

Gender and Serious and Organised Crime

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27 March 2019

Questions

- *What evidence is there of gendered drivers of SOC? How are these drivers gendered?*
- *What are key trends in gendered differences in the roles women and men play in different forms of SOC; any gendered means of control, and use of forms of gender-based violence (GBV) as tools in SOC?*
- *What are the gendered differences in short- and long-term impacts of SOC?*

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1. Summary

The UK Government defines serious and organised crime (SOC) as: “individuals planning, coordinating and **committing serious offences**, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks. The main categories of serious offences covered by the term are: child sexual exploitation and abuse; illegal drugs; illegal firearms; fraud; money laundering and other economic crime; bribery and corruption; organised immigration crime; modern slavery and human trafficking; and cyber-crime” (Her Majesty’s Government, 2018).

Criminal activity is dominated by men as evidenced by significantly larger male prison populations however the **number of female offenders is substantial and growing** (Europol, 2011). In Latin America, the female prison population is growing faster than the number of men in jail (Bonello, 2017). **Women are found as suspects and active in all forms** of SOC. There seems to be no crime from which women are completely excluded (Hübschle, A. 2014). The visible presence of women involved in drug trafficking, extortion and money laundering, and human trafficking is most frequently recorded within the most recent data. These appear to be areas of ‘growth’ where women have found a niche for themselves, both as supporters within male dominated networks, and as bosses of their own networks based upon trust and relationships between women. In some cases, women are cast into these roles as they are less suspect to the authorities.

Anyone can steal or commit a violent act, but things are more complex in organised crime - particularly in cases of cross-border crime. A distinguishing feature is the greater importance of social relations in organised crime. It is impossible to get started without access to suppliers, clients, co-offenders, and profitable criminal opportunities. Trust is also important, as the financial stakes are high and the rules and mechanisms that make transactions easier in the legal world are absent. The new nature of relationships in an era of **globalisation** and the flows of ideas, information, people and products are **affecting the motivations and ambitions of women to participate** actively in both legal and illegal economies.

The transnational and changing opportunities, as well as the attractive image of crime (with its connotations of wealth, power and freedom) seduce women into entering the criminal world. The **changing character of organised crime provides women with new criminal markets and clients**. Although women are frequently victims of the worst forms of organised crime, they also take part in criminal activities at varied levels. Female emancipation in legal spheres of societies are reflected in criminal activities undertaken by women, as women can have more active roles than are achieved legitimately in society. No evidence was found to show that women and men are differently motivated to engage in SOC.

- Overall crime is driven by motivation: for financial gain, influence (sometime political influence), personal reputation and profile or a combination of these.
- Opportunity: the skills, networks and aptitudes that individuals or groups involved in crime have or can access.
- Contextual drivers arising from the environment: laws and their application; social organisation; states of *crimilegality* and levels of corruption.
- Some environments present opportunities in which serious organised crime may flourish – for example, modern slavery can easily persist in the informal economy where labour rights are not enforced.

- Historically, women have always played active roles in SOC, though their profile has been as supporters of more influential males.
- Since the 1990s there is an increase in data recording women's involvement as active players and targeted victims of some forms of SOC.
- The internet hides the identity of many, and there is little gendered data on money laundering, radicalisation and other forms of cyber-crime.
- Globally more men than women participate in organised crime; although some key areas such as human trafficking have involved women as key organisers and "madams".

The threat from SOC is international. Commodities such as drugs, firearms and counterfeit goods are sourced from right across the world, and Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) often have a presence in multiple jurisdictions. The global communications infrastructure enables criminals to operate across geographic boundaries, to target countries from a distance, and reach across continents into other countries. Although in most cases serious and organised criminals will not want to be associated with extremists for fear of coming under additional scrutiny, there is a risk of extremists seeking to exploit criminal contacts, for example, for financial and logistical support.

Much of the literature on crime analysed for this report traces the enduring historical view that crime was generally a man's world, but one in which significant women became involved most commonly through kinship and relationships (e.g. girlfriends, mothers, sisters in law). These networks used to underpin the criminal world of Mafia style gangs allowing activity to be extended into other areas and ultimately across continents. As opportunities for crime have diversified women have taken a lead role in some crimes such as human trafficking, leading to the idea of gendered markets (Zhang et al., 2007). Many criminal roles are still dominated by men – enforcers, drug traders, gang leaders and bosses of organised crime groups, and yet women are almost always also found in some of these positions. The bigger picture is that **the prevalence of men is much higher**, and those who may claim that women play a prominent role in organised crime probably exaggerate the role of women.

Much of the evidence found did not specifically address gender issues or was 'gender-blind' and assumes gender-neutrality or the implied male composition of organised crime groups. This in part is because it is difficult to conduct reliable empirical research on an entity concealed in the criminal underworld. (Arskova & Allum, 2014). Just one study across Southern Africa states clearly that gender remains the most influential determinant of criminality, even more so than a person's socio-economic, educational or employment status (Hubschle, 2014: 32).

2. Drivers of SOC

What evidence is there of gendered drivers of SOC?

