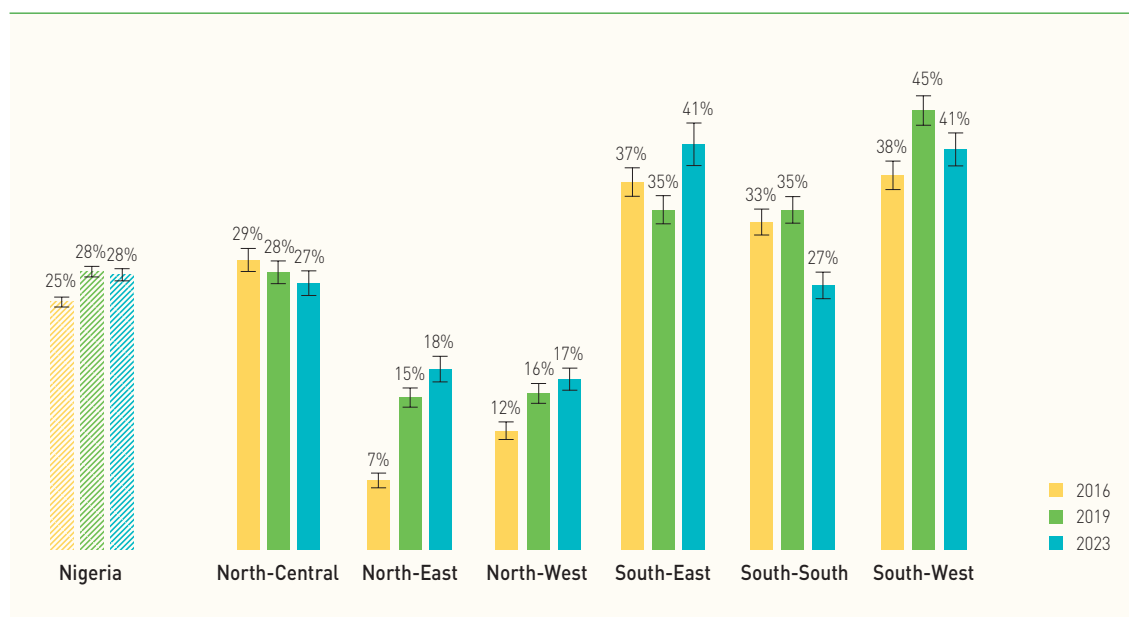
Prevalence and trends in bribery in the private sector

So far, the analysis focused exclusively on bribery in the public sector. However, the issue of bribery also affects the private sector in Nigeria. For this reason, all three corruption survey waves (2016, 2019 and 2023) inquired about respondents' experiences with six types of private sector employees: doctors in private hospitals, nurses in private hospitals, teachers in private schools, employees in private banks, employees in private insurance companies, and other employees in private business.

In 2023, 28 per cent of citizens reported having had a contact with at least one private sector employee in the 12 months prior to the survey, which is the same rate observed in 2019 (28 per cent) and slightly higher than the rate observed in 2016 (25 per cent) (Figure 15). As in 2019, the contact rate in the private sector in Nigeria remains significantly lower than the contact rate in the public sector (28 per cent versus 56 per cent in 2023).

As in the case of the public sector, there is notable geographical variation in contact rates in the private sector too. While increasing over time, levels of contact with private employees remain relatively low in the North-East and North-West zones, with contact rates of 18 per cent and 17 per cent respectively in 2023. By contrast, more than 40 per cent of the adult population in the South-East and South-West zones reported having at least one contact with a private employee in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey.

Figure 15: Contact rate in the private sector in Nigeria and by zone, 2016–2023



Note: The contact rate refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a private official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

Between 2019 and 2023, the private sector recorded a marked increase in the prevalence of bribery, from 6 per cent to 14 per cent (without refusals) or 17 per cent (with refusals) (Figure 16).¹⁶ Inflationary and cost of living pressures that became particularly pronounced from mid-2023 onwards,¹⁷ may have contributed to this increase in prevalence, by pushing private sector employees to demand more bribes. This is partially supported by the finding that bribery prevalence in the private sector increased between 2019 and 2023 irrespective of the specific type of private sector employee, which suggests that the private sector as a whole has been affected (see chapter 2 on “Who takes bribes” for a more detailed discussion). Despite the significant increase in the overall prevalence of bribery in the private sector between 2019 and 2023, it remains much lower than the prevalence of bribery in the public sector, which was approximately twice as high in 2023 (at 27 per cent without refusals and 34 per cent with refusals).¹⁸

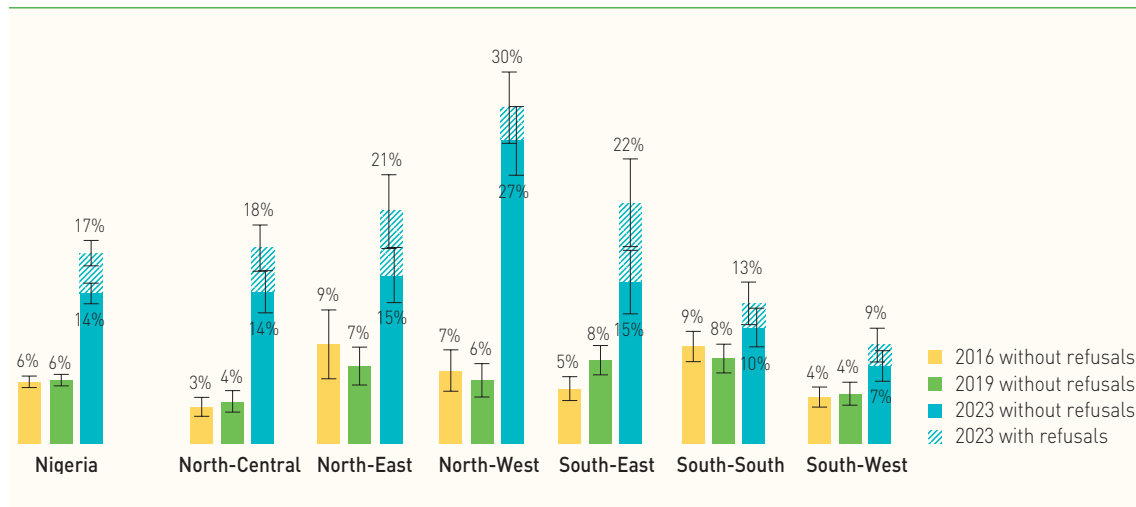
As with the contact rate, there is also sizeable geographical variation in bribery prevalence in the private sector, ranging from a relatively low bribery prevalence rate (with refusals) of 9 per cent recorded in the South-West in 2023, to a relatively high rate (with refusals) of 30 per cent in the North-West, which nearly approaches the bribery prevalence rate in the public sector in that zone (at 39 per cent with refusals) (Figure 16).

16 The 2016 and 2019 surveys did not capture bribery refusals in the private sector. Private sector bribery prevalence rates in 2023 are shown with and without refusals to allow for comparison with previous survey waves.

17 In October, the headline inflation rate was at 27.33 per cent, which was 6.24 percentage points higher compared to the rate recorded in October 2022. See National Bureau of Statistics. Oct 2023. *CPI and Inflation Report October 2023*. Available at: <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241407>.

18 Further details on the prevalence and frequency of bribery for each of the private sector employees mentioned are provided in chapter 2.

Figure 16: Bribery prevalence in the private sector with and without refusals in Nigeria and by zone, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery in the private sector refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a private sector employee, or were asked to pay a bribe by a private sector employee but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a private sector employee in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2016 and 2019 surveys did not capture refusals in the private sector.

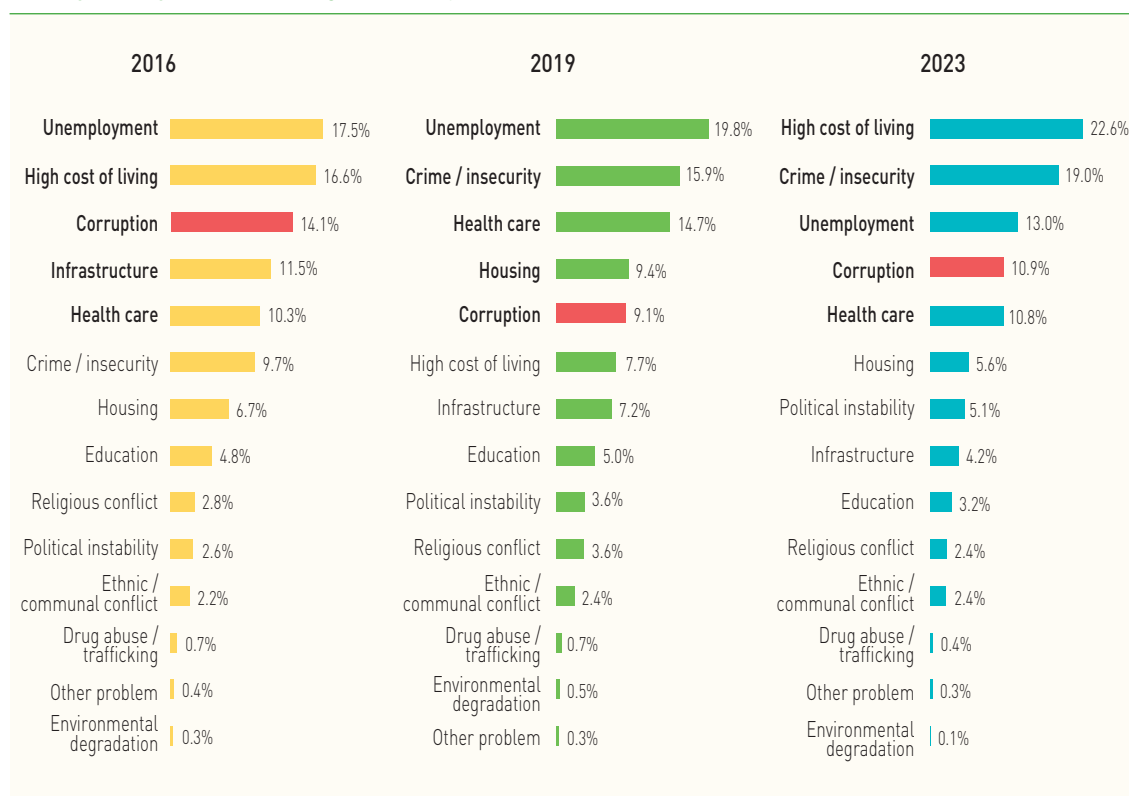
Perceptions of corruption and other concerns

While the focus of the survey is on Nigerians' every-day *experiences* of corruption when interacting with public officials and private sector employees, their perceptions of corruption also deserve scrutiny. This is because citizens' perceptions of the importance of corruption in their every-day life as well as their support for anti-corruption policies can positively influence the application of those measures.

As reported by Nigerian citizens, corruption continues to rank among the most important problems affecting the country in 2023. In 2016, corruption ranked 3rd on the list of most important problems, while in 2019 corruption ranked 5th. In 2023, corruption ranked 4th on the list, suggesting relatively stable and high levels of concerns about corruption over time and compared to other concerns such as education or housing (Figure 17).

In 2023, around 11 per cent of citizens reported that corruption is the most important problem affecting the country, which represents a modest increase of 2 percentage points from 2019. Nonetheless, the level of concern about corruption observed in 2023 (at 11 per cent) remained below the level observed in 2016 (at 14 per cent).

Figure 17: Percentage distribution of Nigerian citizens considering selected issues to be the most important problem affecting the country, 2016–2023



Note: The survey question is: In your opinion, what are the three most important problems Nigeria is facing today? Respondents could only select one most important problem.

Figure 17 also shows that between 2019 and 2023, concerns other than corruption have become significantly more important in the minds of Nigerians. In particular, the high cost of living as well as crime and insecurity have seen marked increases. Between 2019 and 2023, the high cost of living climbed from 6th to 1st position in the list, while crime and insecurity remained in 2nd position, but with a higher share of citizens considering it the most important problem (16 per cent in 2019 versus 19 per cent in 2023).

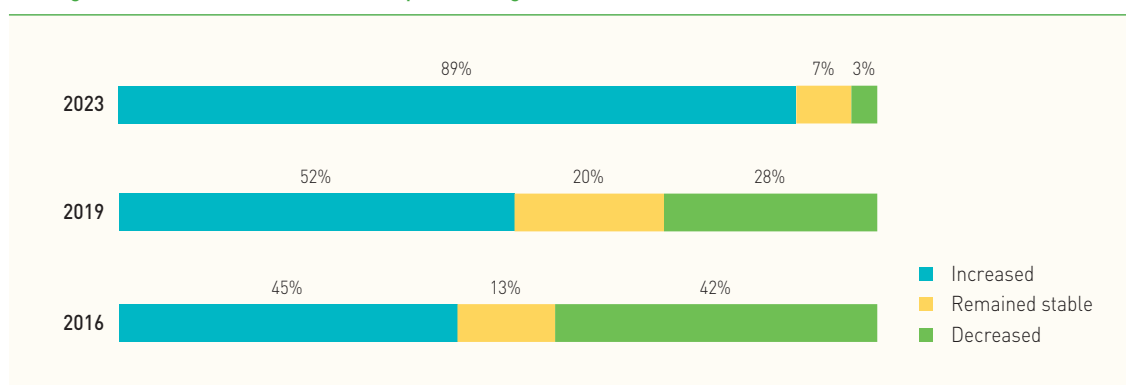
When it comes to perceived trends in corruption, an overwhelming majority of Nigerians (89 per cent) felt that corruption increased in the two years prior to the 2023 survey, while only 3 per cent believed corruption decreased and 7 per cent believed it remained stable (Figure 18). The perception of corruption as a continuously increasing problem, irrespective of trends in the actual experience of corruption, which have, on average, remained relatively stable over the years, is a phenomenon observed in several countries, and Nigeria appears to be no exception in this regard.¹⁹

The findings from 2023 contrast with the results from the previous two surveys in 2016 and 2019, when significantly smaller shares of citizens believed that corruption increased in the two years prior to the survey (45 per cent in 2016 and 52 per cent in 2019) (Figure 18). What is also notable is that, in 2023, the data reveal much less geographical variation in perceived corruption trends, with the share of citizens who believe that corruption increased in the past

¹⁹ The perceived trend in corruption refers to the two-year period prior to the 2023 survey (November 2021 to October 2023).

two years recording on average 85 per cent in Northern zones and 95 per cent in Southern zones – a difference of 10 percentage points.²⁰ This contrasts with the results from the 2019 survey, when a significant gap of 35 percentage points was observed between Northern zones and Southern zones, with on average 37 per cent and 72 per cent respectively believing that corruption increased in the previous two years.²¹ In effect, more Nigerians seem to believe that corruption has increased regardless of where they are located in the country.

Figure 18: Perceived trend in corruption in Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: The question asked in the survey is: Compared to 2 years ago, do you think that the overall level of corruption in Nigeria has increased or decreased? There are four possible answers: (1) Increased, (2) Remained stable, (3) Decreased, and (4) Do not know. Respondents who answered do not know were excluded from the analysis. The percentages do not necessarily add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

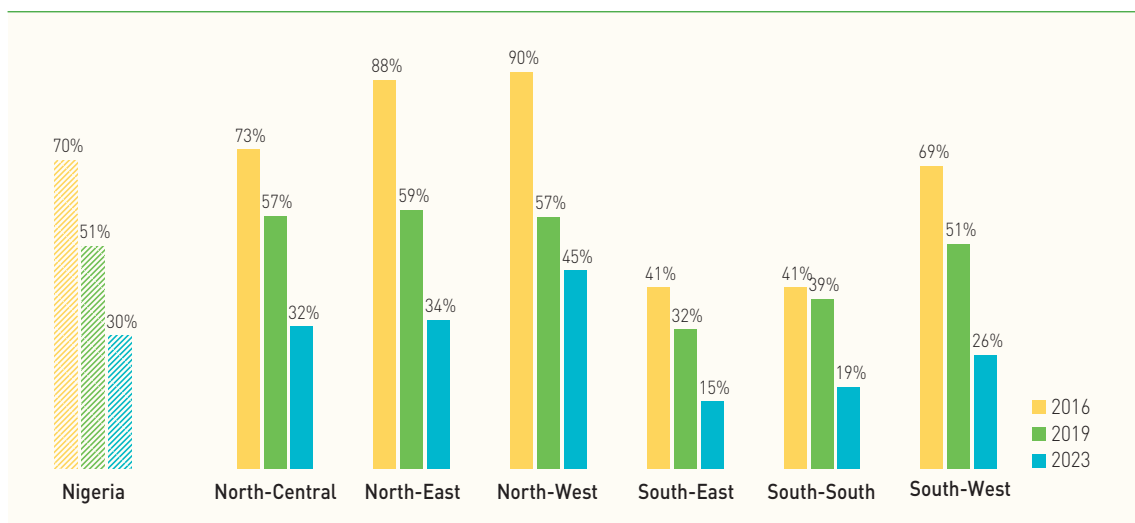
Perceptions about the government’s effectiveness in the fight against corruption is a key factor that may help to explain some of the zonal variation in perceived corruption trends, in addition to variation in the actual incidence of corruption.²² In line with their generally more positive perception of corruption trends, citizens in the Northern zones tend to have higher confidence in the government’s anti-corruption efforts compared with citizens in the South (Figure 19). What the 2023 survey data reveal, however, is that Nigerians’ confidence in the government’s anti-corruption effort has been declining continuously and significantly since 2016, when the first corruption survey was conducted. While in 2016, more than 70 per cent of citizens thought that the government is effective in fighting corruption, in 2023, less than a third of all citizens (30 per cent) were of that opinion.

²⁰ Based on simple averages across zones in the North and South respectively.

²¹ Based on simple averages across zones in the North and South respectively.

²² For a more detailed discussion, see UNODC. 2019. Corruption in Nigeria: patterns and trends. Second survey on corruption as experienced by the population. December 2019. p. 27.

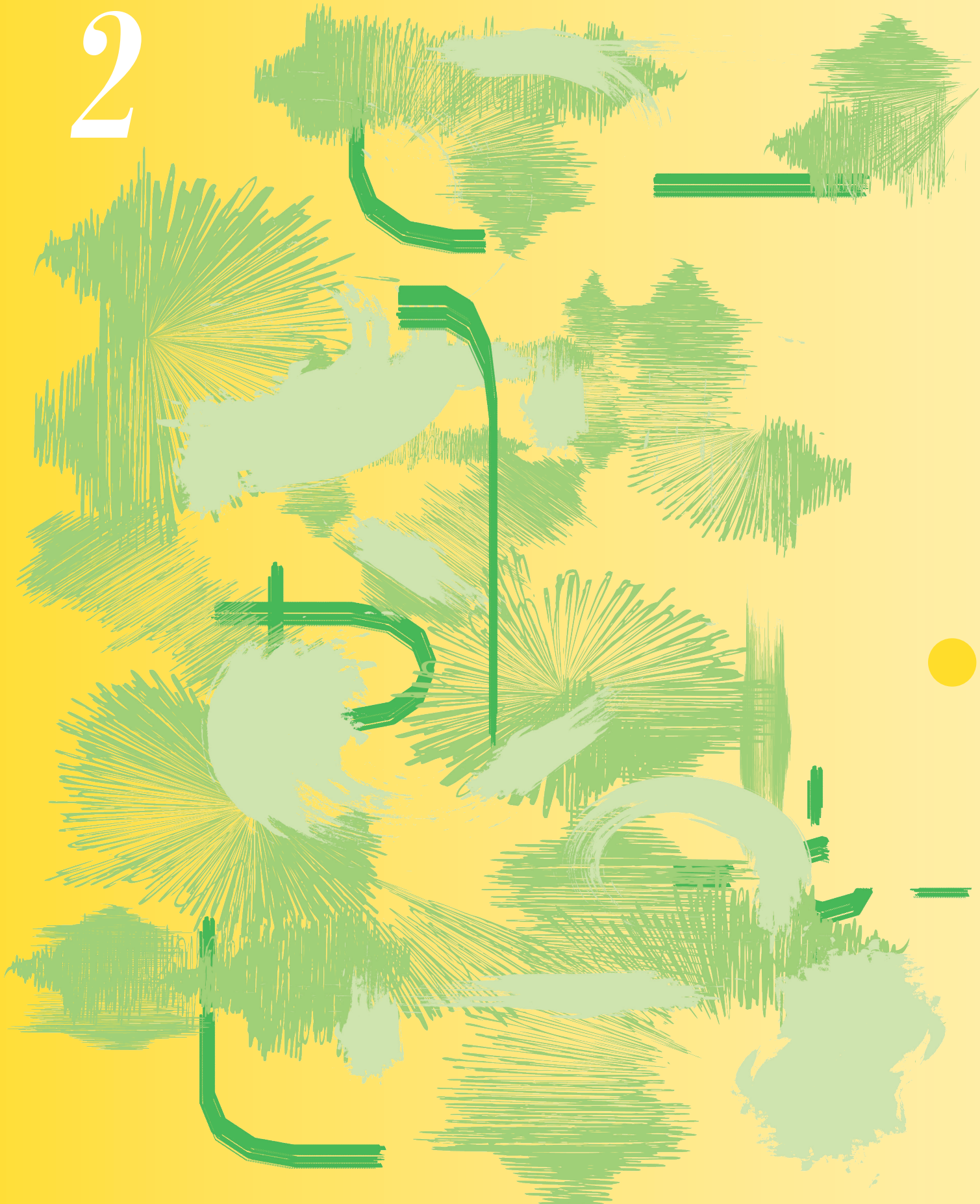
Figure 19: Share of citizens who think the Government is effective in fighting corruption in Nigeria and by zone, 2016–2023



Note: The question asked in the survey is: "How do you rate Government effectiveness in fighting corruption?" There are five possible answers: (1) Very effective, (2) Effective, (3) Not very effective, (4) Ineffective and (5) Do not know. The percentage distribution is calculated by combining the answers "Very effective" and "Effective".

This downward trend in confidence is observable across the entire country, with all six zones recording reductions of more than 10 percentage points between 2019 and 2023 in terms of the share of citizens who think the government is effective in fighting corruption. Since 2016, the reduction in confidence (measured in terms of percentage point decreases) has been particularly pronounced in the Northern zones, primarily because these zones had much higher levels of confidence to begin with (Figure 19).

2





Who takes bribes?

Although Nigerian citizens pay bribes to officials in all types of public institutions and authorities, some types of public officials are more likely than others to request bribes during interactions with the public, or they are more vulnerable to bribe-taking when offered bribes. This chapter examines how bribery varies in frequency and size, across different types of public officials. Bribery of private sector employees and their interactions with citizens is similarly examined.

Contact rate by type of public official

When measuring the likelihood of citizens paying a bribe to, or being asked to pay a bribe, by a public official of a particular public institution or authority, it is necessary to first calculate the contact rate in relation to the type of official.

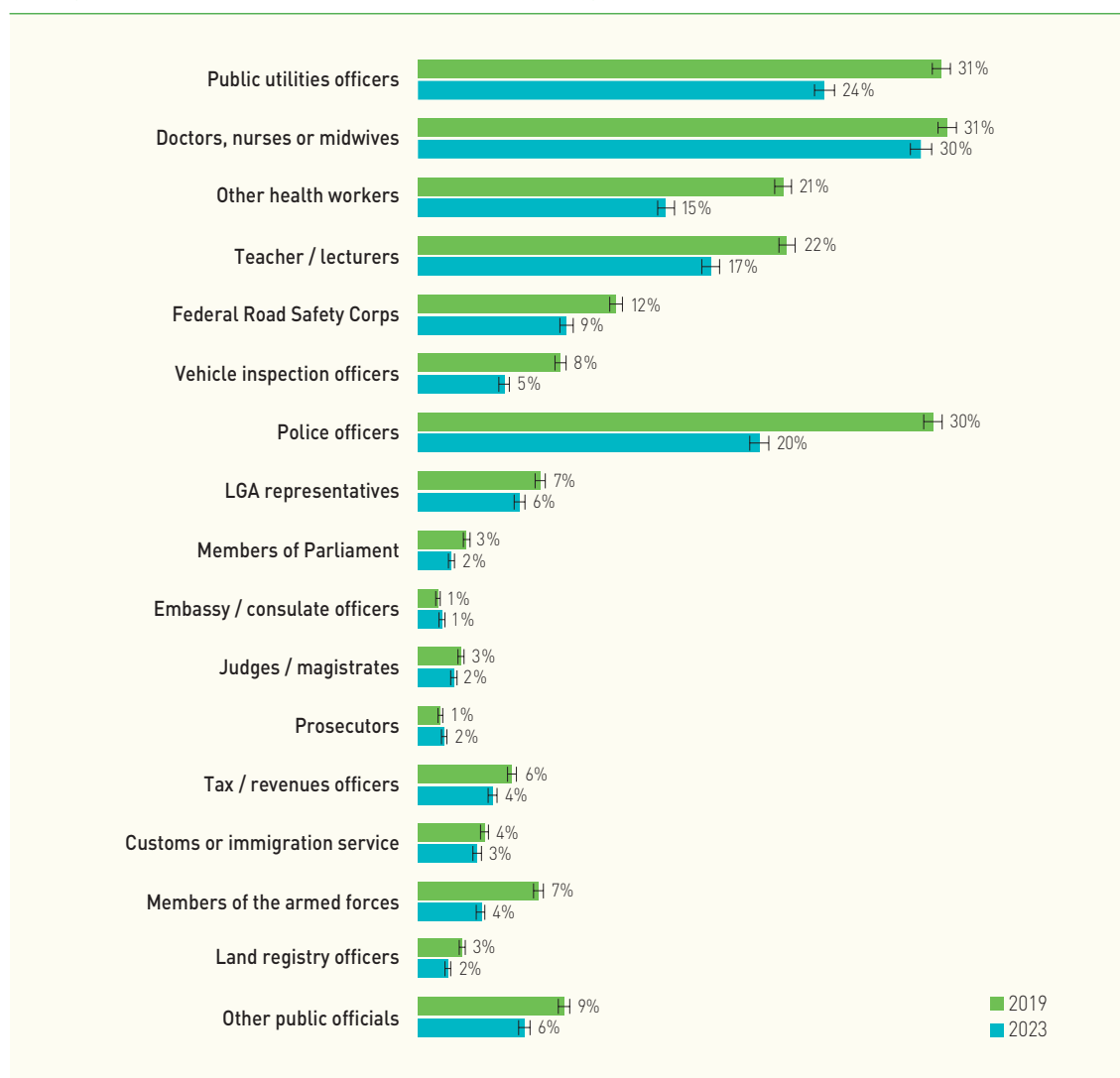
As shown in Figure 20, the contact rate varies substantially by type of public official and over time. In 2023, health care professionals such as doctors, nurses and midwives, and public utilities officers were the two categories of public officials with whom the largest share of Nigerian citizens had contact, at 30 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. The third most contacted type of public officials were police officers, with a contact rate of 20 per cent, followed by teachers and lecturers from public educational institutions (at 17 per cent). In 2023, interactions with all other types of public officials were fewer, with the least contacted public officials being embassy or consulate officers (1.4 per cent) as well as prosecutors (1.5 per cent) (Figure 20).

In line with the reduction in the overall contact rate with public officials witnessed between 2019 and 2023 (from 63 per cent to 56 per cent),²² most types of public officials recorded a decline in contact rates in this period as well. Only embassy or consulate officers as well as prosecutors recorded minor increases in the contact rate between 2019 and 2023, albeit at comparably low levels (Figure 20).²³ Among those public officials who have the most frequent contact with Nigerian citizens, police officers and public utilities officers recorded the largest declines in contact rate between 2019 and 2023 with declines of 10 and 7 percentage points respectively, while health care professionals (doctors, nurses and midwives) recorded a more modest reduction with a decline of just over 1 percentage point) (Figure 20).

22 The overall contact rate is not the average of the contact rate by type of public official, since it is calculated as the share of the adult population who had at least once contact with any type of public official in the past 12 months.

23 The increases in the contact rate between 2019 and 2023 for prosecutors and embassy/consulate officers are not statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.

Figure 20: Contact rate by type of public official, Nigeria, 2019–2023



Note: The contact rate by type of public official refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. Contact rates for the year 2016 are omitted due to space constraints.

Prevalence of bribery by type of public official

As stated in chapter 1 (“The scope of bribery”), an estimated 34 per cent of all Nigerians who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, paid at least one bribe or were requested to pay a bribe but refused, in the same period.

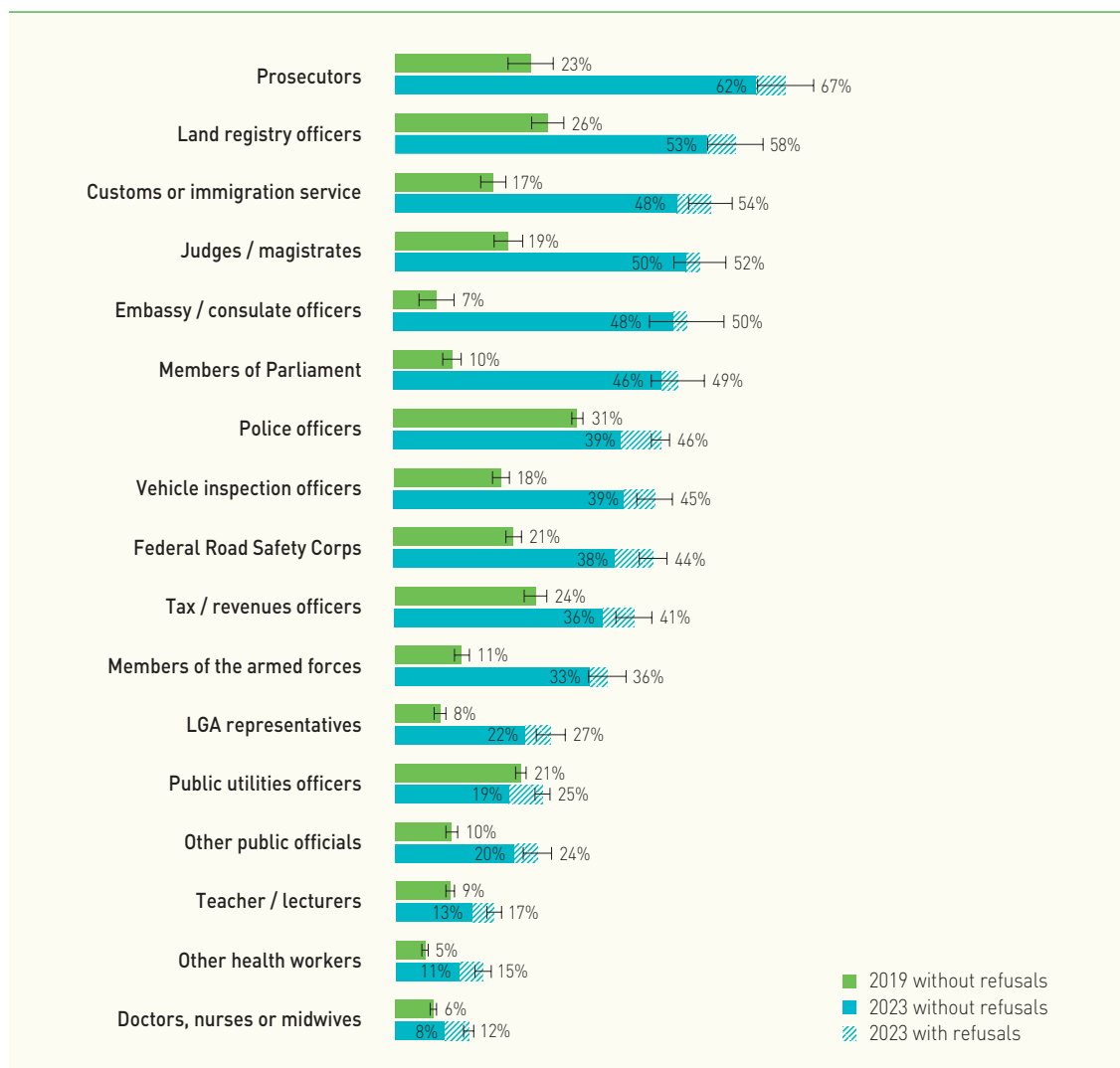
The prevalence of bribery for a particular type of public official can obviously be higher or lower than the overall prevalence of bribery in Nigeria. This depends entirely on the number of citizens who had contact with a particular type of official in the past 12 months, and those who actually paid a bribe to that official or were asked to pay but refused.

In 2023, the prevalence of bribery varied significantly across different types of public official. When including bribery refusals, the prevalence of bribery in 2023 was highest for prosecutors

(67 per cent), land registry officers (58 per cent) and customs/immigration officers (54 per cent). The lower end of the spectrum was occupied by doctors, nurses and midwives (12 per cent) and other health workers (15 per cent) (Figure 21).

When excluding refusals from the calculation, the prevalence of bribe payment by type of official ranged from prosecutors (62 per cent) to doctors, nurses and midwives (8 per cent) in 2023 (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by type of public official, Nigeria, 2019–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery without refusals by type of public official refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with the same type of public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery with refusals refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by that type of public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all adults who had at least one contact with the same type of public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. Prevalence rates for the year 2016 are excluded due to space constraints and 2019 refusals are omitted for comparability.



Across almost all types of public officials, the prevalence of bribe payment (excluding refusals) increased between 2019 and 2023,²⁴ with changes ranging from a 2 percentage point increase among doctors, nurses and midwives to a 41 percentage point increase among embassy and consulate officers (Figure 21). In the period 2019–2023, public utilities officers were the only type of public official that recorded a decrease in the prevalence of bribe payments (without refusals) (Figure 21).

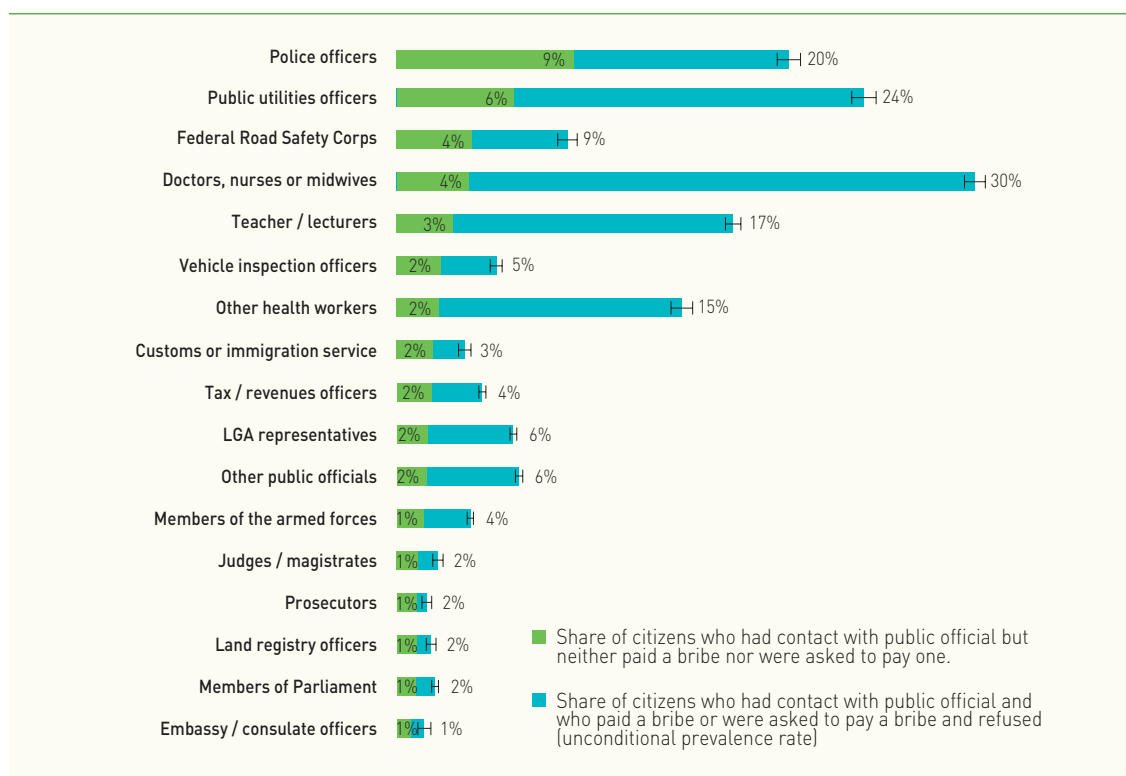
It is important to note that the overall prevalence of bribery in Nigeria (estimated at 34 per cent in 2023) is *not* the average of the prevalence of bribery by type of public official, since it is calculated as the proportion of all those who had at least one contact with any type of public official and were asked to pay a bribe, including those who refused to pay it. This means that in the overall bribery prevalence rate, officials who have relatively more contact with citizens (such as doctors, nurses, or public utilities officers) receive much more weight compared with officials who have relatively little contact with citizens (such as prosecutors or embassy officers).

