



Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University

## **Police Corruption and Crime**

Corruption, Gender, and Sustainable Development  
(COGS) Policy Brief No. 2

Robert Gillanders, Idrissa Ouedraogo, Eugenie Maiga, Doris Aja-Eke,

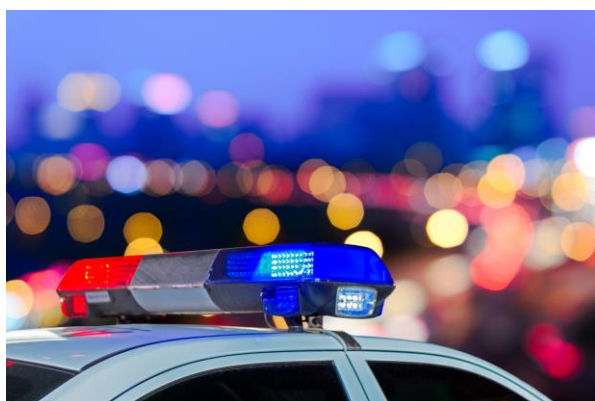
Corruption, the abuse of public power for private gain, is endemic around the world. Evidence shows that it impedes firm performance, economic growth and progress towards sustainable and inclusive development. It also undermines trust and fuels populism and the spread of harmful conspiracy theories.

Corruption can take many forms and can occur across all sectors. However, one of the most dangerous manifestations is police corruption.

Police corruption can threaten the security and stability of a state and lead to increased violence and crime. In Mexico, Malaysia, Nigeria and Kenya, evidence indicates that it has been a threat to national security as bribery has facilitated terrorism and drugs through police collusion, and reduced police and military effectiveness through kickbacks and embezzlement in procurement.

Police corruption also has damaging effects on individual lives. In Peru, police corruption is a significant challenge in the fight against domestic violence as it makes it more difficult for poor and politically weak victims to report. In the US, corruption predicts police killings of black Americans.

Our own work in this space reinforces the harm done to innocent people by police corruption. Using data from the Afrobarometer surveys of people in 34 African countries that captures people's exposure to both corruption and other crimes such as assault and theft, we find that:



This is a photo of a police car

- Those living in regions in which police bribery is more common are more likely to have been victims of assault and are more likely to have had something stolen from their homes;
- It is “transactional” police corruption (having to pay to get help from the police) rather than “predatory” police corruption (paying to avoid trouble with the police) that matters.
- Police corruption also imposes a significant cost on people in terms of fearing crime, even if they have not been a victim themselves.
- Non-police corruption also has an effect on both crime outcomes and fear of crime, pointing to the significant harm that corruption in general does to a society.

Taken together, our findings and the existing literature tell a clear story. Police corruption is one of the most harmful forms of corruption and its effects spill over to harm innocent people.

A corrupt police force not only facilitates terrorism and drugs crime, but also the kinds of day to day crimes that can just as easily ruin the lives of poor and disadvantaged people.

Fighting corruption is therefore an essential step in securing sustainable and inclusive development. By fighting corruption, we protect people from other forms of crime.

*You can find links to the full paper and all of COGS’s work at the DCU ARC Website: <https://www.dcu.ie/arc>  
Social Media: [@DCU\\_ARC](#)*

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