In several areas of organised crime there is **little evidence of gender**: for example, the identity of perpetrators of cyber-crime is rarely known although some notable exceptions exist. For example, in the Falder case of 2017 a UK criminal blackmailed female victim online under an assumed female identity (Perry, 2018). In Southern Africa, existing data on organised crime is basic and assumes gender-neutrality, or the implied male composition of organised crime groups (Hubschle, 2014).

Research into organised crime is still a marginal area: methodological challenges are a clear obstacle; fieldwork is difficult and dangerous; and quantitative databanks are biased because of

underreporting (Arskova & Allum, 2014: 3). For example - gang crime in Cape Town has been fuelled by widespread availability of firearms, allowing small and new gangs to expand or enter the drug trade. Research studies find it difficult to interview female members in part because male members act as gatekeepers. Accessing those involved in illicit or antisocial activity is challenging. In general, the nature of gang culture prevents members from engaging easily with outsiders; it takes time to build trust, find relevant intermediaries, and identify individuals willing to be interviewed (Shaw & Skywalker, 2017).

Criminology has treated women's role in crime - particularly organised crime - with indifference (Arskova & Allum, 2014). Few scholars have tried to study the involvement of women in organised crime activities and focus has overwhelmingly been on the Italian Mafias and their traditional, mainly local, criminal roles and activities. Early work (Anderson & Longrigg 1988 cited in Arskova & Allum, 2014) on how women are drawn into criminal activities as girlfriends, wives and mothers portrays women as subordinate complicit victims. This **stereotype of women as adjuncts to male criminal activity** continued until the 1990s when a more detailed understanding of the complexities of women's knowledge and roles in criminal activity unfolds.

Van San (2011), for example, describes how women at the edge of poverty are attracted to men operating in the drug economy of Curacao and the Netherlands and in turn raise their sons to be 'dangerous men' so that they are attractive to young women. Mothers are active in perpetuating the ideology of honour (Van San, 2011: 286), reminding partners and sons to respond with violence when this is called for. It is documented that women are active in a range of Camorra¹ activities, from messenger to enforcer to decision maker, taking on leadership roles when their partners are sent to prison (Arskova & Allum (2014). Siegel (2014) notes that another task of women involved in criminal organisations is to mediate between rival criminal families or clans.

Since the late 1990s, police agencies across the world, including INTERPOL and Europol, have noted that women have gained more prominent roles in transnational organised crime networks, in particular human trafficking (Aronowitz et al., 2010 cited in Arskova & Allum, 2014). On the other hand, the **number of female offenders is substantial and growing** (Europol, 2011- cited in Arskova & Allum, 2014). Kriegler (2012) records that growing numbers of women are becoming involved in organised crime as active participants: in drug smuggling, in running Mexican gangs when male leaders are imprisoned or die, and in female chapters aligned to male gangs in Cape Town, yet many studies are not sufficiently gender sensitive.

In Latin America, the female prison population is growing faster than the number of men in jail (Bonello, 2017). If prison population is a proxy indicator for women's involvement in organised crime, then women's involvement is growing. The population of women prisoners in Latin America climbed 51.6% between 2000 and 2015, compared to 20% for men, according to figures from the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR). In Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica and Peru, more than 60% of the female prison population was there for drug-related offenses, and the number of women in jail on drug offenses has grown by more than 100% in the last two years (Bonello, 2017). In Guatemala, extortion is the most common crime for which women are imprisoned, and that statistic has been on the rise since 2009. In 2014, there were 382 women in prison for extortion. By 2017, the number had more than doubled, reaching 791 - roughly a third of the total of 2,612 women held behind bars. Most of these women report having been duped by

¹ Mafia type gang syndicate originating from Naples, Italy.

male partners into using bank accounts to deposit money from crime. In both examples **organised gangs have started to bring more women into their activities** as there is less of a tendency to consider women as criminal, so they are less visible to the police (Bonello, 2018).

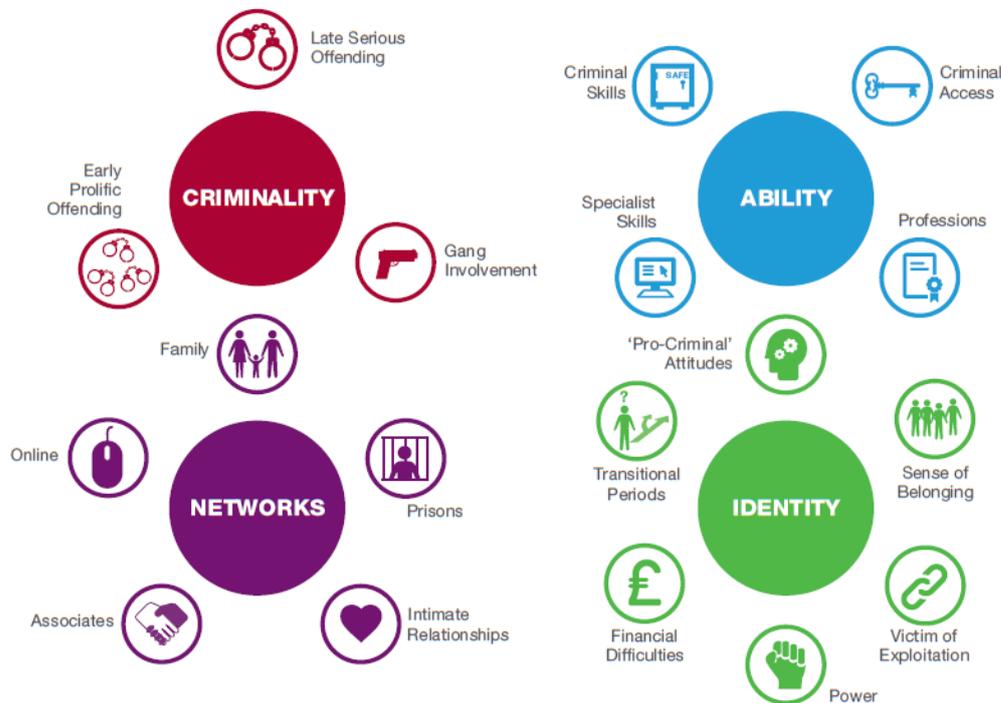
Siegel (2014) argues that women have always been active in organised crime, but that not enough research has been carried out into this phenomenon. Recent focus has revealed a growing body of evidence to suggest that women have been active as members and leaders of criminal organisations in various periods of history, with some women at the peak of criminal organisations. This evidence casts doubt on any idea of a 'sudden rise' of female power, but rather that female emancipation, globalisation and opportunities could provide new explanations for the rise of women to the top of the criminal world (Siegel, 2014). The new nature of relationships in an era of globalisation and the flows of ideas, information, people and products are **affecting the motivations and ambitions of women to participate** actively in both legal and illegal economies. The transnational and changing opportunities and the attractive image of crime (with its connotations of wealth, power and freedom) seduce women into entering the criminal world. The **changing character of organised crime provides women with new criminal markets and clients**. If there are discrepancies in terms of supply/demand, criminalisation, unstable economic conditions, political and ethnic conflicts and wars, both women and men will try to take advantage of the situation and profit from criminal activities (Siegel, 2014).

Other drivers of SOC

There is a well-developed understanding of the risks of individuals being drawn into serious and organised crime; as in the following figure

Figure 1: Individuals at risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime

Factors to assess the risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime



Source: HM Government– a Prevent Guide (2015):

Although gender in and of itself is not considered to be a risk factor for involvement in SOC, this framework is useful to consider how the drivers of entry into SOC might operate differently for different genders and age groups. For example, the networks that bring young males into gangs deliver a sense of belonging and identity. Those with low skills and insufficient opportunity for meaningful employment gain financial pay-outs from their role (as look-outs, messengers, drug runners, extortion agents etc.). Women are less numerous in their involvement in gangs or armed militias, and where they are it is commonly as partners of male gang/armed group members.

Anyone can steal or commit a violent act, but things are more complex in organised crime and particularly in cases of cross-border crime. A distinguishing feature is the greater importance of social relations in organised crime. It is impossible to get started without access to suppliers, clients, co-offenders, and profitable criminal opportunities. Trust is also important, as the financial stakes are high and the rules and mechanisms that make transactions easier in the legal world are absent: entering into contracts, paying via the official banking system and, in cases of disagreement, the availability of mediation or recourse to the law. These mechanisms work differently for men and women and for this reason, existing social ties are used, or new illegal business relationships must be built up. Not everyone has suitable ties providing access to profitable illegal opportunities; and building up such relationships takes time and energy (Kleemans, 2014:18). Some women are found in roles of leadership in SOC, although the specialist skills and professional networks that underpin women entering this niche are different from those of male peers.

Technology has created a **range of new opportunities** for criminals. It has increased the number of ways some traditional crimes can be carried out and provided criminals with much more sophisticated enablers in all threat areas. The sharing of indecent images of children, for example, is now almost entirely enabled by the internet. However, gender distinctions between victims, consumers and purveyors of images are unrecorded.

Corruption has been named as **both a root cause and means to facilitate** human trafficking, and has been identified in many qualitative and empirical studies as a significant contributor to the crime. Government agents receiving bribes or participating in the crime do not have an economic incentive to actively work against it (DiRienzo, 2018: 532). A gendered analysis was not found, however.

Refugee policy and the enforcement of legal restrictions on recruiting foreign workers combine to drive illegal migration affecting both men and women. Murdoch (2016) describes a combination of circumstances that have led to Ethiopia being regarded as a source country for illegal migrants. Ethiopia has a generous refugee policy towards neighbouring countries, particularly Eritrea. From here, Eritreans tend to look for asylum and permanent resettlement in Europe, largely as a result of human rights violations since Eritrea has forced conscription and poor socioeconomic conditions. Another potential factor contributing to illegal migration is Ethiopia's temporary ban on overseas labour recruitment of nationals. Implemented in October 2013 by the Ethiopian Government, this was designed to reduce the number of Ethiopians leaving the country legally or illegally. It has instead increased illegal labour migration through Sudan (US State Department's 2014 *Trafficking in Persons Report* P: 171). Drivers of (illegal) migration and immigration also include **political oppression**. A study by the Danish Refugee Council and the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat in 2012 noted that while many Ethiopians are classified as economic migrants, the migration is also brought on by political oppression (Murdoch, 2016).

