

Report on Regional Consultative Workshops – Ethics Questionnaire (August 1998)

National Democratic Institute for
International Affairs (NDI)

Report Submitted to the Technical
Committee on the Promotion of
Ethics and the Prevention and
Combating of Corruption

*Windhoek, Namibia
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Acknowledgement

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Report on Regional Consultative Workshops – Ethics Questionnaire (August 1998)

Overview

In July 1998, as part of the Namibian Government's initiative on the Promotion of Ethics and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) was requested to provide technical assistance to collect public opinion data related to ethics and corruption in Namibia. This report provides a synopsis of the findings from a questionnaire completed by community and traditional leaders at ten regional consultative workshops on ethics organised by the Namibian Government. This report does not seek to draw conclusions about the views of the Namibian public as a whole, but rather provides systematic data on the feelings of those 269 community and traditional leaders who attended the workshops and completed the questionnaire. Also provided in this report is an excerpt from a public opinion study commissioned by NDI that relates to ethics and corruption issues. In early 1998, a series of 24 focus group discussions were organised by Heike Becker and Peik Bruhns for the Centre for Social Sciences (CASS). While the central focus of the CASS was not ethics or corruption, questions related to these topics were asked. This report closes with an excerpt from the report on the CASS focus group research that relates to ethics and corruption.

In neither study, including the questionnaire from the regional consultative workshops on ethics, was corruption identified as the most pressing issue facing Namibia. Rather, issues related to land, employment and education always were seen as more pressing by the respondents.

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Background on the Questionnaire

In March 1997, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Hage G. Geingob formally launched the Inter-Ministerial Ad Hoc Committee on the Promotion of Ethics and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption. While corruption is not considered widespread in Namibia, the Prime Minister noted that this initiative is necessary so that those periodic incidences of corruption and maladministration do not become more frequent. At that time a Technical Committee, comprising representatives from the public and private sectors as well as civil society, was formed to assist the Ad Hoc Committee in its work.

In June 1997, to familiarise members of the Ad Hoc and Technical Committees on international practices related to ethics and corruption an extensive seminar, Migard I, was held. Out of this meeting, syndicate groups were formed to investigate particular issues related to ethics and corruption. A second seminar, Migard II, took place in March 1998 to introduce and discuss the findings and recommendations of the six syndicate groups. Afterwards a draft National Discussion Paper was produced to synthesise these findings and to serve as a tool for disseminating information and consulting with the public in the regions.

During August 1998, ten regional consultative workshops were conducted to inform the public about the Government's ethics initiative and solicit their input. These workshops were organised to promote analysis and public comment on the draft National Discussion Paper. A Cabinet member and members of the Technical Committee attended each workshop. community leaders from each region were invited, including: regional and local councillors, government officials, non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives, business people, and traditional and church leaders. A workshop was held in every region of the country except for: Hardap and Karas regions where a joint workshop was conducted in Keetmanshoop; and Ohangwena, Omusati and Oshana regions where one workshop was convened in Oshakati for all three regions. A Project Management Team was designated by the Technical Committee to work with the Governor of each region to organise the workshops.

In July 1998, the Project Management Team requested the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) to provide technical assistance to develop and conduct a questionnaire on ethics and corruption in Namibia with the participants at the ten regional consultative workshops. NDI has been providing technical and financial assistance to the Government's ethics initiative since its inception in March 1997. The questionnaire was not intended to enable members of the Ad Hoc and Technical Committees to

draw conclusions about the views of all Namibians on these issues, but rather, to serve as a systematic way for the voices of workshop participants to be heard in the consultation process. Thus, at each workshop participants completed a ten-page user-friendly questionnaire about ethics and corruption. In addition, a rapporteur recorded detailed notes of the ensuing discussion. Staff from NDI and the Project

Management Team worked together to develop and administer the questionnaire. This report, drafted by NDI in consultation with the Project Management Team, overviews the findings from the questionnaire and is intended to complement the National Discussion Paper.

The National Discussion Paper, as revised to include the comments from the regional consultative workshops, will serve as the basis of discussion at a National Consultative Conference on the Promotion of Ethics and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption scheduled for 7 – 9 October 1998.

Methodology

At each of the ten regional consultative workshops a questionnaire was distributed to systematically record the views of participants on ethics and corruption issues in Namibia. The workshop's participants were not a representative sample reflecting the full complexity of Namibian society, but rather, a select group specifically chosen because they were seen as key role players within their respective region. Thus from the findings of this research one should not draw conclusions about the opinion of all Namibians. Instead, the study's goal is limited to reporting the views on ethics and corruption in Namibia of those individuals who attended the ten regional consultative workshops.

The questionnaire was only available in written format, which posed a problem for any participants unable to read and write. Unfortunately, time and staff limitations did not permit the questionnaire to be given orally. The initial questionnaire was drafted in English and latter translated into Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and Otjiherero and these versions were made available to the participants.

The questionnaire was distributed at the workshop, prior to the official opening, for the participants to complete and was intentionally scheduled for the very beginning so participants' responses would not be influenced by the ensuing discussions. Participants were given only thirty minutes to complete the questionnaire and at the end of that time all of the questionnaires were collected (completed or not).

Participants completed the questionnaire on their own rather than being asked the

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questions by a researcher. While this led to some participants not completing the entire questionnaire and others not completing it correctly, this was the only way to ensure that all of the participants had an opportunity to take part in the study. In addition, self-administered questionnaires reduce potential for bias to be introduced into research based on the gender, ethnicity or views of the researcher.