To illustrate the different weight that each type of public official contributes to the overall bribery prevalence estimate, it is useful to plot the share of all Nigerian citizens who have contact with a specific type of public official in the past 12 months (the “contact rate” for each type of official) together with the share of all Nigerian citizens who paid a bribe or were asked to pay a bribe but refused (the “unconditional bribery prevalence”) for each type of public official. Figure 22 shows that several types of public officials with very frequent interactions with citizens have relatively small shares of interactions involving bribery (such as doctors, nurses, or teachers), while other types of officials that rarely encounter citizens (such as prosecutors or land registry officers) have relatively large shares of interactions involving bribery (Figure 22).

Bribery prevalence among “high-contact” public officials has a disproportionate impact on the overall bribery prevalence estimate in Nigeria, while bribery prevalence among “low-contact” public officials can have negligible effects. This explains why, for example, the relatively large increases in bribery prevalence (without refusals) among certain types of public officials between 2019 and 2023 shown in Figure 21 did not translate directly into a large increase in the overall bribery prevalence (without refusals) in the same period.

24 All changes between 2019 and 2023 in bribery prevalence (without refusals) by type of public official are statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.

Figure 22: Contact rate and unconditional bribery prevalence, by type of public official, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The contact rate by type of public official refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, irrespective of whether it involved bribery. The unconditional bribery prevalence by type of public official refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe but refused that type of public official.

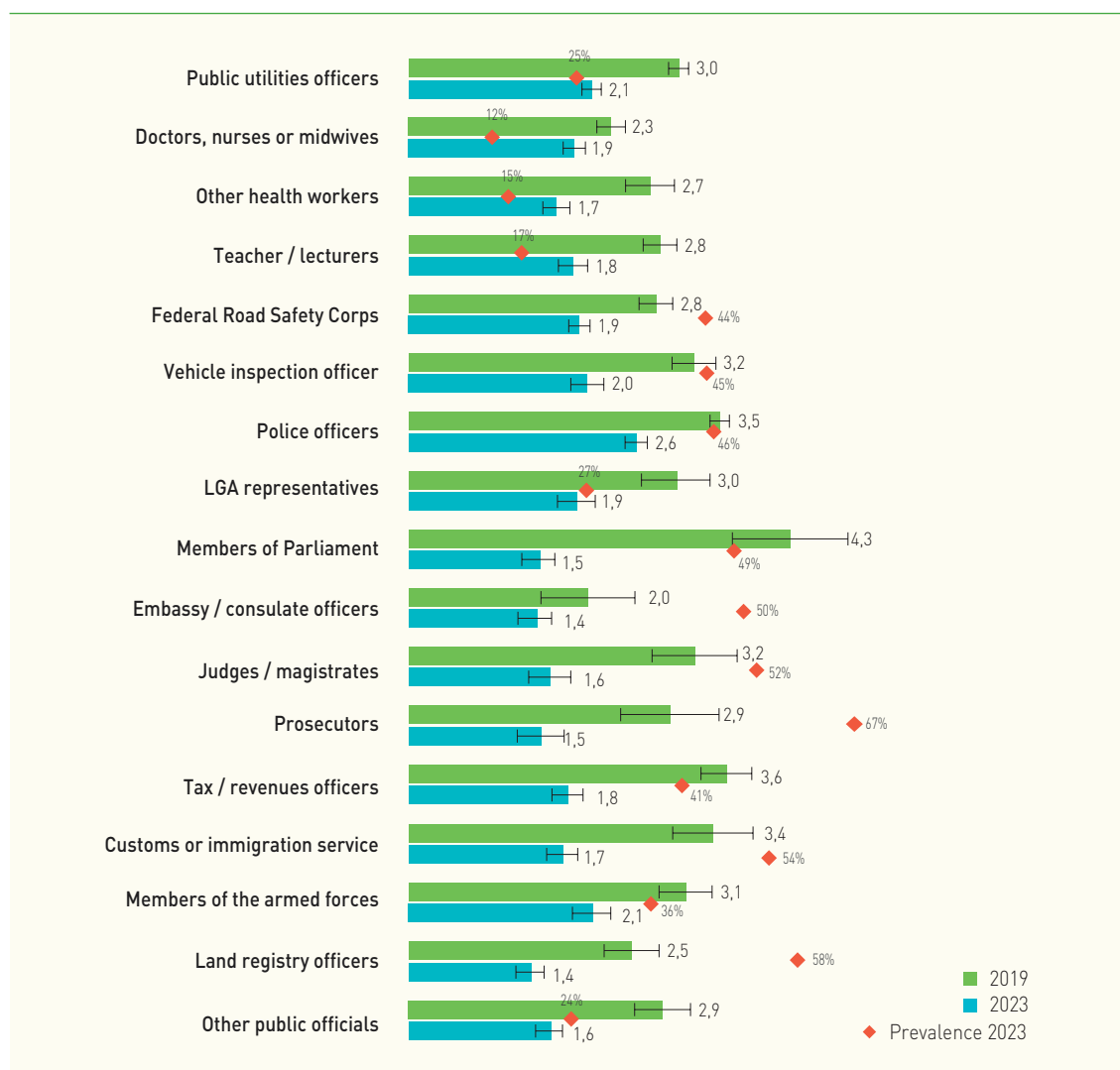
Frequency of bribery by type of public official

From the analysis of the prevalence of bribery in relation to different types of public official, it is apparent that citizens are more likely to pay bribes to particular types of official than others. As shown in chapter 1 (“The scope of bribery”), an estimated 5.1 bribes were paid, on average, by each bribe-payer in Nigeria in 2023. However, this average hides large variations in the frequency of bribe-payments across different types of public officials, which in 2023, ranged from 2.6 bribes in the case of police officers to 1.4 bribes in the case of land registry officers (Figure 23).²⁵

This variation indicates that bribe-paying in relation to certain types of public officials is highly concentrated. For example, while just under 40 per cent of citizens in contact with police officers in 2023 paid them bribes and more than 60 per cent did not, those who paid bribes did so an average of 2.6 times. This means that, in many instances, bribe-paying is not an isolated event and that those who pay bribes are vulnerable to repeated demands for bribes, perhaps because they routinely face situations in which bribes can be extracted from them, possibly even in encounters with the same officials.

²⁵ The average number of bribes paid in this report has been standardized across survey waves, meaning that the “10 times or more” response was imposed on 2016 and 2019 responses before calculating the average. The average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer is therefore comparable across survey waves, but may deviate from the averages published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports.

Figure 23: Average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer, by type of public official, Nigeria, 2019–2023



Note: The average number of bribes paid refers to the average number of bribes paid to each specific public official by all individuals who paid a bribe to that same type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The prevalence of bribery by type of public official refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific type of public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by that type of public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with the same type of public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

Levels of and trends in the average number of bribes paid by bribe-payers to each type of public official do not appear to be systematically associated with the prevalence of bribery among each type of public official. Figure 23 shows that between 2019 and 2023, the average number of bribes paid declined significantly²⁶ among nearly all types of public officials, irrespective of the prevalence of bribery among the different types of public officials. While some types of public officials with relatively high bribery prevalence in 2023, such as prosecutors or land registry officers, recorded large declines in the average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer, the same trend was also observed among types of public officials with relatively low bribery prevalence in 2023, such as teachers and lecturers, or other health workers (Figure 23).

26 All declines between 2019 and 2023 in the average number of bribes paid by type of public official are statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence, with the exception of Embassy/Consulate officers.

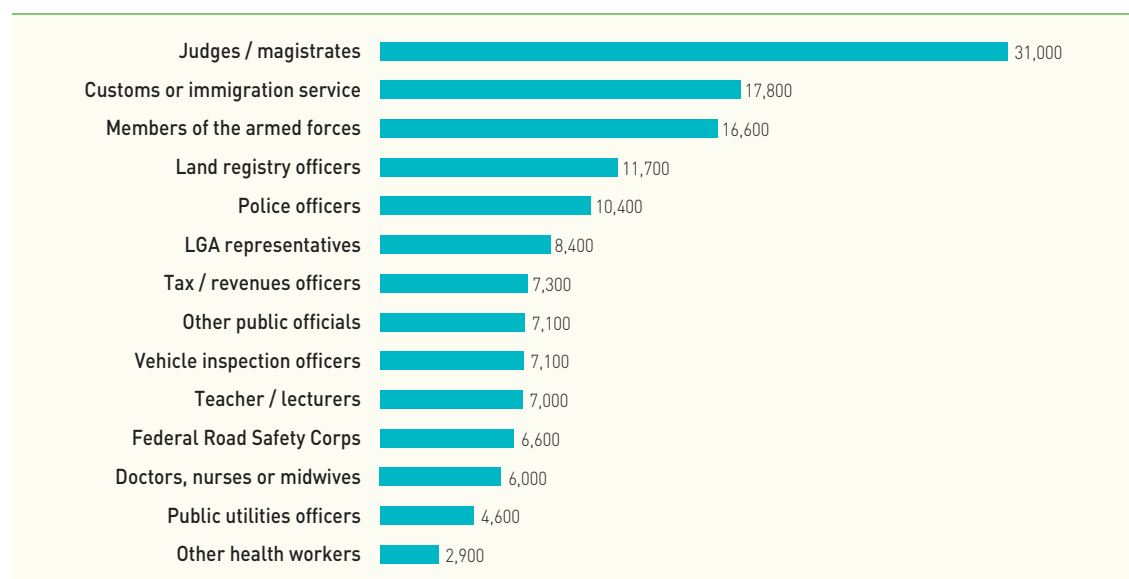
The reductions between 2019 and 2023 in the average number of bribes paid to different types of public officials represents a positive development that contrasts with the increases in bribery prevalence over the same period that were observed for nearly all types of public officials.

Size of bribes paid to public officials

The average cash bribe paid in Nigeria in 2023 amounted to NGN 8,284. This national average masks large variations in the size of cash bribes paid by citizens, which can depend on a number of factors, such as the reasons for which bribes are paid and the geographical area where bribes are paid (see chapter 3 on “How bribery works” for a more detailed discussion).

Similarly, there are large variations in the size of bribes paid by citizens according to the types of public official who receive them. Among all types of public official for which there was sufficient data,²⁷ with an average of NGN 31,000, the largest cash bribes were paid to judges and magistrates, followed by customs or immigration service officers (NGN 17,800) and members of the armed forces (NGN 16,600).²⁸ By contrast, much smaller average amounts were paid to doctors, nurses and midwives (NGN 6,000), public utility officers (NGN 4,600) and other health workers (NGN 2,900) (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Average cash bribe size (NGN) by type of public official, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The average cash bribe size (Nigerian Naira or NGN) by type of public official refers to the mean size of reported cash bribe paid, including money in cash and money transfer (app, SMS, etc.). For respondents who paid a bribe to more than one type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, only bribe size information on one randomly selected type of official was collected. Prosecutors, Embassy/Consulate officers, and members of Parliament/Legislature were excluded from the analysis, given that fewer than 50 respondents reported the cash bribe size for bribe payments made to these types of public officials in the 12 months prior to the survey.

- 27 Prosecutors, Embassy/Consulate officers, and members of Parliament/Legislature were excluded from the analysis, given that fewer than 50 respondents reported the cash bribe size for bribe payments made to these types of public officials in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- 28 It should be noted that these averages are strongly influenced by a few large bribes identified in the 2023 survey, which can raise the average bribe sizes considerably. For example, in 2023, some respondents reported paying cash bribes larger than NGN 150,000 to judges and magistrates (two cases), customs or immigration service (two cases) and members of the armed forces (one case). Overall, 21 respondents out of a total of 3,993 respondents with data (0.4 per cent) reported paying cash bribes larger than NGN 150,000.

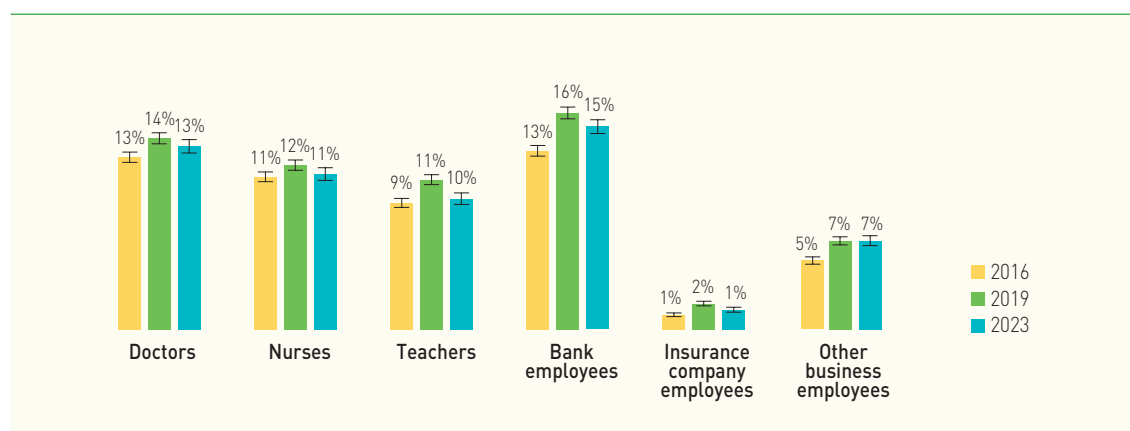
These disparities in bribe size payments across different types of public officials suggest very different dynamics in the payment of bribes. It is notable that some of the largest average bribes are paid to public officials with whom most citizens have little contact in their daily lives (such as judges, customs, or land registry officers). For example, the top four types of officials in terms of bribe sizes all recorded contact rates of less than 4 per cent in 2023 (see Figure 20 above). This may suggest that large bribes, although relatively rare, are generally paid to influence important decisions by public officials, which can have substantial economic or personal consequences, for example, by influencing land-related decisions, immigration matters, or court decisions. Conversely, smaller bribe payments appear to be related to public officials with whom people have more frequent contact (such as doctors, public utilities officers, and other health care workers).

Prevalence and frequency of bribery by type of private sector employees

As mentioned in chapter 1 (“The scope of bribery”), the survey also inquired about respondents’ bribery experiences with six types of private sector employees: doctors in private hospitals, nurses in private hospitals, teachers in private schools, employees in private banks, employees in private insurance companies, and other employees in private businesses.

In 2023, bank employees were the most likely private sector employee with whom citizens had most contact, with around 15 per cent of respondents reporting at least one interaction with a bank employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. Only slightly lower contact rates were recorded for doctors, nurses and teachers working in private institutions (at 13 per cent, 11 per cent, and 10 per cent respectively). By contrast, insurance company employees and other business employees recorded significantly lower contact rates (at 1 per cent and 7 per cent respectively). In terms of trends, contact rates by type of employee remained relatively stable across survey waves, and at significantly lower levels than contact rates with public sector officials (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Contact rate in the private sector by type of employee, 2016–2023



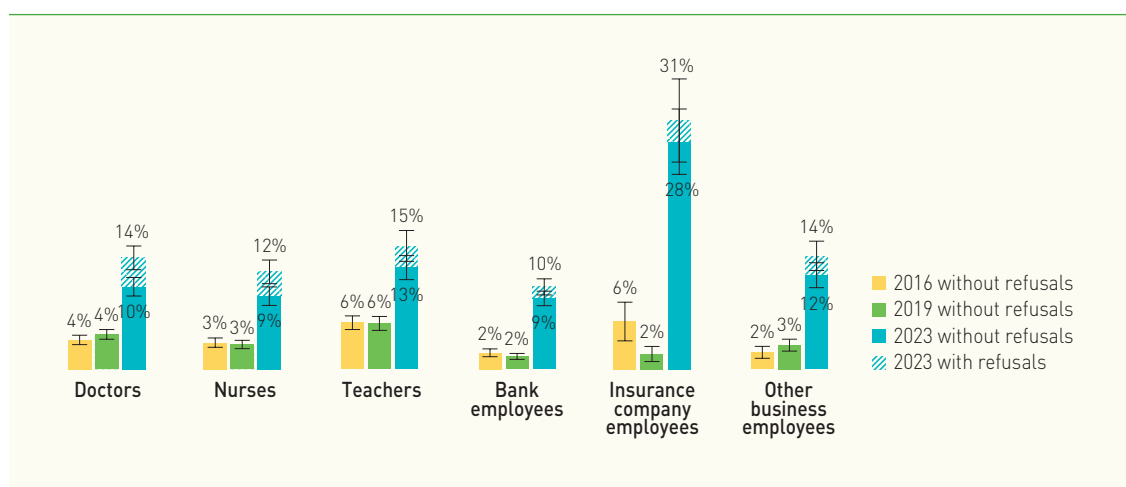
Note: The contact rate by type of employee refers to the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a specific type of private employee in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

As shown in chapter 1 (“The scope of bribery”), although bribes are requested by employees working in the private sector, they are at significantly lower rates as compared to officials working in the public sector of Nigeria. Among the private sector employees covered in the survey, the highest prevalence of bribery in 2023 was seen among insurance company employees at 31 per cent with refusals. This figure is comparable to the public sector bribery prevalence among, for example, local elected public officials (LGA representatives). It should be noted, however, that very few Nigerian citizens actually have any interactions with insurance company employees, with only 1 per cent reporting any such contact in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Other types of private sector employees recorded significantly lower bribery prevalence rates (including refusals) between 10 per cent (bank employees) and 15 per cent (teachers in private education institutions) (Figure 26). In terms of trends, all types of private sector employees recorded significant increases in bribery prevalence between 2019 and 2023, in line with the overall increase in private sector bribery prevalence, which increased from 6 per cent to 14 per cent (without refusals) or 17 per cent (with refusals) in that period.²⁹ It is also noteworthy that, even when bribery refusals are excluded, the increases in bribery prevalence across different types of employees between 2019 and 2023 remain substantial (Figure 26).

As in the public sector, the overall prevalence of bribery in the private sector is not the average of the prevalence of bribery by type of employee, since it is calculated as the proportion of all those who had at least once contact with any type of employee and were asked for a bribe, including those who refused to pay it. This means that in the overall prevalence rate, employees who have relatively more contact with citizens (e.g., bank employees) receive additional weight compared with officials who have relatively little contact with citizens (e.g., insurance company employees).

Figure 26: Bribery prevalence in the private sector with and without refusals, by type of employee, 2016–2023



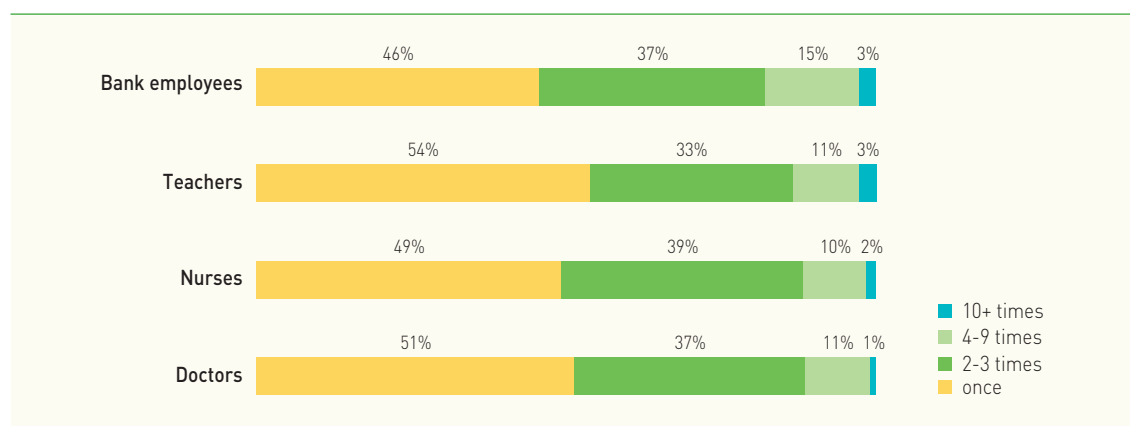
Note: The prevalence of bribery in the private sector by type of employee refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific type of employee, or were asked to pay a bribe by that type of employee but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with that type of employee in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2016 and 2019 surveys did not capture refusals in the private sector.

²⁹ The 2016 and 2019 surveys did not capture bribery refusals in the private sector. Private sector bribery prevalence rates in 2023 are shown with and without refusals to allow for comparison with previous survey waves.

In terms of the frequency of bribery in the private sector, the survey data from 2023 suggest that there is not much variation between different types of employees.³⁰ Around half of all bribe-payers report paying only one bribe, irrespective of the specific type of private sector employee. Similarly, just over a third of all bribe-payers report paying two to three bribes, with little variation across different employee types (Figure 27).

High-frequency bribe payment appears to be relatively rare in the private sector, with no more than 3 per cent of bribe-payers reporting that they paid 10 or more bribes to a specific type of employee in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey (Figure 27). This suggests that the frequency of bribery in the private sector remains much lower than in the public sector, where the average number of bribes paid per bribe-payer is estimated to stand at 5.1 in 2023 (see chapter 1).

Figure 27: Percentage distribution of the number of bribes paid by bribe-payers, by type of private sector employee, 2023



Note: The question asked in the survey is: Now think about the [type of private sector employee]. In the last 12 months (since November 2022): How many times was a gift, a counter-favour or some extra money given? Possible answer options were: once, 2–3 times, 4–9 times, 10+ times, and Don't Know / Refuse. Do not Know / Refuse responses are excluded from the analysis. Insurance company employees and other business employees are also excluded from the analysis due to the small number of data points on bribery frequency for each type of employee (n < 40).

³⁰ Insurance company employees and other business employees are excluded from the analysis due to the small number of data points on bribery frequency for each type of employee (n < 40).

3





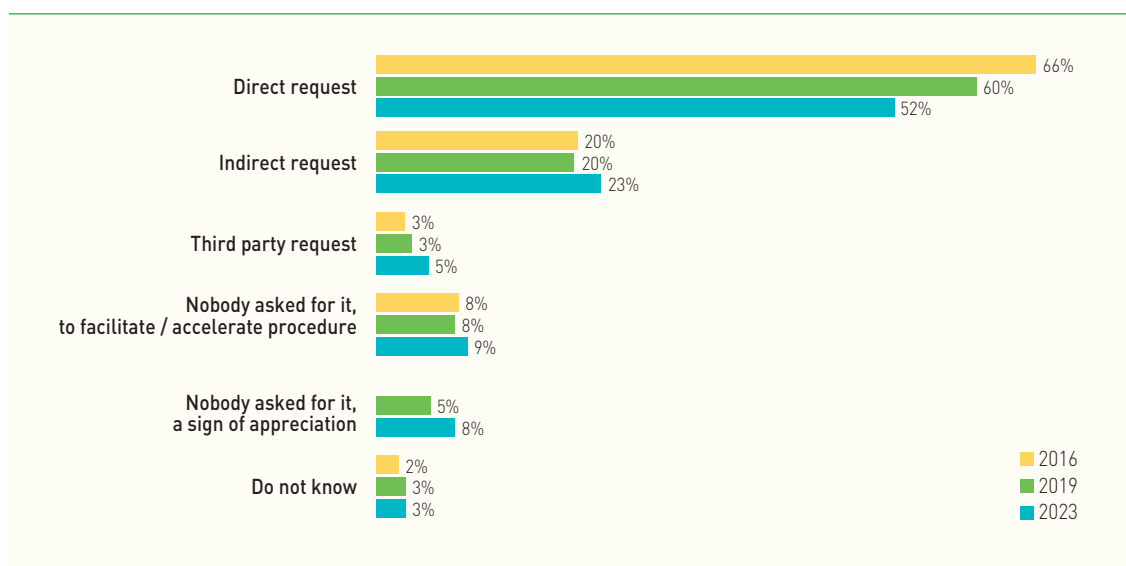
How bribery works

This chapter explores the ways in which the process of bribery unfolds within the public sector, from the modalities of how people ask for bribes, to the forms of payment, from the location and timing of bribes, to the size of cash bribes paid. Additionally, this chapter examines the underlying reasons behind such practices as well as levels and trends in the reporting of bribery incidents by citizens. The chapter concludes with an overview of how bribery works in the private sector.

How are bribes requested?

Officials may explicitly request bribes, indirectly hint at them, or have third parties convey the expectation. In some cases, citizens may voluntarily offer bribes to expedite processes or express appreciation if they feel that this would help them get the required services faster.

Figure 28: Percentage distribution of bribes paid to public officials, by modality of bribe, Nigeria, 2016–2023



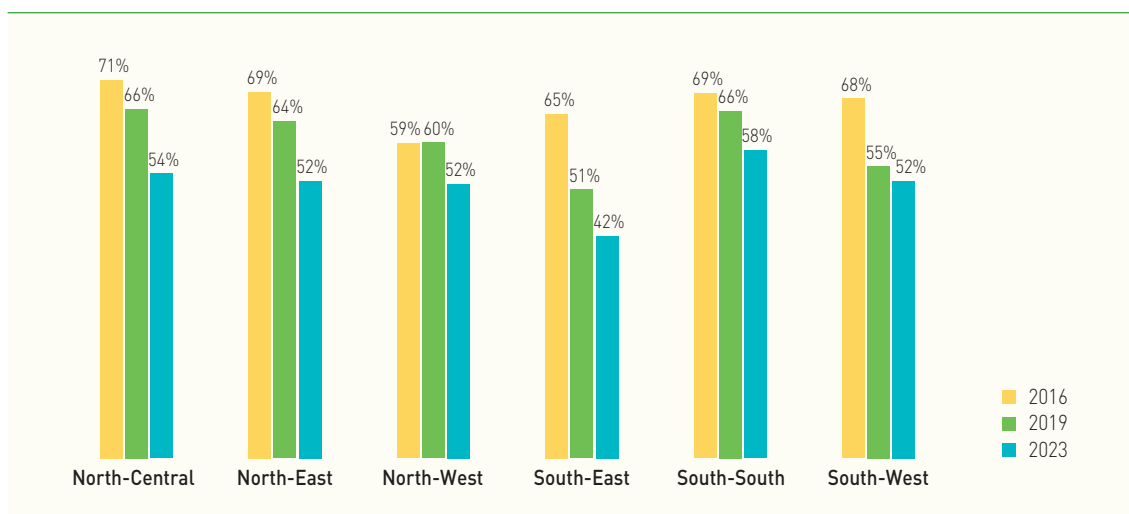
Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. The option "Nobody asked for it, it was a sign of appreciation for a service provided" was not included in the 2016 survey.

While still constituting the majority of cases, the proportion of bribery requests initiated directly by public officials has steadily decreased from around 66 per cent in 2016 to 52 per cent in 2023 (Figure. 28). Meanwhile, indirect requests made up 23 per cent of requests in 2023, showing a negligible increase compared to previous years.³¹ These trends may indicate that public officials feel less confident that they will get away with directly soliciting bribes.

The decrease in direct requests is consistently observed across zones, with the most notable decrease occurring in the South-East zone (by 23 percentage points between 2016 and 2019) followed by the North-Central (by 18 percentage points between 2016 and 2023) (Figure 29).

³¹ The increase in the proportion of indirect requests between the 2019 and the 2023 survey is not statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.

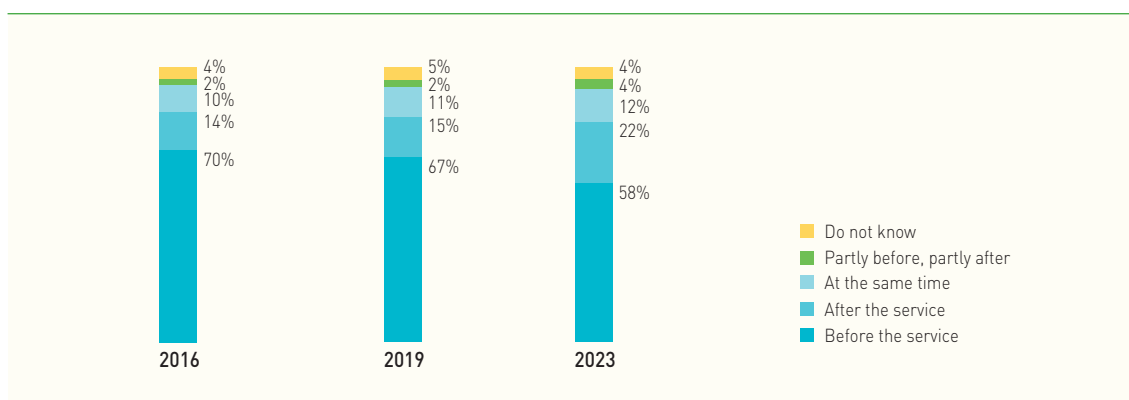
Figure 29: Percentage distribution of direct bribe requests by public officials by zone, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.

When and where are bribes paid?

Figure 30: Percentage distribution of bribes paid to public officials by timing of payment, Nigeria, 2016–2023

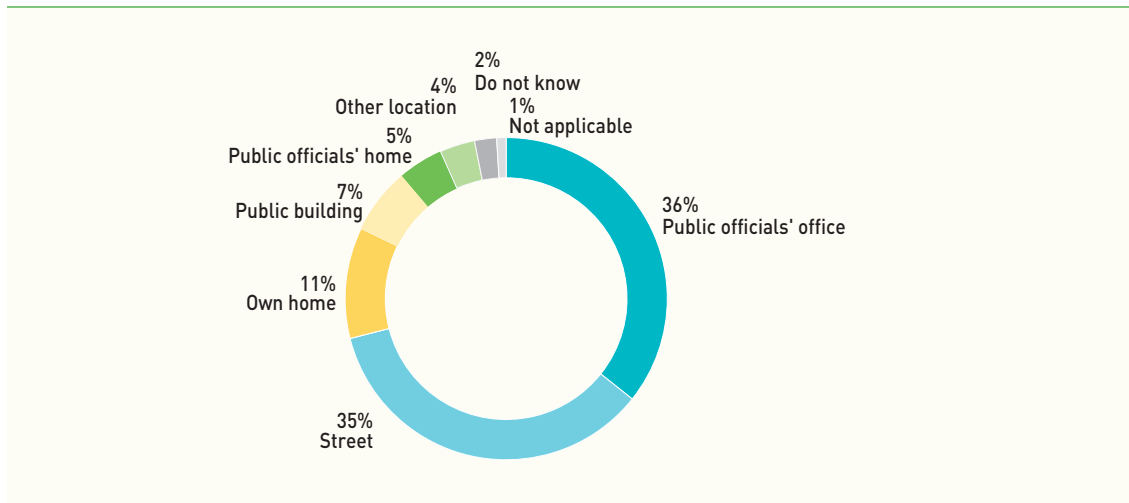


Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The share of bribes paid before a service was provided declined to about 58 per cent in 2023 compared to previous shares of 67 per cent in 2019 and 70 per cent in 2016 (Figure 30). Conversely, 22 per cent of bribes were paid after the service in 2023, this is markedly higher than in 2019 (15 per cent) and 2016 (14 per cent).³² The shift towards more retro-active bribing, combined with indirect requests by public officials, may suggest that public officials are becoming less assertive in asking for bribes and could indicate a gradual shift in the power relationship between officials and citizens to the benefit of the latter. This interpretation also finds support in the data on bribery refusal patterns (discussed in chapter 1 on “The scope of bribery”).

³² The increase in the share between the 2019 and the 2023 survey is statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.

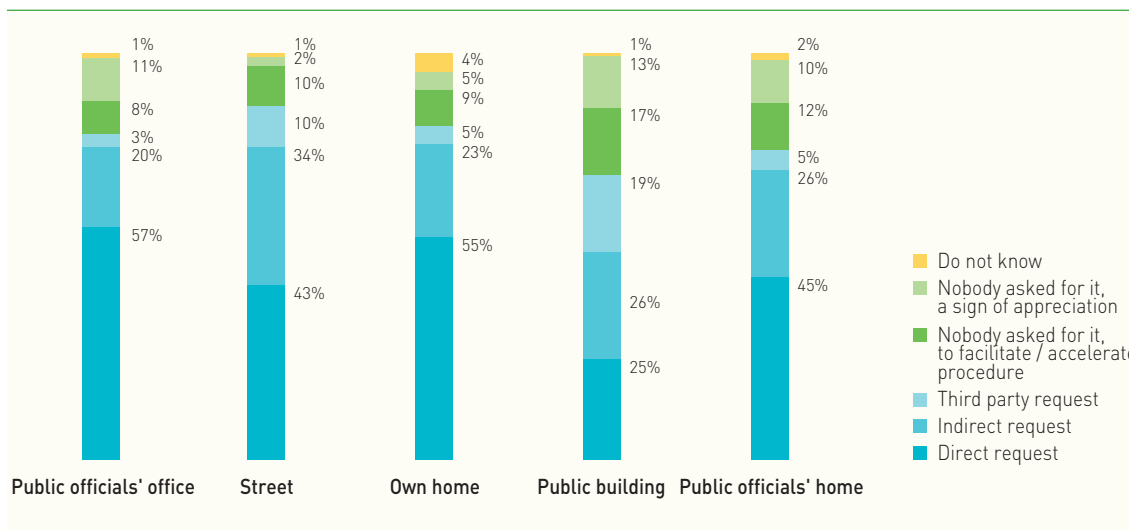
Figure 31: Percentage distribution of bribes paid by location, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.

For the first time, the 2023 survey was able to provide insights into the specific types of location where bribery takes place. In 2023, bribes in a public official’s office and in the street accounted for around 35 and 36 per cent of all bribery incidents, respectively (Figure 31). 11 per cent of bribes were paid in the respondents’ own home, while 7 per cent were paid in public buildings such as restaurant, malls, or stations.