Ellis & Shaw (2015: 510) demonstrate that in the African context habitual distinctions between organised crime and corruption seem to lose their incisiveness. Patterns of law-breaking and **organised crime** are **not confined to weak or failed-states** but are also found in some of the continents middle-income states. These authors trace the origins of this, from a global form of rent seeking perpetuated by foreign businessmen in search of contracts forming alliances with politicians and civil servants as newly independent countries emerged from colonial rule. Foreign businesses exploit African traditions of gift giving and honour, to create this new form of 'protection' where links between foreign firms and states are bound by relationships that appear almost legal, yet officials are open to blackmail if their corruption were to be exposed. Specific gender patterns are not mentioned though it is implicit that officials of either gender may become bound into SOC in this way.

Organised crime has **influence over governance** in West Africa. Even the terms 'illegal' or 'illicit' may present problems, as there may be no laws in place to regulate activity that outsiders consider criminal, or alternatively, the state (or actors within it) may have provided the requisite paperwork to make a specific activity legal for bureaucratic purposes. A good example is high-level oil smuggling in Nigeria, which may make use of genuine official documents procured from senior state officials who are party to a smuggling operation (Ellis & Shaw, 2015: 510).

Schultze-Kraft (2019: 21-22) develops this analysis further to describe the concept of states of **crimilegality**, where a hybrid political order exists between the bureaucracy of the state and the power arising from the criminal underworld. This is in contrast to the 'norm' where morality and

rationality of the law underpins the legitimacy of the state. This lens may be especially relevant in the context of developing and transition countries. Organised crime generates social power and with it, political influence, in cooperation and coordination with myriad otherwise 'legitimate' and 'legal' (armed) political, social and economic actors. This is referred to as crimilegality-crimilegitimacy where **illegality-criminality can legitimately provide the foundation of political order.**

This context for SOC is illustrated in country case studies of Colombia, where for decades organised violence has been used by all manner of state and non-state actors, and groups that are operating in pursuit of their varied interests (political, economic, judicial, criminal, ideological and so on), not in the interest of the common good (Schultze-Kraft, 2019: 73). Also in Nigeria where "the theft of oil has existed for a long time in the Niger delta, its small beginnings going back to the 1970s. This gradually changed from the mid-1980s onwards when "fuel smuggling and theft [...] transitioned from a low-level opportunistic crime into a large-scale organised endeavour. The participants became increasingly high ranking and, during the [military] presidency of Ibrahim Babangida from 1986 to 1993, the military brass came to control much of the crude oil sector. The officers' involvement, however, was for their personal gain and that of their friends and families, not for the protection of the state's resources" (Ralby, 2017:16 quoted in Schultze-Kraft, 2019: 82).

Violent extremism and terrorism

Much of the available literature in this area does not address gender and there is only a small body of literature that investigates the different roles that women play in violent extremism and terrorism (Fink et al., 2016). This study notes the importance of communications channels (namely media and social media) to recruit and build support for extremism and radicalisation. These have gender dynamics: for example, the Taliban uses messages aimed at mothers, convincing them to encourage their sons to join the insurgency and calling on mothers of insurgents to be proud of their son's sacrifices (Fink et al., 2016: 112). ISIS has used gendered messages to call for women to join their 'sisters' as both fighters and state builders (mothers, nurses and teachers) in the caliphate it has declared (Fink et al., 2016:148).

A global mapping of research on youth, violent extremism and social media found that evidence on gender, radicalisation and social media is very limited (Alava et al., 2017: 21). The authors of the mapping point out that it is therefore difficult to design effective communications strategies to counter violent extremism and radicalisation as the mechanisms by which young women are being radicalised are not fully understood. A GSDRC review on women and countering violent extremism conducted in 2017 (Idris & Abdelaziz, 2017: 3) found that few programmes focus specifically on women. Far more common are wider countering violent extremism programmes in which women are participants and beneficiaries or, to a lesser extent, wider programmes to counter violent extremism with women-centric components. There was a lack of evaluations of these programmes. The authors note that one study, which looked at the experiences of Morocco and Bangladesh between 2000 and 2014, pointed out that "the best deterrent against terrorism and radicalisation is educated, prosperous, safe, resilient and empowered communities. Therefore, promoting gender equality within these communities should be a key component of initiatives to counter violent extremism" (Couture, 2014 in Idris and Abdelaziz, 2017: 12).