Demographics of the Respondents

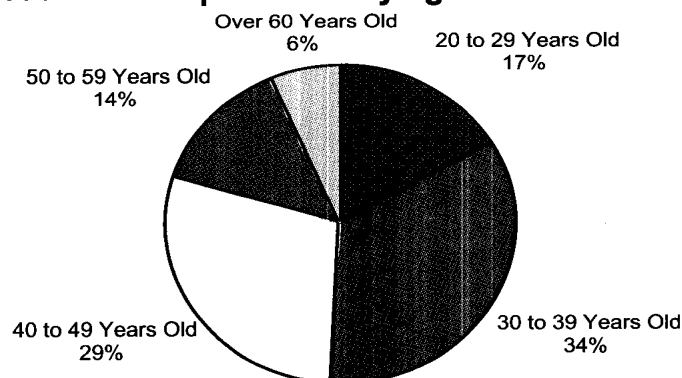
At the ten regional consultative workshops a total of 269 participants completed questionnaires. Women totalled 62 of the respondents or 23% and men 203 or 75%. Every region of the country was represented at the workshops and participants from every region completed the questionnaire.

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by region¹

Region	Number of Respondents	Region	Number of Respondents
Caprivi	22 18%	Okavango	28 10%
Erongo	29 11%	Omaheke	15 6%
Hardap & Karas	36 13%	Otjozondjupa	24 9%
Khomas	24 9%	Ohangwena, Omusati,	57 21%
Kunene	34 13%	Oshana & Oshikoto	

The age of the respondents was broken down into categories. No one reported that they were less than 20 years old while 17 stated they were 60 years old or older and three people did not provide their age. Fifty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they were between 20 and 39 years old.

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by age



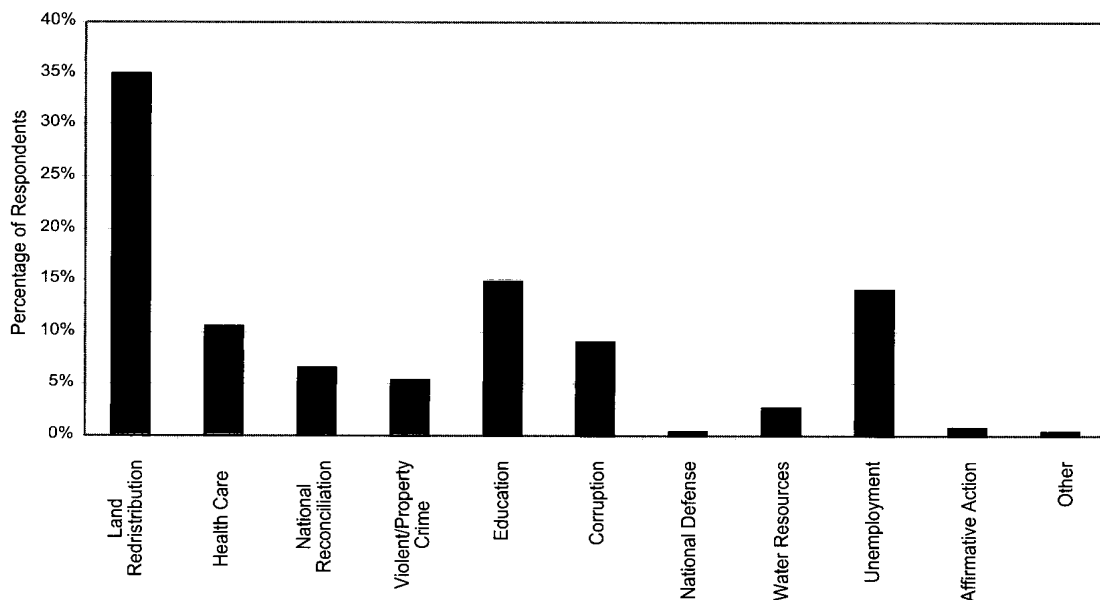
¹ For the purposes of tabulation respondents from Hardap and Karas regions were combined into one category as well as respondents from the four regions that today comprise the former "Owamboland".

The intention of the study was not to produce a sample that accurately reflected the demographics of Namibian society, but rather to collect information from those individuals who participated in the workshop. The demographic information provided here is intended to give an impression as to the composition of those workshop participants who completed the questionnaire.

Corruption in the Namibian Context

While the regional consultative workshops were convened to discuss issues related to ethics and corruption in Namibia, it is important to put these issues into a larger context. How important do respondents feel issues related to corruption are in Namibia? Respondents were provided a list of ten issues currently being discussed in Namibia: land redistribution, health care, national reconciliation, violent/property crime, education, corruption, national defence, water resources, unemployment and affirmative action (the option of “other” was also provided).

Figure 3. What do respondents feel is the most important issue facing Namibia today (n = 255, missing = 14)



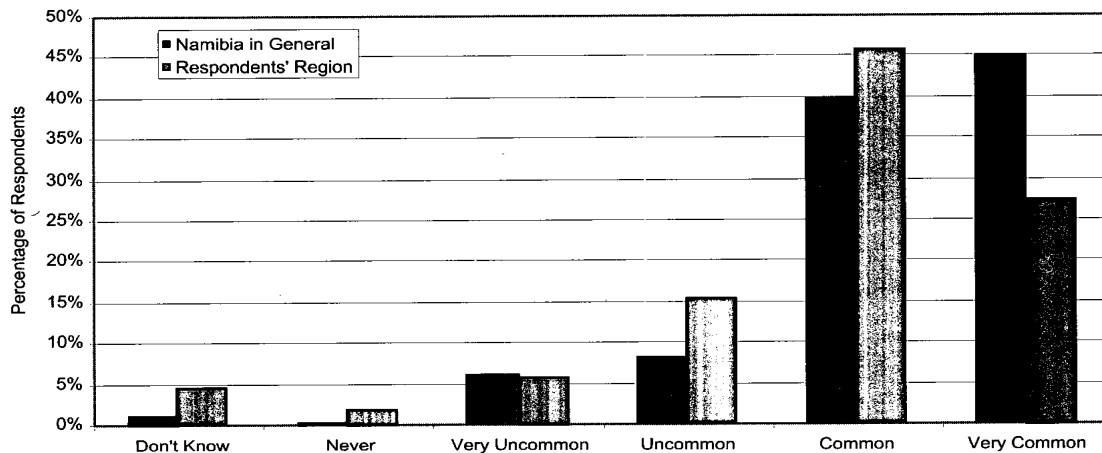
From this list of issues, the respondents were asked to identify in rank order the three most important issues facing Namibia today. The clear choice of the respondents as the most important issue was land redistribution. Education and unemployment followed as the second and third most important issues. Health care was the fourth most common response followed by corruption. However, overall more respondents chose corruption as

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one of their top three issues facing Namibia than they did health care.

The bread and butter issues of land, employment and education were the most important for respondents. Issues such as water resources and affirmative action received almost no responses as the most pressing issues. Falling somewhere in the middle of the responses, corruption in Namibia, perhaps unlike in some other countries, is not seen as so endemic and pervasive. The respondents do not yet hold that issues relating to corruption must be addressed before solutions to other problems can be formulated and implemented.

Figure 4. How common do respondents feel corruption is in Namibia in general (n = 265, missing = 4) and in the region in which they live (n = 268, missing = 1)



When asked about how common corruption is in Namibia in general and in the region in which the respondent lives, most respondents answered either "common" or "very common". No attempt was made to define what respondents meant by these terms. Worth noting, however, is that many respondents felt that there was less corruption in the region in which they live than in Namibia in general. People are more likely to know what is going on where they live than in the country as a whole. Therefore, the high number of "very common" responses for corruption in Namibia in general has probably more to do with the perceptions of respondents rather than actual experiences with corruption.

In general, respondents felt that there was more corruption today than there had been prior to independence. Over 50% of the respondents indicated that there was either "more corruption" or "much more corruption" now while approximately 20% felt that there was less corruption today.

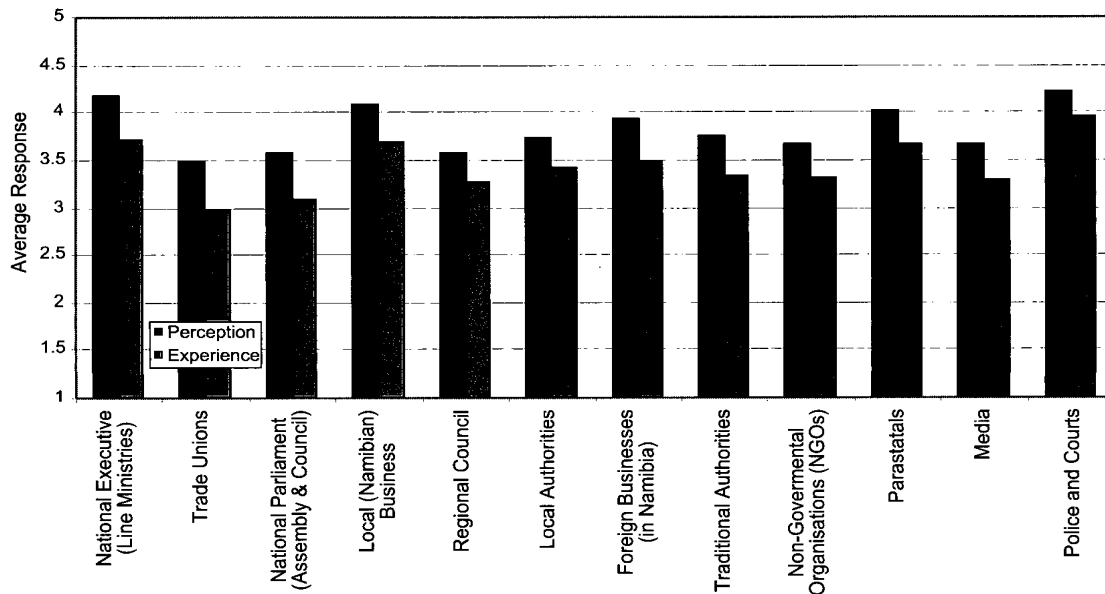
Lastly, respondents were also asked about how likely they felt the "average" Namibian

was to “blow the whistle” (inform the police or a supervisor) about corruption. On this question, the response was mixed. Approximately 42% of the responses were “likely” or “very likely” while 41% were “unlikely” or “very unlikely” (in addition, almost 7% said that the “average” Namibian would never “blow the whistle” on corruption).

Perceptions of Corruption and Experiences with Corruption

Respondents were asked both about how common they thought corruption is in various Namibian institutions (their perception of corruption) and also how often they had personally witnessed corruption in those same institutions (their experience with corruption). They were asked about: the national executive (line ministries), trade unions, the national Parliament (Assembly and Council), local (Namibian) businesses, regional councils, local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), parastatals, the media and the police and courts.

Figure 5. Average response for how often respondents feel corruption occurs (perception) and how often they witnessed corruption (experience) in various types of institutions in Namibia (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = rarely, 4 = often, 5 = very often)



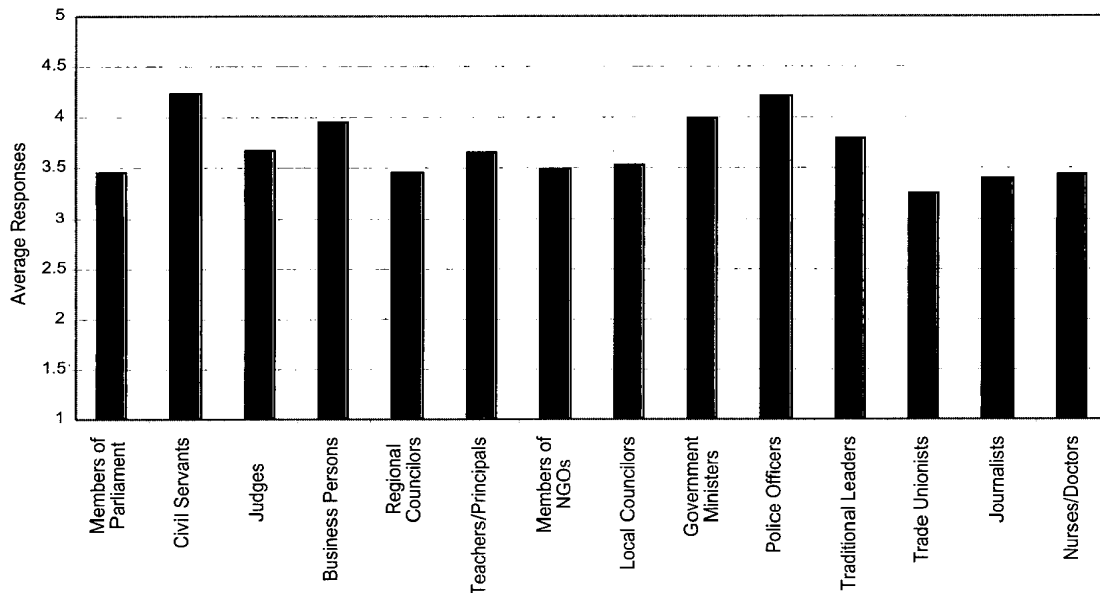
When asked in which single institution do they feel the most corruption takes place, most respondents (45%) indicated the national executive (or line ministries) followed by the police and courts (over 20%). All the other institutions received 6% or less of the responses. Respondents were also questioned about how often they feel corruption occurs in each of these institutions. The institution with the highest average response (indi-

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cating the most perceived corruption) was the police and courts followed closely by the national executive (line ministries) and local (Namibian) businesses. Trade unions, the national Parliament (Assembly and Council) and regional councils had the lowest average response (meaning the least perceived corruption).

Importantly, for all twelve institutions the average response for experience with corruption was always less than the average response for perception of corruption – meaning that respondents' perceptions of corruption were on average greater than their experiences with corruption. The smallest difference between perception and experience was recorded with local authorities and the police and courts. Both of these institutions have offices in the regions quite close (geographically) to the respondents and hence the respondents are more likely to have a direct experience with these institutions.

Figure 6. Average response for how often respondents feel bribes (cash, gifts or favours) for special treatment are received by various categories of individuals in Namibia (1 = never, 2 = very uncommon, 3 = uncommon, 4 = common, 5 = very common)



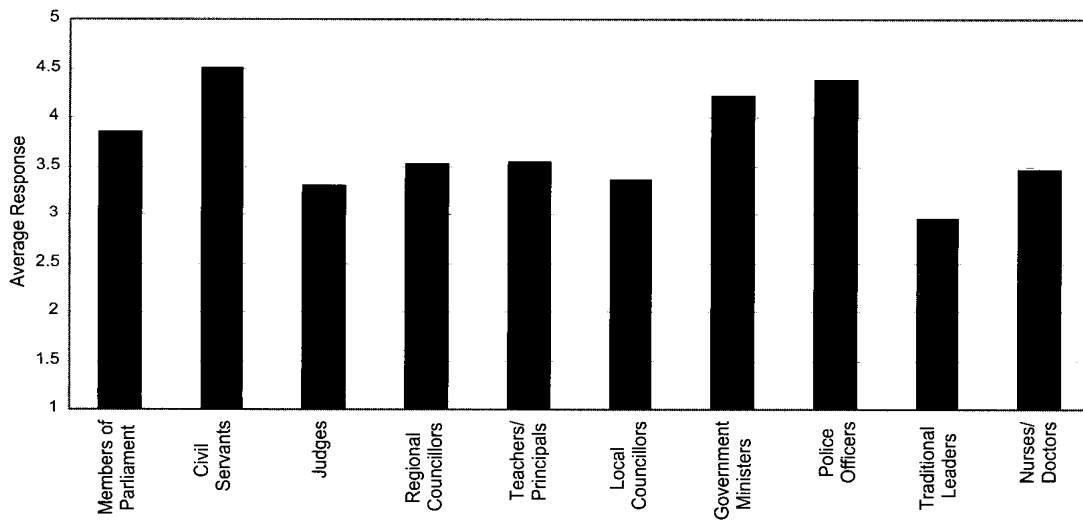
Bribery and the Misuse of Government Property

Turning from institutions to the actions of individuals, respondents were asked about individuals receiving bribes and misusing government property. These questions focused on the following categories of individuals: Members of Parliament, civil servants, judges, business persons, regional councillors, teachers/principals, members of non-governmental organisations, local councillors, government ministers, police officers, traditional leaders,

trade unionists, journalists and nurses/doctors.

