



## What Does the Public Report on Corruption, the CICIG, the Public Ministry, and the Constitutional Court in Guatemala?

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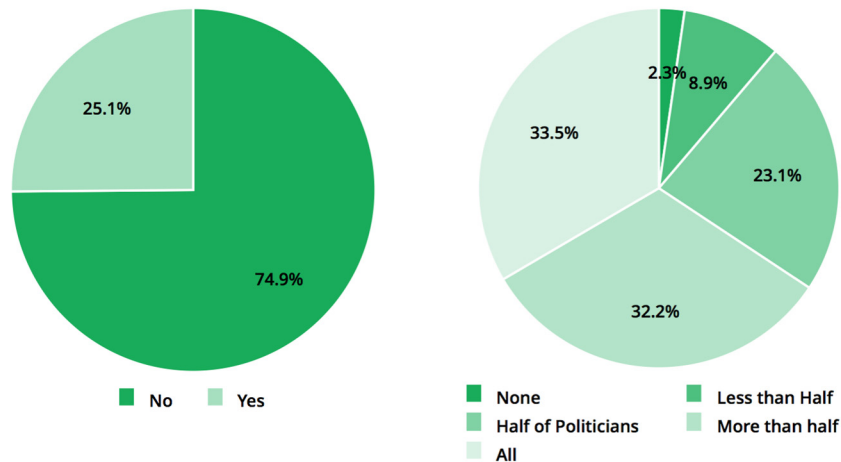
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On August 27, 2017, Guatemala's President Jimmy Morales declared the head of the United Nations International Commission against Impunity (CICIG), Iván Velásquez, *persona non grata*.<sup>1</sup> Quickly, the Constitutional Court moved to block his request that Velásquez leave the country. Recently the CICIG and the Public Ministry (Ministerio Público, MP; the Attorney General's Office) have been questioning the legality of certain financial contributions to Morales' 2015 campaign.<sup>2</sup> It is timely, then, to ask: what is the ordinary Guatemalan's experience with corruption, how much corruption do they see in politics, and what are their views of three institutions at the core of this weekend's politics: the CICIG, the Constitutional Court, and the Public Ministry?

In this *Topical Brief*, we answer these questions with data from LAPOP's AmericasBarometer. Since its inception in 2004, the project has conducted a regular national survey of Guatemala. The latest survey was fielded between February and May 2017; 1,546 voting age adults were interviewed to form a nationally representative sample of public opinion in Guatemala.

In the year prior to early 2017, 25% of Guatemalans were asked to pay at least one bribe.<sup>3</sup> This number, presented on the left-hand side of Figure 1, is an increase from 2014, when the AmericasBarometer detected victimization rates at 20.7%, and it is on par with the rate identified in the 2012 survey (24.1%).<sup>4</sup> On the right side of Figure 1, we present the distribution of responses to a question that asks individuals to report how many of their country’s politicians are involved in corruption. In 2017, a third of Guatemalans (33.5%) believe that all politicians are corrupt and nearly another third (32.2%) believe that more than half of the country’s politicians are corrupt. While nearly two thirds of the country expresses a high level of cynicism about corruption, this statistic lands Guatemala in the mid-range of all countries for which the question was asked in the 2016/17 AmericasBarometer.<sup>5</sup>



Corruption Victimization Rate

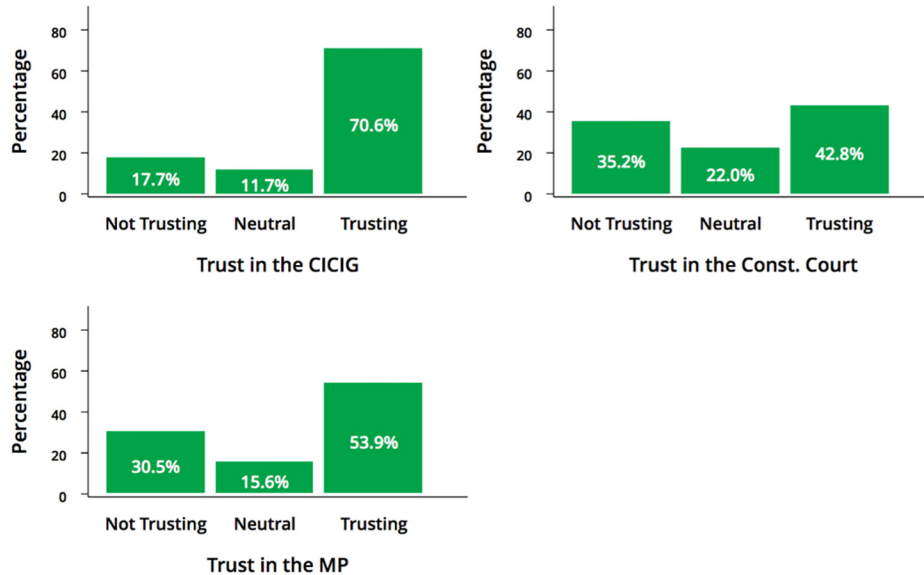
Perceptions of How Many Politicians are Corrupt

Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP; Guatemala 2017 Corvic Exc7new

### Figure 1. Corruption Victimization and Perceptions of How Many Politicians are Corrupt in Guatemala, 2017

The 2017 AmericasBarometer national survey of Guatemala also asked individuals about their trust in key political institutions, including the CICIG, the Constitutional Court, and the Public Ministry. Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale that ranges from “no trust” to “a lot of trust.” For the sake of this report, we code those who responded 5-7 as “trusting”, those who responded at the midpoint (4) as “neutral”, and those who responded 1-3 as “not trusting.”