Figure 32: Percentage distribution of bribes paid to public officials, by modality and location, Nigeria, 2023

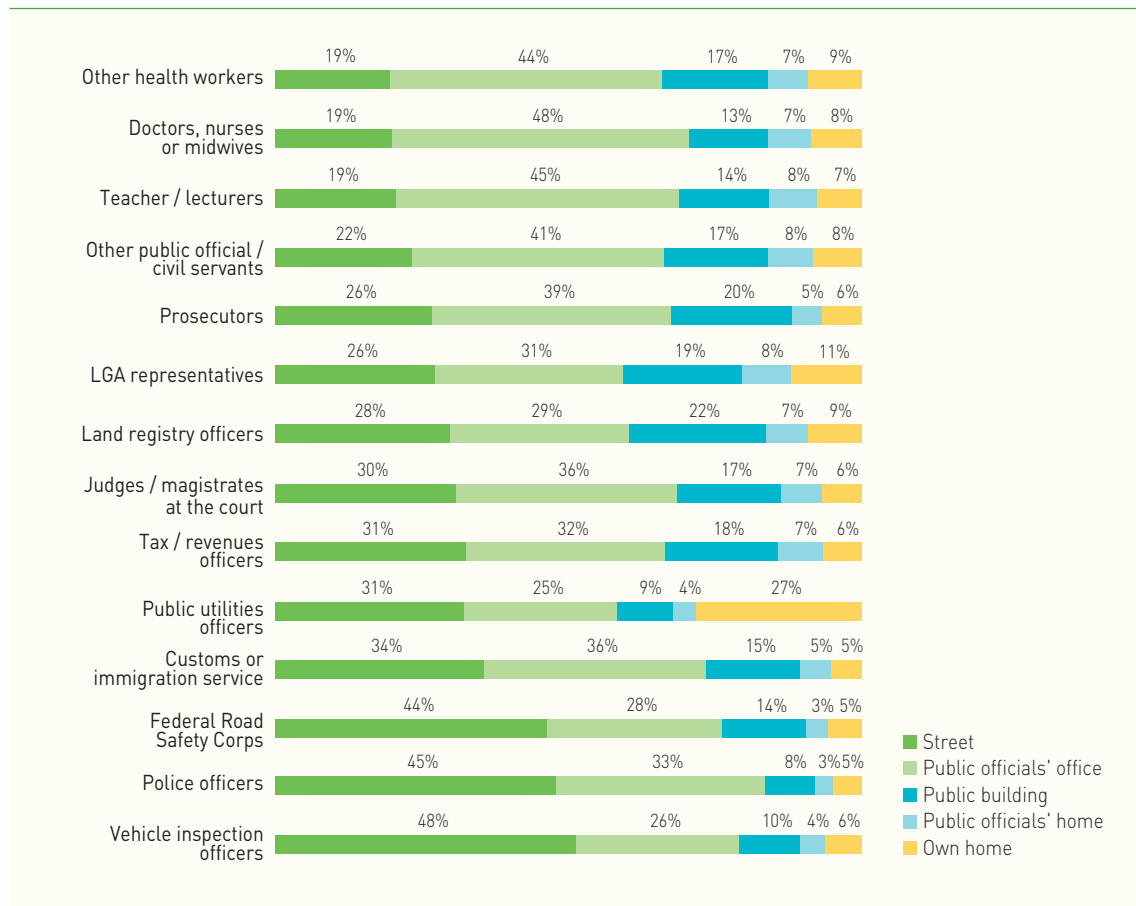


Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.

A joint analysis of how and where bribes were requested provides additional insights into how bribery works in Nigeria. In 2023, direct requests for bribes by public officials occurred more frequently in discreet settings, such as the public officials’ office (57 per cent of all bribes paid in public officials’ offices were directly requested), the bribe-payers’ own house (55 per cent), or the public officials’ home (45 per cent) (Figure 32). When bribery occurred in the street, the proportion of indirect requests increases, as compared to more discreet locations where the demand can be more up front. Bribes paid in public locations such as restaurants, malls, or stations exhibited a more balanced distribution: 25 per cent of all bribes paid in such

public buildings were as a result of direct requests, 24 per cent were indirectly asked for, 19 per cent followed third-party interventions, 17 per cent were not solicited but paid to facilitate or expedite a procedure, and 13 per cent were gestures of appreciation.

Figure 33: Percentage distribution of bribes paid, by type of public official and by location of bribe payment, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Some types of public official have been omitted due to insufficient data points per location disaggregation.

Figure 33 examines how the location of bribes differs according to the type of public official involved. In 2023, bribery in a public officials’ office were prevalent in the health and education sectors.

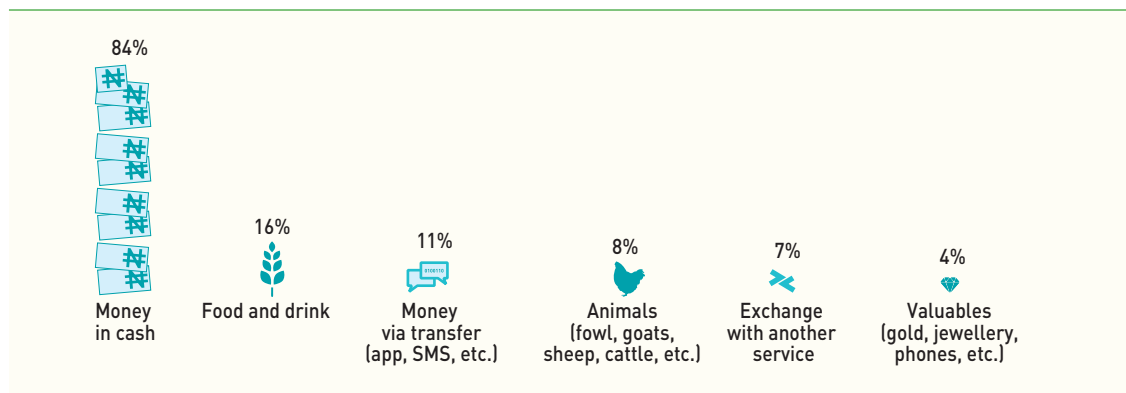
Among all respondents who paid a bribe to doctors, nurses and midwives, 48 per cent reported doing so in the official’s office. Similarly, 45 per cent of respondents who paid a bribe to teachers and lecturers did so in their offices. In the case of prosecutors and judges, this figure was lower, at 39 per cent and 36 per cent respectively.

By contrast, bribes to law enforcement officials, were most frequently paid on the street, with 48 per cent of those who paid a bribe to vehicle inspection officers reporting that they did so on the street. The figures are comparable for police officers (45 per cent) and the federal road safety corps (44 per cent).

Bribes were not frequently requested at the bribe payer's own home, with the exception of public utilities officers whose services are rendered in the bribe-payer's home. 27 per cent of respondents who paid a bribe to public utilities officers reported doing so in their own home.

What forms do bribes take?

Figure 34: Share of bribes paid to public officials, by form of payment, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Shares refer to the number of last bribes paid using a specific payment form (food and drink, valuables, etc.) over the total number of last bribes paid in the 12 months prior to the survey. Respondents could indicate that multiple payment forms were used in one instance of bribery, which means that the shares do not add up 100 per cent.

Citizens can pay bribes in multiple ways, sometimes using different forms of payment in the same instance of bribery. In Nigeria, however, this diversity does not translate into any substantial variation in terms of how bribes are actually paid. As in 2016 and 2019, in 2023 too, cash was the most common form of bribery, accounting for 84 per cent of all bribes paid. 11 per cent of bribes in 2023 were paid via digital transfers of money, using apps, messaging services, or other means (Figure. 34). Taken together, this means that in 2023, the share of all bribes paid in monetary format (either exclusively or in combination with other forms of payment) amounted to 95 per cent, a modest increase compared to 2019, when the share of all bribes paid in monetary form was estimated to stand at 93 per cent. Between 2019 and 2023, the most notable development regarding the form of bribe payments was the increase in the share of bribes paid as food and drink, which increased significantly from 5 per cent in 2019 to 16 per cent in 2023.

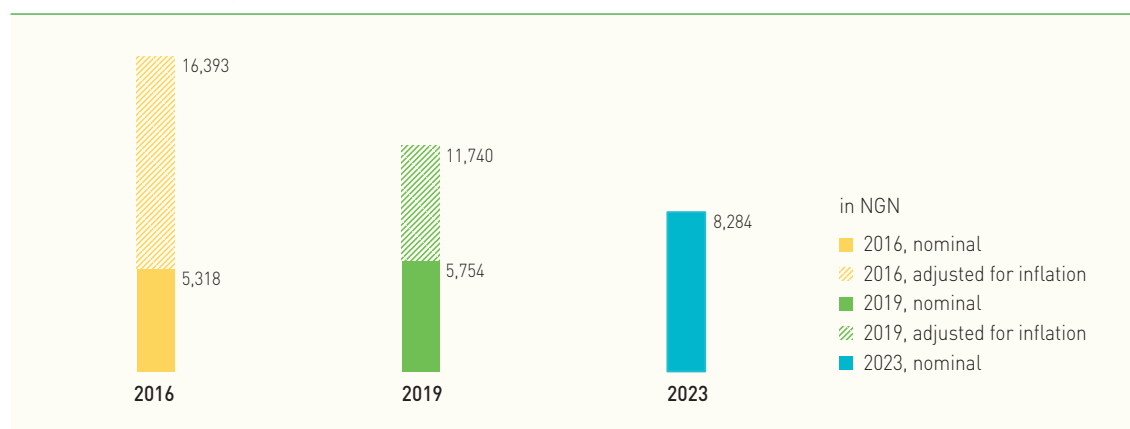
While the share of monetary bribes, both in cash and transfers, were similar in urban and rural areas in 2023, in rural areas a substantially higher proportion of bribes were paid in the form of food and drink (20 per cent of all bribes versus 12 per cent in urban areas) and animals (11 versus 6 per cent).³³

³³ The differences between urban and rural areas in the proportions of bribes paid in the form of animals and in the form of food and drink are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.

Size of cash bribes

In 2023, the average nominal cash bribe paid (excluding money transfers) amounted to NGN 8,284, which is equivalent to \$52 in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).³⁴ This figure represents a notable increase – around 43 per cent – compared to the average nominal cash bribe reported in the 2019 survey (Figure 35). However, when accounting for inflation, the average cash bribe size in 2023 actually represents a decrease of 29 per cent when compared to 2019 and of 49 per cent when compared to 2016. This means that, even though the average nominal cash bribe increased notably between 2019 and 2023, it did not “catch up” with inflation, which may suggest that bribe sizes do not adjust that quickly to inflationary pressures. If this were the case, the inflation-adjusted average cash bribe sizes would have remained constant, when in fact they have decreased over time. When including money transfers, which account for 11 per cent of all bribes paid in 2023, the average bribe size in 2023 amounts to an estimated NGN 8,617– only slightly higher than when money transfers are excluded.

Figure 35: Average bribe size (NGN), Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. NGN are inflation-adjusted constant 2023 Naira. The 2023 figure excludes bribes that were paid through cash transfers, which were not captured in previous survey rounds, to allow for comparability across years.

In 2023, there were an estimated 87 million instances of bribery. Given an average cash bribe size of NGN 8,284 in 2023, this resulted in approximately NGN 721 billion worth of bribes paid in the form of cash to public officials, which is equivalent to around 0.35 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria.³⁵

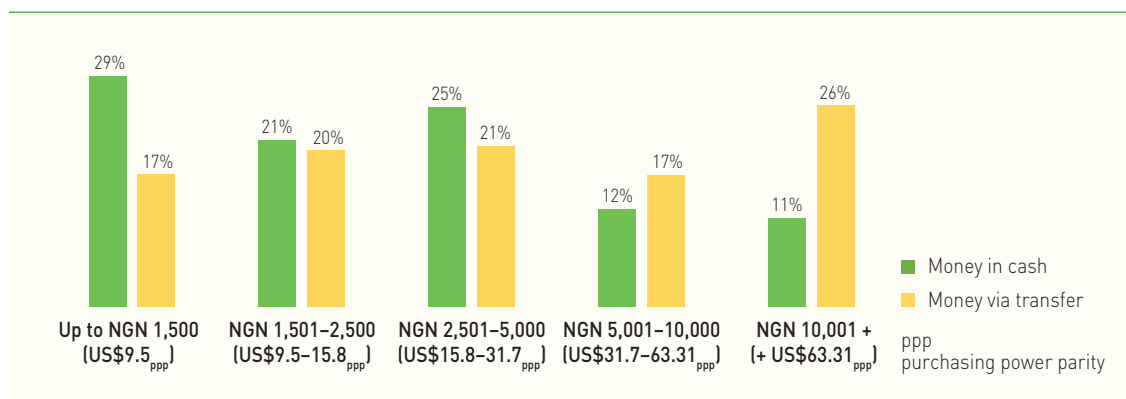
The size of bribes can vary widely, also depending on the form of bribe payment. This is evident, for example, when comparing bribes paid in cash with bribes paid via money transfers. Figure 36

³⁴ The 2023 figure excludes bribes that were paid through a money transfer. Inflation-adjusted cash bribe amounts for 2016 and 2019 were adjusted using the 12-month average of the composite Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI values were obtained from <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241407>. Amounts in NGN have been converted to International Dollars in terms of PPP as of 2022 so as to take into account the difference in the cost of living in Nigeria and in the United States of America. The exchange rate used to convert NGN into Dollars PPP was obtained at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.PPP>.

³⁵ The GDP of Nigeria in 2022 (the latest available year) was estimated at NGN 202.4 trillion, see <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CN>.

shows the difference in the percentage distribution of bribes paid in cash or using money transfer in 2023. While bribes up to NGN 1,500 accounted for 29 per cent of all bribes paid in cash, they only accounted for 17 per cent of bribes paid through a money transfer. By contrast, larger bribes over NGN 10,000 constituted only 11 per cent of all cash bribes as compared to 26 per cent of all bribes paid through a money transfer. This suggests that money transfers are more commonly used when larger sums are involved.

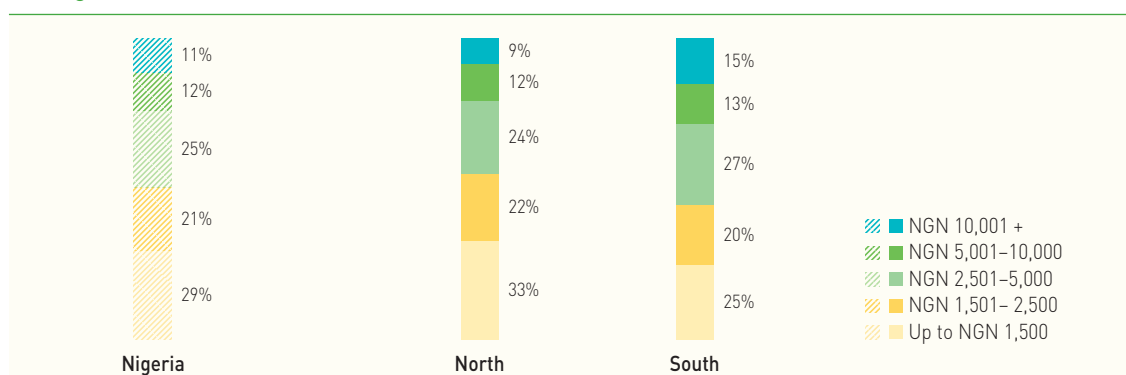
Figure 36: Percentage distribution of number of bribes paid in cash and by money transfer, by size (NGN), Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The analysis of the percentage distribution of bribes paid in cash, categorized by the amount paid and by zone for the year 2023, underscores zonal disparities in the distribution of cash bribes in the country (Figure 37). Smaller bribes of up to NGN 1,500, are relatively less prevalent in the South (25 per cent) as compared to North (33 per cent). In the South, large bribes are more common, with bribes over NGN 10,000 accounting for 15 per cent as compared to only 9 per cent in the North. This pattern can be partly attributed to the differences in living standards between the North and the South. For example, the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index survey showed that 65 per cent of all Nigerians experiencing poverty live in the North.³⁶ It is therefore likely that those living in the North simply do not have the capacity to pay larger bribes.

Figure 37: Percentage distribution of bribes paid in cash, by amount paid and by North – South, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. The figure excludes bribes that were paid through a cash transfer to allow for comparability across years. The North refers to the North-Central, North-East and North-West Zones, while the South refers to South-East, South-South and South-West.

36 See Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022, https://www.mppn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/MPI_web_Nov15_FINAL.pdf

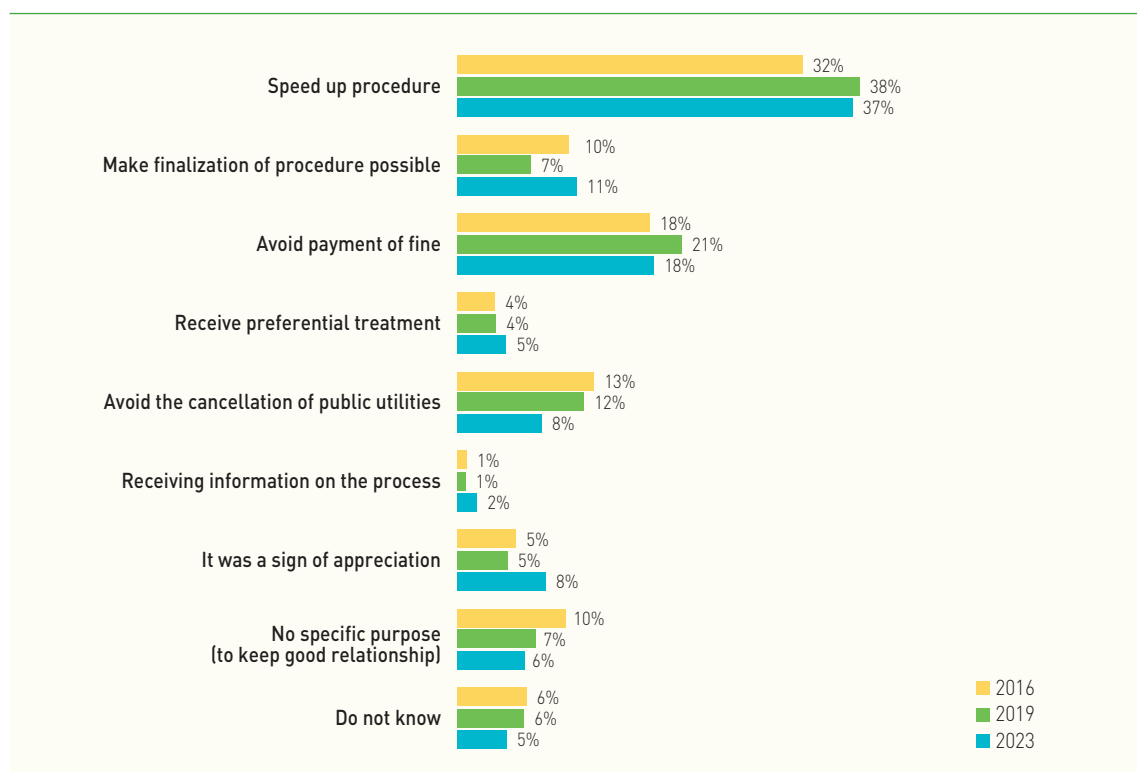


Purpose of bribes paid to public officials

In Nigeria, the majority of bribes are paid for service delivery that should have been provided for free. While there have been some changes over the years in the distribution of the specific purposes for which the bribes are paid, the overall picture has not changed much.

In 2023, 37 per cent of bribes were paid to expedite a procedure, a figure similar to the one recorded in 2019 (38 per cent) and somewhat higher than in 2016 (32 per cent) (Figure 38). Following a decline in 2019, the proportion of bribes paid to ensure the completion of a procedure increased to 11 per cent, similar to the share reported in 2016.

Figure 38: Percentage distribution of bribe payments to public official, by purpose of payment, Nigeria, 2019–2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Certain reasons for paying bribes have experienced a consistent decrease in their respective shares over the years. For instance, the objective of avoiding the cancellation of public utilities was cited as the reason in 2016, at 13 per cent of all payments; this came down to 8 per cent in 2023. Similarly, the motive of maintaining good relations has seen a reduction from 10 per cent in 2016 to 6 per cent in 2023.

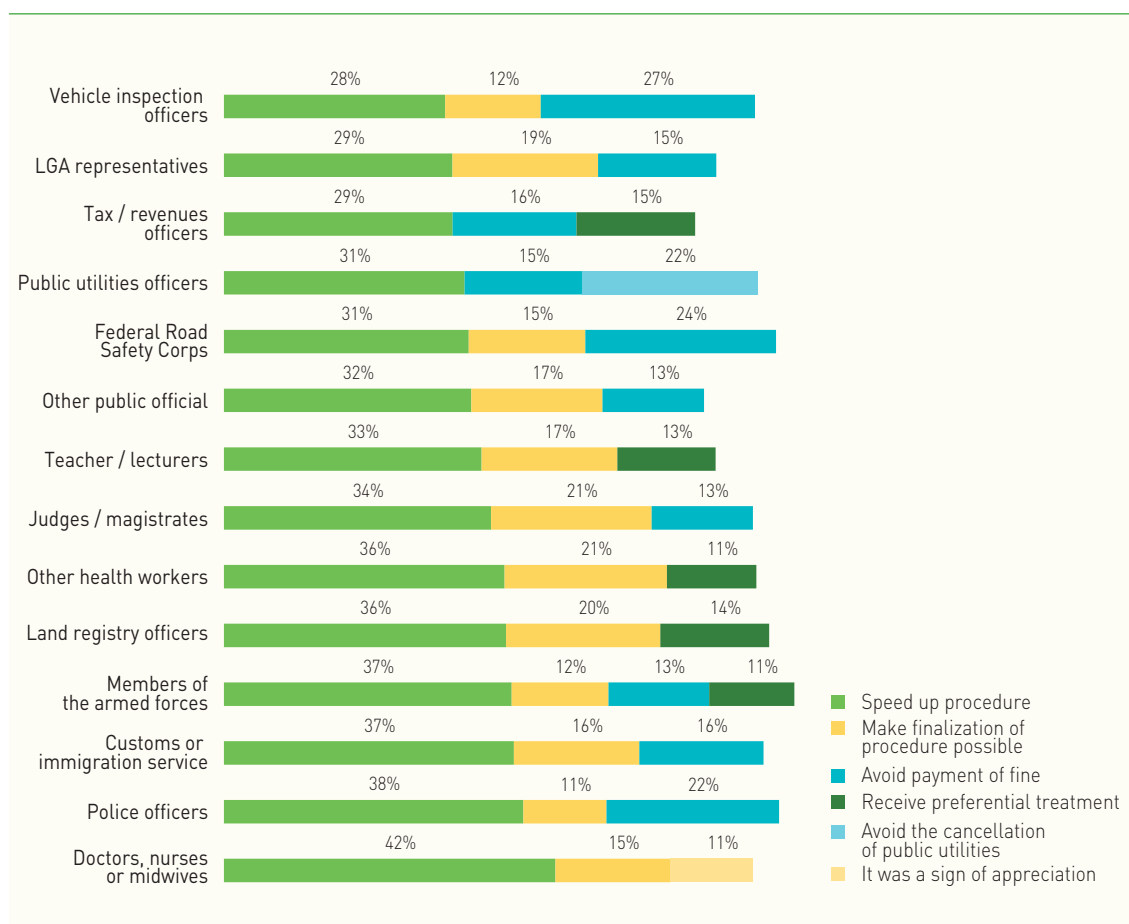
Figure 38 shows that speeding up procedures is the most common reason for bribes across all types of public officials. However, the share of bribes paid to enable the finalization of a procedure varies more by type of official (Figure 39). While the share of bribes paid for this purpose was higher among judges/magistrates (21 per cent), other health workers (21 per cent) and land registry officers (21 per cent), it was lower among police officers (11 per cent) and vehicle inspection officers (12 per cent). By contrast, bribes which are paid to avoid payment of

finances were more prevalent among vehicle inspection officers (27 per cent), federal road safety corps (24 per cent) and police officers (22 per cent).

Bribes paid for the purpose of receiving preferential treatment were more commonly seen among teachers and lecturers (13 per cent), and tax and revenue officers (15 per cent). Teachers and lecturers may have some discretion in grading, while tax and revenue officer may have an influence over audits and tax assessments, which would incentivize bribery with the purpose of obtaining favourable treatment.

Additionally, specific occupations show variations in the reasons for bribery. For example, the decrease in bribes paid to avoid the cancellation of a public utility service was driven primarily by a decline among public utilities officers, where the share decreased from 39 per cent in 2019 to 22 per cent in 2023 (Figure 39).³⁷ As for doctors, nurses and midwives, 11 per cent of bribes were paid as a sign of appreciation, possibly reflecting gratitude for the care received.

Figure 39: Percentage distribution of bribe payments to public official, by top 3 purposes of payment and type of public official, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Percentage distributions reflect the three main purposes for which bribes are paid to each category of public official. Embassy / consulate officers and Members of Parliament / legislature were omitted due to insufficient observations on the breakdown of the purpose of bribe.

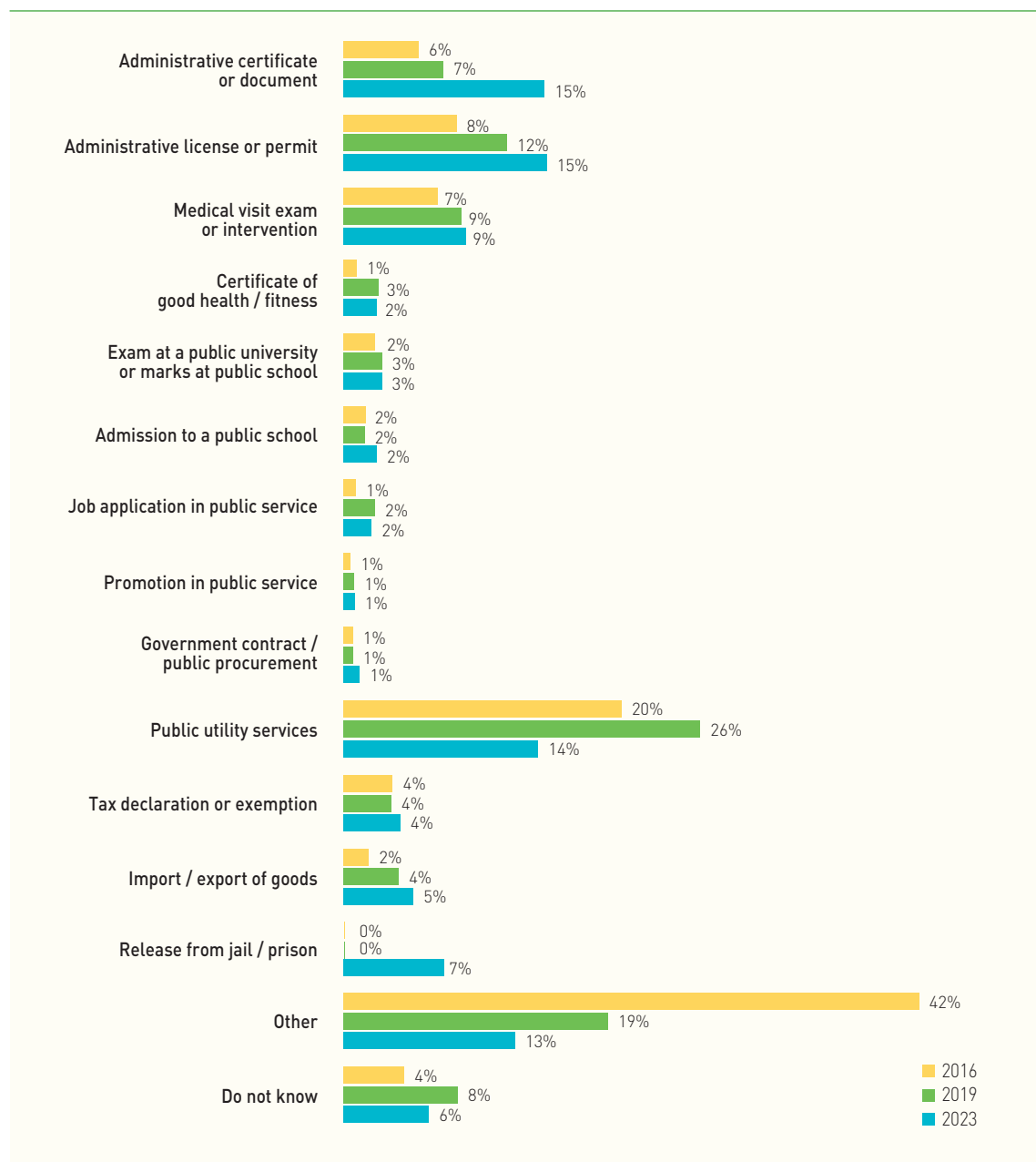
³⁷ For 2019 figures, see *Corruption in Nigeria: patterns and trends. Second survey on corruption as experienced by the population* (2019), p. 52.



Services for which bribes are paid to public officials

Constituting 14 per cent of all reported payments, the predominant service sought by bribe-payers was related to public utilities services such as water, electricity and sanitation (Figure 40). Public utilities also ranked first in 2019. Following closely, access to administrative documents, whether licenses or permits and certificates and documents, accounted for 15 per cent of bribery instances in 2023 respectively. By contrast, bribes for services related to the education sector, (for example, in order to influence exams at public universities or marks at public schools (3 per cent), or obtaining admission to public schools (2 per cent)) were less prevalent in 2023.

Figure 40: Percentage distribution of bribes paid to public officials, by service sought at the time of payment, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. The response item "release from jail/prison" was only included in the 2023 survey.

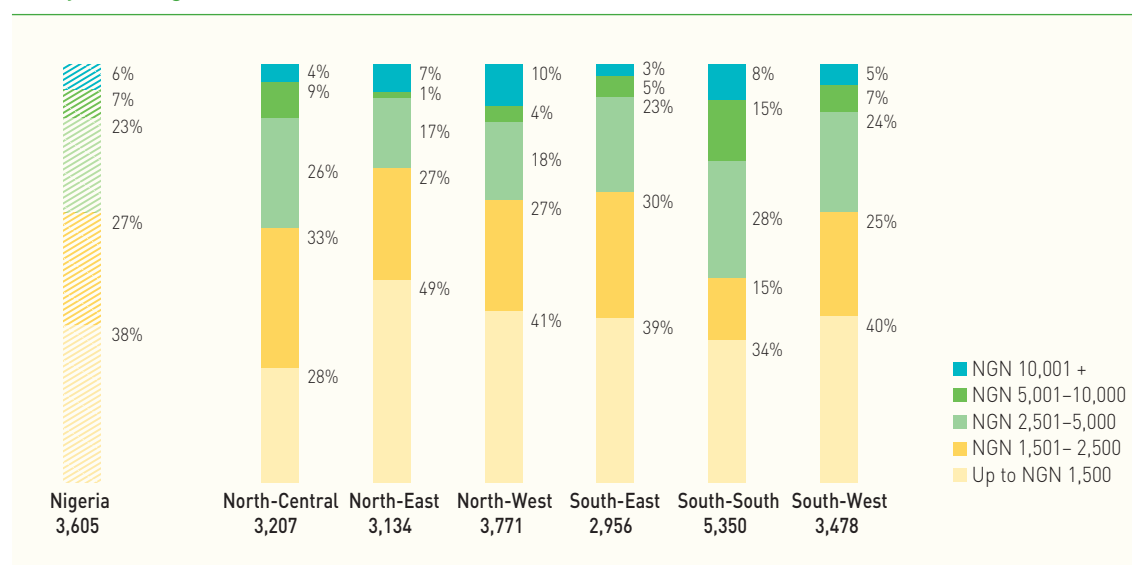
A new response option included in the 2023 survey reveals that 7 per cent of bribe-payers sought release from jail or prison for themselves or someone else. It is also the service for which the highest average bribe size was reported, at around NGN 22,941. This finding is in line with the Comprehensive Human Rights Due Diligence Policy Risk Assessments Report prepared by UNODC and OHCHR in 2024, which identified instances within the Nigerian Police Force involving arbitrary arrest or detention of citizens by police officers, resulting in the extortion of bribes for the release from custody.³⁸

How bribery works in the private sector

When comparing the findings on cash bribes in the public sector to those in the private sector, several interesting patterns emerge. According to the 2023 survey results, cash bribes in the public sector tended to be larger on average (NGN 8,284) compared to those in the private sector (NGN 3,605). A possible reason for this difference in average bribe sizes may be that public sector officials tend to wield more authority than private sector employees over the allocation of resources, services or permits that are more essential for the daily lives of Nigerians, which enables public officials to extract greater bribery amounts from citizens than private sector employees.

Differences in bribe size between sectors may also reflect difference in the (perceived) power relationship between citizens and officials. For example, 17 per cent of those who paid a bribe in the private sector in 2023 also reported it to an official authority or an institution, which is significantly higher than the bribery reporting rate in the public sector (8.6 per cent) and may indicate that citizens are less fearful of holding private sector employees accountable for corrupt behaviour.

Figure 41: Percentage distribution of bribes paid in cash in the private sector, by amount paid and by zone, Nigeria, 2023

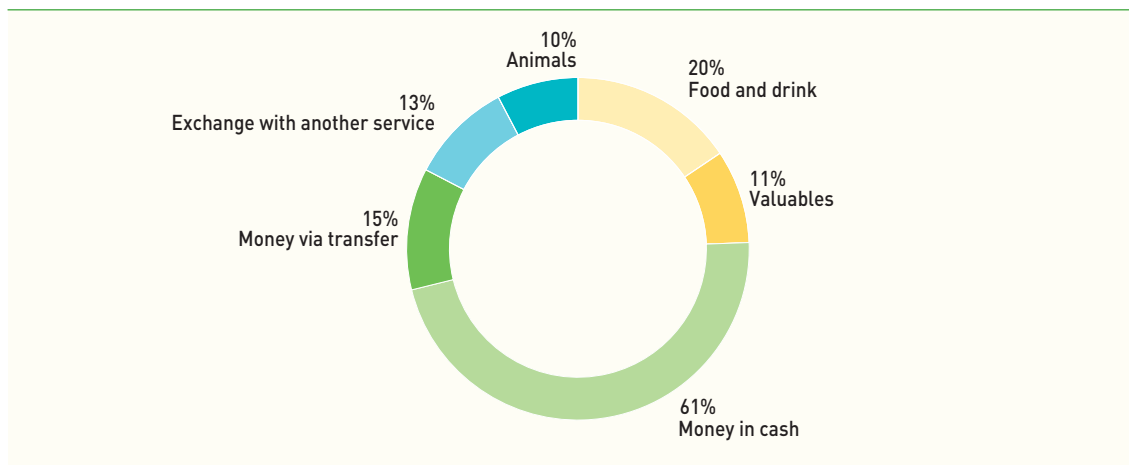


Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Figures underneath the zone names refer to the average amount of bribes paid in cash in each zone.

38 See UNODC and OHCHR, Comprehensive Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP) Risk Assessment Report for the Project: Reducing Grievances through Strengthening the Conflict and Gender-Sensitive Oversight Mechanisms of the Nigerian Police Force

As mentioned, smaller bribes were more prevalent in the private sector, and this finding was persistent across almost all zones. In 2023, bribes up to NGN 2,500 accounted for at least 60 per cent of all private sector bribes in all zones except the South-South (Figure 41). Similar to the public sector, the South-South zone recorded a bigger share of large cash bribes in the private sector, with bribes from NGN 5,000 to over NGN 10,000 accounting for 23 per cent of all private sector bribes in this zone. In the North-East zone, bribes up to NGN 1,500 account for almost half (49 per cent) of bribes, while they constitute around 28 per cent of all bribes in the North-Central zone.

Figure 42: Percentage distribution of bribes paid in the private sector, by form of payment, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Respondents could select more than one option.