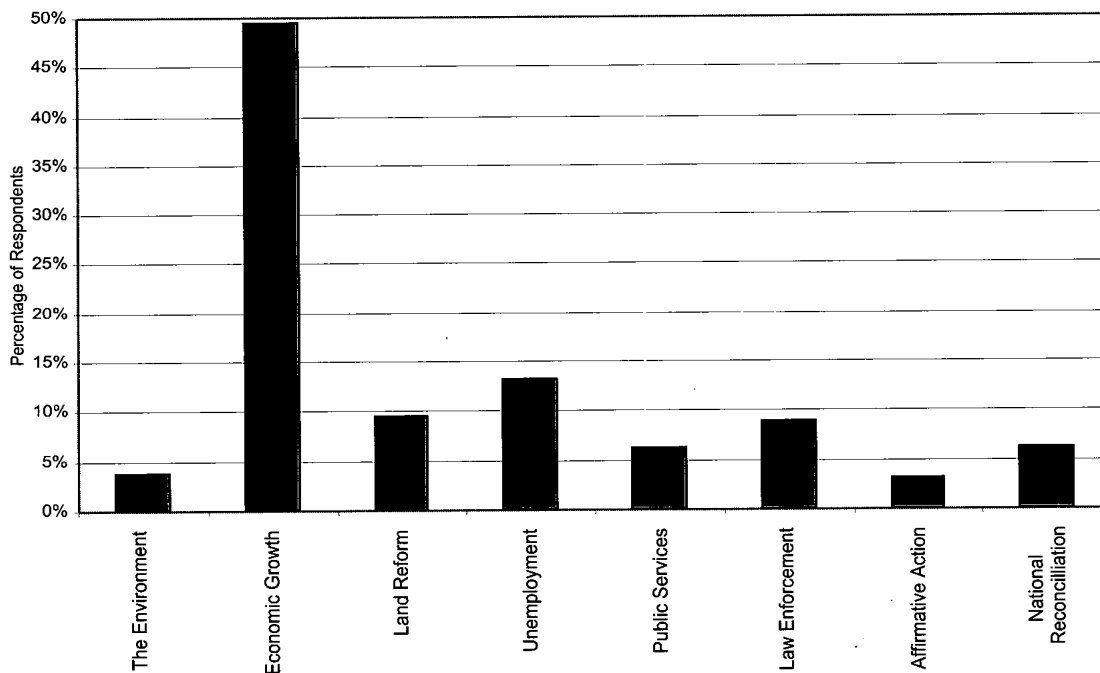
Respondents were asked which one category of individuals was most likely to receive a bribe (cash, gifts or favours) in return for special treatment. Over 30% of respondents answered police officers followed by civil servants (25%) and government ministers (over 10%). All other categories of individuals received less than 10% of the responses. Respondents were also asked how common they thought it was that individuals received bribes. The average responses were highest (indicating the most likely to receive a bribe) for civil servants and police officers followed by government ministers, business persons and traditional leaders. Trade unionists received the lowest average response (meaning the least likely to receive a bribe).

Figure 7. Average response for how often respondents feel government property is misused by various categories of individuals in Namibia (1 = never, 2 = very uncommon, 3 = uncommon, 4 = common, 5 = very common)



The results related to the misuse of government property were similar to those for receiving bribes. Over 40% of respondents thought civil servants were the single most likely category of individuals to misuse government property. Over 30% responded government ministers and almost 15% police officers to this question. Again all other categories of individuals received less than 10% of the responses. When looking at the average responses for how often respondents felt that each category of individuals misused their position, civil servants followed by police officers and government ministers had the highest average response (meaning respondents felt they most often misuse government property). The average response was lowest for traditional authorities and then judges (meaning the least likely to misuse government property).

Figure 8. What do respondents feel is the single issue that is most negatively affected by corruption in Namibia (n = 160, missing 109)



Impact of Corruption

In addition to seeking to measure the level of corruption in Namibia, the questionnaire also briefly looked at the impact of corruption. Included in the questionnaire was a set of questions related to what degree corruption has a negative affect on various issues in the country. The issues included in the questionnaire were: the environment, economic growth, land reform, unemployment, public services, law enforcement, affirmative action and national reconciliation.

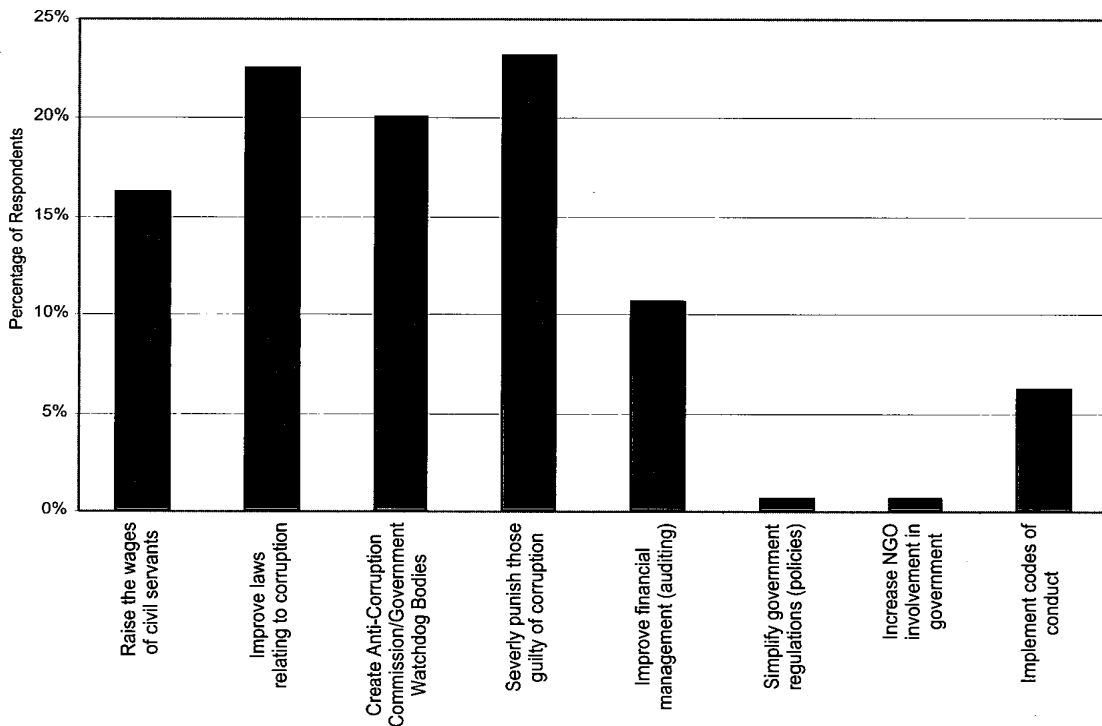
Almost 50% of the respondents indicated that economic growth was the single issue most negatively affected by corruption in Namibia. Unemployment received the second largest number of responses at 10%. Respondents were also asked specifically about the effect of corruption on each issue. For all issues except the environment, land reform and affirmative action, the number of responses for “large negative effect” was over 50%. The issue of the environment was the only issue in which the majority of responses were not “large negative effect”.