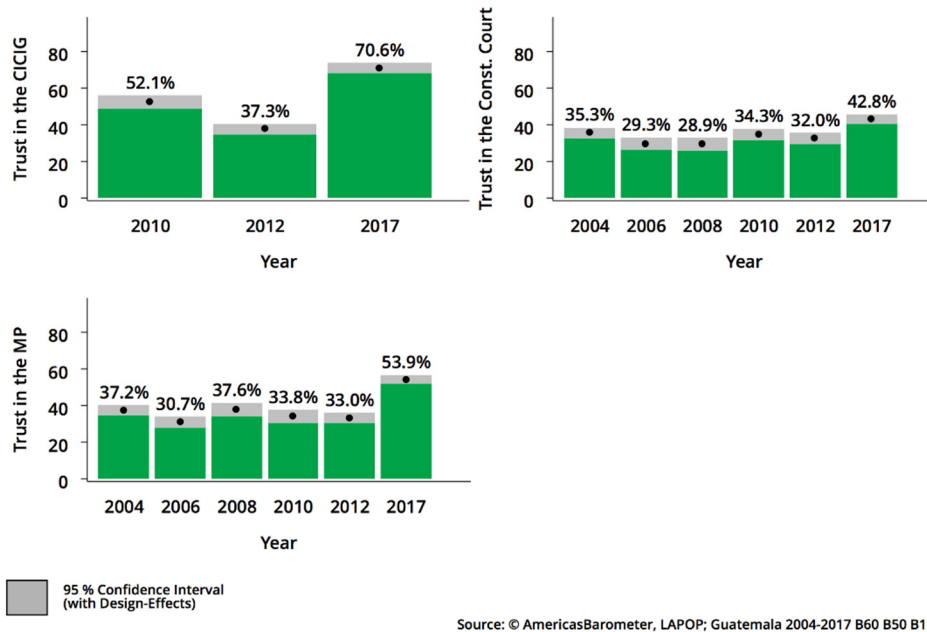
Figure 2 shows that the Guatemalan public has high levels of trust in the CICIG: in 2017, 70.6% of the population expressed some degree of trust in the institution. Levels of trust are lower for the Constitutional Court, but still at moderate levels: in 2017, 42.8% of Guatemalans trust the Constitutional Court while 22% feel neutral toward it. Levels of trust expressed toward the Public Ministry (MP) in 2017 are in between evaluations of the other two institutions: 53.9% of Guatemalans express trust in the MP.



Source: © AmericasBarometer, LAPOP; Guatemala 2017 B60 B50 B15

**Figure 2. Trust in the CICIG, Constitutional Court, and MP in Guatemala, 2017**

Interestingly, trust in all three bodies has increased in recent years. Figure 3 shows the percent of individuals who we code as “trusting” for the years of the AmericasBarometer survey in which the question was asked (in the case of the CICIG, the question was asked only in the 2010, 2012, and 2017 studies; in the case of the Constitutional Court and the MP, the question was asked in all rounds except 2014). In each case, comparing 2012 (the penultimate AmericasBarometer round for which there is data) to 2017, trust in the institution has increased significantly.



**Figure 3. Trust in the CICIG, Constitutional Court, and MP in Guatemala over Time**

In summary, recent survey data show that Guatemalans experience high levels of corruption victimization, have fairly cynical views of the proportion of politicians who are corrupt, hold the CICIG in very high regard, have moderate levels of trust in the Constitutional Court, and fairly high levels of trust in the MP. In such a climate, attempts by President Morales to defy the CICIG, the Constitutional Court, and/or the MP may risk running afoul of the court of public opinion.

## Notes

- <https://www.efe.com/efe/english/world/guatemala-s-president-declares-cicig-head-persona-non-grata/50000262-3362730>
- <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2017/08/25/guatemala-ministerio-publico-y-cicig-piden-antejuicio-contrapresidente-jimmy-morales/>
- Individuals are asked if they have been asked for a bribe by a police officer, a public employee, a soldier, a municipal clerk (in the process of securing a license, for example), someone related to their employment or schooling, or someone related to the courts or health services. For the purposes of this report, we consider anyone who reported being asked for a bribe in at least one of these situations as a victim of corruption.

4. For the sake of parsimony, we do not show these additional analyses here; all data from prior AmericasBarometer waves, as well as reports on these, are available for free download at [www.lapopsurveys.org](http://www.lapopsurveys.org).

5. In the forthcoming regional report on the AmericasBarometer, Lupu (2017) reports that the proportion of individuals who perceive more than half or all politicians to be corrupt is higher in 10 countries and lower in 11 countries.

## References

Lupu, Noam. 2017. "Corruption in the Americas." Chapter 3 in Mollie J. Cohen, Noam Lupu, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Eds., *The Political Culture of Democracy in the Americas, 2016/17: A Comparative Study of Democracy and Governance*. Nashville, TN: LAPOP.

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Data and the regional report for the 2016/17 round of the AmericasBarometer will be released in September 2017. Please follow us on Twitter for more information @lapop\_barometro. Data and reports from past rounds of the study are available for free download at [www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop).