

U4 Helpdesk Answer

U4 Helpdesk Answer 2020:29

The impact of corruption on the poor: the case of Guatemala

In the big picture, corruption undermines economic development and perpetuates inequality. In the immediate reality of the poor, the relationship between corruption and poverty is more complex. There is no clear empirical evidence of a unidirectional causal relationship between corruption and poverty. Rather, it is often a two-way relationship, where corruption results in the impoverishment of its victims as well as being a way for discriminated populations to meet basic needs. Nevertheless, the effects of corruption in slowing economic growth and diminishing governance have an indirect negative impact on the poor. Poverty, as a multidimensional phenomenon, is affected by corruption at different levels: the possession and access to resources; the available opportunities and capacity to choose; the possibility to articulate concerns; being heard and participating in decision making; and the insurance of human safety.

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Query

Please provide an overview of corruption as an obstacle for poor people to improve their living situation and to fully exercise their human rights. Specifically, how does corruption affect poor people in the four dimensions of Sida's multi-dimensional poverty definition. We have a special interest in Guatemala.

Contents

1. The nexus between corruption and poverty
2. The impact of corruption on the poor
3. References

The nexus between corruption and poverty

The financial costs of corruption undermines economic development and perpetuates inequality, being the poor who generally suffer the most the consequences of corruption. The literature presents two models to explain the relationship between corruption and poverty: an economic model and a governance model (Carballo 2010; Chetwynd et al. 2003). The economic model states that corruption has an indirect impact on poverty by affecting economic growth. In general, there is a tendency to think that high corruption will imply lower economic growth. It is also often assumed that corruption aggravates income inequality (Chetwynd et al. 2003).

According to some economic theories (Chetwynd et al. 2003; Mauro 1995; Gyimah-Brempong 2001; Rothstein & Holmberg 2011), corruption hinders economic growth because it discourages foreign and domestic investment (Zurawicki & Habib 2010); reduces tax revenues and increases the underground economy (Nawaz 2010). It also lowers the quality of public infrastructure and basic

services (Tanzi & Davoodi 1997); incentivise rent-seeking behaviour (Zúñiga 2017b); and can hurt entrepreneurship. Contrary theories, however, argue that in some contexts corruption may be economically justified because it can potentially alleviate the obstacles presented by inefficient bureaucracies (Leff 1964; Huntington 1968). The case of many East and Southeast Asia countries who have achieved rapid economic growth despite widespread corruption illustrates this paradox. Studies on those countries find that the relationship between corruption and growth differs by the type of political institutions, and the positive effect of corruption on growth is more likely in autocracies than in democracies (Saha and Sen 2019, Khan and Jomo 2000).

Despite a consensus in the literature on the long-term negative impact of corruption on economic growth and equality (Chêne 2014), high economic growth does not necessarily mean less inequality and a reduction of poverty. Economic growth and wealth distribution are key aspects that determine the relationship between corruption and inequality. The literature shows a bidirectional causal relationship of corruption-inequality-corruption (Zúñiga 2017). On the one hand, corruption can increase inequality by affecting income distribution, the use of aid flows and public expenditure decision making. On the other hand, inequality might help to promote corrupt behaviour through exploiting the vulnerability of

U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk

The impact of corruption on the poor: the case of Guatemala.

the poor to engage in clientelistic relationships and pay bribes to have their needs met.

The governance model states that corruption reduces governance capacity by weakening political institutions and citizen participation, which lowers quality government services and infrastructure, and increases poverty conditions (Chetwynd et al. 2003). Reduced public services, such as basic education and healthcare, are demonstrated to disproportionately affect the poor. Moreover, impaired governance not only restricts economic growth, but it may also be unable to control corruption. Finally, corruption in public service generates social distrust and undermines democracy by reducing citizen's willingness to participate in society, which in turn might affect the economic productivity of those most vulnerable if they lose the incentive to engage in productive activities (Chetwynd et al. 2003).

Poverty and corruption in Guatemala

Guatemala has been one of the strongest economic performers in recent years in Latin America, growing its economy an average of 3% since 2012. Guatemala's human development index (HDI) has increased 36% between 1990 and 2017, positioning the country in the medium human development category (UNDP 2018). That means an increase of life expectancy of 11.4 years, mean years of schooling increased by 3.4 years and expected years of schooling increased by 4.3 years (UNDP 2018). The standard of living measured by the gross national income (GNI) per capita increased by 45% between 1990 and 2017 (UNDP 2018).