Radicalisation and recruitment via social media

Existing research on gender, social media and radicalisation is very exploratory and descriptive and none of the studies/reports consulted offer a full overview of the gender issue in social media (Alava et al., 2017). Women's role in online radicalisation remains under-researched and underestimated. One possible explanation may come from the fact that many women hide their female identity online, because of a masculinist bias (Bermingham et al., 2009), making them impossible to identify. While youth are a clear target for radicalisation, the role of women on line in radicalising others is unclear. Despite the growing presence of radicalised women online, the number of articles devoted to gender and radicalisation on social media is very low (English publications 1% – French publications 2%) (Alava et al. 2017:21). This single study by Alava and colleagues shows that very little research has focused on the effective role of the use of social media in violent radicalisation. Although many articles deal with electronic strategies and the use of the Internet and online social media for recruitment, there are very few empirical studies that describe and examine the real effects of these strategies on youth, and they rarely examine gender aspects (Alava et al., 2017: 5).

Women also play diverse roles in relation to violent extremism: although the literature highlights a popular misconception that women are 'passive, victims' of violent extremism, they can be mobilisers and recruiters for terrorist groups, play support roles, and perpetrate terrorist acts (Idris & Abdelaziz, 2017: 2).

Women can serve as preventers of violent extremism in relation to the family – spotting signs of radicalisation and delegitimizing extremist narratives – as well in their communities (Idris & Abdelaziz, 2017). Gender equality and empowerment of women are in themselves bulwarks against violent extremism: 'Violent extremism is most effectively countered through increased education, better critical thinking and enhanced opportunities' for women (Couture, 2014: cited in Idris & Abdelaziz, 2017). Promotion of gender equality was included in the recommendations in the UN's Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action (UN, 2015).

Trade in human body parts

The trade in body parts from children and adults with albinism has been documented over several decades in Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi. Superstitions and myths about the potency of traditional medicines made from these drives the practice. The illegal practice is sometimes directed more towards male victims whose genitals are believed to confer sexual prowess and/or cure HIV. As successful prosecutions for murder have increased, the practice and trade has moved further south to Swaziland (IRIN: 2016). This study found no gendered data on victims, intermediaries and users of this traditional medicine.

3. Dynamics: key trends and gendered differences in roles of women and men in different forms of SOC

Transnational organised crime (TOC) involves the planning and execution of illicit business ventures by groups or networks of individuals working in more than one country (Arskova & Allum, 2014). A **host of actors** participate beyond the stereotypical images of the rogue individual, the Mafia or other ethnic-based organised crime syndicates to include corporations (i.e., transnational, multinational, and local domestic entities), militias and paramilitary groups.

The role of States in the facilitation of transnational crimes or their complicit or implicit involvement is rarely discussed in terms of TOC (Della Porta, 2012).

The Dutch Organised Crime Monitor collects solid empirical data on a wide cross-section of organised crime cases. Kleemans et al. (2014) used this and analysed a wide cross section of 150 cases to find out which roles women play in transnational organised crime. **There seems to be no criminal activities from which women are absent.** Many of the criminal activities concerned various forms of 'transit crime': international smuggling activities, such as drug trafficking, smuggling illegal immigrants, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, arms trafficking, trafficking in stolen vehicles, and other transnational illegal activities, such as money laundering, fraud, and tax evasion (e.g. cigarette smuggling, oil fraud, and Value Added Tax fraud) (Kleemans et al., 2014: 21). In a large majority of all cases analysed, women play a role and sometimes a prominent one.

This study draws three conclusions:

- Women are involved as suspects in 68% of all cases (102 out of 150 cases). This means that in only a minority of all cases (48) were women absent as suspects.
- The number of women involved is small (compared to men). In total, 247 female suspects are involved, which is only a very small percentage (11%) of all suspects.
- The 'gendered markets' hypothesis should be modified and elaborated for particular criminal activities and particular roles, as all markets seem to be in some way accessible for women (Kleemans et al. (2014: 24).

Prior to this research, Zhang et al. (2007) in a seminal paper, introduced the hypothesis of gendered markets to explain the unusually prominent role of (Chinese) women in human smuggling as a form of organised crime. According to these authors, this higher prevalence of women in human smuggling, compared to traditional drug cases, is due to the limited role of violence and territory as organising features of human smuggling; the importance of interpersonal networks in defining and facilitating smuggling operations; gender ideologies about work and care giving; and the impact of safety as an overriding concern for clients. Kleemans et al. (2014) show that women are involved in all these different kinds of criminal activities: they are not only involved in human smuggling, but they are also involved in traditional drugs trafficking. **Women are not absent from human trafficking and play roles other than victim roles**, but still the picture of men trafficking women prevails. Furthermore, women are involved in human trafficking for sexual exploitation (which is not only a crime of men against women) and fraud and money laundering (presumably also open to women as offenders or as accomplices). Nevertheless, the bigger picture is that **the prevalence of men is much higher**, and those who may claim that women play a prominent role in organised crime probably exaggerate the role of women.

Women in the criminal world occupy a wide variety of roles from go-betweens who connect drug traffickers and politicians, to money-launderers who run clothing or jewellery shops or bars to launder drug profits, right up to women who acquire leading positions after the imprisonment or death of their husbands. Women are used as drug mules in trafficking in order to exploit gender stereotypes but are now found in mid-level roles, enforcing contracts via others (Seigel, 2014), and at the highest level where they may achieve relative independence from male dominance in society (Campbell, 2008).

In research on human trafficking in the Netherlands, Siegel and De Blank (2010) found a similar division of the roles and tasks of female offenders into different categories, based on an increasing degree of independence, on the content of the tasks and on the extent of equality in the relationship. Women were classified as **supporters** when they executed the orders of the leader or other members of the human trafficking network; as **partners-in-crime** when they had a relationship with a man and cooperated with him, in principle on the basis of equality, in conducting tasks and activities; and as “**madams**” when they played a central role, were in charge of criminal organisations, and coordinated human trafficking activities (Siegel & De Blank, 2010).

Hübschle (2014) identifies a gap in the literature on **the role of African women in transnational organised crime**. Existing data is basic and assumes gender-neutrality or the implied male composition of organised crime groups. Some data shows that African ‘madams’ are active in many cities in the Global North. Siegel (2014) describes how Nigerian female criminals have become associated with women trafficking as so-called ‘madams’. These ‘madams’ are at the head of a criminal organisation, and are responsible for planning its activities. They issue orders to subordinates, coordinate the human trafficking activities, manage the prostitutes and control the finances. Networks can vary from small groups to sizable organisations operating at an international scale. The explanation as to why Nigerian women are overrepresented in this category of “independent criminal businesswomen” can perhaps also be found in the historical background of the phenomenon. In the 1980s, when Nigeria was hit by an economic crisis, these women came to Europe either as seasonal labourers to work in Italy’s tomato fields, or as prostitutes and they discovered that there was a great demand for African girls (Becucci, 2008). ‘madams’ from Ghana and Cameroon followed the Nigerian example. Working as prostitutes themselves and by recruiting other girls, they succeeded in convincing male sponsors to invest in the sex industry, which turned out to be a lucrative business.

With the creation of new markets, African women succeeded in obtaining a leading role in criminal organisations involved in large-scale human trafficking and they left their male competitors behind. Contrary to the Italian mafia women, who took the place of their imprisoned husbands and sons, these Nigerian and Ghanaian offenders took the initiative themselves, by planning, making contacts and performing various tasks in the human trafficking business. This phenomenon of female “women traffickers” can be explained by both socio-economic developments in the position of women in their native countries, and by the opportunities of making quick money in Europe (Siegel, 2014).

Drawing on findings from a twelve-country research project from Southern Africa, and research questions dealing with the nature, structure and extent of organised crime in the region (Hübschle, 2014:7) makes important empirical insights on the role of women in the transnational trafficking in persons, drugs and endangered wildlife. Varying and significant roles of women are identified from the research data. While there were only a few cases of ‘madams’ or leadership positions identified, many other varied functions were observed. Women play important functional roles in the recruitment, transfer and management of other women when it comes to trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Women also played important functional roles in illegal drug markets and rhino poaching syndicates.

Data from this research shows that labour trafficking is a far greater concern than sex trafficking. The movement of people across the region and beyond is a common deeply rooted cultural

tradition of African peoples. Increasingly socio-economic factors have led to (mostly younger) people from poorer countries in Africa seeking greater opportunities in countries with stronger economies. Both men and women act as recruiters. There is a **high incidence of male victims of trafficking into Southern Africa**. 801 cases of trafficking for labour exploitation were identified during the initial 5-country project. 784 of these cases involved the movement of Asian men to Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, where they worked in exploitative conditions in factories, small businesses and on agricultural farms (Hübschle 2014:42).

Modern slavery deals with forced labour, debt bondage and forced marriage. International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that in the past five years some 89 million people have experience some form of modern slavery lasting from a few days to the whole five years².

Women and girls account for 71% of modern slavery victims; one in every four victims is a child (ILO, 2017). While modern slavery takes place both within and across national borders Trafficking in human beings is most commonly associated with trafficking of women for sexual exploitation or of children for sexual exploitation, forced labour or begging and delinquency. Consideration of trafficking in males, particularly adult men, but also minors is far less common and yet there are significant signs that in many countries and regions males are also exploited and violated in ways that constitute human trafficking. In a study amongst those assisted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (Surtees 2008) found that as many as 28.3% of the caseload from Belarus were male; and from Ukraine 17.6%.

In contexts where the opportunities for legal migration are limited, illegal trafficking exploit this excess in demand. Push factors for migration include the need to support dependent children and unemployment. Pull factors are promises of work used to recruit most trafficked male victims (Surtees 2008:10). Recruitment processes mimic legal migration, even crossing land borders in organised transport through legal entry points (that suggests collusion or corruption of state agents). Both Ukrainian and Belarusian men faced exploitative, often traumatic working and living conditions, which, in many circumstances, compromised their physical and mental well-being (Surtees, 2008). On arrival in target countries (Montenegro, Poland, Russia) most men found themselves in conditions of forced labour most often within the construction industry; also, in agriculture, factory work and fishing. In addition to trafficking for forced labour a handful of males suffered other forms of exploitation – adoption (in the form of selling a trafficking victims' child), low level criminal activities (including forced begging and delinquency) and sexual exploitation. Reporting on support provided to victims of modern slavery in the UK (Salvation Army, 2018) illustrates an annual increase over each of the past seven years in number of victims seeking support and the proportion of these who are male (reaching 42.56% of the total in 2017/18).

In several cases of **child trafficking** in Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, older women were involved in both the recruitment and transfer process. An old woman travelling with a group of children across national borders was less likely to attract attention from law enforcement agents, so they are used as a decoy. Also, grandmothers are integral to many African rural communities as the young people often leave for work in cities and these **older women play a crucial role** in the overall recruitment and transfer process (Hübschle 2014:41).

² www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf

Data collected from Sub-Saharan Africa (Hübschle 2014:41) revealed varied roles of women in drug trafficking networks. These included cannabis growers - peasant farmers supplement their living in the outlying rural areas by growing cannabis with women in both supporting and managerial roles of cannabis plantations. In some closely-knit communities, drug operations are a family affair. A man usually heads the drug business; however, if incapacitated through death, prison or ill-health then the matriarch takes over. This involves operational and financial management of local distribution networks with links to transnational networks. Women are also involved as “cooks” of designer drugs predominantly in South Africa and Mozambique, where such drugs are produced with imported precursor chemicals. Either these women have a university qualification in chemistry or a pharmacology-related field or, they assist and support other cooks.

No female hunters or rangers were identified in rhino poaching syndicates. Female wildlife veterinarians, on the other hand, were complicit in several incidents of chemical poaching (Hübschle 2014:49).

Women as victims need specific responses to drive change

The sector still tends to plan generic anti-slavery programmes or human trafficking awareness initiatives. Communications initiatives frequently educate those targeted by modern slavery (many of whom are women); families, community members, local officials and border officials but are unable to provide strong evidence of impact from broad programming. One review of 19 projects focused on lessons coming from Vietnam, was unable to identify generic ‘solutions’ or evidence of what works and what does not work in terms of communications initiatives that aim to affect human trafficking and modern slavery patterns. In part this was because:

- The problems are diverse. For example, one problem is forced marriages of young women to people in China. Another problem is young men taking complicated trips across Europe to work in the UK cannabis industry. Still another problem is illegal labour conditions in Vietnamese factories.
- The priority populations are diverse. For example, some priority populations have been relatively affluent consumers. Other priority populations are poorly-educated villagers.

The research also heard strong echoes from other places in which the organisation works, such as Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, East Africa, Gambia and Europe and concludes that priorities, methods and funding need to be built up from a specific problem, among specific people, identifying specific intended targets and messages. (SeeFar 2018)

Similar specificity of responses is proposed (Shaw and Skywalker 2017) with reference to women in gangs since the initial step to leave the gang is fraught with danger for individual women. They argue for providing pathways to exit and recommend a hierarchy of responses at three levels:

- Short term immediate and specific actions that provide channels, opportunities and points of contact for women seeking to exit gangs;
- Medium-term interventions to prevent recruitment into gangs in the first place; and,
- Longer-term programmes that concentrate on changing structural conditions that push girls and young women into gangsterism.

Corruption and Governance

UNODC (2014) reports that human trafficking affects every country in every region of the world and is the third most profitable criminal activity. Victims of human trafficking tend to be from vulnerable populations such as those living in high poverty, children, and young women, many of whom are single mothers. These individuals are typically in search of low-skilled work and opportunities to increase their economic status. Although men and boys are also trafficked the majority of human trafficking victims are female; as a result, human trafficking is considered a form of gender-based violence (as for example by Cho, 2015).

Women have potential to redress the impact upon other women of this gender-based violence although evidence is mixed as to their agency. Chattopadhyay & Duflo (2004) and Bartilow (2010) (cited in DiRienzo, 2018) have shown that gender representation in government affects policy-making and compliance with the *UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*. The general conclusion of these studies is that when females hold greater representation as legislators and/or political representatives, there is more investment and policy creation that benefits women's interests. Cho & Vadlamannati (2010) offer empirical evidence that the share of female legislators has a significant positive effect on the protection sub-index, but no significant effect on the other two indices of prevention and prosecution (the 3P index).

DiRienzo (2018) argues that gender, specifically the share of women in government, does significantly affect country compliance with the Protocol; however, when empirical studies include measures of corruption and share of women in government in regression analyses, shows that corruption fully mediates the effect of women in government (DiRienzo 2018). Interventions which focus on addressing the drivers of organised crime therefore need also to consider the role of women as a positive force for change. Where judicial and political systems are weak, training programmes for prosecutors, judges and law enforcement officers act to strengthen the legal and criminal justice systems, (as for example trialled in collaborative and targeted work between the UK, Ethiopia and Eritrea (Murdoch, 2016) but wider efforts to balance gender in local representation, government and the judiciary improve the agency of women and their ability to act against organised crime.

4. Gendered differences in the short and long-term impacts of SOC

Little information on gendered differences in the impact from serious and organised crime was found. That is, the literature commonly describes impacts that are considered at the different levels of individual, community and nations without discussion of how these impacts are differently disaggregated across age and sex groupings.

Individual level

Individual short-term benefits from participation in organised crime may (subjectively) be gained. Agents of crime develop a profile and identity; the criminal activity provides alternative career options; material wealth and access to power and influence (for example in form of arms, drugs, sexual opportunities may result). Young males can assert and demonstrate their masculinity through involvement in groups and criminal gangs. Trimino from Saferworld (2018) argues that manhood is something to be achieved and is not automatically ascribed to all adult men.

Masculinities are a social construct; roles and norms associated with or seen as valuable in men and boys in a culture whose traits include being tough, confident and strong while femininity is often associated with a lack of power. Thus, young males are drawn into violence, conflict and military service or other use of weapons to describe and demonstrate their masculinity. In societies where men are prevented from fulfilling masculine roles (such as providers and supporters of family) they may be driven to migrate, or to join armed groups as a substitute strategy. Violence may become a way of resisting their 'thwarted masculinity' and women and girls are the main group affected by male violence by a significant number.

While gangs also appear as a way out of poverty, with the conspicuous consumption and riches of gangster glamour standing out as a preferential pathway to manhood against the backdrop of exclusion in poor neighbourhoods across Latin American and Caribbean, Baird (2016) found:

- There is always a range of competing pathways to male adulthood and many youths interviewed, gang members and non-gang members alike, also respected men who earned money legally. The gang clearly stands out as an option, or even the 'best option' for many boys, but it will always be a minority employer amidst a multitude of pathways to manhood in these communities.
- The non-gang youths interviewed gave several explanations for not joining gangs, which included; positive influences at home, in school, at church or in other communal spaces such as youth organisations. These acted as buffers to gang entry by fostering a moral rejection of the gang and helping them to socialise away from gang circles.

The impacts on mental health caused by crime is widely reported from media coverage of crime, the impact on trafficked victims and in those dispensing or receiving violence because of criminal activity may be substantially longer-term. Research has found that the impact on mental health of victims of drug-related crime in Mexico is substantial and long-lasting, especially in those who have been heavily exposed to violence (Feinstein, 2012; Flores, Reyes, & Reidl, 2014; Leiner et al., 2012; Lusk & McCallister, 2013) cited in Martinez & Atuesta (2018).

Community level

The impact from some forms of organised crime on communities is recorded with little mention of gendered impacts as in the following examples:

- Stigma and isolation within their host communities has been recorded by former child soldiers, particularly for young women who have been forced to live as wives of their abductors and return with children born from such unions but also by young boys who were captured and forced to join militia yet are regarded as killers after demobilisation and reintegration into their community (Garsd, J. 2017)
- The human cost and suffering from gangs and violence in South Africa has been enormous, with some parts of Cape Town having homicide rates of over 100 deaths per 100,000 people with innocent bystanders, including children, often caught in the crossfire (Shaw and Kriegler 2016).
- Some research on crime shows that the mental health of non-victims is influenced by vicarious exposure to violence (witnessing and hearing about it), fear, and the victimization of individuals' close acquaintances. In Mexico for example the general population is a direct victim of the psychological violence imposed by those involved in drug related crime including the use of gruesome killing methods or when narcomessages are found next to the executed bodies - a method used by criminal

groups to promote their violent acts. Mental health is also affected when police forces fight criminal groups. (Brück & Müller (2010).

National & Transnational

Organised crime promotes “non-development” at national level and between nations across four distinct dimensions:

- Economic: Huge proceeds from illicit and criminal activities are siphoned away from the legitimate economy, and lawful markets are distorted.
- Political and governance: Organised crime alters the political economy of developing countries, as illegal-criminal interests that span the public–private divide and involve non-state and state actors transform economic, political and social institutions.
- Social: The social cohesion of communities and societies is fractured as criminal subcultures emerge and replace traditional values and norms.
- (Human) security: The security of both citizens and states is endangered by organised crime (Schultze-Kraft, 2016).

Organised crime has profound economic consequences, in addition to obvious social and psychological costs. In the short term, violence and predatory activities destroy part of the physical and human capital stock; in the long run, the presence of criminal organisations increases the riskiness and uncertainty of the business environment, which ultimately lowers the growth potential of the economy. Such concerns are even more pressing in the wake of globalisation, as transnational mobility allows criminal organisations to expand their businesses on a larger scale. The United Nations (2011) estimate the profits of transnational organised crime at USD1.6 trillion (1.5% of global GDP), accounting for 70% of all criminal proceeds. This massive flow of dirty money allows criminal organisations to extend their reach out of the underworld and into the public and political sphere. Pinotto shows that organised crime goes hand-in hand with greater corruption (Pinotti 2015:8). Further research is needed into the gendered nature of these influences currently lacking from the literature.

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Acknowledgement

We thank the following experts who voluntarily provided suggestions for relevant literature or other advice to the author to support the preparation of this report. The content of the report does not necessarily reflect the opinions of any of the experts consulted.

- Markus Schultze-Kraft, Universidad Icesi, Colombia.

Key toolkits

- Guidance note for UNODC staff (2013):
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Suggested citation

Enfield, S. (2019). *Gender and Serious and Organised Crime*. K4D Helpdesk Report 561. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

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