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Public Perceptions on Corruption in Namibia

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"I can resist everything except temptation"
Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, 1892

1. Introduction

In the introduction to their book *Anti-Corruption Mechanisms and Strategies in Southern Africa*, Matsheza and Kunaka write that "corruption represents one of the most significant threats to development" (2000: 15). It impacts on economic, political and social development. This explains its prevalence in public discussion in recent years and makes it a very important issue in developing countries, where its adverse affects are often magnified (Matsheza and Kunaka 2000: 15).

Transparency International publishes an annual Global Corruption Report that includes a Corruption Perception Index. In order to determine the extent of corruption in a specific country, this index combines various perceptions on corruption, which reflect the "frequency of corrupt payments, the value of bribes paid and the resulting obstacles imposed on business" (Lambsdorff 2003: 262).

Scores on the Corruption Perception Index range from '10', highly clean, to '0', highly corrupt. The Global Corruption Report utilises various international sources to construct its Corruption Perception Index. These include the World Economic Forum; the World Bank's World Business Environment Survey; the Institute of Management Development; Price Waterhouse Coopers; the Political and Economic Research Consultancy; the Economist Intelligence Unit; Columbia University; Gallup International; and Freedom House (Lambsdorff 2003: 262). The Corruption Perception Index is *not* an index of the actual level of corruption in any particular country, "rather it is an attempt to assess the level at which corruption is perceived by people working for multinational firms and institutions as impacting on commercial and social life" (Pope 1996).

Perceptions are most often not a true reflection of the actual state of affairs. Thus by looking at perceptions of corruption, we are unlikely to conclude anything about the real level of corruption in a polity. So why study perceptions? In this paper we do not argue that perceptions are accurate proxies for actual levels of corruption, nor do we use them as such. But we do argue that perceptions on corruption are *real political perceptions* and as such they are worthy of investigation and explanation.

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Political perceptions are important for at least two reasons. Firstly, these attitudes, like all other attitudes, shape citizens' behaviour. They help determine how citizens view and/or interact with the state and government, and as such they influence sentiment towards the political system as a whole, as well as the actors operating within it. For example, the perception that "all politicians are corrupt" can cause disinterest in the electoral process, which in turn could have a negative impact on voter turnout. On a larger scale, political cynicism hampers the development and consolidation of democracy.

Secondly, perceptions act as public and political 'road maps' for citizens, in that they guide people's understanding of what is deemed 'good' or 'acceptable' behaviour. If the perception that the civil service is driven by greed and personal gain prevails, citizens will act accordingly. Such perceptions can lead to an increase in bribery, gifts and favours, simply because citizens believe that this is the acceptable way to get things done. This could lead to 'institutionalised' corruption and a general breakdown of public integrity, which in turn undermines the effectiveness of public institutions. This too would have a strong negative effect on the development and consolidation of democracy. In order to understand how citizens interact with their institutions or how they behave in the political system, we need to understand their perceptions. We also need to understand how these perceptions are formed and what (political and economic) consequences they have or might have.

With these points in mind, it is important to stress again that this paper makes no claims about real instances of corruption, nor does it comment on the frequency with which these instances are increasing or declining. The paper is simply an attempt to explain public political perceptions by looking at how Namibians view the levels of corruption in their country.

Transparency International does not use mass opinion polls in their assessment of perceptions on corruption. Instead, they rely on opinions and perceptions of various elites (such as journalists and business and bank executives). As a result, they do not reveal much about how ordinary citizens view the state of corruption within their polity, nor do they explore these mass perceptions or relate them to an appropriate political and economic context. Thus they fail to explain why citizens have the perceptions they do.

Yet mass perception-based studies of corruption are not without shortcomings either. For example, ordinary citizens have little exposure to actual deeds of corruption, whereas elites who provide access to state-controlled resources by means of tenders or quotas have much more. Also actual instances of corruption can only occur among elites (foreign or national), and thus do not involve ordinary citizens. Where this is the case, the experiences of ordinary citizens cannot be used as an accurate indicator of actual levels of corruption in a country. Popular perceptions on corruption would not be related to actual experiences of corrupt practices, instead these perceptions might be the product of general political cynicism or political distrust, and might be shaped by media reporting. Ideally the two levels of analysis (elite and mass-level) should to be used to supplement each other.

This study reports on mass perceptions on corruption in Namibia. In doing so it draws on public opinion data from recent rounds of the Afrobarometer Survey (1999 and 2002). It shows that although the current level of corruption is perceived to be quite high, actual experiences of corruption are much lower. Secondly, the paper explores the links between public perceptions on corruption and general political attitudes such as political trust; government legitimacy, responsiveness and performance; service delivery; and support for democracy. Finally, the paper uses these links to explain public perceptions on corruption, using a multivariate regression model.

2. The Survey

Data for this analysis is obtained from the first and second round of the Afrobarometer Survey conducted in Namibia during 1999 and 2002. The Afrobarometer Surveys have a sample size of 1,200 citizens of voting age (i.e. 18 years or older) and all interviews are conducted face –to face. The sample is a Probability –Proportional –to Size (PPS) sample, stratified by rural/urban location as well as by gender. Households were selected from 150 enumerator areas by means of a random starting point with a fixed sample interval. Respondents from each household were selected at random by means of numbered cards, whilst controlling for the gender quota. A Namibian survey research company, Research Facilitation Services (RFS), conducted the fieldwork. RFS was also responsible for data capturing and cleaning.

3. Methodology

This paper starts by providing an overview of the responses to questions on corruption. The questions are clustered into two categories measuring perceptions, as well as actual experiences of corruption. Given the conceptual ambiguities surrounding corruption (see Matsheza and Kunaka 2000), the Afrobarometer Survey used a narrow definition of corruption, "…bribes, gifts or favours to government officials", to avoid confusion. Furthermore, the survey did not explore corruption-related issues such as favouritism and nepotism. Since the Afrobarometer network felt the need to expand the questions on corruption, a number of additional questions were included in the 2002 questionnaire. As a result the Round 1 and Round 2 surveys are not fully comparable.

The survey collected the views of ordinary citizens, and thus did not have an elite focus. One should, therefore, keep in mind that perceptions and real instances might be quite different, and that one should not be used as an indicator or proxy for the other. This study should be read in conjunction with the elite level of analysis produced by organisations such as Transparency International.

4. Findings

Namibia in Comparative Perspective
In order to assess perceptions on corruption in Namibia we must start by comparing Namibia with a number of African countries on two indexes: the Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index and the Afrobarometer Corruption Perception Index.[1] On both indexes '1' represents most corrupt whilst '5' represents most clean. The TI data is from 2002 whereas the Afrobarometer data is from the first-round surveys conducted from 1999 through to 2001. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the two indexes.

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[1] The Index consists of responses to questions on corruption among public officials, civil servants and elected leaders. For the exact wording of the questions, see Logan and Machado (2002). The Afrobarometer Index ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 being 'most clean from corruption'. To ensure compatibility between the indexes, the original TI perception scoring, ranging from 1 to 10, was divided by two to produce a 5-point scale.
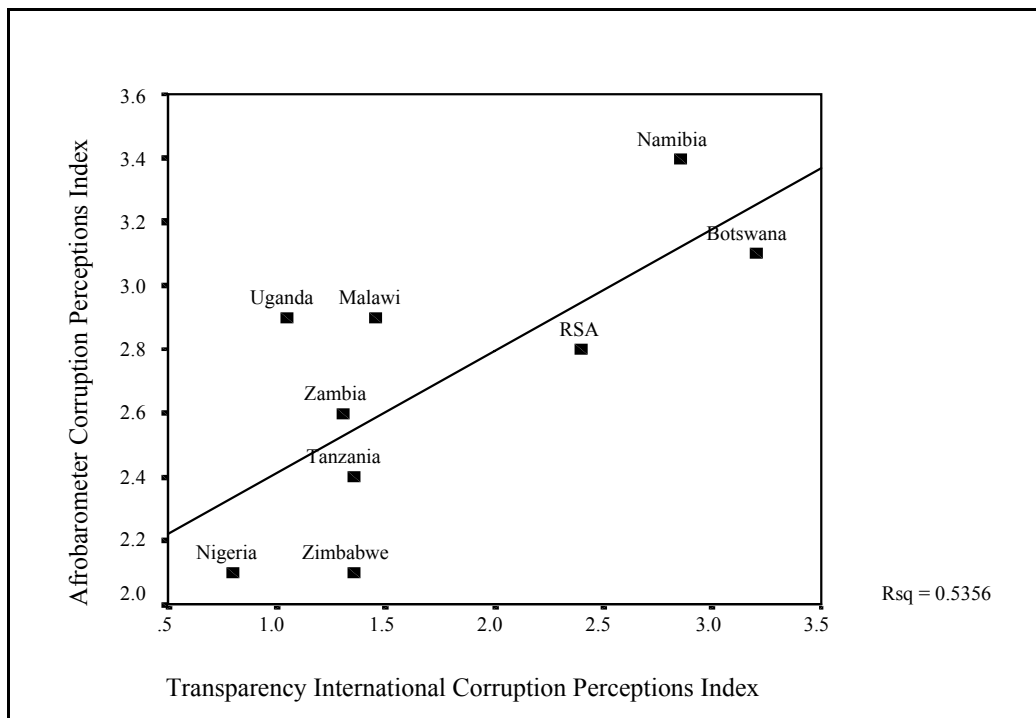
Overall the two indexes correlate sufficiently to conclude that for the most part elites (TI Perceptions Index) and citizens (Afrobarometer Perceptions Index) have fairly similar perceptions on the extent of corruption in these nine countries. But it would be wrong to suggest that they are the same, or that one could be used as a proxy for the other. Of the nine countries Namibia received the most positive ranking from its citizens, followed by Botswana, Uganda and Malawi. Nigeria and Zimbabwe received the lowest rankings from their citizens. Botswana received the best ranking by the elites followed by Namibia and South Africa. These elites also ranked Zimbabwe and Nigeria lowest. In Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa and Botswana, elite and citizen perceptions are closest to each other.