Measures to Curb Corruption

Lastly, the questionnaire included questions looking at different measures that might be implemented to combat corruption in Namibia. The possible measures provided to respondents included: raise the wages of civil servants; improve laws relating to corruption; create anti-corruption commission/government watchdog bodies; severely punish those guilty of corruption; improve financial management (auditing); simplify government regulations (policies); increase NGO involvement in government; and implement codes of conduct.

When respondents were asked which one measure would be most effective in curbing corruption in Namibia “severely punish those guilty of corruption” received the most responses (approximately 23%). However, “improve laws relating to corruption”, “create anti-corruption commission/government watchdog bodies” and “raise the wages of civil servants” all received a significant number of responses (over 15%). Only “simplify government regulations (policies)” and “increase NGO involvement in government” received less than 2% of the responses.

Figure 9. What do respondents feel is the single most effective measure to curb corruption in Namibia (n = 160, missing = 109)



Respondents were also asked to indicate how effective they thought each of these measures would be in curbing corruption in Namibia. Again, “severely punish those guilty

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of corruption” had the highest average response (meaning that respondents felt it would be most effective). However, “raise the wages of civil servants” had the lowest average response (implying it was the least effective measure). Other measures that had a high average response (indicating effectiveness) were “improve laws relating to corruption”, “create anti-corruption commission/government watchdog bodies”, “improve financial management (auditing)” and “implement codes of conduct”.

Gender Differences

There was no significant pattern of difference in the answers women and men respondents provided to the questions in the questionnaire. By and large, male and female respondents shared the same views on ethics and corruption in Namibia. For example, both felt the most important problem facing Namibia today was land redistribution and that generally corruption was more common today than during the previous dispensation. Similarly, the responses showed that both genders had higher perceptions of corruption occurring in various institutions than their personal experience with corruption.

There were, however, a few issues where there were small differences in the responses of women and men. With respect to the misuse of government property for personal benefit, women on average thought that judges, teachers and principals, and nurses and doctors were somewhat more likely to do this than men did. Women, on average, also did not feel that “raising the wages of civil servants” would be as effective a measure to curb corruption, as did men.

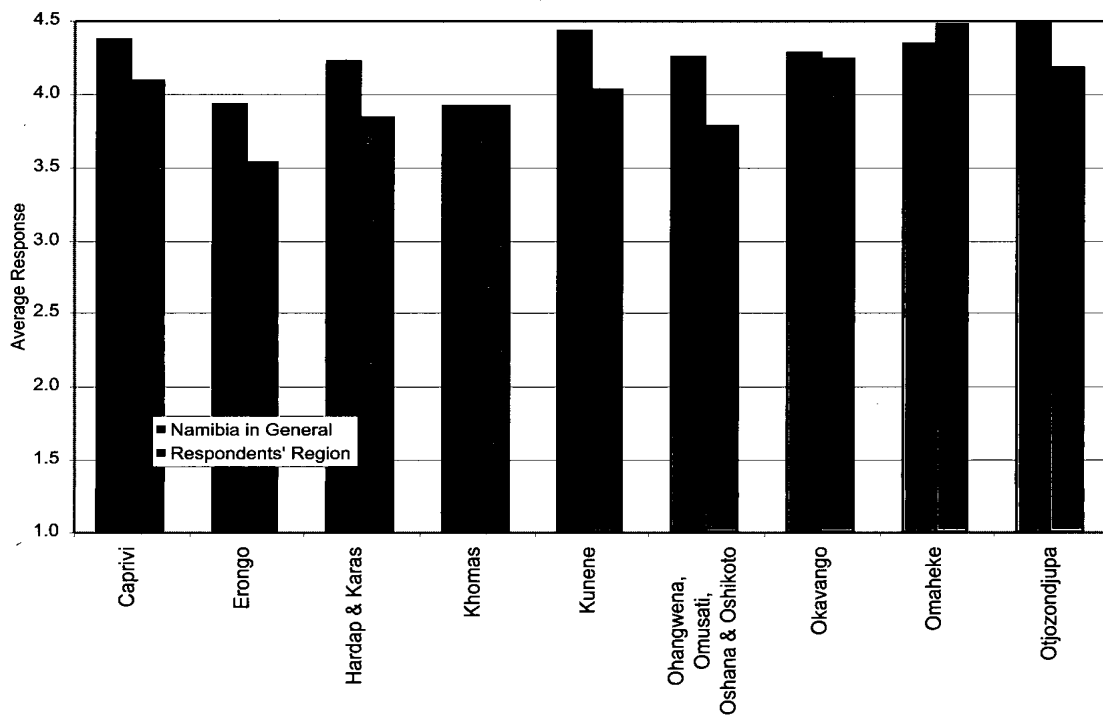
Regional Differences

The responses by region were also largely similar. However unlike for the responses by gender, there were several relevant trends that emerged in the data. For all of the regions the most important issue currently facing Namibia was land redistribution except for Okavango and the four regions that make up the former “Owamboland”. In the Okavango region national reconciliation received the most responses. This is particularly interesting since only around 7% of all respondents indicated that this was the most important issue. In the four northern regions, an equal number of respondents chose as the most important issue land redistribution, education and employment.

With respect to the level of corruption in Namibia in general, respondents in Otjozondjupa gave the highest average response (indicating the most corruption) while those in Erongo and Khomas had the lowest average response (meaning the least corrup-

tion). With respect to corruption within the region where the respondents live, again, the average for Erongo was the lowest (least corruption), but Omaheke respondents had the highest average (most corruption). Lastly, respondents from Erongo were the most likely to think that there is less corruption now than before independence while those from Kunene are most likely to think corruption has increased.