Despite this growth, Guatemala has one of the highest inequality rates in Latin America, with high levels of poverty, malnutrition and maternal-child mortality rates, especially in rural and indigenous areas. The average loss due to inequality for medium HDI countries in Latin America and the

Caribbean is 21.8%; the human inequality coefficient for Guatemala is 27.7%. Although the country reduced its poverty rate from 56% to 51% from 2000 to 2006, in 2014 the poverty rate increased to 59.3% (World Bank 2019b).

According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), the perception of the level of corruption in Guatemala has progressively decreased from a rate of 33 (with 0 being highly corrupt and 100 very clean) to 27 in 2018. The CPI's experts' negative perception is confirmed by the citizens' perception on the issue: 46% of the respondents to Transparency International's 2019 Global Corruption Barometer thought that the level of corruption in Guatemala had increased in recent years. Two-thirds of respondents also thought that the current government was handling corruption badly. An especially unpopular decision was when the Guatemalan president, Jimmy Morales, revoked the mandate of the International Commission against Impunity of the United Nations (CICIG) in September 2018, despite the commission's success with national authorities in prosecuting high-level corruption cases since 2007.

Corruption is a key problem in Guatemala, and affects most public institutions including the police, the army, the prosecutor's office, the judiciary, local governments, and the Parliament (BTI 2020). This is confirmed by the low score got by Guatemala -0.34 in a scale where 0 represents weaker adherence to the rule of law and 1 stronger adherence to the rule of law- in the absence of corruption indicator of the 2020 Rule of Law Index, which examines bribery, improper influence by public or private interests, and misappropriation of public funds by government officers in the executive, the judiciary, the military, the police and the legislature. The 2020 Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index (BTI) score for prosecution of office abuse in Guatemala is three, which

U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk

indicates that officeholders who engage in corruption do not receive legal consequences or are not adequately prosecuted. Public funds are often used for political purposes, such as illegally finance electoral campaigns, through mechanisms like budgetary allocations for NGOs that do not exist (BTI 2020).

The impact of corruption on the poor

Defining poverty

Poverty is often defined in absolute and relative terms (UNESCO, no year). Absolute poverty refers to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs, like food, clothing and shelter. This definition does not take into account the individual's social and cultural needs. Relative poverty, in contrast, defines poverty in relation to the economic standards in each society. According to this approach, someone is poor if they live below the prevailing standards of living in a given society.

Poverty can also be viewed as a multifaceted phenomenon. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) presents a poverty model composed of four dimensions (Sida 2017):

- **Resources:** this refers to the lack of possessions or access to resources that can be used to sustain decent living standards, meet basic needs and improve one's life. Resources can be material (for example, having a decent income or access to land, natural resources or clean air and water) and non-material (e.g. being educated or having professional skills).
- **Opportunities and choice:** this dimension concerns one's possibility to develop and/or use resources to move out of poverty. A lack of

opportunities and choice can be a consequence of a lack of the other three dimensions as well as a consequence of a disabling context that, for instance, does not guarantee access to education, health, energy, markets or information.

- **Power and voice:** this dimension refers to people's ability to articulate their concerns, demands and rights in an informed way, and to take part in decision-making processes affecting them. Any form of social or cultural discrimination would directly affect the fulfilment of this dimension.
- **Human security:** this dimension recognises that violence and insecurity are constraints to people's possibilities to exercise their human rights and to find paths out of poverty. The level of security can differ depending on gender, ethnicity, identity, age or geographical area.

The remainder of this sub-section reviews the potential impacts of corruption on each of these four dimensions.

The impact of corruption on resources

A key condition to get out of poverty is to have the basic resources to achieve a decent living standard. Among those basic resources are safe water and sanitation and land. Despite their importance, 844 million people in the world do not have access to basic drinking water and almost 2.3 billion do not have access to basic sanitation (WHO & UNICEF 2017). Every year, millions of people die because of diseases transmitted by untreated water. Aware of what is at stake if these needs are not met, the international community has made universal availability and sustainable management water and sanitation part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Corruption in water management is a significant obstacle to achieve that goal. It endangers health outcomes, food security and people's livelihoods (Albisu & Chêne 2017). Corruption in the water and sanitation sector has disproportionate adverse effects on the poor since it contributes to the pollution of drinking water, creates inadequate water infrastructure, and discriminates in irrigation patterns and water flows in favour of the most privileged (Jenkins 2017). This has been acknowledged by the Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, who states "corruption tends to disproportionately affect poor and disadvantaged individuals and groups as they lack the necessary power to oppose the vested interests of elites, and do not have the necessary resources to pay bribes" (UN General Assembly 2015).