Bribes paid in cash account for 61 per cent of bribes paid in the private sector in 2023 (Figure 42). While it is the most common form of bribery in the private sector, it is lower compared to the share of cash bribes in the public sector (84 per cent). This finding and the low share of bribes paid through money transfers, which tend to involve larger sums of money than cash payments,³⁹ may be one of the reasons why cash bribes tend to be smaller in the private sector. Food and drink are the second most common form of bribery in the private sector, accounting for 20 per cent of all bribes – similar to the public sector, where food and drink made up 16 per cent of all bribe payments.

In summary, bribery in the private sector generally involves smaller cash and transfer amounts compared to the public sector, likely due to differences in the nature of authority and the stakes involved. However, there are similarities across public and private sectors, such as the preponderance of cash bribes and the relatively frequent use of food and drink as a form of bribery, suggesting that the mechanisms of bribery are similar across Nigeria's public and private sectors.

³⁹ In 2023, the average bribe paid via money transfers was NGN 7,582 in the private sector compared to 11,016 in the public sector.

Reporting of bribery

Geographical and socio-demographic trends in bribery reporting

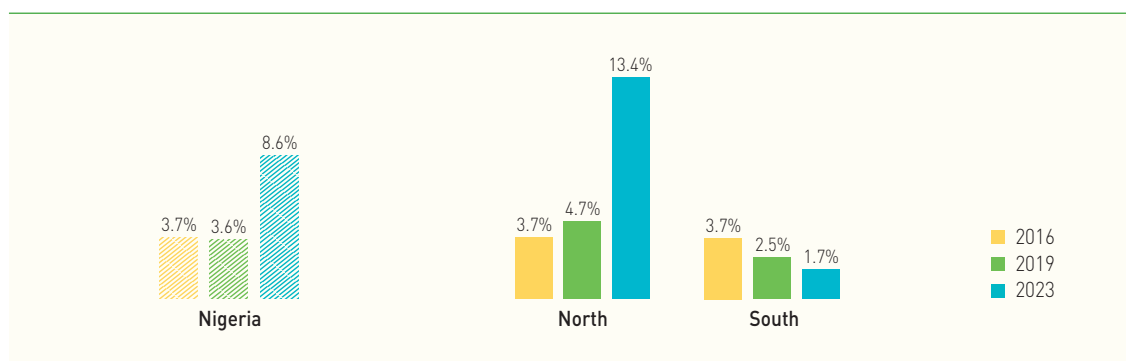
The 2023 survey saw a noticeable increase in the share of Nigerians who paid at least one bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey and reported their experience to an official institution⁴⁰ (8.6 per cent) compared to the figures reported in 2016 (3.7 per cent) and 2019 (3.7 per cent) (Figure 43). This increase is primarily driven by developments in the Northern zones,⁴¹ where the bribery reporting rate increased, on average, from 4.7 per cent in 2019 to 13.4 per cent in 2023. By contrast, in the Southern zones, the bribery reporting rate decreased from, on average, 2.5 per cent in 2019 to 1.7 per cent in 2023.⁴²



What is the bribery reporting rate?

The share of the adult population who paid a bribe to a public official at least once in the past 12 months and who reported the payment of a bribe to any official authority.

Figure 43: Bribery reporting rate to an official authority, overall and by North-South, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: The bribery reporting rate is calculated as the number of people who reported the payment of a bribe to any official authority (for example, police, prosecutor, anti-corruption agency, etc.), as a percentage of people who paid at least one bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey. This rate does not include reporting by people who were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but refused to pay. Respondents to the survey could select more than one institution. The North refers to the North-Central, North-East and North-West Zones, while the South refers to South-East, South-South and South-West.

Breaking down bribery reporting rates by citizens' sex and age offers further insights into what may have driven the increase in the national bribery reporting rate between 2019 and 2023. While there has been an increase in the bribery reporting rate for both women and men between 2019 and 2023, women recorded a larger increase, about 6 percentage points compared with 4.5 per cent for men (Figure. 44).⁴³

40 Official institutions include the police, anti-corruption agency, public complaints commission, the same agency or institution of the officer requesting the bribes or any other official institutions.

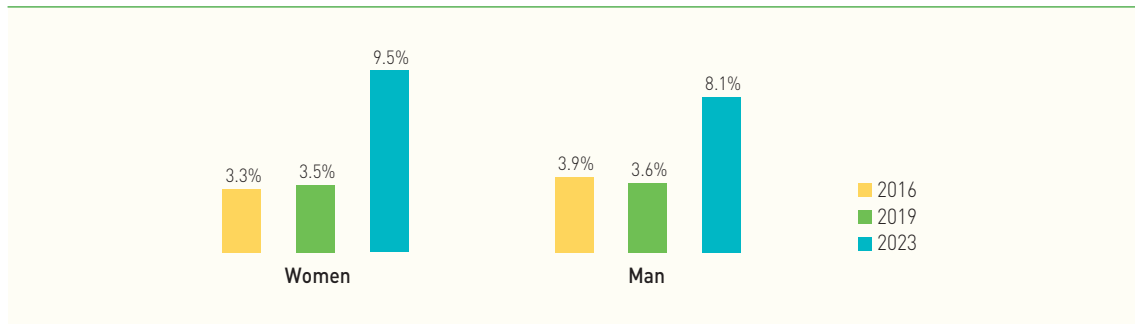
41 Due to insufficient observations, a further breakdown by zone is not possible. The North refers to the North-Central, North-East and North-West Zones, while the South refers to South-East, South-South and South-West.

42 The decrease in the reporting rate in the South from 2019 to 2023 is statistically significant at 90 per cent confidence.

43 The difference in bribery reporting rate changes between male and female citizens between 2019 and 2023 is not statistically significant.



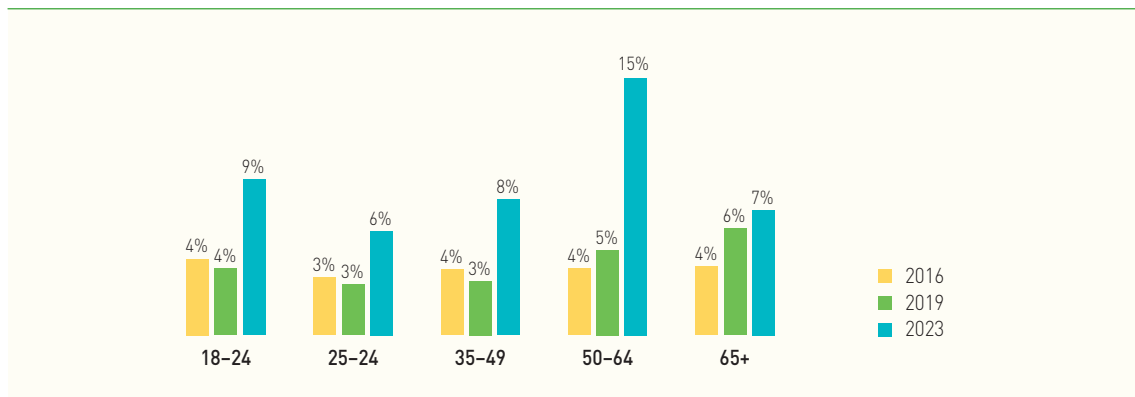
Figure 44: Bribery reporting rate to an official authority, by sex of citizen, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: The bribery reporting rate is calculated as the number of female/male citizens who reported the payment of a bribe to any official authority (for example, police, prosecutor, anti-corruption agency, etc.), as a percentage of all male/female citizens who paid a bribe. This rate does not include reporting by people who were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but refused to pay. Respondents to the survey could select more than one institution.

Certain age groups also recorded significantly larger increases in the bribery reporting rate than others. (Figure 45). The largest increase was observed among 50–64-year-olds, from 5 per cent in 2019 to 15 per cent in 2023, followed by 18 to 24 year olds (increased from 4 per cent in 2019 to 9 per cent in 2023). This suggests that the increase in the bribery reporting rate between 2019 and 2023 was driven disproportionately by Nigerians aged 18 to 24 as well as those aged 50 to 64.

Figure 45: Bribery reporting rate to an official authority, by age group, Nigeria, 2016–2023

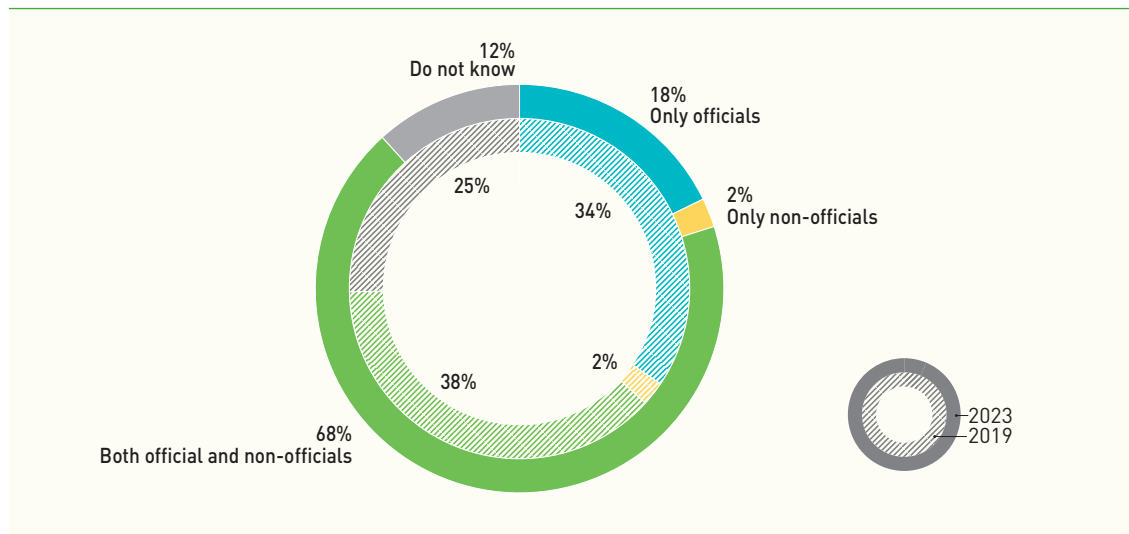


Note: The percentages above are calculated as the number of people in a specific age group who reported to a selected official authority, divided by the total number of people in that age group who reported bribery (last bribe paid only). Respondents to the survey could select more than one institution.

To whom do Nigerians report bribery cases?

Changes in bribery reporting rates are also reflected in the types of official and non-official institutions (e.g. media, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOS)) that are approached by citizens to report bribery. In 2023, relatively fewer Nigerians who reported bribery cases reported them only to official institutions (18 per cent) compared to 2019 (38 per cent) (Figure 46). Increasingly Nigerians who report bribery cases seem to be reporting to both official and non-official bodies with 68 per cent reporting to both official and non-official authorities in 2023. This clearly indicates the increasing role of civil society in receiving complaints about corruption in the public sector.

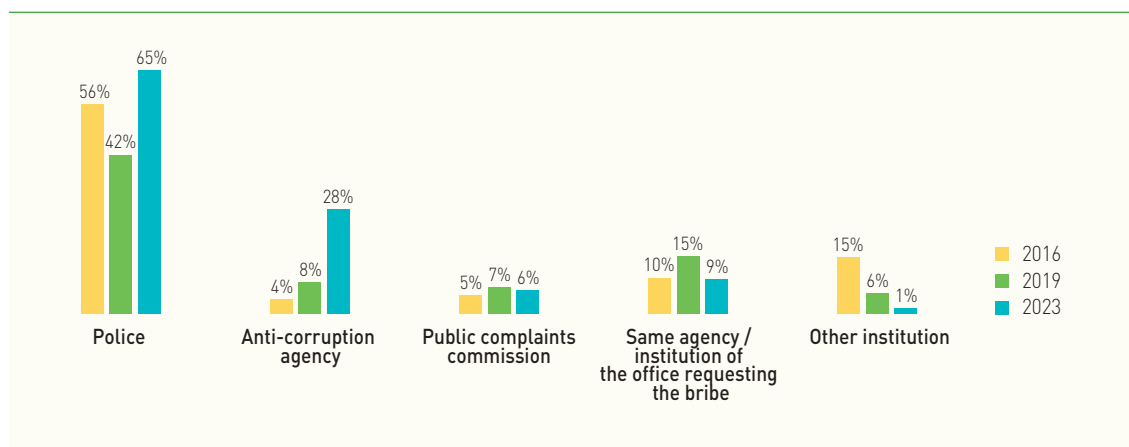
Figure 46: Share of reported cases of bribery, by type of institution or authority that received the complaint, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Share of Nigerians who paid a bribe and then reported it to any official or non-official institution. Official institutions include the police, the Anti-Corruption Agency, the Public complaints Commission, the same agency or institution of the officer requesting the bribe, or any other formal institution. Non-official institutions include the media, international organizations and NGOs. Respondents to the survey could select more than one authority or institution.

Figures 47 and 48 provide a further breakdown of official and non-official authorities that Nigerians turn to when reporting bribery cases. In 2023, 65 per cent of Nigerians who reported bribes to any type of authority (official or non-official), did so to the police, while 28 per cent reported to the Anti-Corruption Agency (Figure. 47). This marks an increase in both shares compared to previous surveys and suggests that the police and anti-corruption agencies are increasingly relied on as channels for bribery reporting. By contrast, the proportion of Nigerians who reported bribery to the same agency or institutions as the one that the officer belongs to decreased from 15 per cent in 2019 to 8 per cent in 2023. This could mean that there is limited confidence in internal anti-bribery procedures, even if they exist.

Figure 47: Share of citizens who reported bribery cases to different types of official authority over all citizens who reported bribery cases, Nigeria, 2016 –2023

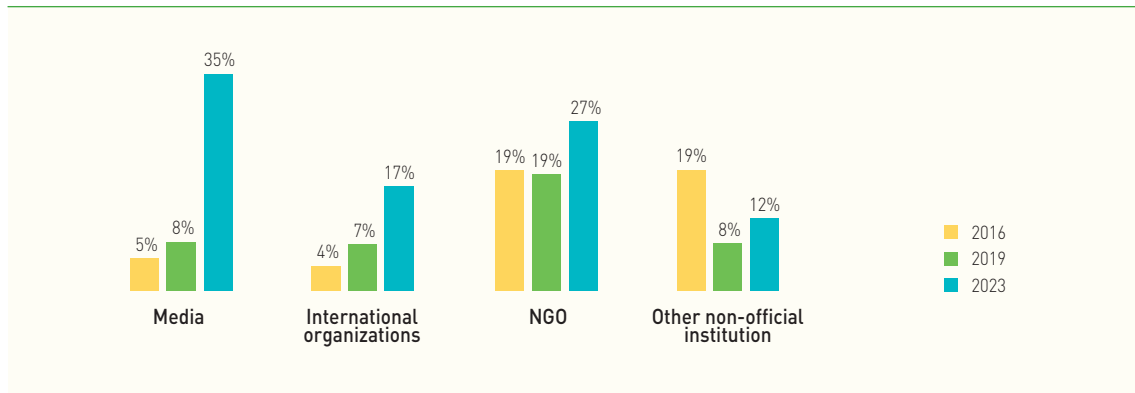


Note: The percentages above are calculated as the number of people who reported to a selected official authority, divided by the total number of people who reported bribery to any official and non-official authority (last bribe paid only). One person might have reported to more than one official authority and/or non-official institution.



Between 2019 and 2023, all types of institutions among all non-official institutions to whom Nigerians can report bribery cases, saw an increase in their respective shares of complaints lodged (Figure 48). The most notable increase was observed in reports to the media. This figure rose from 8 per cent in 2019 to 35 per cent in 2023, thus putting the media in second position after the police.

Figure 48: Share of citizens who reported bribery cases to different types of official authority over all citizens who reported bribery cases, Nigeria, 2016 –2023



Note: The percentages above are calculated as the number of people who reported to a selected official authority, divided by the total number of people who reported bribery to any official and non-official authority (last bribe paid only). One person might have reported to more than one official authority and/or non-official institution.

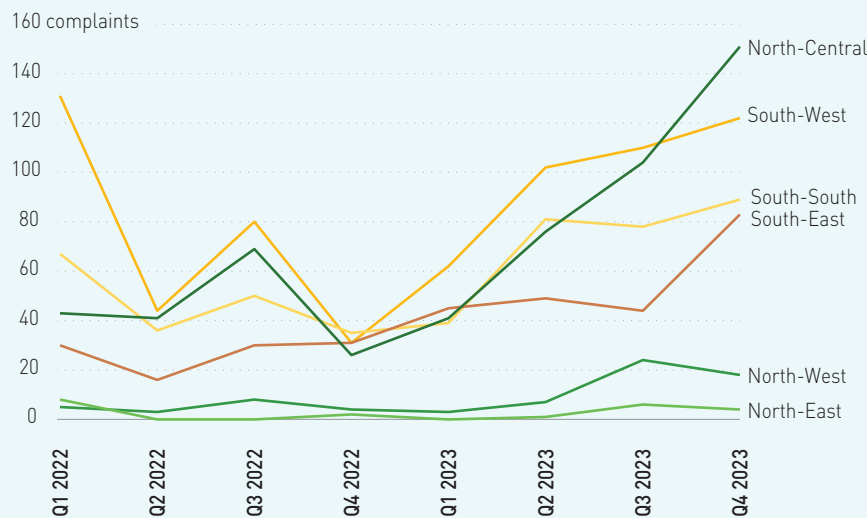
Complaints Response Units

A mechanism to increase accountability in policing

As part of the Presidential Police Reform Roadmap of Nigeria and following the enactment of the Nigeria Police Act of 2020, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) started establishing Complaints Response Units (CRUs) in all state commands and the Federal Capital Territory.⁴⁴ CRUs are important in enhancing the NPF's ability to handle public complaints and could potentially serve as a major internal accountability mechanism. Their primary objective is to facilitate citizen reporting of cases related to corruption, abuse of power or authority, demanding money for bail, police misconduct and extortion, while reinforcing discipline within the NPF. Additionally, CRUs are charged with enabling the NPF to establish and operate a more credible and transparent oversight function.

⁴⁴ Currently, the only fully operating CRU is located at the NPF headquarter office in Abuja, as well as a smaller unit in Lagos. Other offices are currently being set up in the other state commands.

Figure 49: Quarterly number of complaints received at the Abuja CRU unit, by zone of complaint origin, 2022–2023



Source: Nigeria Police Force, Complaint Response Unit – CRU

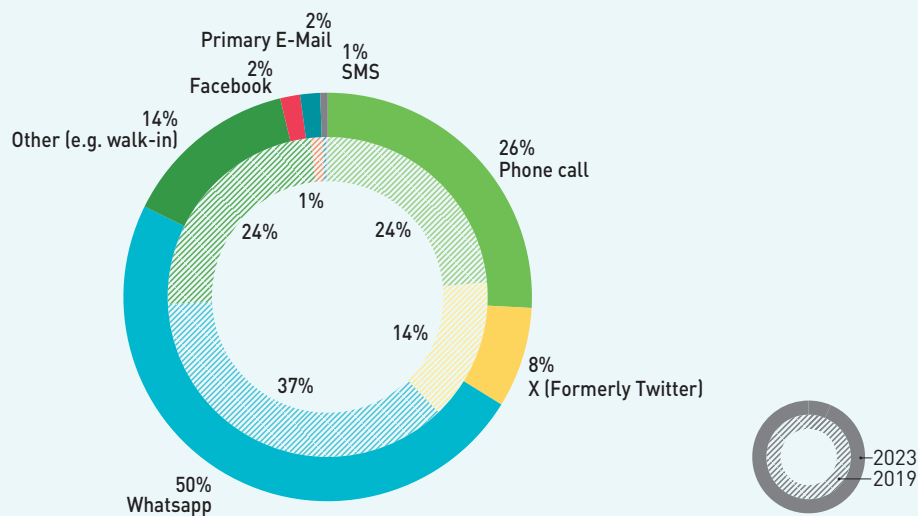
The above figure shows the number of complaints received at the CRU unit located at the NPF headquarters in Abuja, by quarter and by zone or origin. The data indicate a gradual rise in complaint numbers across zones over time. However, it is important to exercise caution in interpreting these trends, as increases may not only reflect increased reporting of cases, but also reflect improvements in data collection methods implemented in 2023.

On average, around 87 per cent of the complaints received between Q3 2022 (the earliest quarter with sex disaggregated data and Q4 2023) were submitted by men, and 17 per cent of all who submitted complaints in the same period were under the age of 35. The figure below shows that the most preferred means of reportage in the period Q1 2022 – Q4 2023 was WhatsApp, which was used by around 37 per cent of those who submitted complaints in 2022, and 50 per cent in 2023. This was followed by phone calls (24 per cent in 2022 and 14 per cent in 2023), X (formerly Twitter) (8 per cent in 2023 and 14 per cent in 2022) and other means such as walk in (14 per cent in 2023 and 24 per cent in 2022). There were very few instances where complaints were received via Facebook, email, or SMS (less than 2 per cent).

The establishment of CRUs within the Nigerian Police Force marks an important step towards enhancing accountability and transparency within law enforcement. Overall, the data indicates citizen engagement with law enforcement and highlights the importance of continued efforts to strengthen accountability mechanisms, which the findings from the 2023 survey have shown to be associated with increases in bribery reporting rates.



Figure 50: Number of complaints received at the Abuja CRU unit, by means of reporting, 2022–2023



Source: Nigeria Police Force, Complaint Response Unit – CRU

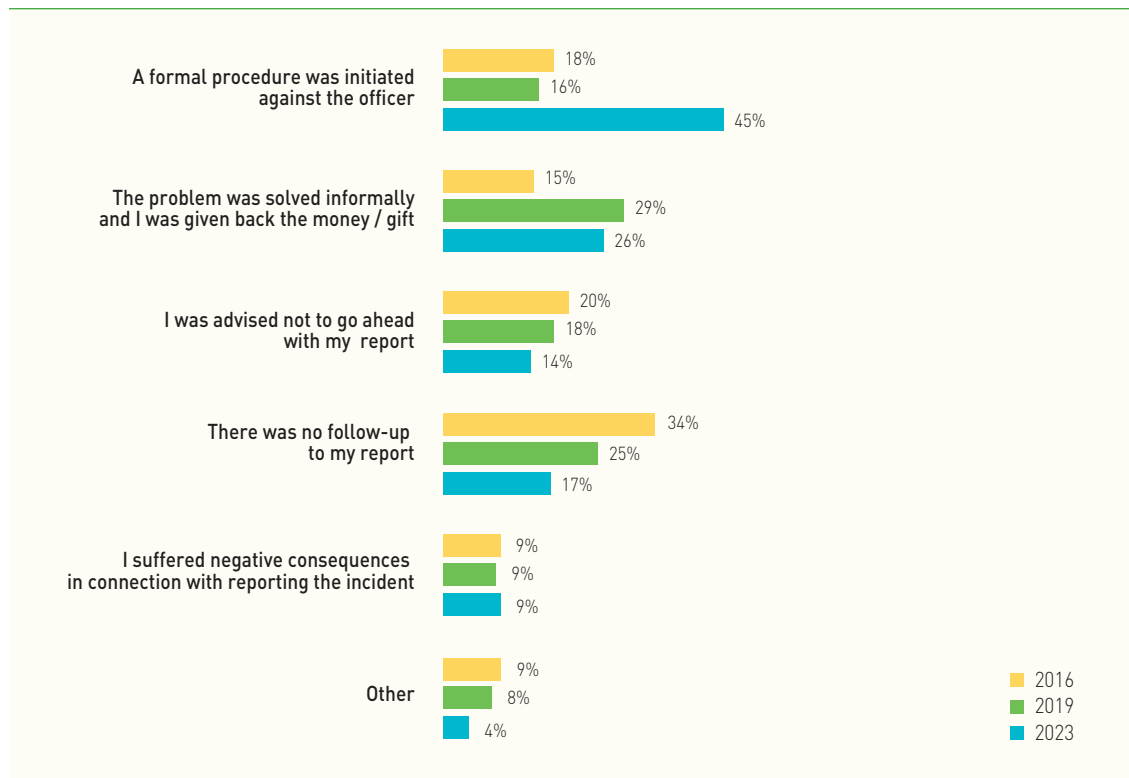
Bribery reporting: consequences and barriers

The survey data also shed light on the consequences of reporting a bribe and indicate some positive developments (Figure 51). The most notable positive change from 2019 to 2023 was the increase in the share of bribery reports that resulted in the initiation of a formal procedure against the public official, at 45 per cent of bribery reports in 2023 compared to 16 per cent in 2019. This represents a significant, nearly three-fold increase in the share of bribery reports that triggered a formal procedure between 2019 and 2023. The increase was mostly seen in Northern zones, where 49 per cent of bribe reports resulted in an initiation of a formal procedure in 2023 compared with only 14 per cent in the Southern zones.⁴⁵

There has also been a decrease in some of the undesirable consequences related to bribery reporting. For example, among all citizens who reported a bribery instance in the 12 months prior to the survey, the share who then experienced no follow-up went down from 34 in 2019 to 17 per cent in 2023 and the share who were advised not to go ahead with the report went down from 20 per cent in 2019 to 14 per cent in 2023. As with trends in the initiation of formal procedures, these positive developments in terms of other consequences of bribery reporting were primarily driven by trends in the Northern zones. Taken together, these developments may explain some of the large increases in reporting rates observed in the North, as citizens in this zone appear to increasingly perceive benefits in reporting bribery cases and fewer report no follow-up or discouragement. Overall, the data on bribery reporting and reporting consequences signify a positive shift towards accountability in Nigeria.

⁴⁵ The difference between Northern and Southern zones is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

Figure 51: Percentage distribution of consequences subsequent to reporting a bribery incident, Nigeria, 2016–2023

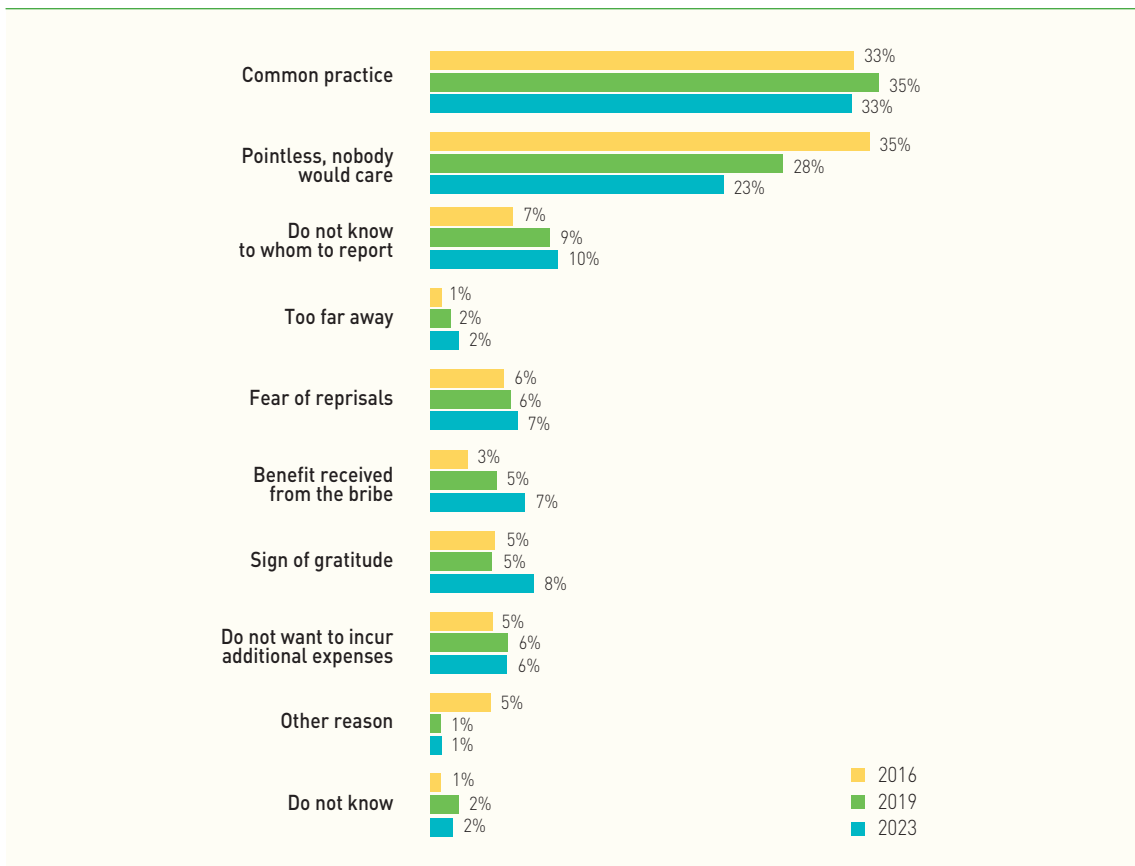


Note: Share of Nigerians who paid a bribe and then reported it to any official or non-official institution.

Looking at the reasons for why Nigerians who experienced bribery in 2023 but did *not* report this to official or non-official authorities, one third reported that bribery is simply a common practice in Nigeria, and hence there was no need to report, similar to the findings from the two previous surveys (Figure 52). Importantly, the data indicate that there has been a continuous decline in the share of respondents who found that reporting bribes is pointless (nobody would care), decreasing from 35 per cent in 2016 to 23 per cent in 2023, which may be one of the subjective factors driving the increase in bribery reporting rates.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The decrease in shares of “Common practice” and “Pointless, nobody would care” between 2019 and 2023 are statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence. Changes in the share of other reasons were not statistically significant with the exception of the increase in the share of “Sign of gratitude”.

Figure 52: Percentage distribution of the main reasons why a bribery incident was not reported to any official or non-official institution, Nigeria, 2016–2023



4





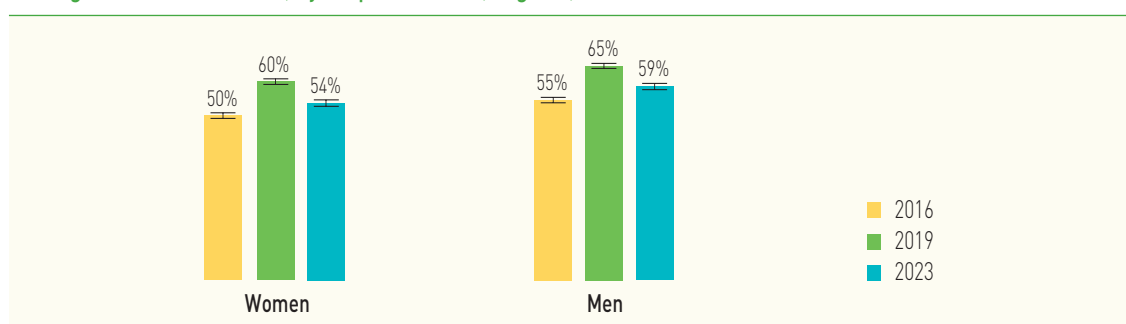
*Gender and
socio-demographic
dimensions of
corruption*

As shown in chapter 1 (“The scope of bribery”), roughly one in three Nigerian citizens who had contact with a public official in 2023 had to pay a bribe or were asked to pay and refused. This chapter examines how bribery affects the different -demographic groups in Nigerian society. It asks whether Nigerian men and women are equally at risk of bribery, and whether there are differences between male and female public officials when it comes to bribery. New evidence is also presented on the sensitive issue of requests for sexual favours by public officials as a form of bribery. Furthermore, this chapter looks at how prevalence of bribery varies along various different socio-demographic dimensions, including age, educational attainment, employment status, occupation, household expenditure, and disability status. This disaggregated analysis not only helps improve the understanding of bribery in Nigeria in general, but also provides policymakers with an evidentiary basis for designing and tailoring national anti-corruption policies that leave no one behind.

Differences in the interactions of men and women with public officials

As shown in chapter 1 of the report, 56 per cent of the adult population in Nigeria had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey. To understand the differences in the experience of bribery between men and women, the first step is to look at the contact rate of the two sexes. As in previous survey waves, the 2023 survey data revealed that men in Nigeria are somewhat more likely to interact with a public official (59 per cent) than women (54 per cent) (Figure 53).⁴⁷

Figure 53: Contact rate, by respondent sex, Nigeria, 2016–2023



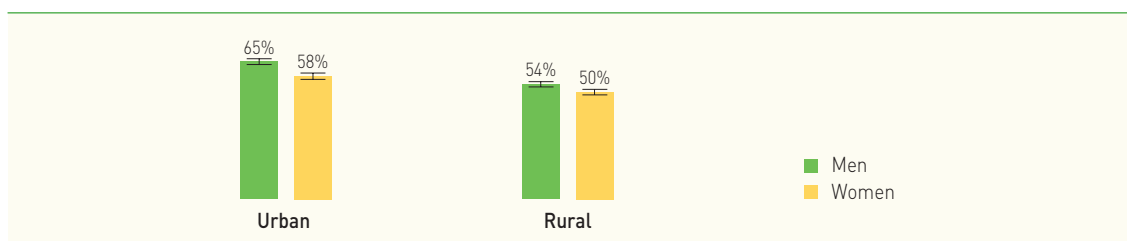
Note: The contact rate refers to the share of the male / female adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

Disaggregating the contact rates in 2023 by the level of urbanization in the country also reveals some gender-specific patterns, as both men and women have a higher contact rate with public officials in urban areas compared with rural areas, with women in rural areas having the least contact with public officials (at 50 per cent). Furthermore, the 2023 data reveal that the difference in the contact rate between men and women is somewhat more pronounced in urban areas (at 7 percentage points) compared with rural areas (at 4 percentage points) (Figure 54).

⁴⁷ The difference in the contact rate between men and women is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.



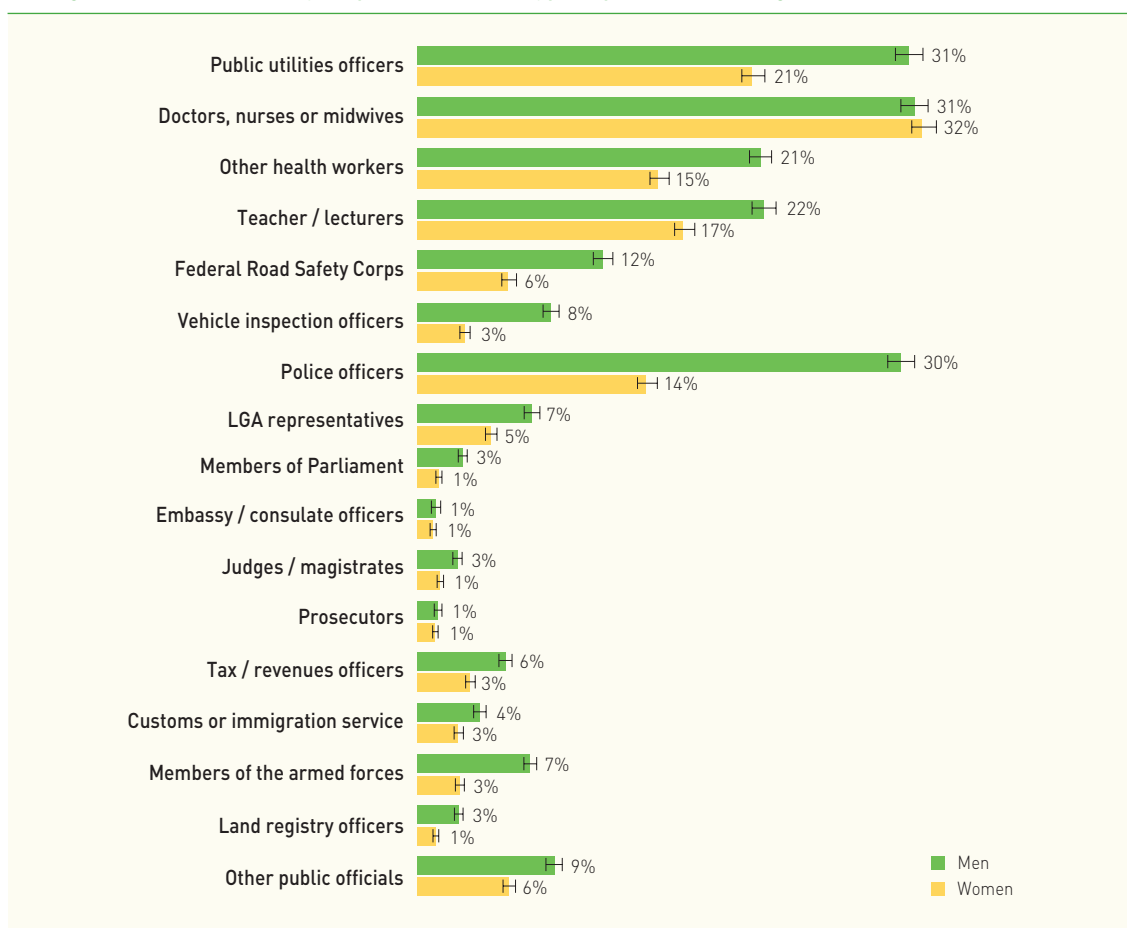
Figure 54: Contact rate by respondent sex and urban-rural area, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The contact rate refers to the share of the male/female adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

The type of public official with whom men and women interact is perhaps one of the most important factors when analysing the differences in bribery experiences between the two sexes. Figure 55 shows the contact rates of men and women with 17 different types of public official in Nigeria. The data show that men have a higher rate of contact than women with most types of public official. They are substantially more likely to interact with public utility officials, police officers, teachers and lecturers, vehicle inspection officers, and the federal road safety corps. Women, in turn, have a marginally higher rate of interaction with doctors, midwives, and nurses. Indeed, the contact rate of women with these public health care providers was the highest contact rate recorded in the country for 2023 (at 32 per cent).