Figure 10. Average responses by region for how common respondents feel corruption is in Namibia in general and in the region in which they live (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = rarely, 4 = often, 5 = very often)



With respect to both the perception of corruption and the experience with corruption in various institutions, the most significant trend was that respondents from Omaheke region had the highest average for all institutions (meaning the most corruption). Also with respect specifically to regional councils, the average responses from Erongo region for both perceptions of corruption and experience with corruption were lower than the other regions (implying less corruption). However, the average responses from Omaheke region with respect to the perception and experience of corruption with regional councils was higher than other regions (indicating more corruption).

The only other noticeable trend in the data by region was that the average responses from Kunene for both bribery and misuse of government property were higher than the other regions for all categories of individuals (indicating more corruption). Related, respondents from Caprivi had a lower average responses that the other regions related to the misuse of government property (meaning less corruption).

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Figure 11. Average responses for Erongo and Omaheke regions for how often respondents feel corruption occurs (perception) and how often they witness corruption (experience) in various categories of institutions in Namibia (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = rarely, 4 = often, 5 = very often)

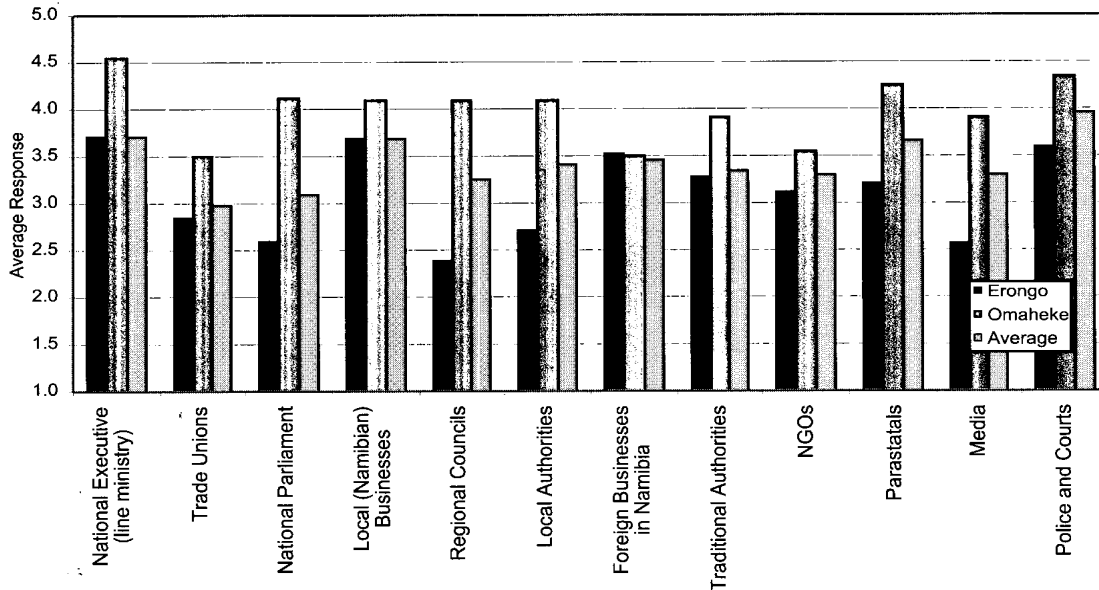
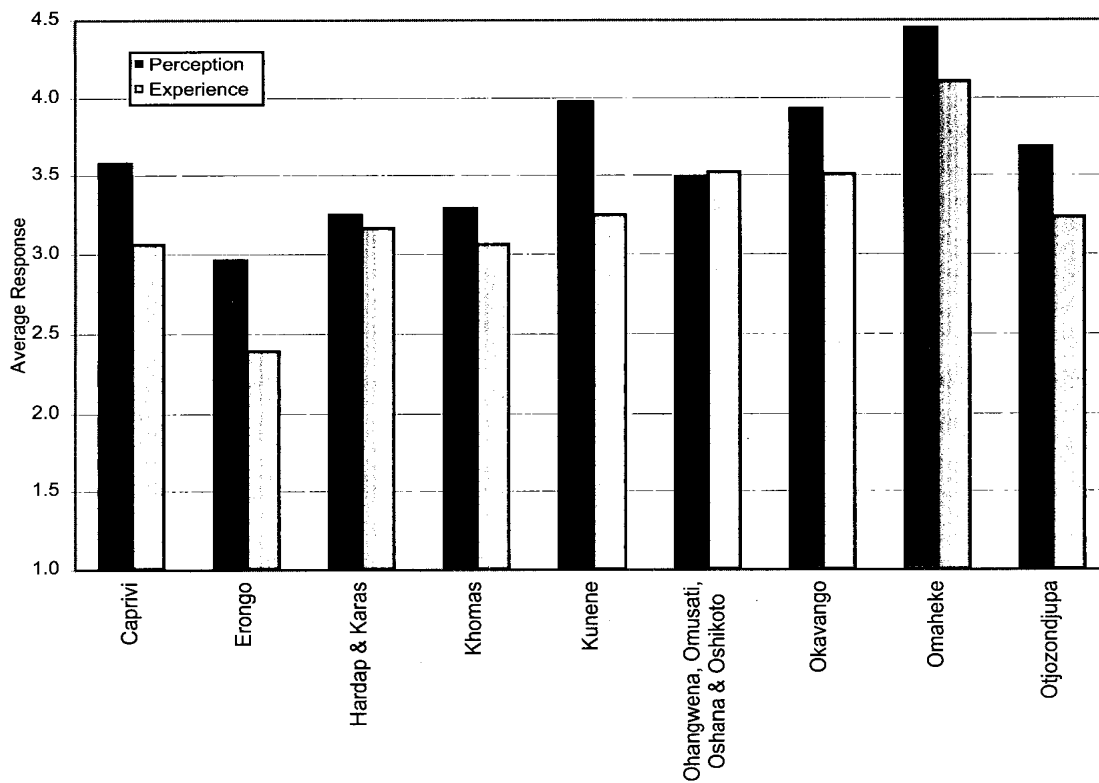


Figure 12. Average response by region for how often respondents feel corruption occurs (perception) and how often they witness corruption (experience) in regional councils in Namibia (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = rarely, 4 = often, 5 = very often)



Addendum A:

Excerpt from "Sa xu-i ge a sa (What is Yours is Yours): Popular Perceptions of Political Institutions in Namibia" by Heike Becker and Peik Bruhns, Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), University of Namibia (UNAM). A report on 24 focus group discussions for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).
Windhoek, Namibia, September 1998.