Corruption in the water sector has a significant financial impact on poverty. The World Bank estimates that between 20% and 40% of public investment meant for the water sector is lost to corruption (Odiwuor 2013). In Africa, for example, it is estimated that two-thirds of the operating costs for 21 water companies were attributable to corruption (Estache & Kouassai 2002). At the household level, corruption is thought to increase the price of water by around 30% (Transparency International 2008). The contamination of water or the lack of easy access to it due to corrupt distortion of water policy priorities affect poor people by forcing them to rely on informal water suppliers where the cost of water can be higher. Slum dwellers in Lima, Peru, for instance, paid five times more for water than those living in high-income areas (Defensoría del Pueblo 2005).

Access to water and sanitation has been hindered in Guatemala due to the inference of corrupt practices in water management. The World Bank (2018) notes that access to water and sanitation remains an issue in Guatemala, not because of a

lack of investment but due to "limited regulation, bad financial supervision, low accountability, poor communication between governments and a lack of capacity to execute projects".

Corruption in land administration can increase levels of poverty and hunger because it reduces access to land and damages the livelihoods of small-scale producers, agricultural workers and landless rural and urban poor (Zúñiga 2018). In rural areas, corruption in land title and tenure prevents small-scale producers from improving their food security and increasing their productivity. The impact of corruption is especially significant in developing countries due to the large number of small-scale landholders, many of whom are extremely poor. In sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, for instance, 80% of the farmland is managed by smallholders (FAO 2012). In addition, the economic viability of small-scale farmers is threatened by unsustainable international competition, decline of agricultural prices and corruption in the allocation of government-subsidised credit, in government contracts and licences for agricultural supplies (Fink 2002), which are often subjected to bribes unaffordable to poor farmers. In the case of indigenous populations, land corruption not only disrupts their economic means of living but also their social and cultural sustainability attached to their ancestral land.

In Guatemala, the indigenous population is especially affected. They constitute 52% of the poor in the country (World Bank 2019a) and 66% of the country's extreme poor (Hernandez et al. 2017), as their income is 2.8 times less than the non-indigenous minority (Lynn 2017). Indigenous communities have lower rates of schooling (Cruz-Saco 2018) as well as notably higher rates of infant mortality and malnutrition (Cimadamore et al. 2006). Also, according to the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies (ICEFI), indigenous

communities receive less budgetary allocation than non-indigenous communities (ICEFI 2015)

There have been longstanding demands to establish consultative processes with indigenous communities, whose tenure on collective land is sometimes unclear or purposely manipulated by government authorities, with the intent to profit from the sale of mining licences or land sales (Sieder 2016; Daitch & Field 2016). While Guatemala has embraced the Extractive Initiative Transparency Initiative (EITI), which calls for the establishment of consultative processes in land acquisition and mining concessions, consultation of indigenous communities as a requisite for the sale of land or mining licenses is not currently regulated, nor are there tendencies in judicial rulings that indicate a change in attitude toward indigenous land rights or rights to consultation (CIDH 2018). Furthermore, at least two multi-national mining companies are currently defendants in lawsuits over a lack of consultation and forced eviction of rural communities (Shipton 2017).

In the cities, the use of urban land for political patronage keep most slum dwellers with no security of tenure and in highly precarious conditions under the threat of eviction (Zúñiga 2018). In 2001, it was estimated that 924 million people were living without secure tenure in unauthorised settlements in urban areas of developing countries (UN Habitat 2004). Excluding a significant proportion of the urban population from legal shelter reduces the prospects for economic development. According to UN Habitat, the fear of eviction may prevent people from operating to their maximum potential or investing in their neighbourhoods, which in turn reduces the revenue from taxes and service charges (UN Habitat 2004). Moreover, the uncertainty associated with insecure tenure may hinder external investments and the improvement of services such as water and sanitation.

These effects of corruption in the land sector on the poor are increased in contexts where implementation of the rule of law is poor and weak institutional systems prevail. For example, in Guatemala, a lack of transparency in transactions and/or registration as well as limited knowledge and competence in the management of the land-related infrastructure creates obstacles to landowners and paves the way for abuses, fraud and illegalities regarding property and land management (BTI 2016; Shipton 2017; Kasimbazi 2017). Also, poor rule of law negatively affects property rights in the country (BTI 2016; CIDH 2018).