Figure 55: Contact rate, by respondent sex and type of public official, Nigeria, 2023

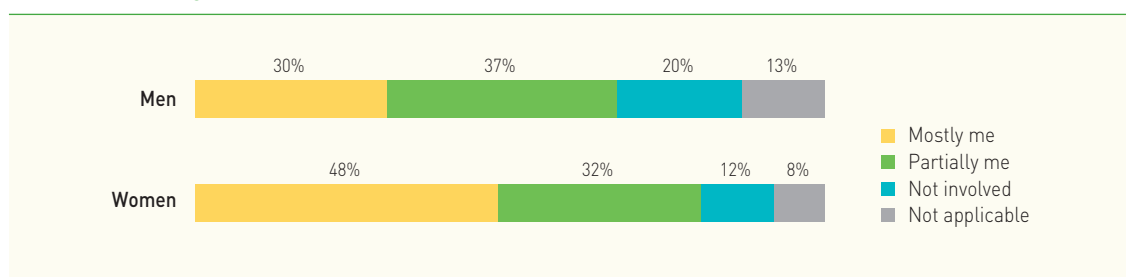


Note: The contact rate by type of public official refers to the share of the male/female adult population who had at least one contact with a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

There are several factors that could explain the differences in the contact rate between men and women in Nigeria. Some may be related to the broader gendered divisions of paid and unpaid labour, some to the existing differences between men and women in terms of health and educational needs, and others to established gender norms and expectations. Women, for example, may have relatively more contact with health care providers than with other types of officials because they tend to access health care not only for themselves but also for their children and ageing family members in need of assistance.⁴⁸

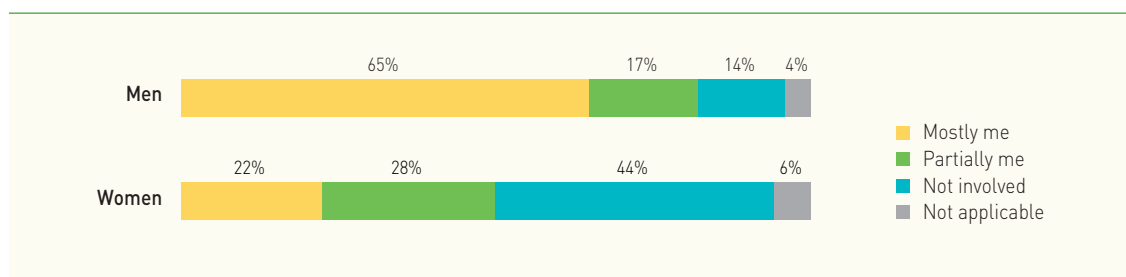
Such gender disparities in household responsibilities are to some extent confirmed by the data from the 2023 survey. For example, a substantially larger share of women (80 per cent) than men (67 per cent) report looking after children in their household. Men are roughly 1.6 times more likely than women to report not being involved in childcare at all (Figure 56).

Figure 56: Percentage distribution of men and women who report looking after children in their household, Nigeria, 2023



Other household responsibilities also show clear gender-based patterns. A significantly larger share of men (65 per cent) than women (22 per cent) report being the main person in the household to interact with public authorities when problems arise. Furthermore, men are also more than twice as likely (2.6 times) to report being mainly responsible for paying household bills such as electricity, water, waste, etc. and 2.8 times as likely to report being mainly responsible for household official business such as when applying for building permits or similar household needs, than women:

Figure 57: Percentage distribution of men and women who report talking to public authorities when problems arise, Nigeria, 2023



Further research is needed to improve understanding of the factors that determine the contact rate of men and women with different public institutions and what is needed to ensure that the two sexes have equal opportunities to avail of the public services provided in Nigeria.

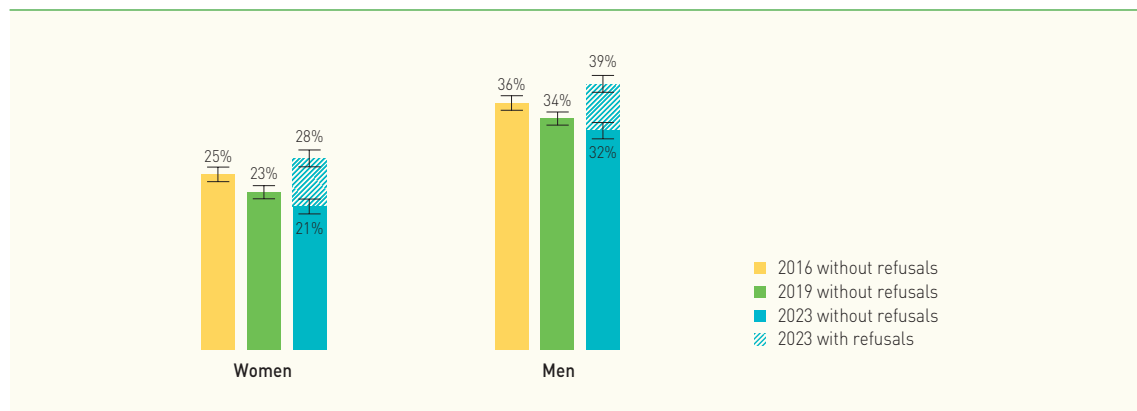
48 UN Women, *Families in a Changing World* (2019).



Differences between men and women with bribery experiences in the public sector

Overall, women in Nigeria tend to have a lower contact rate with public officials than men, but this does not necessarily mean that they are less exposed to bribery than men. As mentioned previously, the prevalence of bribery is defined as the share of adults who had contact with a public official in the past 12 months and paid a bribe to a public official or were asked to pay a bribe but refused to do so. To understand the gender differences in exposure to bribery, it is therefore important to establish how many women and men interacted with public officials and then consider how many of those women and men actually paid a bribe or were asked to pay a bribe but refused to do so during the interaction.

Figure 58: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent sex, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery without refusals refers to the proportion of the adult male/female population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all male/female adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery with refusals refers to the proportion of the adult male/female population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all male/female adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

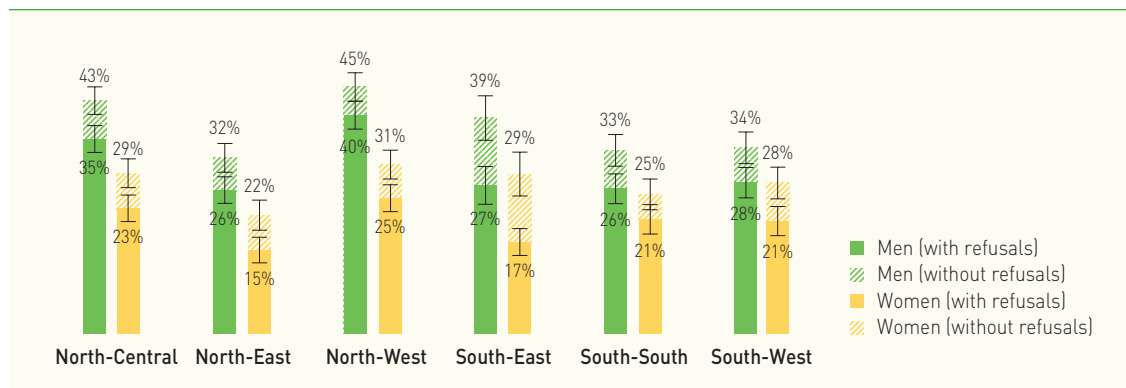
According to the 2023 survey data, men in Nigeria are around 1.4 times more likely than women to pay or be asked to pay a bribe. In the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, 39 per cent of all men who had contact with a public official either paid a bribe or were asked to do so but refused. The figure for women was significantly lower, at 28 per cent (Figure 58). This difference in bribery prevalence between the sexes also remains the same (at 11 percentage points) when excluding bribe refusals from the calculation, which suggests that men and women are, on average, equally likely to refuse bribe requests when interacting with public officials.

The difference in the prevalence of bribery (including refusals) between men and women remains significant across age groups, education levels and employment status.⁴⁹ In terms of trends between 2016 and 2023, the data show a moderate reduction in the prevalence of bribe payment (without refusals) for both men and women by four percentage points, respectively, in line with the modest reduction of four percentage points in the overall prevalence of bribe payment (without refusals) over the same period (Figure 58).

⁴⁹ In a multiple regression on the 2023 survey data, respondent sex remains a significant predictor of bribery ($p < 0.01$), even when controlling for respondents' age group, educational attainment and employment status.

It is noteworthy that the differences in the bribe-paying experiences of men and women apply to the whole country, across all regions. A regional disaggregation of the 2023 survey data suggests that men are more likely than women to be exposed to bribery irrespective of the geographical zone in which they live, and irrespective of whether bribery refusals are included or excluded from the calculation. In all six zones, the prevalence of bribery (with and without refusals) is significantly higher among men than women, with a particularly large difference, of 14 percentage points between men and women, recorded in the North-Central and North-West zones (Figure 59).

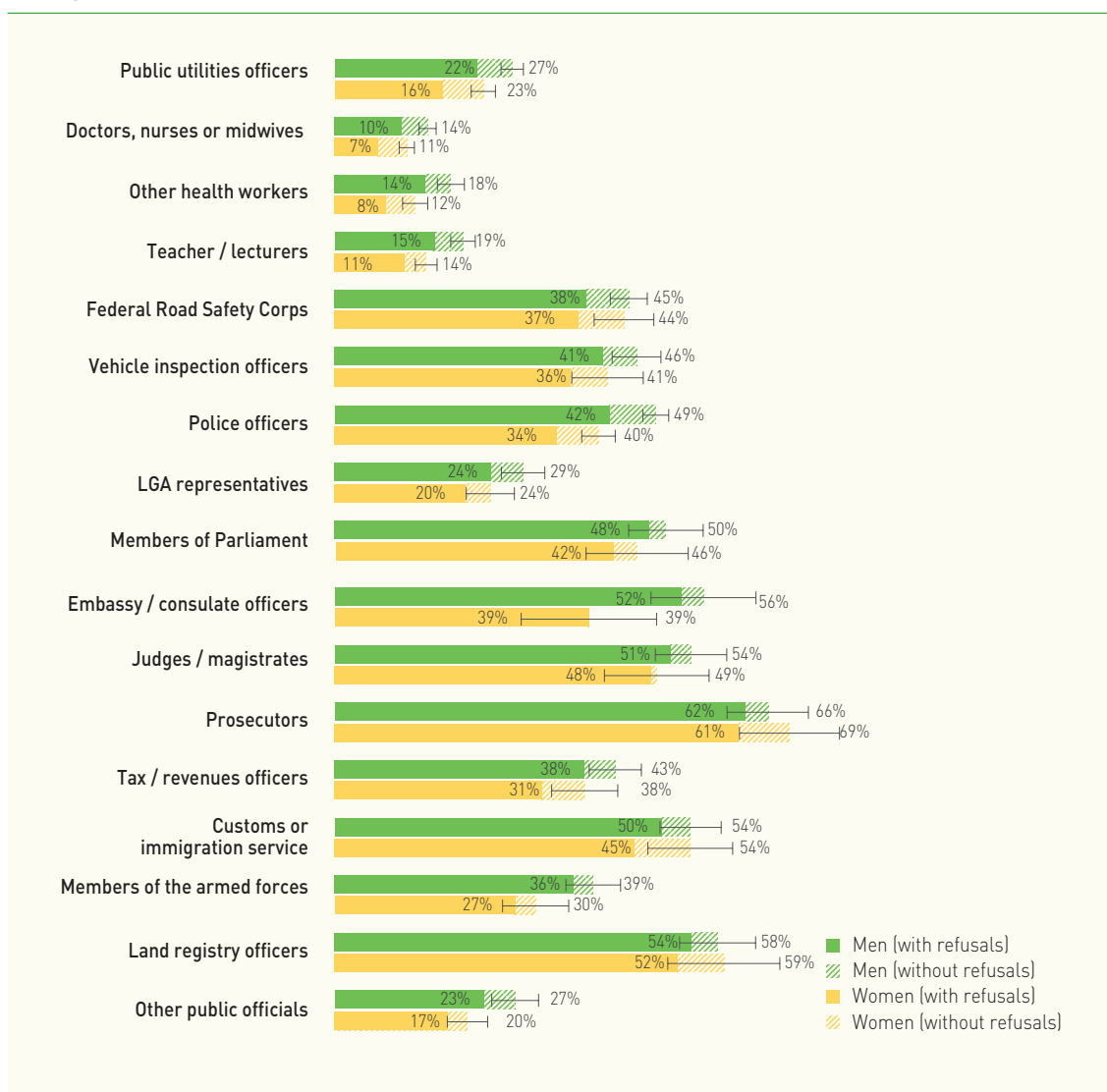
Figure 59: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent sex and zone, 2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery without refusals refers to the proportion of the adult male/female population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all male/female adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery with refusals refers to the proportion of the adult male/female population who paid at least one bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all male/female adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

To improve understanding of what could possibly explain the overall difference in the bribery experiences of men and women, one must also consider the different types of public official to whom men and women actually pay bribes or who request bribe payments from citizens. The survey data suggest that one of the largest differences between the sexes pertains to interactions with police officers, to whom men are approximately 1.2 times more likely than women to pay or be asked to pay a bribe when they encounter such officials (Figure 60). Relatively large differences in bribery prevalence are also revealed in relation to members of the armed forces, and embassy and consulate officers, to whom men were respectively 1.3 and 1.4 times more likely than women to pay or be asked to pay a bribe. By contrast, in the case of several frequently encountered types of public official, such as health care professionals or public utilities officers, the difference in the bribery exposure between men and women is minimal. This suggests that the overall difference in bribery exposure between men and women is largely determined by interactions with a few frequently contacted types of public official, in particular police officers, as well as some less frequently contacted types of officials such as members of the armed forces and embassy and consulate officers (Figure 60).

Figure 60: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent sex and type of public official, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery without refusals by type of public official refers to the proportion of the adult male/female population who paid at least one bribe to a specific type of public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all male/female adults who had at least one contact with the same type of public official in the same period. The prevalence of bribery with refusals refers to the proportion of the male/female adult population who paid at least one bribe to a specific public official in the 12 months prior to the survey, or were asked to pay a bribe by that type of public official but did not do so (refusals), relative to all male/female adults who had at least one contact with the same type of public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level.

Differences between male and female public officials when engaging in bribery

Every instance of bribery requires at least an offer or a request. There is no requirement for the offer to be accepted or for the request to be met for the act of bribery to occur. In other words, there are bribe-payers who pay or are asked to pay bribes and there are public officials who receive or solicit bribes. This chapter has so far focused on the differences between male and female citizens in their experience of bribery, but the following section focuses on the differences between male and female public officials when receiving or requesting bribes.

In the early 2000s, academic and policy research emerged that highlights the importance of adopting a gender perspective in the analysis of corruption and in anti-corruption policymaking. This research triggered an on-going debate about whether women might play a decisive role in reducing corruption, with early empirical work showing that women are less involved in bribery than men and less likely to condone bribe-taking than men.⁵⁰ Although these findings have since been challenged and the initial evidence considered suggestive, at best, the debate on whether policies that promote gender equality in positions of power can effectively reduce corrupt behaviour has gained momentum in recent years.⁵¹ Researchers have found supporting evidence that a more gender-balanced workplace is a less corrupt one.⁵² However, women tend to hold fewer decision-making positions, which limits their opportunities to benefit from corruption regardless of the gender-balance in the workplace. More research and better disaggregated data are needed to improve the understanding of the gender dimensions of corruption.

Administrative data on the sex composition among Nigerian public sector employees are not readily available in a consolidated manner. However, data collated from different agencies and institutions within the public sector can provide valuable insights into the sex composition among public sector employees in Nigeria. For example, according to the *2021 Statistical Report on Women and Men*,⁵³ women made up less than a third of all National Judicial Officers in 2018 and less than a third of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in 2020.⁵⁴ 19 per cent of police officers in 2017 were women,⁵⁵ 24 per cent of academic staff and 37 per cent of non-academic staff at Nigerian universities in 2019 were women, and for doctors, this figures stood at 37 per cent in 2020.⁵⁶ Women also continue to be significantly under-represented in positions of power and decision-making in Nigeria. Following the 2023 general election, women occupy only 3.9 per cent of seats in the House of Representatives and 3.7 per cent of seats in the Senate.⁵⁷ By contrast, certain types of public sector employment exhibit more equal sex composition: for example, in 2020, women accounted for 51 per cent of all teaching staff in public primary schools in Nigeria.⁵⁸

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

51 UNODC: *The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption* (Vienna, 2020).

52 For example, see UNODC, *Gender and Corruption in Nigeria* (Vienna, 2020).

53 National Bureau of Statistics, 2023, *Statistical Report on Women and Men 2021*, available at: <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241312>.

54 Ibid. pp. 53 and 59.

55 Nigeria Police Force: HQTS, Abuja (2017)

56 Ibid. pp. 17 and 39.

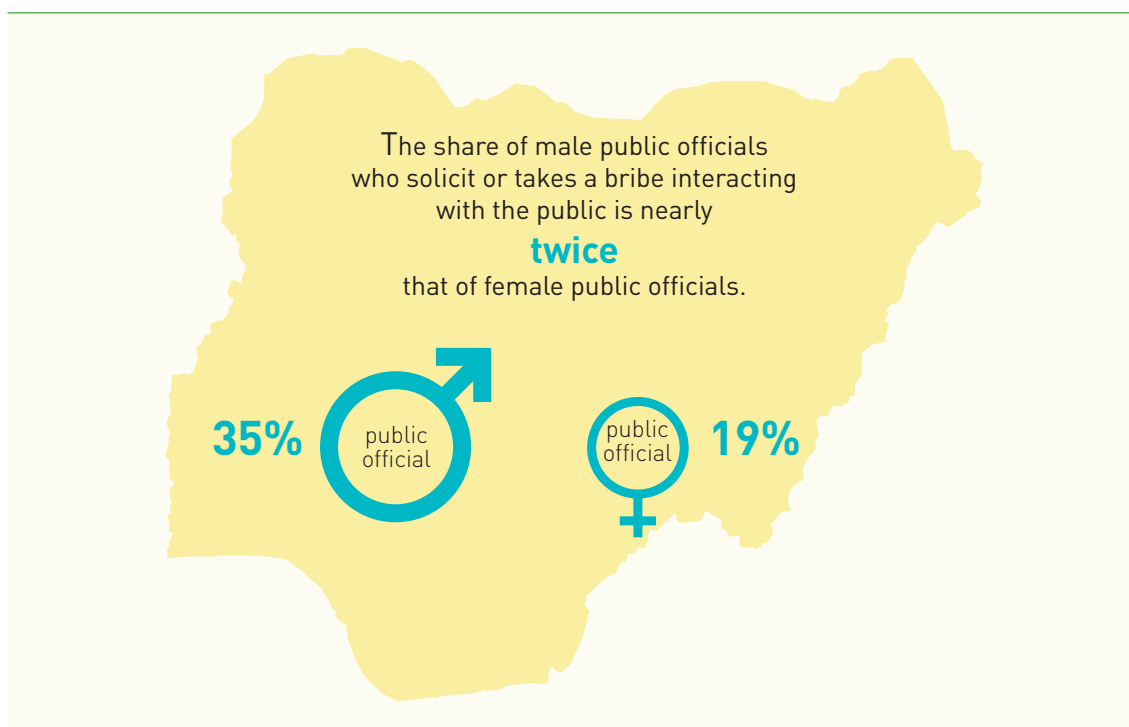
57 <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/>.

58 National Bureau of Statistics, 2023, *Statistical Report on Women and Men 2021*, p. 37.



The gender imbalance in public sector employment is also reflected in the contact rate between the public and male and female public officials: according to the survey data, 53 per cent of people had at least one contact with a male public official in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, whereas only 37 per cent had at least one contact with a female public official in that period.⁵⁹ Based on these contact rates, the survey data indicate that the share of male public officials who solicit or receive unsolicited bribes when interacting with the public is nearly twice that of female public officials. An estimated 35 per cent of all male public officials who had contact with citizens in the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey engaged in bribery (i.e. were either paid a bribe or requested a bribe but were refused), while a much smaller share of female public officials (19 per cent) requested or received a bribe.⁶⁰

Figure 61: Prevalence of bribery (with refusals), by sex of public officials, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The prevalence of engaging in bribery by sex of public official is calculated by dividing the total number of adults who paid or were asked to pay a bribe to a (male or female) public official by the total number of adults in contact with a (male or female) public official in the 12 months prior to the survey.

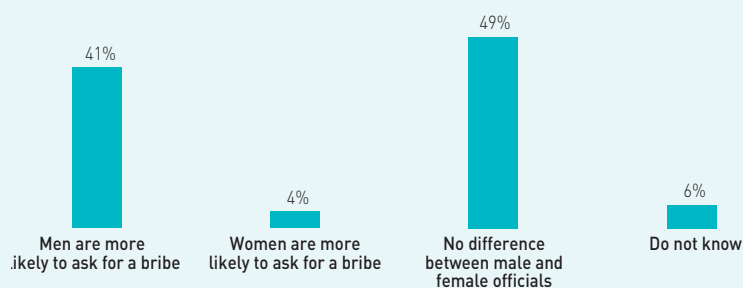
59 Respondents could indicate that they had contact with both male and female public officials during a single interaction.

60 Respondents could indicate that they paid a bribe or were asked to pay a bribe by both male and female public officials during a single interaction.

Public perceptions versus reality: who are the corruptible public officials?

Since the 2023 survey data show that the share of male public officials who engage in bribery is nearly twice that of female public officials in Nigeria, it is both interesting and relevant to analyse whether public perceptions of bribery align with the reality of bribe-paying.

Figure 62: Percentage distribution of people who think male or female public officials are more corrupt, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The survey question was: Imagine you have to deal with a public official. Which behaviour would you expect depending on the sex of the public official? The answer options were: 1) Men are more likely to ask for a bribe; 2) Women are more likely to ask for a bribe; 3) No difference between men and women; 4) Do not know (Do Not Read Out).

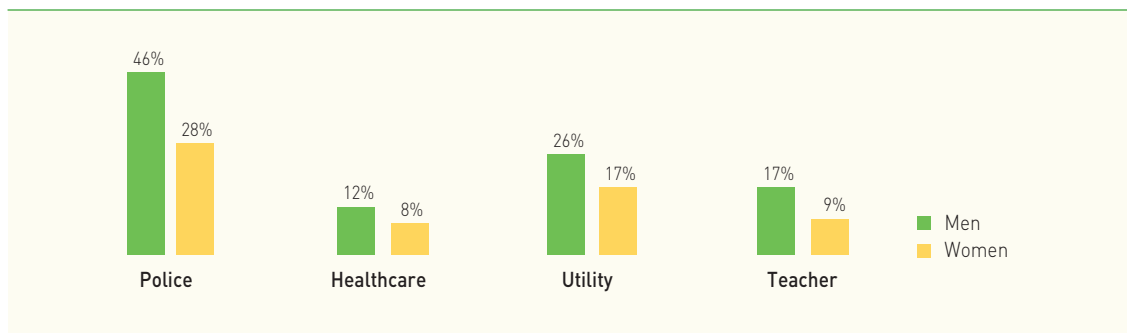
The 2023 survey collected information about people's opinions about whether male or female public officials are more likely to request a bribe, with 41 per cent of survey respondents indicating that male officials are more likely to do so and only 4 per cent indicating that female officials are more likely to do so (Figure 61). Interestingly, the largest share - nearly half of all respondents (49 per cent) - think that male and female public officials are equally corrupt, suggesting a certain mismatch between people's perceptions and the reality of bribery in the country.

Although a disproportionate share of male public officials engage in bribery, there are substantial variations in corrupt behaviour across different types of public official in Nigeria. This becomes evident when looking more closely at sex-disaggregated prevalence of engaging in bribery among the four most frequently contacted types of public official: health care providers, teachers, public utility officials and police officers. The 2023 survey data suggest that one out of two male police officers (46 per cent) engage in bribery when interacting with the public, while only one out of three female police officers (28 per cent) behave similarly (Figure 63). This would suggest that male police officers are roughly 1.6 times as likely to engage in bribery as their female colleagues. Among public utilities officers, healthcare professionals and teachers, engaging in bribery is also significantly more likely among men than among women, but the differences between the sexes are smaller (at less than 10 percentage points)⁶¹ and the overall prevalence of bribe-taking is lower than among the police (Figure 63).

61 However, the relative difference between the sexes is comparable across the different types of public official: Among police officers, men are 1.6 times more likely to engage in bribery than women, among healthcare professionals 1.5 times, among public utilities officers 1.8 times, and among teachers 1.9 times.



Figure 63: Prevalence of bribery (with refusals), by sex of public official, Nigeria, 2023

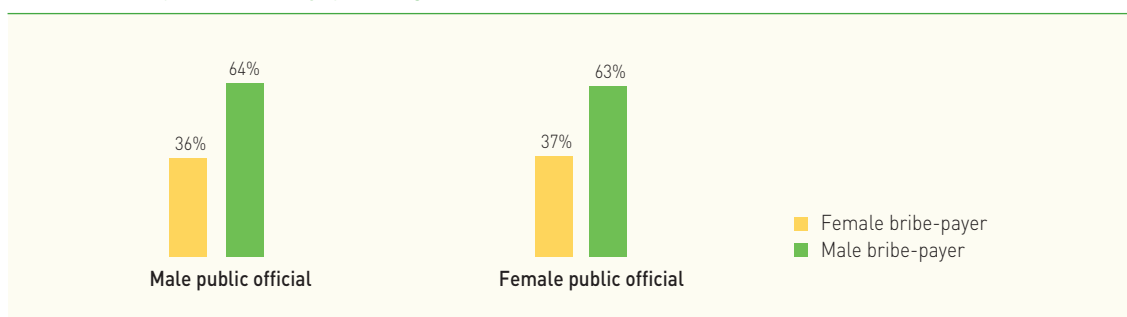


Note: The prevalence of bribery by sex of public official is calculated by dividing the total number of adults who paid or were asked to pay a bribe to a (male or female) public official by the total number of adults in contact with a (male or female) public official in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Overall, it appears that in sectors with a larger share of female employees such as education (50 per cent in public primary schools), male officials are less likely to engage in bribery than in those sectors where men are over-represented, such as the police force (81 per cent male employees). This could be related to sector-specific characteristics, such as salary levels, social status or average educational attainment, but it could also be related to the attitude of female officials to bribery having an indirect (and positive) impact on male colleagues. Further, sector-specific research is needed to improve the understanding of how a more gender-balanced workplace in the public institutions of Nigeria could both promote gender equality and contribute to the fight against corruption.

Another interesting gender dimension to investigate is related to the sex of public officials engaging in bribery and the sex of people who interact with those public officials. The 2023 survey data indicate that around 64 per cent of all bribes taken or requested by male public officials in Nigeria were from men, while less than 36 per cent were from women (Figure 64). Compared with male public officials, female public officials were found to be only marginally less likely to take or request bribes from men (63 per cent) and marginally more likely to take or request bribes from women (37 per cent).

Figure 64: Percentage distribution of bribes paid or requested, by sex of public official receiving the bribe and by sex of bribe-payers, Nigeria, 2023



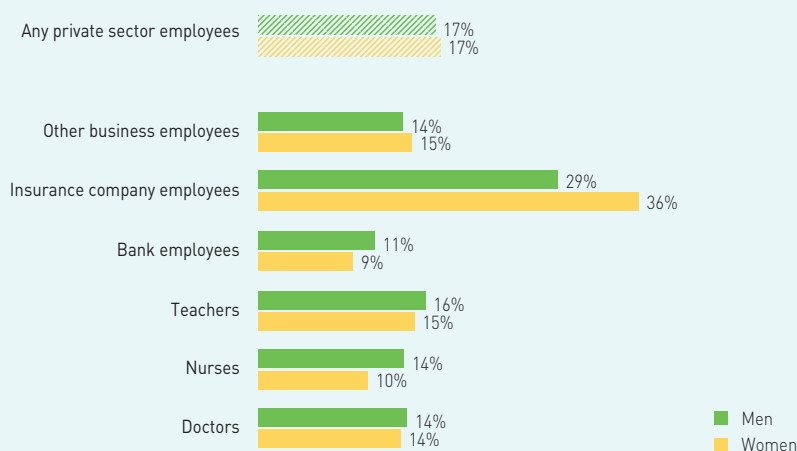
Note: This figure shows the respective shares of all bribes taken or requested by male/female public officials that can be attributed to male / female adults who either paid the bribe or refused to pay the bribe.

Differences between men and women in their experiences with bribery in the private sector

Mirroring the findings in the public sector, the survey data revealed that women in Nigeria are, on average, somewhat less likely than men to interact with private sector employees. In the 12 months prior to the 2023 survey, the male contact rate with private sector employees was 2 percentage points higher than that of women.⁶² This pattern pertains to bank employees, insurance officials, and other private business employees. Women were, however, found to be more likely than men to interact with private sector employees in the health sector (doctors and nurses) as well as the education sector (teachers at private schools).

In contrast to the findings from the public sector, the 2023 survey data revealed no significant differences, on average, between men and women with respect to the prevalence of bribery in the private sector (including bribery refusals). For most types of private sector employee, the difference in bribery prevalence (with refusals) between the sexes is minimal, with the exception of insurance company employees (where women were found to be more exposed to bribery) and nurses (where men were found to be more exposed) (Figure 65).

Figure 65: Prevalence of bribery in the private sector, by sex of bribe-payer and type of private sector employee, Nigeria, 2023



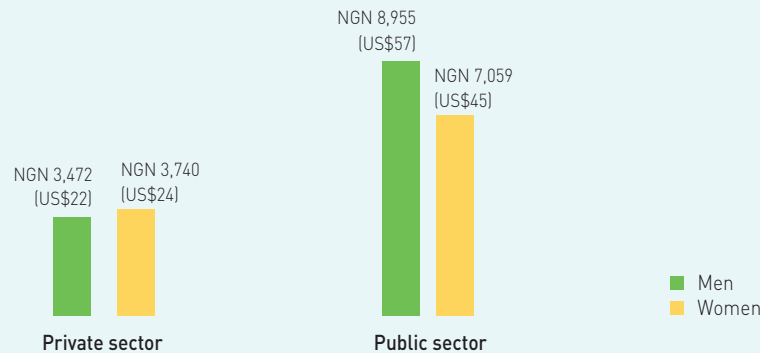
Note: The prevalence of bribery in the private sector refers to the share of adults who had contact with a private sector employee in the previous 12 months and paid a bribe to a private sector employee or were asked to pay a bribe but refused to do so. The difference between men and women in the general prevalence rate ("Any private sector employee") is not statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

⁶² The difference between men and women in the contact rate for private sector officials is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.



A striking difference between the private and public sector relates to the average bribe size and the sex of the bribe-payer. Based on data from the 2023 survey, the average bribe size paid by men in the private sector was slightly lower than the average bribe size paid by women (NGN 3,472 vs NGN 3,740). By contrast, bribes paid in the public sector by men were, on average, significantly larger compared those paid by women (NGN 8,955 vs 7,059) (Figure 66).

Figure 66: Average bribe size (NGN), by sex of bribe-payer and sector, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Data refer to the last bribe paid by each bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey. Dollar equivalents refer to 2022 International Dollars (PPP). The figure excludes bribes that were paid via a money transfer.

Money and gifts are not the only currency of corruption

The request for sexual favours when interacting with public officials without recourse to physical forms of coercion (also referred to as “sextortion”⁶³ or “body currency”) is a type of abuse of authority that occurs in countries at all income levels.⁶⁴ Acts of a sexual nature being the currency of corruption tend to take place in situations where power disparities between those who pay and those who solicit bribes are large, and the bribe-payer has no other means of payment.⁶⁵ Evidence suggests that women are disproportionately affected, but due to the highly sensitive nature of this phenomenon, collecting reliable and nationally representative data is challenging.⁶⁶ A further challenge is that victims may not necessarily view demands for sexual favours as acts of corruption, adding an additional layer of under-reporting.⁶⁷

63 The word “sextortion” has definitional ambiguities and is used differently in different jurisdictions, for example, to refer to webcam blackmail (United Kingdom) or the threat of exposing private or sensitive information (Pennsylvania, United States). For more details, see UNODC, *The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption* (Vienna, 2020), p. 44.

64 Aksel Sundström and Lena Wägnerud. “Sexual forms of corruption and sextortion: How to expand research in a sensitive area”, the *Quality of Government Working paper series 2021:10* (2021).

65 UNODC, *The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption* (Vienna, 2020), p. 45.

66 UNODC, *Gender and Corruption in Nigeria* (Vienna, 2020); UNODC, *Corruption in Ghana – People’s Experiences and Views* (Vienna, 2022).

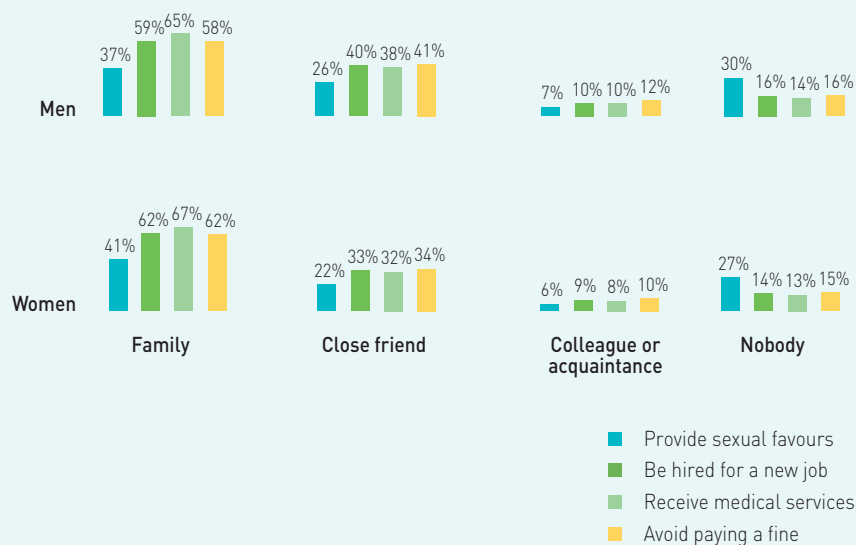
67 UNODC, *The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption* (Vienna, 2020), p.45.

Requests for sexual favours: a sensitive topic among men and women in Nigeria

To explore how sensitive the topic of requests for sexual favours is among Nigerian citizens, the survey asked men and women how comfortable they would feel about sharing different types of corruption experiences (including bribery involving sexual favours) with their family, friends and colleagues. Overall, the survey data indicated that both men and women feel relatively comfortable talking about their bribery experiences, especially with other family members, whether the experiences are related to accessing medical services, securing a new job or avoiding paying a fine to the police. However, an important exception was when people were asked who they would tell if they had to provide a sexual favour to a public or private sector employee in exchange for preferential treatment.

The share of both men and women who would feel comfortable talking about their bribery experience involving sexual favours with family members, friends or colleagues is significantly smaller than for other types of bribery experiences. Around 30 per cent of both men and women indicated that they would not feel comfortable telling anybody at all about experiencing requests for sexual favours by public or private sector employees. The data reveal no marked differences between men and women in terms of how comfortable they would feel talking about experiences of bribery, including bribery involving sexual favours. This suggests that the request of sexual favours is deemed a sensitive topic by an equal (and large) share of both men and women in Nigeria.

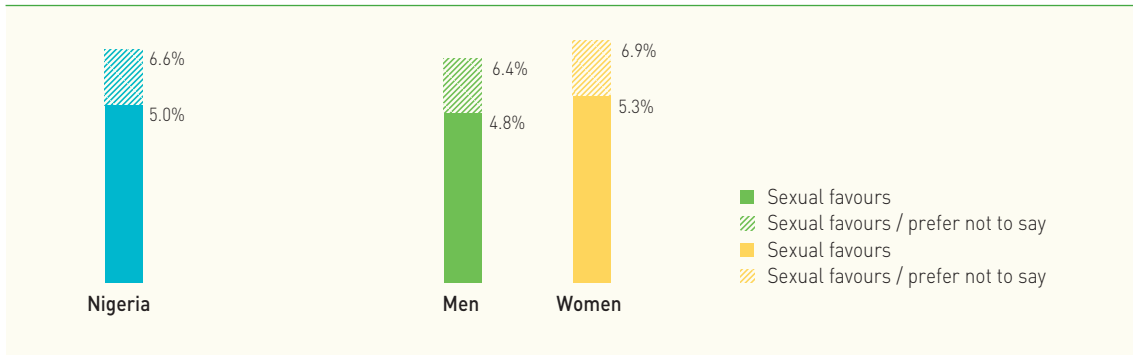
Figure 67: Share of women and men who would feel comfortable sharing bribery experiences, by type of experience and counterpart, Nigeria, 2023





With these caveats about measuring requests for sexual favours in mind, the 2023 survey data suggest that women are more at risk than men of being asked for sexual favours when interacting with public officials: 5.3 per cent of all women reported having been asked for sexual favours when interacting with public officials in the three years prior to the survey, while 4.8 per cent of men reported experiencing such behaviour.⁶⁸ When also including respondents who preferred to not respond to the question about sexual favours, prevalence increases to 6.9 per cent among women and 6.4 per cent among men.⁶⁹

Figure 68: Share of the adult population who were asked for sexual favours when interacting with public officials, 2020–2023



Note: The specific question was: “In the past 3 year, since November 2020, did it happen to you that a teacher, master, lecturer, professor, health worker or other public official who may be your supervisor or colleague if you worked in the public sector, made you understand that unless you provide sexual favours you will not, for example, get a job, promotion, pass an exam, get medical treatment or any other public service?” Also included in the prevalence estimates were respondents who answered “Yes” to the follow-up question: “In the past 3 years, since November 2020, have you been asked for sexual favours from public officials and you refused?” For both questions, respondents had the option of indicating that they would “prefer not to say”.

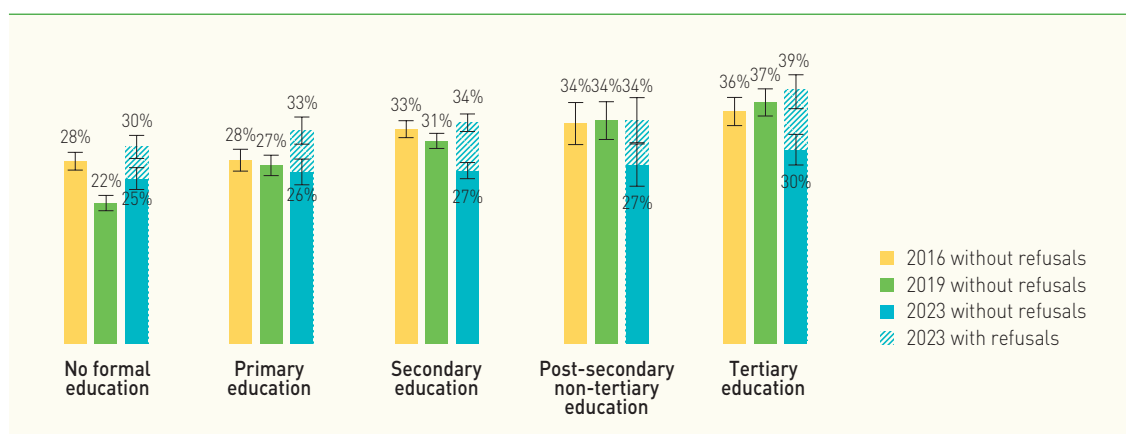
Other socio-demographic dimensions of bribery in the public sector

The prevalence of bribery in Nigeria does not only vary along geographical dimensions, as shown in chapter 1 (“The scope of bribery”), but also along key socio-demographic dimensions. Educational attainment, for example, is strongly associated with exposure to bribery. Figure 69 shows that citizens who completed tertiary (university) education were significantly more likely to be exposed to bribery in 2023 (39 per cent bribery prevalence with refusals) compared with citizens who had no formal education (30 per cent). What is noteworthy, however, is that the gap in prevalence between citizens with no formal and those with tertiary education appears to have *decreased* significantly, from 18 percentage points in 2019 to 9 percentage points in 2023. This can primarily be attributed to a marked increase in bribery requests made to citizens without formal education (Figure 69). Another important pattern emerging from the 2023 data is that, while highly educated citizens are more at risk of bribery, they are also significantly more likely to refuse bribe requests than less educated citizens (Figure 69).

⁶⁸ The difference between women and men is statistically significant at 99 per cent confidence.

⁶⁹ The difference between women and men is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

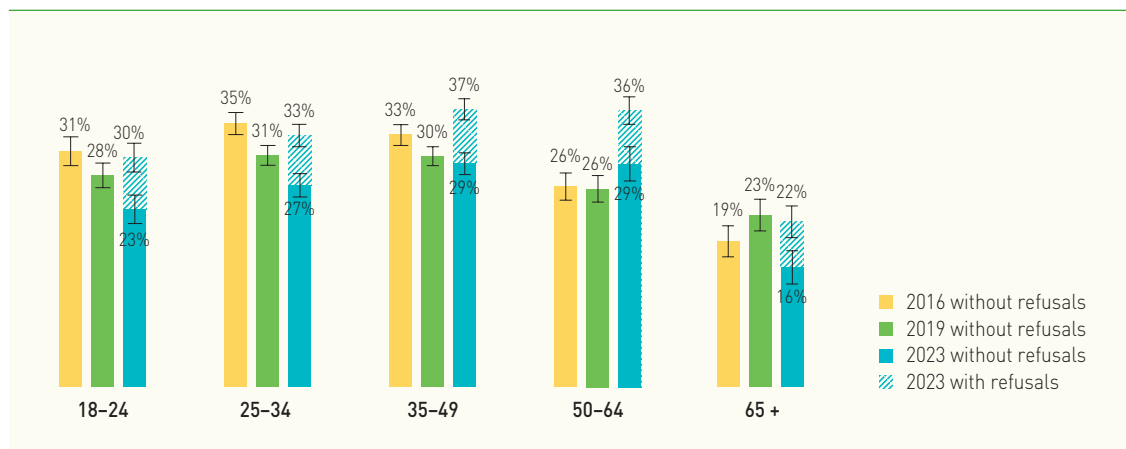
Figure 69: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent educational attainment, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

As in 2016 and 2019, the 2023 survey reveals that the prevalence of bribery also varies significantly across age groups in Nigeria. In 2023, the prevalence of bribery (with and without refusals) reached its peak in the 35–49 and 50–64 age groups, before decreasing again in the oldest age group (aged 65 years and above) (Figure 70). In terms of trends between 2019 and 2023, the data indicate that bribery prevalence (without refusals) decreased moderately across age groups, with the exception of the 50–64 age group, which witnessed an increase by three percentage points over this period.

Figure 70: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent age group, 2016–2023



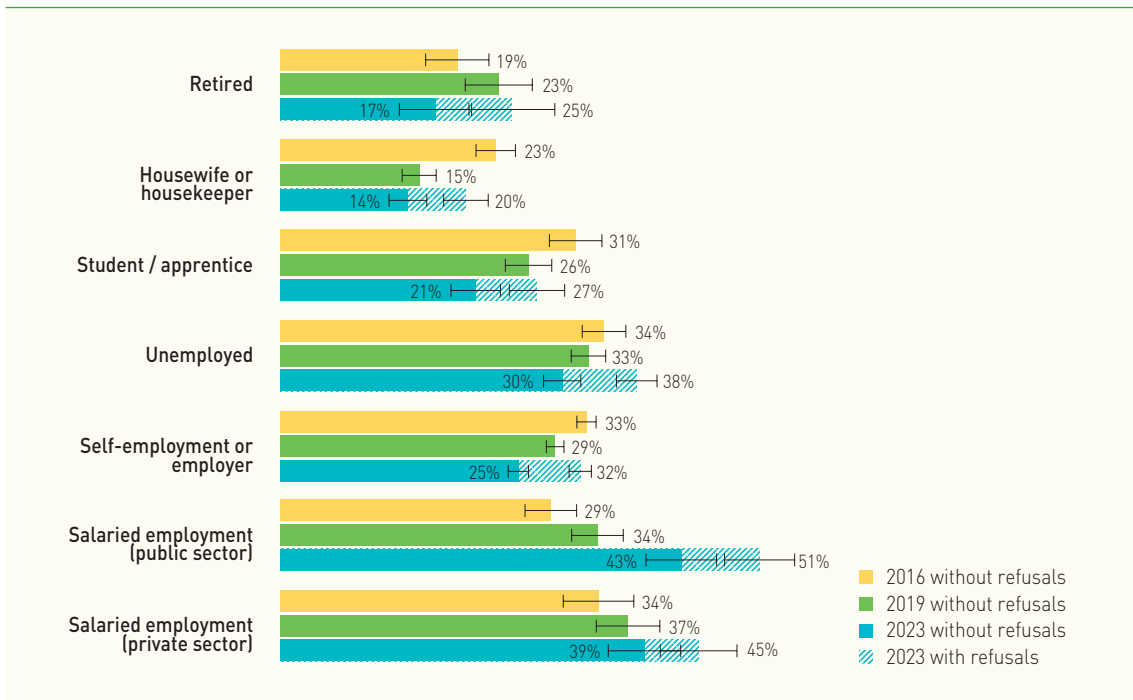
Note: The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

Employment status is also associated with exposure to bribery in Nigeria. As in previous survey waves, the 2023 survey data indicate that salaried employees, both in the public and private sectors, tend to be most at risk of bribery compared with other employment groups (Figure 71). In particular, salaried employees in the public sector recorded a significant increase in bribery prevalence (without refusals) in recent years, from 34 per cent in 2019 to 43 per cent 2023,



showing that public sector employees are by no means immune to paying bribes themselves. By contrast, all other employment groups (retirees, housewives/housekeepers, student / apprentices and unemployed) recorded some decreases in bribery prevalence (without refusals) between 2019 and 2023. In line with findings from previous survey waves, the unemployed were at a greater risk of having to pay bribes than the self-employed, with a bribery prevalence rate (with refusals) in 2023 of 38 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

Figure 71: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent employment status, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

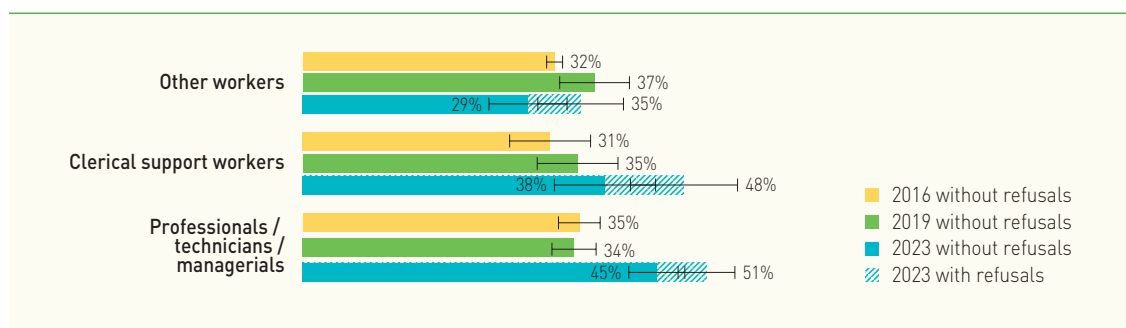
According to the 2023 survey data, public and private sector employees make up more than 17 per cent of the adult working population in Nigeria.⁷⁰ As in previous waves of the survey, a distinction is made between three types of occupation of employees working in those sectors: professional, technical or managerial workers, clerical support workers, and other types of workers.⁷¹ While in the 2019 survey, all three employee groups had a roughly equal risk of exposure to bribery in the public sector, in 2023, professional, technical or managerial workers (51 per cent), and clerical support workers (48 per cent) both recorded significantly higher bribery prevalence (with refusals) compared with other types of workers (35 per cent). The latter group actually witnessed a reduction in bribery prevalence (without refusals) between 2019 and 2023 (by 8 percentage points), contrasting strongly with the increase in bribery prevalence

70 The adult working population includes people currently employed either as self-employed persons or in the public / private sector. The retired, unemployed, students and housewives/housekeepers are excluded. According to the 2023 survey data, around 83 per cent of the adult working population is self-employed, 9 per cent are employed in the private sector (including the faith-based sector) and 8 per cent in the public sector.

71 Professional, technical or managerial includes IT specialists, accountants, lawyers, doctors, researchers, managers, senior officials, etc. Clerical support workers include receptionists, office assistants, etc. "Other types of workers" refers to drivers, cleaners, labourers, machine operators, etc.

(without refusals) witnessed among clerical support workers (by 3 percentage points) and professional, technical and managerial workers (by 11 percentage points) (Figure 72).

Figure 72: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent occupation, 2016–2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period. The black bars indicate confidence intervals at 95 per cent confidence level. The 2023 survey used a more detailed methodology to capture unsuccessful bribe solicitations by different types of public officials, which means that 2023 refusal rates are not directly comparable to refusal rates published in the 2016 and 2019 survey reports. 2016 and 2019 refusals are omitted.

Besides educational attainment, employment status and occupation, it is possible to examine reported monthly household expenditure to capture yet another facet of respondents' social background. In low- and middle-income countries, monthly household expenditure can be a suitable proxy for household income, as measurement of the latter can suffer from non-reporting and reliability issues, for example due to non-standard forms of income, seasonal variations, and reluctance to report this information to a stranger.⁷²

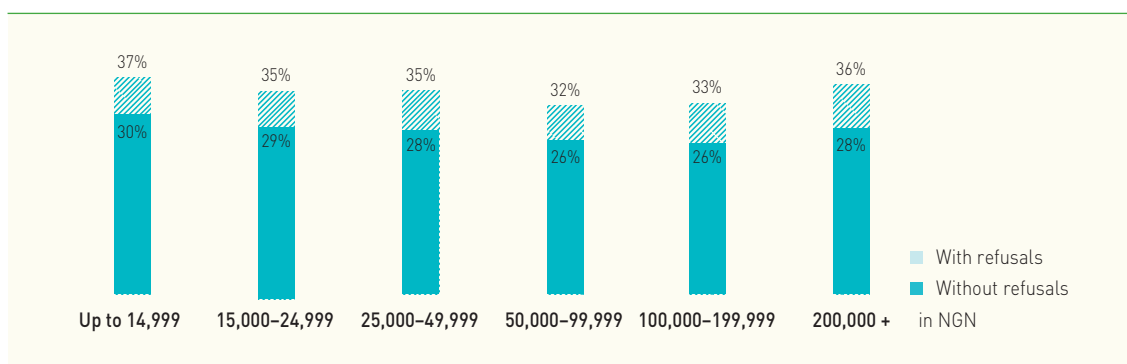
Analysis of monthly household expenditure data from the 2023 survey reveals no clear difference in bribery prevalence between lower and higher expenditure groups. While bribery prevalence stood at 37 per cent among those spending less than NGN 14,999 per month, bribery prevalence amongst those spending more than NGN 200,000 per month stood at 36 per cent. This stands in contrast with results from the 2019 survey, where respondents with higher household expenditure were, on average, found to be more exposed to bribery requests than those with lower household expenditure.⁷³

72 See for example, Howe et al (2012). Measuring socio-economic position for epidemiological studies in low-and middle-income countries: a method of measurement in epidemiology paper. *International journal of epidemiology*, 41(3), pp. 871–886.

73 While the same household expenditure brackets were used in the 2019 and 2023 surveys, it should be noted that due to inflation and cost of living pressures, the distribution of respondents across expenditure brackets was much less skewed in the 2023 survey compared with the 2019 survey: while in 2019, around 50 per cent of respondents reported household expenditures of less than NGN 24,999 per month (the lowest and second lowest expenditure brackets), in 2023, around 50 per cent of respondents reported household expenditure of less than NGN 49,999 per month (the lowest to third lowest expenditure brackets). The more even distribution of bribery prevalence across expenditure groups can at least partly be due to the more even distribution of the survey sample across expenditure groups.



Figure 73: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by respondent monthly household expenditure (NGN), 2023



Note: The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period.

Are people living with disabilities more or less likely to experience bribery than others?

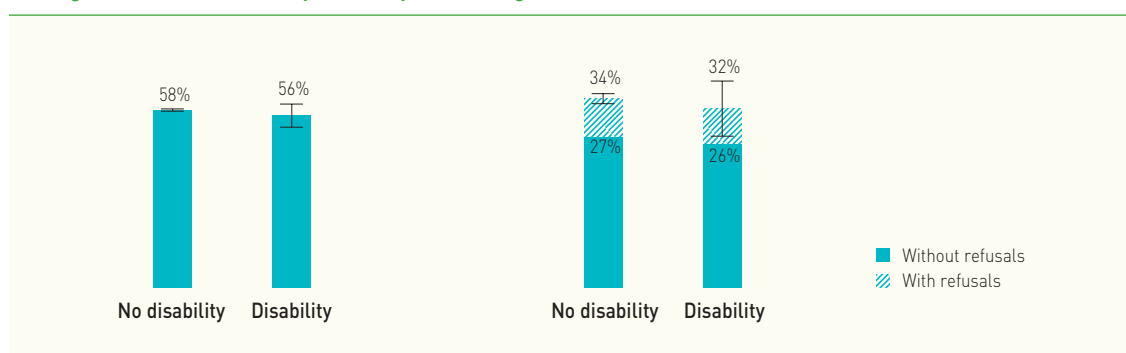
People living with disabilities may be exposed to bribery in a different way to the rest of the population. On the one hand, because of the challenges people living with disabilities face, public officials may try to take advantage of them and request bribes from them more often than from other people. On the other hand, public officials may target people with disabilities less than others because they often belong to lower-income groups in the population.

In order to examine the unique circumstances and challenges faced by people living with disabilities when accessing public services and interacting with public officials, the survey collected data aimed at providing understanding about whether individuals who reported that they are living with a disability experience bribery in a different way to people who reported not living with any disability.

The set of questions measuring disability status is based on the Short Set data collection tool developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics,⁷⁴ and classifies a respondent as living with a disability if they reported having “a lot of difficulty” doing any one of the six activities in different domains of functioning listed below or if they reported that they “cannot do at all” any of these activities.⁷⁵

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?
3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5. Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?
6. When using your usual (customary) language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example, understanding or being understood?

Figure 74: Contact rate by disability status, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Disability status is based on the Short Set data collection tool developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and classifies a respondent as living with a disability if they reported having “a lot of difficulty” doing a set of activities in six different domains or if they reported that they “cannot do at all” these activities. The prevalence of bribery refers to the proportion of the adult population who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period.

Using this self-perceived measure of disability status allows for an examination of commonalities and differences in interactions with public officials and bribery experiences between people living with and without disabilities. The 2023 survey data suggest that there were no notable differences between people living with and without disabilities in terms of their contact rate with public officials in the 12 months prior the survey.⁷⁶ Similarly, people living with disabilities were found to be no less likely to pay or be asked to pay a bribe when interacting with public officials than people without disabilities: 34 per cent of people living without disabilities were exposed to bribery (including refusals) in 2023, whereas the prevalence of bribery with refusals

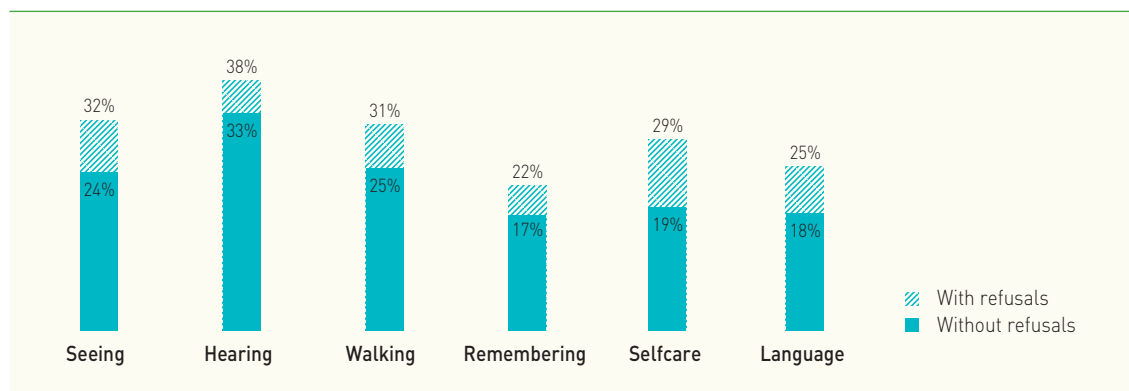
74 The binary classification into disability status is based on the best practice recommendation of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (see <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>).

75 According to the survey data, less than 1 per cent of respondents reported having “a lot of difficulty” doing any one of the six activities in different domains of functioning or they reported that they “cannot do at all” these activities. This figure should not be interpreted as the share of the Nigerian population living with disabilities – which is likely higher – given that “physically / mentally ill, incompetent” was one of the permissible reasons that survey enumerators could instead interview a respondent in a replacement household. For comparison, an analysis of the 2018 General Household Survey Panel suggests that 2.3 per cent of Nigerian adults have at least “a lot of” functional difficulty (see <https://disabilitydata.ace.fordham.edu/country-briefs/ng/>).

76 The difference in contact rates between people living with and without disabilities is not statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

was 32 per cent among people living with disabilities.⁷⁷ However, given the unique challenges people living with disabilities face, it is likely that having to pay bribes when accessing public services represents a greater burden for this population group than for those who live without any disabilities.

Figure 75: Bribery prevalence with and without refusals, by type of disability, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Disability status is based on the Short Set data collection tool developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, and classifies a respondent as living with a disability if they reported having “a lot of difficulty” doing one of six activities across different domains of functioning or if they reported that they “cannot do at all” one of these activities. The prevalence of bribery by type of disability refers to the proportion of the adult population living with a specific type of disability who paid at least one bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official but did not do so (refusals), in the 12 months prior to the survey, relative to all adults living with that specific type of disability who had at least one contact with a public official in the same period.

While the 2023 survey data show no notable differences in bribery exposure between people living with and without disabilities, they also show that women living with disabilities are significantly less likely to be exposed to bribery (at 25 per cent prevalence with refusals) compared to men living with disabilities (at 35 per cent). Furthermore, there is some evidence that people living with certain types of disability (such as those related to seeing, hearing, and walking) may be somewhat more exposed to bribery experiences than people living with other types of disability (such as those related to memory loss, selfcare and language) although estimates are subject to uncertainty given the small samples involved (Figure 75).⁷⁸ Further research is needed to improve understanding of these differences in bribery experiences across different types of disability and what is needed to ensure that all people living with disabilities have equal access to the public services provided in Nigeria.

⁷⁷ The difference in bribery prevalence between people living with and without disabilities is not statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

⁷⁸ The number of survey respondents who reported having “a lot of difficulty” doing one of the six activities or reported that they “cannot do at all” one of the six activities is as follows: seeing (369 respondents); hearing (155); walking (575); remembering (188); selfcare (246); and language (107).

5





Other forms of corruption

This chapter explores several aspects of corruption in Nigeria that go beyond bribery, focusing on corruption in public and private sector recruitment and promotion, corruption in access to public services, as well as vote-buying.

Corruption in public sector recruitment

According to the 2023 survey data, around 8 per cent of the adult working population are employed in the public sector, while 9 per cent are employed in the private sector (including the faith-based sector) and the remaining 83 per cent are self-employed.⁷⁹ A form of corruption affecting the public sector is the use of dishonest means and methods to bypass or undermine established recruitment processes. Certain candidates for public sector positions may be given preferential treatment on the basis of their personal, family or social connections rather their skills and experience, or because of the payment of bribes. Such practices may have a detrimental effect not only on the efficiency, productivity and management of public resources and service delivery, but also on the fight against corruption itself. Rather than an impartial and merit-based recruitment process, corruption in recruitment processes can lead to the hiring of candidates who are more willing to pay bribes or resort to and condone other forms of corruption. This, in turn, may create a vicious circle that is difficult to break and where corrupt behaviour can be seen as the normal way of doing business.

Recruitment in the public sector: process and perceptions

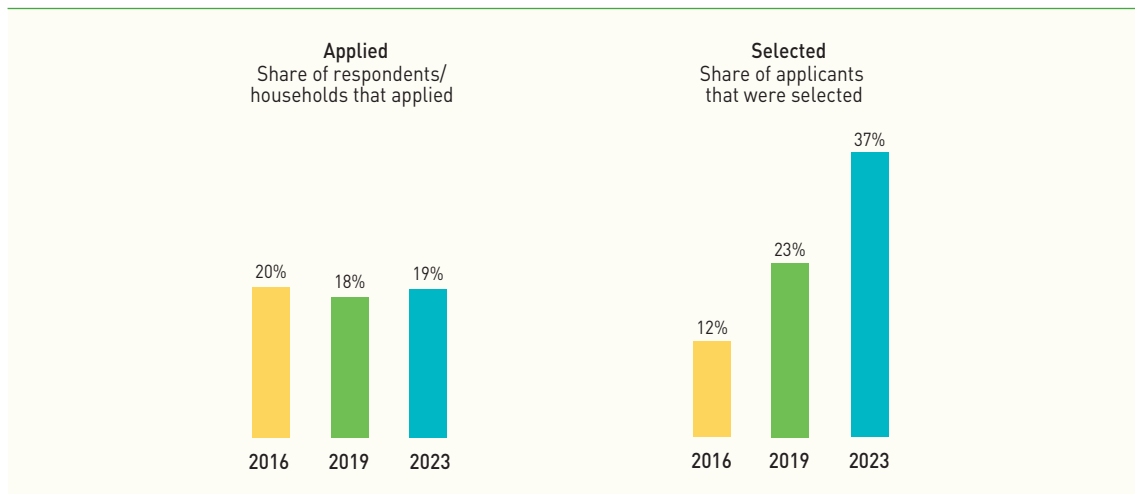
Within the three years prior to the 2023 survey, 19 per cent of respondents applied personally or have members in their households who applied for positions in the public sector (Figure 76). While this share remained relatively stable since the 2016 survey, the share of applicants who were eventually selected for a position in the public sector increased significantly over the years, from 12 per cent in 2016 to 37 per cent.⁸⁰ One possible explanation could be the overall growth in the public sector⁸¹ or changes to recruitment strategies, which can contribute to a higher rate of successful applications.

⁷⁹ The adult working population includes people currently employed either as self-employed persons or in the public / private sector. The retired, unemployed, students and housewives/housekeepers are excluded.

⁸⁰ The increase in the share between the 2019 and the 2023 survey is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

⁸¹ The Integrated Payroll and Personnel information system (IPPIS), which manages the salaries of government employees across, ministries, departments and agencies, reported having 700,000 employees in 2018 and over 1 million employees as of 2023. Source: <https://www.ippis.gov.ng/about>

Figure 76: Share of respondents with household members (including themselves) who applied for a position in the public sector in the three years prior to the survey and were selected, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: Share of respondents with household members (including themselves) who applied for a position in the public sector in the three years prior to the survey; and the share of respondents with household members (including themselves) who applied for a position and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. (November 2020 – October 2023).

Similar to findings from the 2019 survey, the main types of public sector occupation that successful household members were selected for in the three years prior to the 2023 survey, were professionals, technicians or scientists,⁸² which accounted for 40 per cent of all occupation types of selected applicants. This was followed by 25 per cent of applicants getting selected for other types of positions (e.g. services, sales, agricultural, craftsmen, machine operators, drivers, cleaners) and 16 per cent as clerical support workers such as receptionists or office assistants. The proportion of successful household members who were selected as managers and senior officials increased from 8 per cent in 2019 to 15 per cent in 2023.⁸³

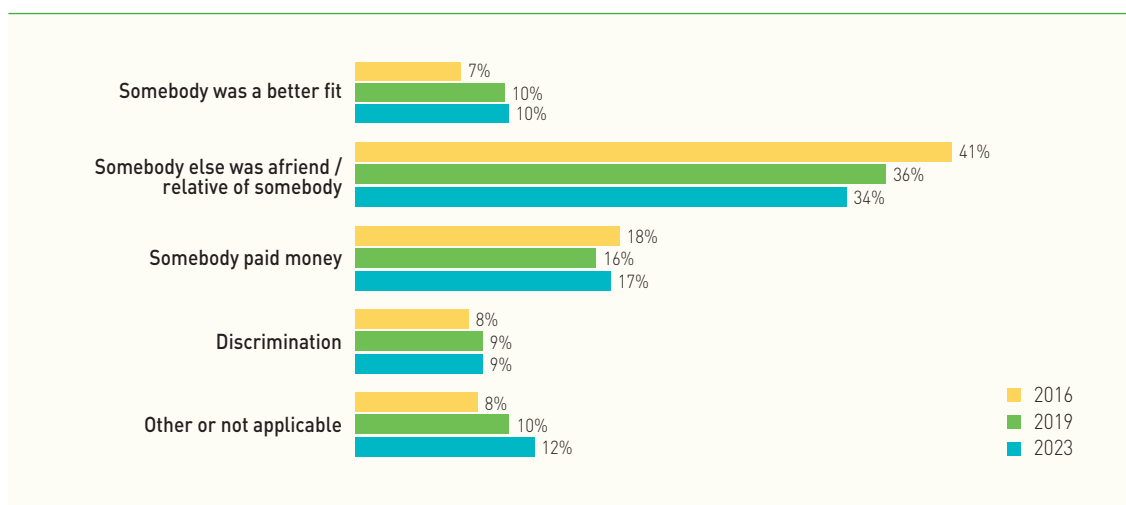
What is nepotism?

The United Nations Convention against Corruption does not include the term “nepotism” but instead states that the abuse of functions and trading in influence should be criminalized. This type of behaviour refers to situations when an official uses their public employment for personal gain, or for the gain of somebody else. The use of the term “nepotism” here is therefore not limited to family members, but also includes other relatives and friends.

⁸² This includes professional engineers, IT professionals, accountants, lawyers, economists, researchers, scientists, doctors, nurses, etc.

⁸³ The increase in the share between the 2019 and the 2023 survey is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

Figure 77: Percentage distribution of reasons why unsuccessful public sector job applicants think they did not get the position, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: Share of respondents with household members (including themselves) who applied for a position in the public sector in the three years prior to the survey and were not selected. [November 2020 – October 2023].

Among unsuccessful applicants, the majority believe that the reason they did not get the position was related to corruption. In 2023, 34 per cent of unsuccessful applicants reported that nepotism was the reason why they did not get the position, which reflects a consistent decrease compared to the previous survey rounds (Figure 77).⁸⁴ In 2023, nepotism still remained the main perceived reason for unsuccessful applications (somebody else was a friend/relative of somebody), however, followed by bribery (17 per cent), and discrimination (9 per cent). The rest either reported not knowing the reason or thought someone else was a better fit for the position.

An examination of the recruitment process through the 2023 survey reveals that 37 per cent of successful applicants in the three years prior to the survey reported having the relevant professional or educational background, as well as undergoing a written test or oral interview, similar to the 2019 survey (39 per cent) (Figure 78). Nevertheless, the share of successful applicants who reported having neither the expertise nor having done a test or interview increased from 38 per cent in 2019 to 44 per cent in 2023.⁸⁵

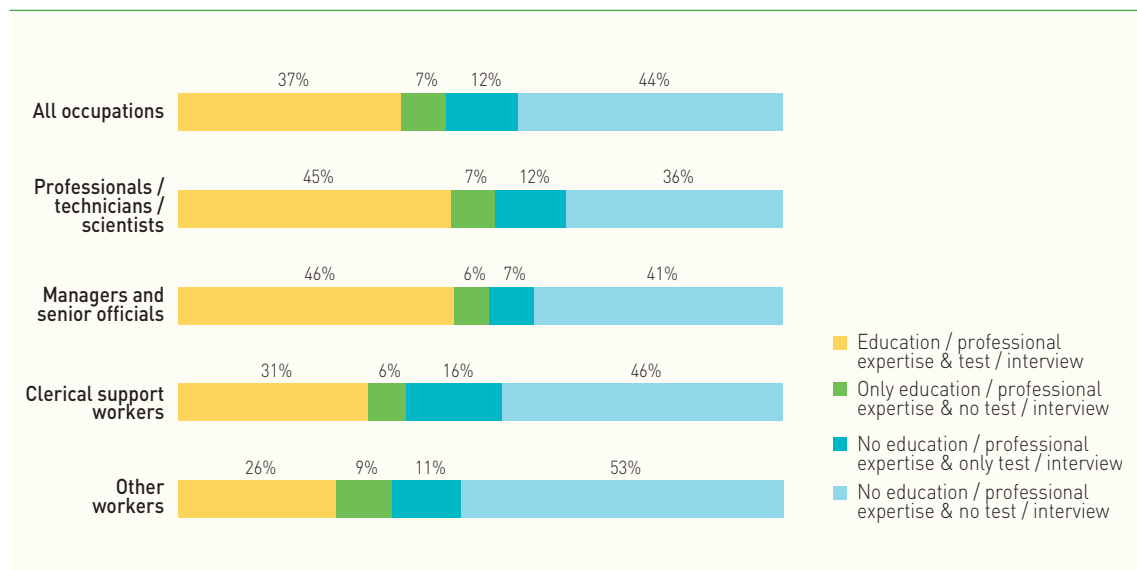
While these findings may indicate a lack of transparent and fair recruitment process in the public sector in general, undertaking a formal recruitment process or having specific expertise may be less relevant for public sector occupations that do not require specific qualifications. For example, 46 per cent of applicants who were employed as clerical support workers and 53 per cent of applicants who were employed in other types of positions (not managerial and not professional) reported having no good educational background or professional expertise for it, and reported not undergoing a test or interview in 2023 (Figure 78). In such cases, the positions may not demand a specific educational background or professional expertise and so the findings do not necessarily indicate a lack of transparent and fair recruitment process.

⁸⁴ The decreases in the share from 2016 to 2019 and from 2019 to 2023 are statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

⁸⁵ The increase in the share is significant at 95 per cent confidence.

Importantly, the share of successful household members (including respondents themselves) who also reported having no good educational background or professional expertise and did not undergo a test or interview, but who were selected for high-skilled positions such as managers and senior officials was 41 per cent. Likewise, for professionals, technicians, and scientists, this figure stood at 26 per cent in 2023. While these shares are smaller compared to the other types of occupation mentioned earlier (clerical, other), they indicate that many applicants that secure high-skilled positions in the Nigerian public sector do not undergo a fair and transparent recruitment procedure, thereby making it susceptible to corrupt practices.

Figure 78: Share of successful applicants for public sector positions, by occupation and recruitment process, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Share of households with members (including respondents themselves) who applied for a position and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. There were two questions asked in the survey: "Did you, or your household member, get this job because you had a good educational background or professional expertise for it?" and "Did you, or your household member, get this job through a written test or oral interview?". Respondents could answer "Yes" or "No" to each question separately.

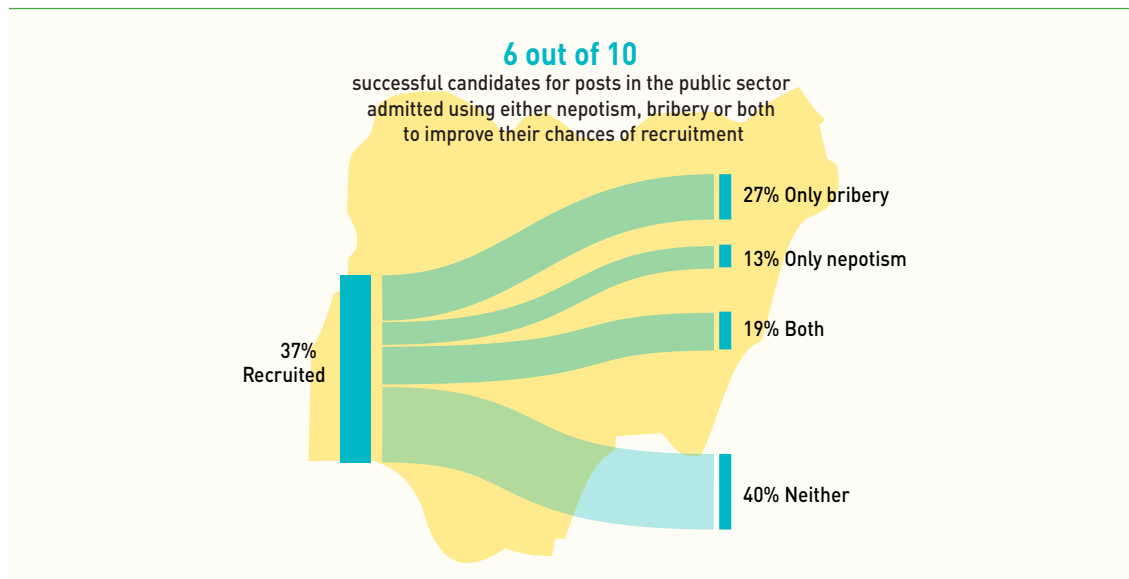
Recruitment in the public sector: the use of bribery and nepotism

There are two common methods of unduly influencing the recruitment process: applicants may pay a bribe, or they may resort to nepotism.⁸⁶ Overall, the survey found that the share of household members who reported resorting to nepotism decreased from 17 per cent in 2019 to 13 per cent in 2023. However, the share of successful applicants who reported paying a bribe in addition to relying on nepotism, increased from 11 to 19 per cent between 2019 and 2023 (Figure 79), meaning that the overall prevalence of nepotism in public sector recruitment increased from 28 per cent in 2019 to 32 per cent in 2023.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ As mentioned in the info box above, nepotism refers to situations when an official uses their public employment for personal gains, or for the gain of somebody else they know. The use of the term "nepotism" here is not limited to family members, but also includes other relatives and friends.

⁸⁷ Both changes in the share between the 2019 and the 2023 survey are statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

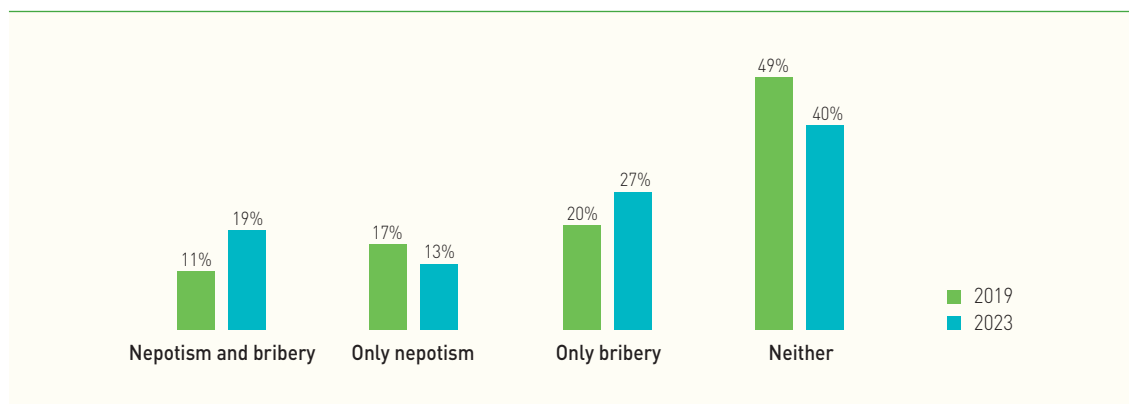
Figure 79: Share of successful applicants for public sector positions, by occupation and recruitment process, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The reference period is the 3 years prior to the 2023 survey (November 2020–October 2023)

The share of successful applicants who reported paying only a bribe also increased significantly from 20 per cent in 2019 to 27 per cent in 2023 (Figure 80). Interestingly, these findings present a contrast to the perceptions among unsuccessful applicants discussed earlier. While there has been an increasing trend of unsuccessful applicants reporting that nepotism was the main reason for their lack of success, a large and increasing share of successful applicants cited the use of bribery rather than nepotism, suggesting a certain mismatch between perceptions and reality.

Figure 80: Share of successful applicants for public sector jobs who used nepotism, bribery, both or neither, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023

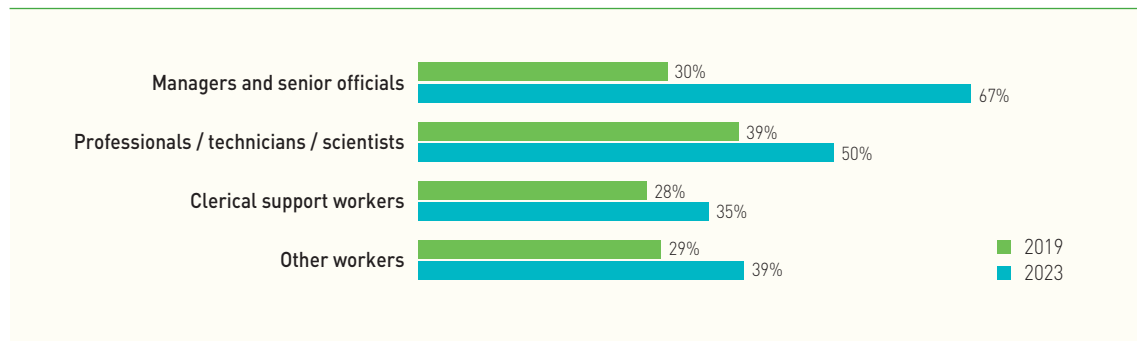


Note: Share of households with members who applied for a position and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. The survey question to measure nepotism in recruitment was: Did you, or your household member, get the job also thanks to the help of a relative, friend or member of your tribe? The survey question to measure bribery in recruitment was: Did you, or a household member, have to make an extra payment or to provide a gift to someone in order to facilitate the recruitment? Respondents could indicate using both nepotism and bribery.

The increase in the reported use of bribery (alone or with nepotism) in public sector recruitment can be observed across all occupation types, with the most notable increase seen among managers and senior officials (Figure 81). In 2019, 30 per cent of successful applicants in this category reported paying a bribe (either alone or with relying on nepotism), a figure that rose to

67 per cent in 2023, marking the highest share among all occupations in 2023. Clerical support workers reported the lowest share of bribe-paying to facilitate recruitment in 2023, standing at 35 per cent.

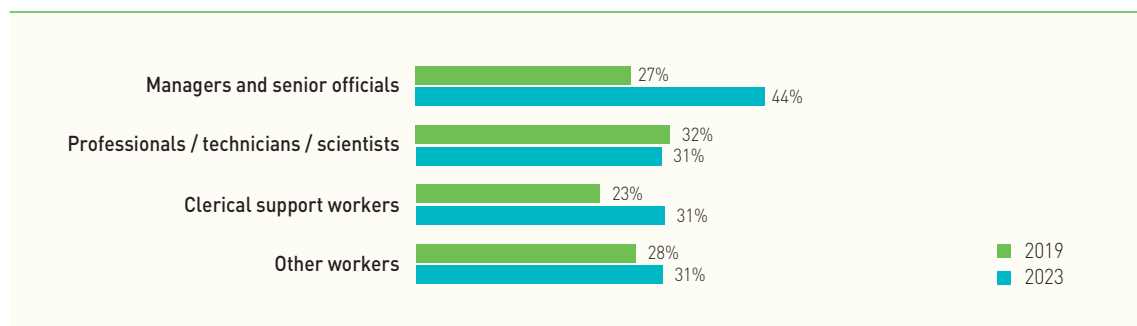
Figure 81: Share of successful applicants for public sector positions who paid a bribe (alone or with nepotism) to facilitate the recruitment, by type of occupation, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Share of households with members who applied for a position and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. Successful applicants who reported using bribery could also report using nepotism.

An increase in the reported use of nepotism (alone or with bribery) was observed among all occupation types between 2019 and 2023, with the exception of professionals, technicians and scientists, where the share of successful applicants citing nepotism remained approximately the same (32 per cent in 2019 and 31 per cent in 2023) (Figure 82). In the case of the use of nepotism in recruitment (alone or with bribery), there was also a large increase seen among managers and senior officials (from 27 per cent in 2019 to 44 per cent in 2023), followed by clerical support workers (from 23 per cent in 2019 to 31 per cent in 2023).

Figure 82: Share of successful applicants for public sector positions who used nepotism (alone or with bribery), by type of occupation, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



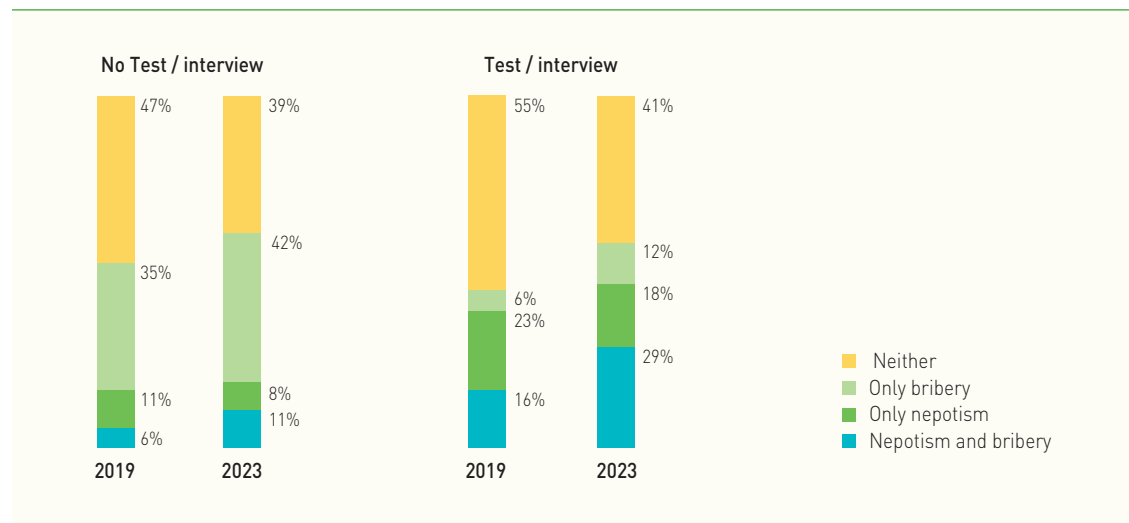
Note: Share of households with members who applied for a position and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. Successful applicants who reported using nepotism could also report using bribery.

Figure 83 below compares the use of nepotism, bribery, both or neither between successful applicants who went through a formal recruitment procedure and those who did not. The figure shows that in 2023, among those successful applicants who reported writing a test or doing an interview (i.e. a formal recruitment procedure), a smaller share paid a bribe (41 per cent) compared to those successful applicants who did not go through a formal recruitment procedure (53 per cent).⁸⁸ These findings suggest that formal recruitment processes can act as a deterrent to corruption in public sector recruitment.

⁸⁸ This includes applicants who only paid a bribe and applicants who paid a bribe and used nepotism.

Figure 83 also shows that the share of bribe-payers increased between 2019 and 2023, irrespective of whether a formal recruitment procedure was used or not, suggesting that corruption in public sector recruitment has increased in this period, both amongst positions requiring a formal selection procedure and those that do not.

Figure 83: Share of successful applicants for public sector jobs who used nepotism, bribery or both, by completion of written test and/or interview, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023 (with bribery), by type of occupation, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Share of households with members who applied for a position and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. The question asked in the survey is: "Did you, or your household member, get this job through a written test or oral interview?". Respondents could answer "Yes" or "No".

Importantly, the data suggest that, while the use of bribery alone (without resorting to nepotism) is less prevalent in recruitment for positions that require a formal selection procedure, the use of nepotism alone (without paying a bribe), in turn, disproportionately affects recruitment for positions that require formal selection procedures. One of the possible reasons for this pattern is that friends or relatives of successful applicants who relied on nepotism may use formal procedures to legitimize the recruitment process.

In 2023, only 8 per cent of successful applicants who did not undergo a test or interview used nepotism alone compared with 18 per cent of successful applicants who did a test or interview. The trend data indicate that the share of successful applicants relying on nepotism alone decreased between 2019 and 2023, irrespective of whether the recruitment procedure was formal or not. However, the share of successful applicants who relied on nepotism and bribery together to secure their job increased over the same period, irrespective of how formal the recruitment process was (Figure 83).

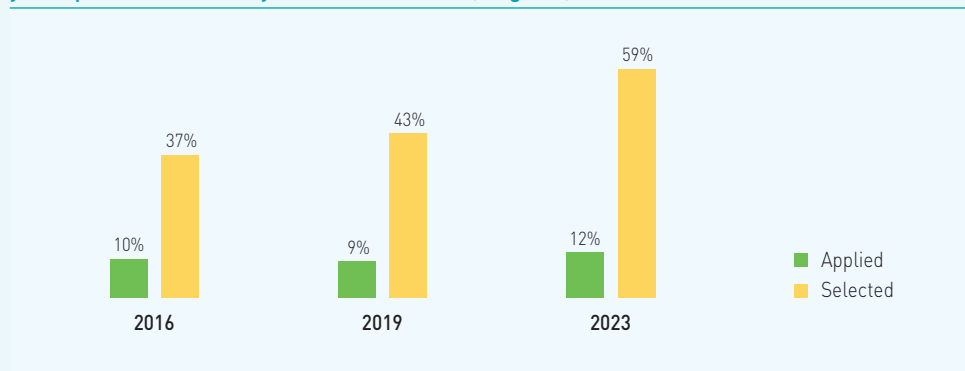
Overall, the results show that nepotism continues to affect the public recruitment process in Nigeria, especially among higher-skilled occupation types and those requiring formal selection procedures. However, the data also suggest that, over time, applicants are increasingly resorting to bribery payments (either alone or in combination with nepotism) to secure positions in the public sector.



Nepotism and bribery in private sector recruitment

The share of Nigerians who applied for a job in the private sector has remained relatively constant over the years, while the share of applicants who were eventually selected for private sector positions has steadily increased, amounting to around 59 per cent in 2023, up from 43 per cent in 2019 (Figure 84). These trends are similar to the application and recruitment trends observed in the public sector over the same time period.

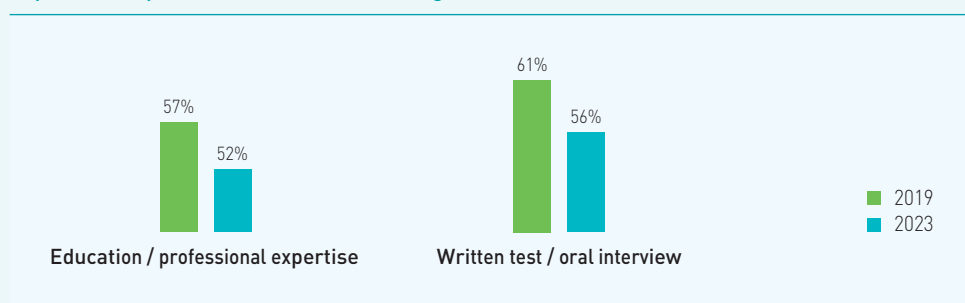
Figure 84: Share of successful applicants for private sector positions in the three years prior to the survey and were selected, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: Share of respondents with household members (including themselves) who applied for a position in the private sector and were selected in the three years prior to the survey.

The survey data show that formal recruitment processes played a somewhat smaller role in private sector recruitment in 2023 compared to 2019, which may indicate increased vulnerability to corruption. Figure 85 shows that the share of successful applicants in private sector positions who underwent a written test decreased moderately (from 61 per cent in 2019 to 56 per cent in 2023). Similarly, the share of successful applicants who reported having relevant qualifications also recorded a decline over this period (57 per cent in 2019 to 52 per cent in 2023).⁸⁹

Figure 85: Share of successful applicants for private sector positions who possessed the expertise or passed a test/interview, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023

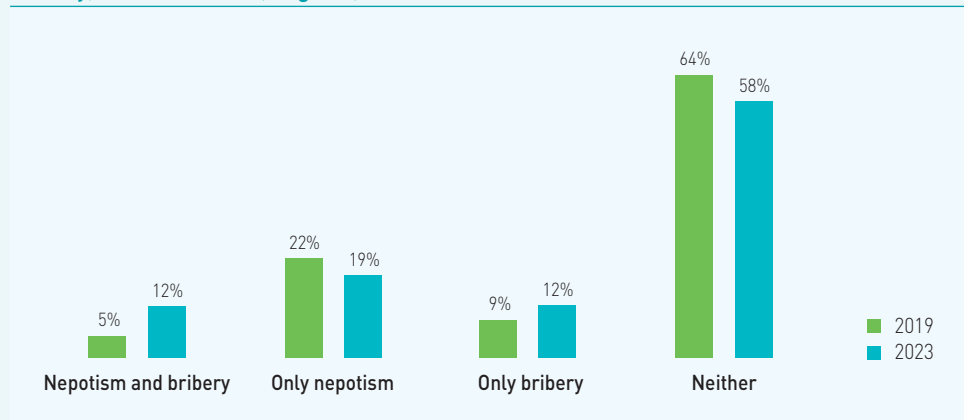


Note: Share of respondents with household members (including themselves) who applied for a position in the private sector and were selected in the three years prior to the survey.

⁸⁹ Both decreases between the 2019 and the 2023 survey are statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

In the 2023 survey, 12 per cent of successful applicants reported paying a bribe and using nepotism to facilitate the recruitment process in the private sector, an increase compared to 2019 (5 per cent). The share of successful applicants who reported relying on nepotism alone to obtain a private sector job in turn decreased from 22 per cent in 2019 to 19 per cent in 2023, while 12 per cent reported paying a bribe only in 2023 compared to 9 per cent in 2019 (Figure 86). These findings mirror trends and patterns observed in recruitment processes in the public sector, in which applicants have also increasingly turned to bribery payments, either alone or in combination with nepotism to secure positions. Overall, corruption appears to be less prevalent in private sector recruitment compared with public sector recruitment, as 58 per cent of successful applicants in the private sector reported not having to rely on neither bribery nor nepotism to secure employment, compared with 40 per cent in the public sector.

Figure 86: Share of successful applicants for private sector positions who used nepotism, bribery, both or neither, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Share of households with members who applied for a position in the private sector and were selected in the three years prior to the survey. The survey question to measure nepotism in recruitment was: Did you, or your household member, get the job also thanks to the help of a relative, friend or member of your tribe? The survey question to measure bribery in recruitment was: Did you, or a household member, have to make an extra payment or to provide a gift to someone in order to facilitate the recruitment? Respondents could indicate using both nepotism and bribery.

Corruption in public sector promotion

In addition to playing a role in the recruitment process for public sector jobs, instances of nepotism and bribery can also occur in promotion processes.

In 2023, 37 per cent of public sector employees stated that they were promoted in the three years prior to the survey, a modest increase compared to 2019 (32 per cent). Among those who were promoted, 80 per cent reported getting the job because they had acquired enough professional expertise, assumed more responsibilities and done a test or interview. Of those who were promoted in the three years prior to the survey, only 4 per cent reported getting the job despite



not having acquired professional expertise, not having assumed more responsibilities and not done a test or interview. Compared to the share of successful applicants to public sector jobs who report lacking relevant background qualifications and who did not go through a formal selection procedure (44 percent), the share of unqualified and informally selected public sector workers who received a promotion is relatively small (4 per cent).⁹⁰ This is a first indication that corruption in the public sector promotion processes is less prevalent compared to the public sector recruitment processes.

Of those who received promotions in the public sector in the three years prior to the survey, 5 per cent acknowledged resorting to bribery alone to facilitate the process in 2023, compared to 2 per cent in 2019.⁹¹ Furthermore, in 2023, 5 per cent admitted receiving assistance by friends and relatives (nepotism alone) in obtaining the promotion, a modest decrease from 2019 (7 per cent).⁹² Finally, 11 per cent of those who received promotions reported using both nepotism and bribery, compared to 5 per cent in 2023.⁹³

These findings suggest that bribery and nepotism play similar roles in both recruitment and promotion processes in the Nigerian public sector but are less prevalent in the promotion process. One possible explanation for this difference could be the different nature of the two processes: recruitment often involves selecting candidates from a pool of external applicants, where bribery and nepotism may be perceived as a more expedient way to bypass formal procedures and secure a position. By contrast, promotion procedures typically involve existing relationships between employees who have accumulated experience and responsibilities, which may be more straightforward to evaluate based on merit and performance within the organization's structure.

Corruption and access to public services

Bribery and nepotism can hinder Nigerian citizens' access to public services. Without the help of relatives or the financial means to pay a bribe, some may face more challenges in accessing essential public services compared to others.

One type of public service that the survey asked about is the provision of official documents. In 2023, 6 per cent of Nigerian citizens applied for a document from a public institution, with the majority of applicants (85 per cent) successfully obtaining the requested document (Figure 87). Over time, there has been little change in demand for such services (7 per cent in 2019), and only a modest increase in the share of requested documents that are successfully obtained (81 per cent in 2019).

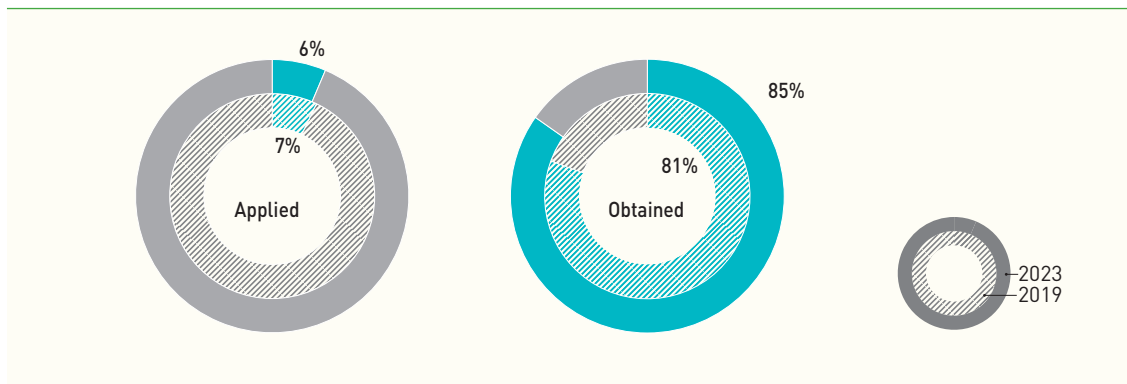
⁹⁰ See Figure 77.

⁹¹ The increase between 2019 and 2023 in the share of successful applicants who report using only bribery to obtain a public sector promotion is not statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

⁹² The decrease between 2019 and 2023 in the share of successful applicants who report using only nepotism to obtain a public sector promotion is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

⁹³ The increase between 2019 and 2023 in the share of successful applicants who report using bribery and nepotism to obtain a public sector promotion is statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence.

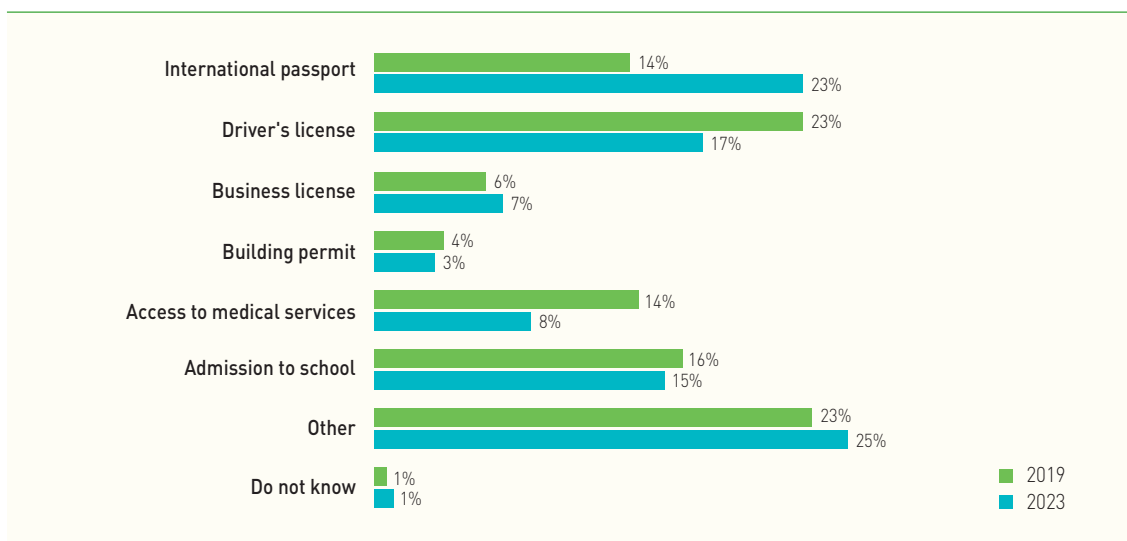
Figure 87: Share of Nigerians who applied for a document in a public institution in the three years prior to the survey and obtained the document, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Share of Nigerians who applied for a document from a public institution in the three years prior to the survey and share of applicants who obtained the document.

In the 2023 survey, 23 per cent of applicants for official documents reported applying for international passports, a notable increase from the 14 per cent reported in 2019 (Figure 88). There was also a decrease in the share of requests of driver's licenses (23 per cent in 2019 to 17 per cent in 2023) and documents relating to medical services (14 per cent in 2019 to 8 per cent in 2023).

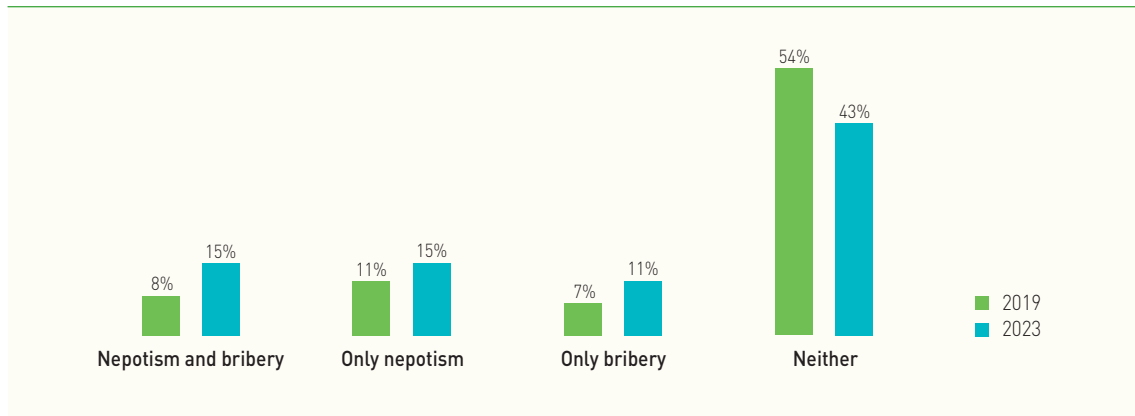
Figure 88: Percentage distribution of the documents applied for in the three years prior to the survey, by document type, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Types of documents that Nigerian citizens applied for in the three years prior to the survey. Respondents could only select one answer.

Nigerians who want to obtain official documents may need to resort to corruption. Between 2019 and 2023, there was an increase in the reported use of bribery (7 per cent to 11 per cent), nepotism (11 per cent to 15 per cent), and both nepotism and bribery (8 per cent to 15 per cent) among all those Nigerians who successfully obtained official documents (Figure 89).

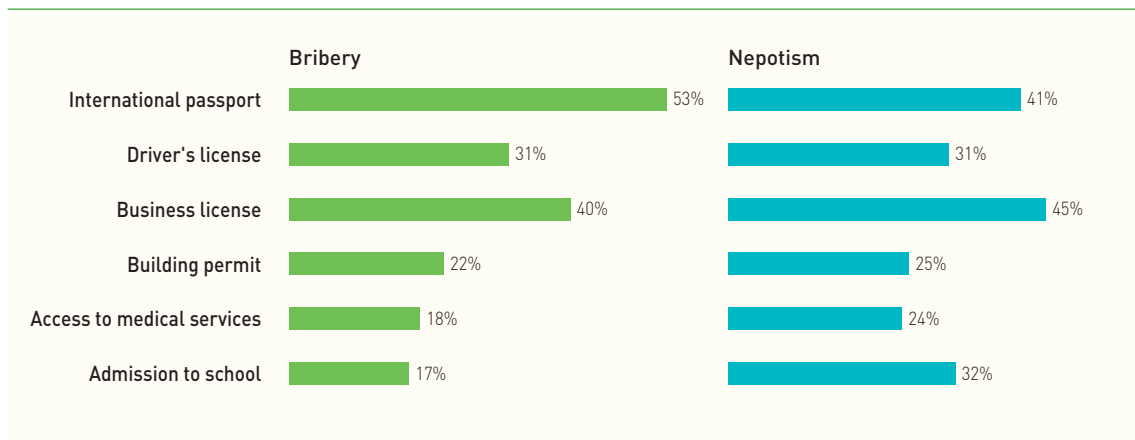
Figure 89: Share of successful applicants for official documents who used at least nepotism, bribery, both or neither in the three years prior to the survey, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: Share of respondents who applied for and obtained a document from a public institution in the three years prior to the survey. The survey question to measure nepotism in access to documents was: Did you get this document also thanks to the help of a relative, friend or member of your tribe? The survey question to measure bribery in access to documents was: Did you have to make an extra payment or to provide a gift to someone in order to get this document. Respondents could indicate using both nepotism and bribery.

Further analysis reveals significant variations in the incidence of bribery and nepotism depending on the type of document requested and obtained (Figure 90). In 2023, more than half (53 per cent) of Nigerians who successfully acquired an international passport reported paying a bribe, while 40 per cent reported doing so to obtain a business licenses and 31 per cent for driver's licenses. In contrast to the use of bribery, the incidence of nepotism when obtaining official documents exhibited a more consistent pattern across various document types in the 2023 survey data. A particularly striking difference between the use of bribery and nepotism in obtaining official documents is related to school admission documents: while 17 per cent of respondents reported paying a bribe for such documents, nearly twice as many (32 per cent) had to rely on the assistance of relatives or friends.

Figure 90: Share of applicants who used at least nepotism or bribery to obtain a document, by type of document, Nigeria, 2023



Note: Share of applicants who reported obtaining a document by being helped by a relative or friend or by paying a bribe out of respondents who applied and obtained a document from a public institution in the past three years. Applicants who used bribery could also report using nepotism and vice-versa.

Other forms

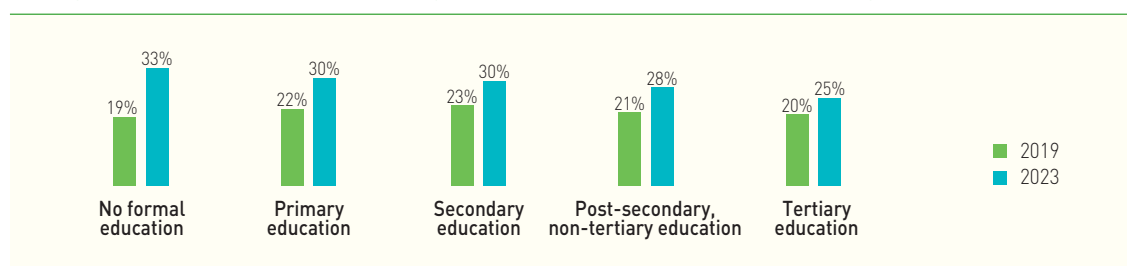
Other forms of corruption include vote-buying, which is defined as the act of offering money, goods or other favours in exchange for the vote of a voter in an election. The 2023 survey examined the prevalence of vote-buying before or during the 2023 General Election, in which the president, vice-president and members of the national assembly were elected.

Findings from the survey indicate that 22 per cent of Nigerian citizens reported that they were personally offered money in exchange of a vote before or during the 2023 General Election, while 9 per cent were offered another favour. This represents an increase in both types of vote-buying compared with 2019, when personal offers of money were reported by 17 per cent and personal offers of other favours were reported by 4 per cent of citizens.⁹⁴ Furthermore, in 2023, 10 per cent reported that they were not personally offered money or another favour in exchange for their vote, but that instead another member of their household was approached, compared to 5 per cent in 2019.

Just over half (55 per cent) of the citizens who were personally offered money or another favour in exchange for their vote in the 2023 General Election reported that the offer did not influence their vote choice, while 40 per cent of those citizens said they voted for the person or political party which offered them money or a favour precisely because of the offer.

Between 2019 and 2023, the proportion of Nigerians who were personally offered bribes in exchange for votes increased similarly across sexes, urban and rural areas, and age groups. However, a breakdown of vote-buying prevalence⁹⁵ by zones shows some notable changes between 2019 and 2023: while in some zones, like South-West, South-South and North-Central there were minimal to no changes between 2019 and 2023, the prevalence of vote-buying in the North-West increased from 23 per cent in 2019 to 44 per cent in 2023. Furthermore, in the North-West zone, a relatively high share (55 per cent) of citizens who were offered money or another favour in exchange for their vote also reported that the offer of money influenced who they voted for (compared with the national average of 40 per cent).

Figure 91: Prevalence of vote-buying, by citizens' educational attainment, Nigeria, 2019 and 2023



Note: The prevalence of vote-buying is defined as the share of adult Nigerians who were personally offered money or some other favour in exchange for their vote. Instances of other household members being offered money or a favour in exchange for their vote are not included.

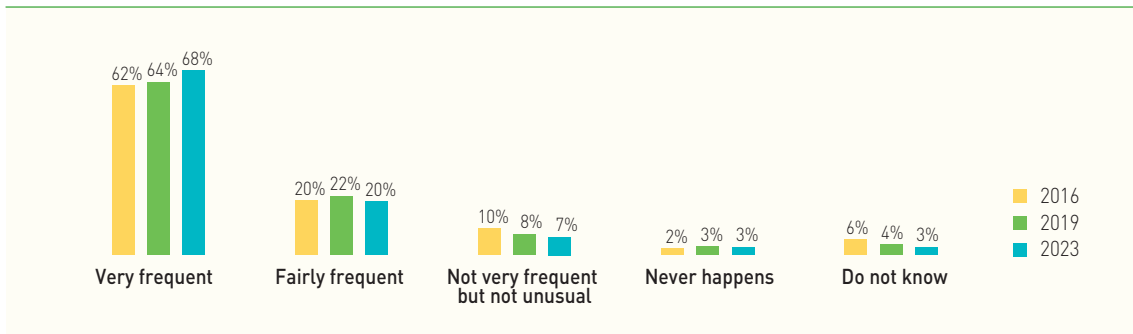
⁹⁴ The 2019 survey asked about the last national or state election.

⁹⁵ Here and in the subsequent discussion, the prevalence of vote-buying is defined as the share of adult Nigerians who were personally offered money or some other favour in exchange for their vote. Instances of other household members being offered money or a favour in exchange for their vote are not included.

There are also some notable variations in the prevalence of vote-buying according to citizens' educational backgrounds. In 2023, the prevalence of vote-buying was highest among citizens with no formal education (33 per cent), decreasing gradually with levels of educational attainment until completed tertiary education (25 per cent) (Figure 92). This pattern is different to the one found in the 2019 survey data, where the prevalence of vote-buying was relatively constant across citizens' educational attainment. This difference could be attributable to the fact that the North-West region, where vote-buying prevalence is highest, also has a relatively large share of respondents with no formal education (43 per cent in 2023 compared to the national average of 26 per cent), thus influencing the overall pattern.

The survey data also show some parallels between Nigerians' perceptions regarding trends in vote-buying and its actual prevalence. Between 2019 and 2023, the share of survey respondents who perceived vote-buying to be very frequent increased (from 64 per cent to 68 per cent), in line with the actual increase in vote-buying observed in this period (Figure 92).

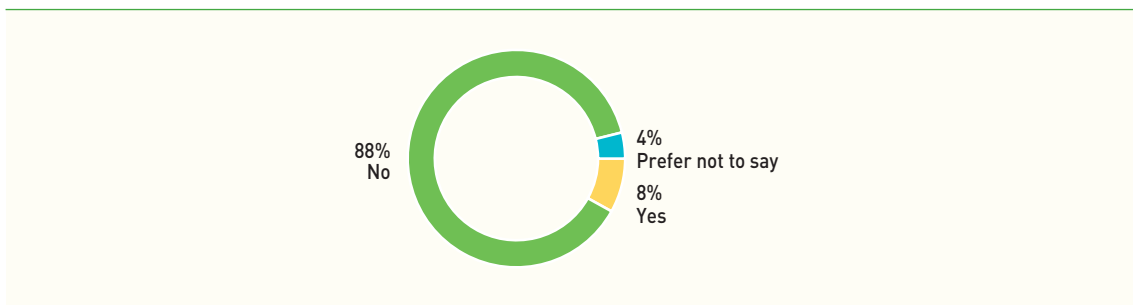
Figure 92: Percentage distribution of perceptions of the frequency of electoral fraud, Nigeria, 2016–2023



Note: The survey question was: In your opinion, how frequent is the practice of manipulating electoral processes/ electoral fraud among elected representatives/politicians? Do you think it is very frequent, fairly frequent, not very frequent but not unusual or do you think it never happens?

The data reveal a certain mismatch between Nigerian's opinions about the acceptability of vote-buying and their reported behaviour in relation to vote-buying. For example, according to the 2023 survey data, 88 per cent of Nigerians think that it is not acceptable for people to collect money or a gift in exchange for their vote (Figure 93). However, among those citizens who thought that vote-buying is not acceptable, 28 per cent were personally offered money or another favour and approximately 10 per cent also reported that they voted for the person or political party because they made such an offer.

Figure 93: Percentage distribution acceptability of vote-buying, Nigeria, 2023



Note: The survey question was: Do you think that it is acceptable for people to collect money or a gift for their vote? Answer options were: 1) Yes, it is acceptable, 2) No, it is not acceptable, and 3) Prefer not to say.





*Conclusions
and policy
recommendations*

Focus on what matters to citizens.

The 2023 corruption survey reconfirms the need for Government to prioritize its corruption prevention and enforcement efforts on those types of institutions and public officials most relevant and present in the lives of ordinary citizens. In essence the majority of Nigerians interact only with five types of public officials, namely doctors, nurses, and midwives (30 per cent), public utility officers (24 per cent), police officers (20 per cent), teachers and lecturers (17 per cent), and other health workers (15 per cent). It is therefore advisable that Government focuses where it matters most and is likely to have the greatest relative impact for the common man.

Empower citizens.

In 2023, 70 per cent of Nigerians who were asked to pay a bribe, refused to do so on at least one occasion. Additionally, at least 42 per cent of respondents refused to pay a bribe because it was the “right thing to do”. This encouraging trend could be attributed to either an increased awareness of the negative impacts of bribery by citizens or reduced tolerance towards those breaking the law. The survey also highlights that the rate of those who experienced negative consequences when refusing the payment of a bribe reduced considerably from 49 per cent in 2019 to 38 per cent in 2023. Such positive behavioural changes and attitudes must be further encouraged through targeted campaigns, rewarding honest citizens as well as public officials while continuing to report on examples of courage and determination. Such campaigns need, in particular, to target the tech-savvy youth who have shown the most significant increases in terms of their readiness to refuse requests for bribes. At the same time, officers who seek to retaliate against those refusing to pay bribes must be held to account for such actions in a very visible way in order to serve as a deterrent to others.

Diversify and strengthen complaints mechanisms.

Another encouraging trend is that of citizens’ willingness to report bribery to the relevant authorities. As highlighted in the report, the percentage of those who were willing to report incidents of bribery more than doubled from 3.6 per cent in 2019 to 8.6 per cent in 2023. This seems to be linked to greater accessibility of complaints channels as well as increased readiness of institutions to take such complaints seriously and to initiate a formal procedure. More specifically, the share of bribery reports that led to the initiation of a formal procedure against the public official increased nearly three-fold between 2019 and 2023, from 16 per cent to 45 per cent while the share of those who experienced no follow-up after reporting reduced from 34 per cent to 17 per cent, as did the share of those who were advised not to go ahead with the report (from 20 per cent to 14 per cent).



One particularly encouraging example of an increasingly well-functioning and accepted complaints mechanism is the Police Complaints Response Unit which receives a rapidly growing number of complaints from citizens through various social media channels and seems to provide quick and credible responses to the alleged misconduct. Strengthening such complaints channels, making them even more accessible with the help of modern technology, allowing citizens to lodge complaints from the safety of their homes, and providing quick remedy, where possible, have proven to be some of the critical ingredients to a more effective response to small scale bribery in particular.

Increase the use of e-government.

One of the important findings from the 2023 survey report is the significant reduction in the contact rate between citizens and public officials (from 63% in 2019 to 56% in 2023). This likely to explain the overall reduction in the total number of individual bribes paid in 2023 (87 million compared to 117 million estimated in 2019). This finding appears to be linked to the Government's efforts to digitalize public services and improve the ease of doing business.⁴² Building on this effort, is therefore recommended for the government to continue expanding the availability of online services not only to enhance ease of access but also to reduce the need for face-to-face contact between citizens and public officials and hereby the opportunities for bribery.

Strengthen the integrity of institutions of accountability.

As already observed in the 2019 report, in many regards those institutions which are created to enforce the law and hold those to account who break it continue, unfortunately, themselves not be immune from corruption. Also in 2023, the institutions of the criminal justice system as well as parliamentarians recorded high levels of bribery prevalence. Past successful efforts aimed at strengthening the integrity and accountability of the justice sector should be revived and rolled out.^{43,44}

42 In June 2022, the Presidential Council on Digital Economy and E-government was inaugurated <https://statehouse.gov.ng/news/e-government-president-buhari-inaugurates-presidential-council-tasks-members-on-improving-nigerias-ranking-on-ease-of-doing-business/>.

43 National Judicial Institute/UNODC, Ten Years of Justice Sector Reform – A 360 Degree Review, 2010 *Ten_years_of_Justice_Sector_Reform_in_Nigeria_-_A_360_Degree_Review.pdf* (unodc.org).

44 Impact Assessment of Justice Sector Reform in Three Nigeria States 2002–2007 (UNODC/LEDAP, 2007).

Target locations where bribery occurs.

The survey provided new and more accurate insights into the locations of corruption, giving additional information to further refine and guide preventive and enforcement actions. With the absolute majority of bribery transactions occurring either on the streets (36 per cent) or in public offices (35 per cent), increased scrutiny towards those institutions and agents policing the streets and ads of the country in particular in manning roadblocks could have a significant impact, as it would have to install CCTV systems in public offices.

Bribery in the private sector is not to be ignored.

Between 2019 and 2023, the private sector recorded a marked increase in the prevalence of bribery, from 6 per cent to 14 per cent (without refusals) or 17 per cent (with refusals). Particularly affected is the insurance sector, where, seemingly, insurance holders and agents increasingly collude to the detriment of the insurance companies. It therefore seems important to start raising awareness among private sector stakeholders of the specific corruption risks as well as methods to insulate their business processes against fraud and corruption.

Promote gender equity, women empowerment, and social inclusion as core elements of good governance.

Similar to the 2019 survey, the 2023 survey report highlights the significant differences that persist in the experiences of women and men when faced with corruption. According to the survey report, women continue to be less likely to engage in bribery irrespective of where they live, their age, educational background, and employment status. Furthermore, both the 2019 and 2023 surveys show that female public officials are considerably less likely than their male counterparts to pay bribes.

The 2023 report also found that people with disabilities are as likely as everyone else to be approached for the payment of bribes, yet having to pay bribes when accessing public services is likely to place a far greater burden on people with disabilities.



Anti-corruption and good governance policies need to pay greater attention to these differences and design measures taking into account the particular conditions and needs of these groups. For example, women and girls affected by various forms of sextortion schemes, might require special complaints mechanism to feel safe and comfortable to come forward. People with disabilities may not have the same level of access to information or may face challenges when seeking to access websites and social media channels. Public sector entities representing the interests of these groups such as the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, and The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities should be involved when working together to create more awareness and increased understanding of the underlying vulnerabilities that exist for marginalized groups in the anti-corruption sector.





Methodological annex

Part 1

National survey on the quality and integrity of public services

Background

The 2023 data presented in this report were collected in the third¹ National Survey on the Quality and Integrity of Public Services, otherwise known as Third Nigerian Corruption Survey, a project funded by the MacArthur Foundation and implemented by UNODC in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).²

Like its predecessors in 2016 and 2019, the Third Nigerian Corruption Survey was designed as a large-scale household survey, representative at the level of the Nigerian states, with the aim of collecting baseline information on:

- direct experiences of corruption events, as victims, by citizens,
- the experience of reporting corruption and other crimes to the public authorities,
- opinions and perceptions of citizens concerning recent trends, patterns and state responses to corruption.

Evidence derived from the survey is used to calculate benchmark indicators that can be used to inform relevant policies and track future progress, while ensuring international comparability with surveys of a similar nature carried out in other countries.

Survey contents and instruments

Following previous international experiences and extensive consultations with all major stakeholders in the nationwide corruption survey, the survey instrument³ is structured into several parts that cover the various information requirements identified: starting with a part on attitudes and opinions on corruption, the main part of the questionnaire addresses experiences with public services and experiences of bribery in particular. The subsequent parts of the questionnaire deal with bribery in the private sector; nepotism and favouritism in public and

- 1 The first Survey on the Quality and Integrity of Public Services was carried out in June 2016 by UNODC in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria (NBS) with funding from the European Union. The second Survey on the Quality and Integrity of Public Services was carried out in May/June 2019 by UNODC in collaboration with the NBS with financial support of the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom.
- 2 The 2023 survey closely follows the 2016 and 2019 data collection and estimation procedures. The full methodological annex for the 2016 survey is available in the report: UNODC, *Corruption in Nigeria. Bribery: public experience and response*, July 2017. The full methodological annex for the 2019 survey is available in the report: UNODC, 2019. *Corruption in Nigeria: patterns and trends. Second survey on corruption as experienced by the population*, December 2019.
- 3 The survey questionnaire and other background materials are available at: <https://dataunodc.un.org/content/microdata>

private sector recruitment and promotion, as well as access to public services; and the awareness and opinions on specific anti-corruption agencies.⁴

In developing the survey instruments for the 2016 and 2019 surveys, much time and effort had been invested in adapting a standard survey methodology⁵ already tested and refined in other national contexts (such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and the western Balkans) to the specific Nigerian context and to ensure national ownership of the survey results. For the third corruption survey in 2023, the 2019 survey instrument was reviewed and updated. This also involved taking on board some of the lessons learned during the implementation of the first national corruption survey in Ghana in 2021–22.⁶

Novel in the Third Nigeria Corruption Survey was the inclusion of a gender component, which aims to capture the differences between men and women when paying and receiving bribes, as well as the differences in opinion and perceptions about corruption and bribery. Part of this novel module also includes questions aimed at capturing the experiences of the population related to sexual corruption. Furthermore, the 2023 survey instrument was developed to more accurately and comprehensively capture instances of citizens refusing bribery requests, and included new items to measure the location of bribery as well as citizens' disability status.⁷

In the process of developing the 2023 survey instrument, roundtable discussions were held with the National Steering Committee (NSC)⁸ – consisting of 36 institutions active in anti-corruption work in Nigeria, including all the major anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, law enforcement, justice institutions, as well as civil society organizations – for overall guidance on survey implementation. In addition, several working group meetings were held with the National Technical Committee (NTC) for technical guidance in the implementation of the survey, and for consultation and inputs on revisions and additions to the survey instrument. The NTC was composed of a sub-set of the NSC and included UNODC and NBS as implementing partner.

4 Further sections deal with general crime victimization and access to justice. The data from these sections are not presented in this report.

5 For more information on the standard methodology see: UNODC, *Manual on Corruption Surveys* (Vienna, 2018).

6 UNODC, *Corruption in Ghana – People's Experiences and Views* (Vienna, 2022)

7 The set of questions measuring disability status is based on the Short Set data collection tool developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (<https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>)

8 The members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) for the 2023 survey were: Action Aid Nigeria (AAN), Anti-corruption Academy of Nigeria (ACAN), Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Centre for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch (CeFTIW), Chatham House, Civil Society Network Against Corruption (CSNAC), Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), CLEEN Foundation, Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Federal High Court (FHC), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Federal Ministry of Justice (FMOJ), High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (HC, FCT), Independent Corrupt Practices (and other related offences) Commission (ICPC), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning (MBEP), National Population Commission (NPC), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), National Judicial Council (NJC), Nigeria Correctional Service (NCS), Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC), Public Complaints Commission (PCC), Socio-Economic Right And Accountability Project (SERAP), Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML), Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms/Inter-Agency Task Team (TUGAR/IATT), MacArthur Foundation (MAF), NBS, and UNODC.

Survey preparation

To test the adequacy of the survey instrument and the integrity of survey operations and logistics before the main survey, various preparatory tasks, cognitive testing and a pilot survey were carried out. After completion of the survey instrument, the questionnaire was translated to the four other main languages of Nigeria and programmed into the electronic devices adopted for fieldwork (the CAPI – Computer Assisted Personal Interview device). Additional logic and consistency checks were carried out to ensure the correct application of the logical sequence and skip rules in the interviews. The interviewer manual from the 2019 survey was revised and updated for use in the pilot and main survey.

Cognitive testing

To explore the adequacy of new question formulations (in particular on the gender dimensions of corruption) in the Nigerian multi-cultural and multi-lingual context, a cognitive testing was conducted on 24 respondents recruited from two different Nigerian states (12 from Lagos and 12 from Kano state, stratified by sex, age and educational background) in order to examine the ways in which respondents interpret, consider and ultimately answer the questions as well as to identify potential response errors.

One-on-one in-depth interviews were used to test the questions with respondents. The interviews were conducted on the four steps in the cognitive process of responding to questions: understanding the question and response categories, recalling or searching for the requested information, thinking about the answer and making a judgment about what to report, and reporting the answer. The cognitive testing was conducted by local researchers in the period 6–12 August 2023 and the findings informed the development of the survey instrument subsequently used during the pilot and main fieldwork activities.

Pilot survey

A pilot survey is the process of testing all stages of data production carried out during the main survey, under actual survey conditions in the field, though on a smaller scale. This helps to fine-tune all survey instruments as well as to ensure adequate planning for all logistics that will be required for the main survey. The pilot survey was carried out in the period 5–11 September 2023 in two States – Nasarawa State in the North-Central zone and Oyo in the South-Western zone – with a total sample size of 200 households (100 in each state). Respondents for the pilot survey were identified by randomly selecting 10 enumeration areas (EAs) per State, 10 households per EA, and one eligible adult respondent per household. The results of the pilot survey were documented in a technical report and used to improve survey procedures, question formulations, instructions for interviewers in the interviewer guidelines, sampling procedures applied by interviewers and other technical issues.



Main survey

Sample design and weighting procedure

For the main survey, a total of 33,035 computer assisted personal interviews were conducted across the 37 states (36 states and the Federal Capital Territory) with people aged 18 and above.⁹ The sampling methodology adopted was a stratified, three-stage cluster sample design, with a stratification process conducted in the 37 Nigerian states.¹⁰ The first stage entailed the selection of primary sampling units, which in the case of Nigeria were the EAs. A total of 60 EAs were randomly selected with probability proportionate to EA population size (PPS) in each of the 37 states (strata),¹¹ for a total of 2,220 EAs nationwide that covered both rural and urban areas.¹² The second stage involved the selection of secondary sampling units, which were the households (HHs). At this point, 15 HHs were randomly selected from each of the initially selected EAs, making a total of 900 households that were covered in each state.¹³ In the third sampling stage, the interviewer then randomly selected one individual respondent in each selected household amongst all eligible (adult) household members.¹⁴ The interviewer was required to return to the same HH for at least three visits (i.e. three call backs if the household member could not be located before the respondent was treated as a missing/non-responding unit). Households or respondents were not replaced on the basis of refusal or non-availability. Rather, allowance for non-response was built into the estimation of sample size. However, sample EAs or households were replaced from a pre-defined replacement sample when it was impossible to locate them or if security concerns made it impossible to access the area.

-
- 9 Due to insecurity and outdated household listing (vacant housing units) in some areas, 3 per cent of respondents were selected from a random, pre-defined sample of replacement EAs and 5 per cent of respondents were selected from a random, pre-defined sample of replacement households, meaning that 92 per cent of respondents were from the original sample and 8 per cent from replacement samples.
 - 10 Stratified random sampling is a sampling method that requires the population to be divided into smaller groups (or strata) and the drawing of a randomised sample within each stratum.
 - 11 Additionally, six extra households were randomly selected in each EA for replacement, if needed, due to insecurity or inaccessibility.
 - 12 Nigeria is made up of 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) with a total of 662,529 Enumeration Areas (EAs). The sampling frame used for the third corruption survey was the National Agricultural Sample Census (NASC) frame, which was completed in June 2022 by NBS. A total of 30,455 EAs (approximately 5% of all EAs) and 1,193,267 households were listed during the census. Before the sample was drawn, EAs less than 20 HHs were excluded from the frame in order to have an adequate number of households for selection. Following the exclusion, the number of EAs in the frame was reduced to 26,336 EAs.
 - 13 Additionally, five extra households were randomly selected in each EA for replacement, if needed.
 - 14 Random sampling of one respondent within households was done with support of the CAPI script, following the determination of all eligible household members through a household roster.

Sampling weights:

Sampling weights for the 2023 survey were computed as follows:

$$\text{First stage: } P_{1hi} = \frac{a_h M_h}{\sum M_h}$$

$$\text{Second-stage: } P_{2hi} = \frac{b}{M_{hi}^*}$$

$$\text{Third-stage: } P_3 = \frac{1}{c}$$

Where:

a_h = Number of sample EAs allocated to the h-th stratum (State)

M_{hi} = Number of persons aged 18 years or older in the i-th selected EA in the h-th stratum

$\sum M_h$ = Total number of persons aged 18 years or older in the h-th stratum

M_{hi}^* = Number of households in the i-th selected EA in the h-th stratum

$b = 15$ (number of selected households per EA)

c = Number of adults in the household eligible for interview

where P_{1hi} is the probability of selecting the i-th EA in the h-th stratum (State), P_{2hi} is the probability of selecting a household in the i-th EA of the h-th stratum, and P_3 is the probability of selecting a respondent in the household. The overall probability of selection of an individual respondent in the i-th selected EA of the h-th stratum is given by:

$$F_{hi} = P_{1hi} * P_{2hi} * P_3$$

The final weighting factor for each respondent is the inverse of the overall probability of selection, calibrated to adjust for non-response and to align the weighted figures with the official national and state population estimates from the National Population Commission.

Quality control and questionnaire translation

Considering the large scope of the study and the nature of extended and sensitive field work, in addition to the systematic quality assurance carried out by NBS supervisors, an external quality assurance monitoring of survey operations was contracted out to an independent party. The external monitor was Practical Sampling International (PSI), a Lagos-based consultancy group,



which specializes in sample surveys.¹⁵ PSI were tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the quality of survey activities and survey outputs at all stages of the survey implementation, starting from the quality of survey instrument and its translations into local languages, to a review of all survey processes – including training of interviewers, logistical arrangements and organization of field operations, technical aspects of data capture, etc. – and up to the assessment of the data quality produced.

To assess the quality of data collection by interviewers, PSI monitors carried out independent back checks of interviews (a repetition of the main questions of the interview and comparison of responses) and interview accompaniment (observing and recording quality criteria of interview conduct). PSI quality control monitors covered 4 States in each of the 6 zones of Nigeria – a total of 24 States. 3 per cent of the total sample of survey interviews in these 24 states was quality assessed through random back-checks and a further 2 per cent of the sample was quality assessed through accompaniment, which resulted in more than 1,000 interviews in the PSI quality control sample. In the comprehensive final quality assurance report, the monitoring team concluded that generally there were no major issues that compromised the data gathering process and that consequently the data gathered were of high quality.

In addition to the quality assurance carried out by NBS and PSI, an external quality assurance monitoring of the entire survey operations was conducted by UNODC. NBS provided UNODC real-time access to the data collected in the field. To monitor the quality of the data collected, UNODC developed a set of objective indicators, which were updated and shared with NBS and PSI on a daily basis. Some of these indicators included:

- number of interviews completed by each interviewer per day
- start and end time of interviews
- duration of interviews
- sequence (with time gap in between) and overlap of interviews
- item non-response rate
- number of unfinished interviews
- GPS location of interviews

Potential data quality issues were flagged to NBS and PSI on a daily basis and addressed accordingly. Overall, there were no major issues that compromised the data gathering process, and the data collected were of high quality.

Training and field work

The first level of preparation – the Training of Trainers (TOT) – was held in Abuja in October 2023, lasted for four days and included Trainers, Monitors and Coordinators. Participants were staff of NBS, UNODC, PSI and members from the National Steering Committee. The second level training was conducted for the recruited fieldworkers (supervisors and interviewers)

¹⁵ For more information, see <https://psi-research.net/>.

across all 37 states in the country and lasted for four days each. Training focused on the efficient administration of the research instruments, the productive engagement with research subjects and the seamless deployment of the CAPI device.

For the field work, four teams were constituted in all 37 states. Each of the teams comprised of one supervisor and four interviewers. Each team was assigned 15 EAs for coverage and the entire fieldwork lasted for 17 days (from 27 October to 12 November 2023).¹⁶ In addition to supervisors, two field monitors per state and one coordinator per zone ensured the proper conduct of interviews and quality control. Field teams completed each EA before moving to the next EA to enable close contact and feedback from the supervisor.

Interviews and language versions

Before the main fieldwork, the English language questionnaire was translated into Pidgin English and the three main languages spoken in the geo-political zones of Nigeria – Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. The translations were checked to ensure that the questions were correctly interpreted and programmed into the CAPI devices for use in the fieldwork.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in the five main languages with additional language requirements covered by qualified interviewers in their native languages.

Data entry and data cleaning

As the data from the interviews were captured in the hand-held CAPI devices, it could be automatically uploaded to the central NBS Data Processing Centre in Abuja immediately after the interview, or during the debriefing of interviewers by the supervisor at the end of the working day.

In a first stage of data cleaning, the raw data were processed and cleaned of obvious errors by qualified NBS staff. In a second stage, the data were sent to UNODC in Vienna for further analysis and processing. Detailed cleaning of inconsistent data points and obvious outliers resulting from erroneous data entries was performed and a final data set for analysis prepared by NBS and UNODC, before data were analysed for tabulation and report writing.

¹⁶ The minimum qualification for NBS field interviewers is a National Diploma in a numeric field such as mathematics, economics, statistics, sociology, etc. Field personnel are usually recruited locally and are based in their state to ensure a good understanding of English as well as local languages. When conducting a particular survey, priority is also given to those who have previous experience in similar surveys.



Descriptive statistics

Figure 1: Sex distribution of respondents, Nigeria, 2023

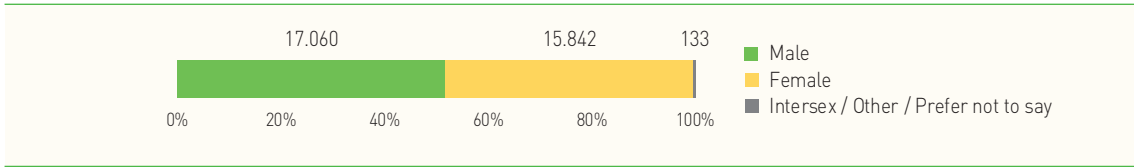


Figure 2: Age distribution of respondents, Nigeria, 2023

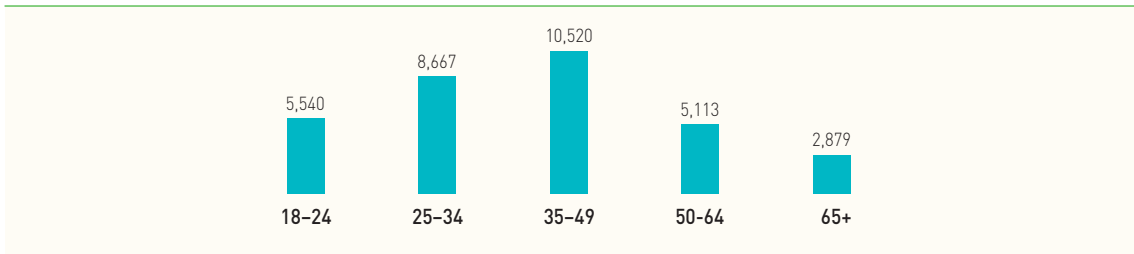


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by educational attainment, Nigeria, 2023

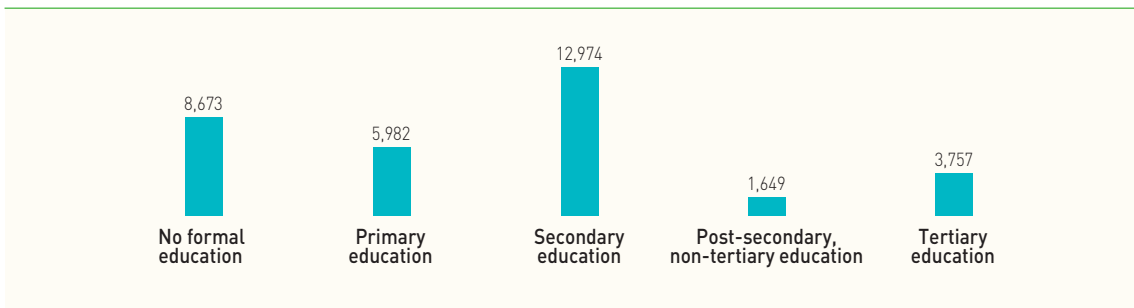
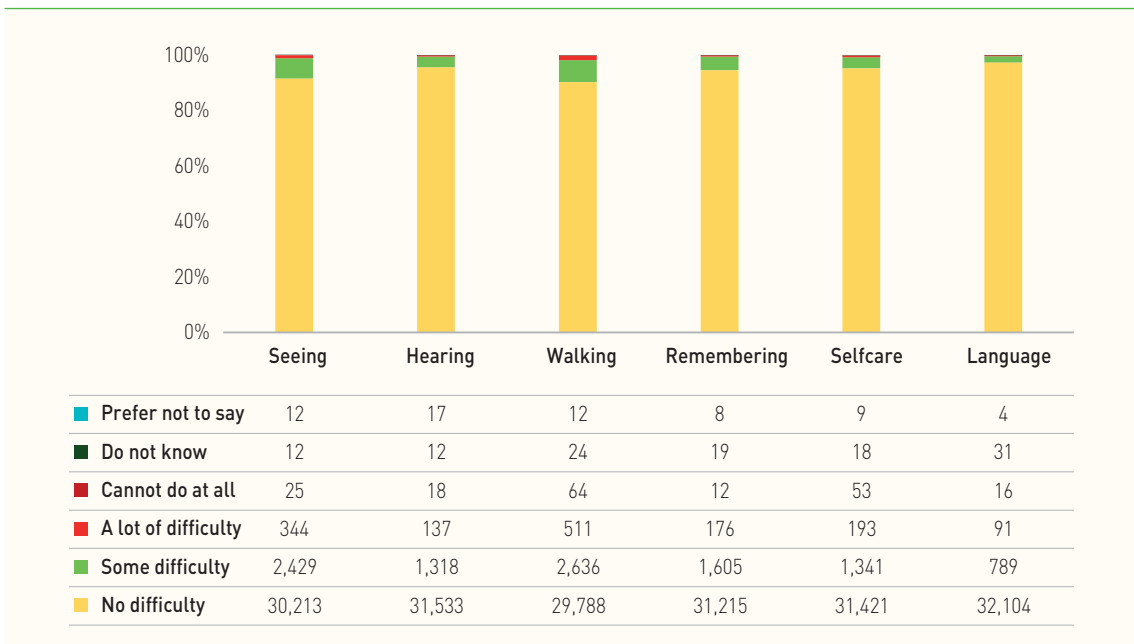


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by educational attainment, Nigeria, 2023



Part 2

Key indicators

Throughout the report, three key indicators are used to understand the extent to which bribery is affecting the lives of Nigerians:

- I. Contact rate
- II. Prevalence of bribery
- III. Frequency of bribery (or average number of bribes paid)

All formulas described below are multiplied by the weighting factor described above to align all the findings to actual population figures.

I. Contact rate

The **contact rate** is defined as the share of the adult population who had at least one contact with a public official in the previous 12 months. The overall contact rate in the population is calculated as follows:

$$I = \frac{C}{A}$$

Where C denotes the total number of adults who had at least one contact with any public official in Nigeria in the 12-month period prior to the survey; A is the total adult population of Nigeria.

Adult population disaggregated by sex is used in the calculation of the contact rate for men and women separately. The **contact rate by sex** is thus calculated as follows:

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

Where I_s denotes the contact rate among adults of sex s (male or female).¹⁷ C_s is the total number of adult men/women who had at least one contact with any public official in the 12-month period prior to the survey; A_s is the total adult male / female population of Nigeria.

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

$$I_i = \frac{C_i}{A}$$

¹⁷ Respondents who reported that their sex was “Intersex” (0.1 per cent of the sample), “Other” (0.1 per cent) or “Prefer not to say” (0.1 per cent), were excluded from the analysis of differences between men and women.

Where I_i denotes the contact rate with public official of type i . C_i is the total number of adults who had at least one contact with a public official i in the 12-month period prior to the survey; A is the total adult population.

Finally, the **contact rate by sex of public official** is calculated using the following formula:

$$I_{i,si} = \frac{C_{i,si}}{A}$$

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

II. Prevalence of bribery

The prevalence of bribery represents the share of adults paying a bribe when in contact with a public official. It is formally defined as the share of adults who had contact with a public official in the previous 12 months and paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked to pay a bribe and refused. The prevalence of bribery (with refusals) is indicator 16.5.1 under Sustainable Development Goal target 16.5: “Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms”.¹⁸

The **prevalence of bribery** (with refusals) is calculated as follows:

$$P = \frac{B}{C}$$

with C defined above and B defined as the total number of adults who paid or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey. It is important to stress that B also includes people who were asked to pay a bribe but refused. The **prevalence of bribery by sex of bribe-payer** is calculated as follows:

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

With C_s as defined above and B_s defined as the total number of adult men/women that paid or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Similar to the contact rate, the **prevalence rate by type of public official** who receives a bribe is calculated as follows:

$$P_i = \frac{B_i}{C_i}$$

Where P_i denotes the prevalence of bribery among adults in relation to public official of type i . C_i is the total number of adults who had at least one contact with a public official i in the 12 months

¹⁸ Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>.

prior to the survey; B_i is the total number of adults who paid or were asked to pay a bribe by a public official of type i in the 12 months prior to the survey.

All public officials included in question DT1 of the 2023 survey questionnaire¹⁹ are used in the computation of the contact rate and the prevalence rate. Results are weighted with sample weights to obtain representative estimates.

Prevalence of male and female public officials engaging in bribery

On the one hand, the concept of the prevalence of bribery presented above describes the share of men and women in Nigeria who pay a bribe when in contact with a public official. On the other hand, the share of male and female public officials engaging in bribery is formally defined as:

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

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

III. Frequency of bribery

The *frequency of bribery* (F) (also called “*average number of bribes paid*” in the report), is calculated as the average number of times that bribe-payers paid a bribe in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The frequency of bribery is obtained as:

$$F = \frac{1}{K} \sum_{k=1}^K x_k$$

and:

$$x_k = \sum_{j=1}^J x_{kj}$$

¹⁹ The questionnaires can be accessed at <https://dataunodc.un.org/content/microdata>.



Where:

x_k = the total number of bribes paid to any public official by the k -th bribe-payer in the 12 months prior to the survey.²⁰

$k = 1, \dots, K$ Nigerian adult who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official in the 12 months prior to the survey.

$j = 1, \dots, J$ Type of public official receiving the bribe.

20 In the 2023 survey questionnaire, respondents were asked how many times they had to give a bribe in the last 12 months to each type of public official, but the highest possible response option per type of public official was restricted to “10 times or more”, while in previous survey waves no such upper limit was imposed. For comparability across waves, the average number of bribes paid in this report has been standardized across survey waves, meaning that the “10 times or more” response was imposed on 2016 and 2019 responses before calculating the average.