From February to April 1998 Heike Becker and Peik Bruhns, Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), University of Namibia (UNAM), conducted 24 focus group discussions in six different regions across Namibia. The theme of the discussions was popular perceptions of democratic political institutions with a focus on Parliament and democratic participation in Namibia eight years after independence. In addition to questions related to these topics, the participants in the focus groups also discussed briefly issues related to ethics and corruption in Namibia. This research was conducted with financial support from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs under a grant from the United States Agency for International Development as part of a program to strengthen the Namibian Parliament. This verbatim excerpt contains the section of the study's final report dealing specifically with corruption.

Corruption

Participants across the country strongly condemned any illegal self-enrichment schemes and corruption. There was a generalised feeling that highly paid political leaders should abstain from 'stealing', which was regarded as a threat to the country's assets. Several respondents made reference to the Katutura Single Quarters court case, in which several top-officials of the Ministry of Local, Regional Government and Housing (MLRGH) had been implicated, and which was on trial at the time of the research. A few participants felt that cases of illegal appropriation by lower rank civil servants, such as nurses, should be looked at in a more lenient way.

'Whistleblowing', i.e., the reporting and publicising of self-enrichment and corruption, was considered legitimate by all respondents who commented on the topic. A few participants were aware that such action, though legitimate, was not being regarded favourably in their community. However, the overwhelming majority felt that it was justified as long as the 'whistleblower' could substantiate his/her claims.

They are actually selfish. They get a lot of money from the government and on top of it they steal money. They steal instead of looking after the welfare of the people.

(Katutura resident, female)

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We feel bad when our leaders misappropriate funds. We elect them to help us govern ourselves. We do not expect them to steal our money. It affects our pension payouts; we have kids that have to go to school. The high school graduates don't have jobs.

(Anamulenge resident, male)

The leader that steals is not a leader. He gets the best of the country and a high salary. Why does he need to steal? He is not a builder but a breaker of the nation. You cannot have a wolf guarding a sheep kraal.

(Anamulenge resident, male)

It is not good for a leader to earn money using dishonest ways. Then you start wondering how safe the country's assets are.

(Mariental resident, professional, female)

It is the responsibility of everyone to report irregularities. The money goes to the pocket of only one person. With every project a structure should be worked out to have regular inspections and [if something happens] the Minister and his Deputy should be fired immediately, to sweep corruption out of Africa.

(Katutura resident, male)

It is dangerous to talk if you do not have enough money because if I have evidence but I cannot afford a lawyer, it won't help. Therefore, I do not blame the people who are afraid.

(Mariental resident, semi-skilled, female)

He is a hero as long as he tells the truth and can substantiate his claims because sometimes people are evil and try to break another person's reputation.

(Anamulenge resident, male)

Nepotism

There was a generalised feeling that it did not harbour well for Namibia if vacancies were filled on account of family relationship or friendship. However, several respondents were of the opinion that not too much was wrong with such recruitment practices as long as the protégé was qualified for the position.

Most respondents did not understand the problem to be caused predominantly by familial or friendly personal favouritism. Rather they interpreted it from an ethnic or regional angle. Therefore, they felt that apart from preventing efficient job performance it also threatened amicable inter-ethnic and inter- and intra- regional relations. It should also be noted that at least at one location in the Omusati region, participants related the problem of nepotism to the divide between former exiles and those who had remained inside the country during the struggle for national liberation. It was claimed that only the former benefited from present-day's job allocations.

I don't think, nepotism is a good thing. It is very difficult. When I have a friend having all the necessary qualifications, no one will question that. But sometimes the person does not have the necessary qualifications and experience and is put on board. This person becomes a failure. This is a problem. But if a person can perform I don't see a problem.

(Walvis Bay resident, male)

This kind of thing will cause great damage to our country in the long run. Nepotism, racism and favouritism play a big role in the Ministries. It might help if we, the society, can remind the government again and again that this type of thing is wrong. People must get jobs on the basis of merit and qualifications.

(Usakos resident, under 40, male)

It is pathetic because you have people in high positions that do not know what is going on. We have to listen to them but they do not even know what they are talking about. Maybe they should start thinking about recruiting people with qualifications, and not based on whether you know someone.

(Walvis Bay resident, female)

This really exists and it is not right. It is bad, and is also dividing ethnic groups.

(Usakos resident, over 40, female)

How important an issue is corruption to people in Namibia?

How do perceptions of corruption relate to experiences with corruption?

How do perceptions of corruption vary in Namibia's different regions?

In August 1998 a series of 10 regional consultative workshops were held as part of the Namibian Government's initiative on the Promotion of Ethics and the Prevention and Combating of Corruption. These workshops were conducted to discuss the draft National Discussion Paper on ethics and to solicit input from the public. The participants at the workshops were drawn from community leaders in all 13 of Namibia's regions.

During the workshops a questionnaire on ethics and corruption in Namibia was distributed to participants. This was done not as an attempt to draw conclusion about how the Namibian public as a whole feels about these issues but rather, as a way to systematically collect data from the workshops' participants. A total of 269 responses were received. This report reviews the findings of the questionnaire and is intended to complement the Namibian Government's National Discussion Paper on ethics.