Bribery is another way in which land corruption affects poverty. Studies show that the poor are more vulnerable to bribery and, therefore, more likely to pay bribes (Peiffer & Rose 2016; Justesen & Bjørnskov 2014). This vulnerability to bribery can increase poverty in two ways. One, the payment of bribes can account for a considerable proportion of a poor household's income: in Sierra Leone the poor pay 13% of their income on bribes, compared to 3.8% paid by high-income households (World Bank 2017). Two, the corrupt character of land services might discourage poor people from regulating their own land, putting them in a position that might compromise their future land entitlement and livelihood.

There are also non-material resources such as education levels, health status and social capital. The indicators on those are in part the result of how corruption affect the access to these non-material resources as explained below. According to 2019 Human Development Index, in Guatemala the mean years of schooling is 6.5 whereas the expected years of schooling is 10.6. The literacy rate (ages 15 and older) is 81.3 percent and the percentage of the population (ages 25 and older) with at least some secondary education is 38.4. Regarding the health status, in Guatemala in 2017, undernourishment affected to 15 per cent of the

U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk

population, and the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population was 43.6 per cent (FAO 2018).

The impact of corruption on opportunities and choice

Lack of opportunities, choice and respect reduces the ability of an individual to live a life of abundance and fulfilment and to get out of poverty. Following the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen (1985), poverty is a deprivation of the capability to live a good life. Capability is what we are enabled to be and do. The outcomes of fulfilling those capabilities are objective (having food and shelter, for instance) and subjective (based on the individual's conception of happiness, values and goals). Both objective and subjective outcomes can be compromised by corruption. In the first case by the lack of access to public services and in the second case by the lack of choice, which is connected with social discrimination and exclusion.

Public service delivery refers to services provided by governments to their citizens, such as healthcare, education, identification documents and licences, among others. Many of these services are tied to the realisation of fundamental human rights, including, according to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, “the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services”. However, their access and quality is often compromised and significantly affected by corruption.

Extended corruption in public service delivery can have two distinct effects on poverty: i) to exacerbate poverty conditions, and ii) to increase the exclusion of the poor population. In the first case, rampant corruption in service delivery can

leave the government unable to safeguard its citizens from famine and a lack of basic medical supplies (Albisu & Chêne 2017). In the second case, forms of corruption in service delivery, such as clientelism, patronage and bribery, undermine the right to equal access to public services and exacerbates social inequalities, dividing the society between those who can afford private services and those who cannot (Albisu & Chêne 2017). Studies show that corruption in education increases inequality and sabotages development by impeding the formation of future leaders and labour force (Kirya 2019).

In developing countries, bribery in service delivery is the form of corruption most directly experienced by citizens, especially poor people who are more reliant on state assistance than wealthy people. As already mentioned, studies show that low-income households are more likely to pay bribes to access basic services than wealthier households due to their lack of options (Justesen & Bjørnskov 2014). Thus, poor people are the most affected by the presence of corruption in public service delivery. The need to pay bribes for education, for example, puts poor students at a disadvantage and reduces equal access to education (Kirya 2019). According to 2019 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), 25 per cent of the respondents and public service users in Guatemala paid a bribe in the previous 12 months. Following 2019 GCB data, bribery rates in public services in Guatemala are 21 per cent in public schools, 14 per cent in public clinics and health centres and IDs, 17 per cent in utilities, and 37 per cent in the police.

Corruption in public services not only affects the access to those services but also their quality. For example, suppliers can use low quality materials or products to increase their profit at the expense of the beneficiaries (Albisu & Chêne 2017). This practice is damaging in the health sector due to the negative consequences that the use of poor quality

pharmaceutical products or medical equipment can have in the health of the patients. Safety of the population and poorly constructed buildings and infrastructure projects are especially costly for the public budget. In Guatemala, in 2015 corruption affected the acquisition of medicines by the Social Security Guatemalan Institute, governmental institution in charge of providing health services (UNOPS, no year). It was also found that some providers benefited unfairly of public acquisitions, jeopardizing the delivery of medicines to the Guatemalan population (UNOPS, no year).

The way in which poverty affects the capacity to choose is linked to the level of inclusion or exclusion in a society. In some societies, there is a social stigma regarding poverty that manifests in excluding those who are poor. According to some authors, poverty is socially constructed, and the cultural dimension of poverty determines the relationship between social classes, the public discourse on poverty as well as the policies and institutions created to address it (Bayón 2013). In fact, the position of the poor people in relation to other social classes – the level of inequality in a society – is what creates feelings of insecurity and incompetence between the most disadvantaged (Wilkinson & Pickett 2009), worsening their conditions of poverty. In this sense, corruption affecting the effective implementation of policies to increase equality are considerably damaging to overcome the stigma of being poor.

In addition, social networks can play an important role in the opportunities available to a person. Social networks and the supporting dynamics within create a distinction between those that belong to the network and stronger because of it, and those excluded from it and weaker. Moreover, in highly corrupt contexts, social norms governing those networks might help to explain corrupt behaviour that reinforces the network while

exacerbating inequalities (Jackson and Köbis 2018).

Impact of corruption on power and voice

The Voices of the Poor report (Narayan et al. 2000) suggests that the condition of being poor goes together with feelings of powerlessness, helplessness and the belief of having little influence over political representatives. Across national borders, those feelings come from poor people's experience with corrupt, uncaring and inefficient public officials. Nevertheless, the lack of voice is not only experienced in their interactions with government, but also in their interactions with the market, the private sector, landlords, bankers and employers (Narayan et al. 2000).

The ability to articulate demands and to take part in decision making requires an empowering space in a democratic context. Findings from the 2018 CPI show that the continued failure of most countries to significantly control corruption is contributing to a crisis of democracy around the world. The relationship between corruption and the weakening of civil liberties, in particular the ability of citizens to speak out in defence of their interests and the wider public good, was also suggested in the 2017 CPI. Civic rights violations affect the entire population but especially the poor due to their often lack of awareness about their entitlements and rights, thus reducing their chances to counter the problem. In 2020 Freedom House defines Guatemala as a partly free country and gives it a punctuation of 31 over 60 in civil liberties. According to Freedom House's assessment, many Guatemalans are cautious when talking about social and political issues due to the high level of insecurity in the country. Increased intimidation and harassment of political opponents

has triggered self-censorship behaviour among citizens.

Another expression of how corruption can prevent the empowerment of the population is by controlling the media and, therefore the information that the population can receive. In Guatemala, journalists and human rights defenders reported harassment incidents in 2019. Journalists face threats when talking about corruption, drug trafficking, organized crime and human rights violations, and physical attacks against journalists are frequent (Freedom House 2020).

The impact of corruption on human security

Studies show that security or low levels of violence do not always imply a high level of development; however, insecurity does disrupt and prevent development (Denney 2013). In this sense, security is not sufficient, but it is a necessary condition to move out of poverty.

One of the main challenges to ensure human security is the existence of high levels of corruption in those institutions in charge of guaranteeing a safe society, such as the police. According to the 2017 Global Corruption Barometer, the police, together with elected officials, are often at the top of corrupt institutions. In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of respondents who thought that the police is the most corrupt institution is 47%; 46% in the Americas; and 39% in Asia Pacific.

High levels of corruption in the security sector have negative economic and social impacts on poverty. From an economic perspective, a corrupt security sectors can lead to wasting resources and preventing or slowing economic growth. In the first case, corruption in defence can result in inflated defence budgets (Magahy et al. 2009) and the purchase of unnecessary equipment (Mann 2011), followed by

lower investment in basic social services for poor people (Collier 2004). On the other hand, corruption in security institutions can lead to poor equipment and inadequately trained staff, reducing operational effectiveness and the capacity of those institutions to guarantee human security.

High corruption in security sectors can also have a significant effect on the economic growth of a country. For instance, it might discourage foreign direct investments and it might slow the growth of small companies through direct illegal taxation (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2008). The illegal participation of the military or the police in economic activities, such as the extraction of natural resources, contributes to the paradox of rich countries with high levels of poverty. For instance, the involvement of the military in oil theft in the Niger Delta – the most important oil-producing region in Africa – cost the Nigerian government 3.8 trillion Nigerian naira (approx. US\$105 billion) in 2016 and 2017 (Transparency International 2019).

The impact on the economy of corrupt security institutions can be greater or even contradictory, depending on who they partner with. The partnership between the police and organised criminal groups, for instance, allows an increase in the size of the informal economy, negatively affecting an effective taxation (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2008). The partnership between the police and the political elite or the private sector might result in worsening the conditions of the poor population in order to protect private interests. For instance, the police might serve the interests of the elite by removing poor house-owners to build industrial plants on specific land (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2008).

Private arrangements between the police and formal business interests can also lead to increasingly difficult informal sector survival strategies through harassing and collecting bribes from vendors and small traders (Narayan et al.

U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk

The impact of corruption on the poor: the case of Guatemala.

2000). Women are specially affected by this practice since the informal sector is in some developing societies a way for many women to generate an income.

From a social perspective, corruption in security sectors can have three effects on poor people: to increase crime and violence, to increase the vulnerability of poor people and to generate public distrust. Corruption in security services allows official positions to be bought, reducing the overall quality of the security sector. This can result in increasing the levels of crime and violence since bribe payments to the police can result in criminals not being arrested, the facilitation of illegal activities, such as drug trafficking (Mann 2011), and a growing consumption of illegal goods (like drugs and alcohol) and services (for instance, prostitution).

Another effect is that it increases the vulnerability of poor people. That vulnerability, in turn, makes poor people the target for the police to obtain bribes. It is considered that excluded groups are particularly vulnerable to police extortion and harassment (Narayan et al. 2000). A corrupt police not only do not protect and provide a safe environment but generates insecurity and fear. In countries like Jamaica, Uganda, India and Moldova, police brutality is considered a serious concern by the poor population (Narayan et al. 2000). The same fear of police abuse leave some in vulnerable positions to pay a price for being left alone. In urban slums, poor people often do not have any other choice since they are trapped between corrupt police and slum landlords and gangs. Police indifference to the safety conditions of the population also has a negative effect on poverty. That indifference is particularly prevalent in cases of violence against women.

Finally, a corrupt and inefficient police generates distrust among citizens to the institution and to

authority. This absence of trust might harm cooperation between communities and among groups, which compromises the potential for a positive social change, and it might provoke the deterioration of social cohesion, increasing lawlessness, crime and violence in the society (Narayan et al. 2000). Moreover, public distrust might contribute to a collective perception of corruption as a more effective way to ensure citizens protection (Transparency International 2010).

Improving the levels of citizen security is one of the main challenges in Guatemala. High levels of corruption in law enforcement and the judicial branch create massive obstacles to investigating and sanctioning acts of corruption and investigations into violent crimes (Niemeier 2012). Guatemala has low rates of crime reporting, primarily due to a lack of an effective witness protection programme and widespread incidences of retaliation (Walsh & Menjívar 2016). Recently, police forces in Guatemala City found that half of the police officers investigated were indicted for abuse of powers, corruption and complicity in violent crimes. Only a dozen of these officers were ever brought to trial, thus contributing to the perception of impunity (Niemeier 2012). Similarly, recent high-profile cases related to corruption in law enforcement and the judicial branch have been delayed, stalled or thrown out by lower level courts, allegedly due to influence peddling by powerful interests ([Chase 2017](#)).

According to the 2017 Global Corruption Barometer, 40% of the respondents see the police as highly corrupt. Similarly, in the 2018 Latinobarometro survey, 43.2% of Guatemalan respondents believed all or most of the police force to be corrupt ([Latinobarometro 2019](#)). In turn, the police is the service where more people pay bribes. According to data from 2016, between 21% and 30% of police service users paid a bribe (Transparency International 2007)

U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk

Generally, indigenous groups are especially targeted by police, especially in rural areas with large business interests (UNSRIP 2018). Furthermore, a commission was established to investigate systematic sexual assault cases of indigenous women in the country, and found police complicity, lack of punishment for accused officers and corruption in local law enforcement to be the main drivers behind these crimes against humanity (Lynn 2017; Musalo & Bookey 2013)

The impact of corruption in human security becomes particularly complex in fragile states. The specialized literature have studied corruption as both a cause and a consequence of fragility. Fragility is a complex multidimensional phenomenon and, depending on the setting, different forms of corruption can have divergent effect on the level of fragility (OECD 2018).

Another situation in which corruption has a special effect on human security is in cases of sextortion, a gendered form of corruption that happens when those entrusted with power use it to sexually exploit those dependent on that power (Feigenblatt 2020). It is usually targeted to women, but men and transgender can also be affected. Sextortion is often unreported due to social stigma and risks of retaliation, among other reasons (Feigenblatt 2020). One of the demands regarding sextortion is to be legally recognized as a corruption crime so it could be prosecuted under anti-corruption laws as well as under sexual violence laws.

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U4 Anti-Corruption Helpdesk

The impact of corruption on the poor: the case of Guatemala.

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The U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre shares research and evidence to help international development actors get sustainable results. The centre is part of Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway – a research institute on global development and human rights.

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