In the 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index Namibia ranks 28th, with a score of 5.7 points (Lambsdorff 2003: 264). Other countries in the southern African region included in the Index are: Botswana, which is the only African country with a better position than Namibia - 24[th,] with a score of 6.4 points; South Africa - 36th (4.8 points); Malawi - 68th (2.9 points); Zimbabwe - 71st (2.7 points); Zambia - 77th (2.6 points); and Kenya - 96th (1.9 points) (Lambsdorff 2003: 264). Namibia's position on the TI Index has remained relatively fixed since 1998, suggesting that elites do not perceive this country as becoming more corrupt.

Perceptions on Extent of Corruption
Table 1 provides an overview of Namibians' perceptions on the extent of corruption when asked about the frequency with which a number of agencies engage in acts of corruption. The predominant view was that across all agencies at least some people are involved in corruption (as stated by between a third and a half of all respondents). Government officials (40%) and the police (36%) were regarded as most corrupt with over 35% of respondents thinking that *most or all* people in these agencies are involved in corruption. These two agencies were followed by: foreign businessmen (32%); elected leaders (27%); border officials (25%); and teachers and school administrators (24%). Those perceived to be *most clean* (i.e. *none* are involved in corruption) included: religious leaders (43%); the Presidency (34%); and judges and magistrates (27%).

One interesting aspect of the findings in Table 1 is the difference in perceptions of local and foreign businessmen. Whereas most respondents felt that corruption levels among local businessmen are moderate (54% of respondents felt that *some* local businessmen are involved in corruption), fewer Namibians felt the same way about foreign businessmen (some 40% felt that *some* foreign businessmen engage in acts of corruption). However, at the higher end of the perceptions' spectrum foreign businessmen were viewed more negatively than local businessmen. Whereas only about 20% felt that *most or all* local businessmen engage in corruption, substantially more, 32%,, felt the same way about foreign businessmen. Also, more Namibians '*do not know*' about foreign businessmen and corruption (11.5%) than about local businessmen and corruption (6.1%).

Table 1: Perceptions of corruption by agency 2002 (%)

	None	Some of them	Most of them	All of them	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	%
Officials in the Presidency	34.4	38.7	15.8	2.3	8.8
Elected leaders	14.6	51.8	23.5	3.3	6.8
Government officials	8.2	46.5	34.3	5.1	5.9
Police	9.9	50.9	31.3	4.7	3.3
Border officials	16.6	47.6	18.3	6.3	11.3
Judges and magistrates	26.6	48.3	12.8	1.8	10.4
Local businessmen	20.2	54.3	17.7	1.8	6.1
Foreign businessmen	16.5	39.7	22.5	9.8	11.5
Teachers and school administrators	25.3	46.3	21.5	2.7	4.3
Religious leaders	43.2	34.3	15.8	1.8	4.9

Question: How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption?

Another interesting aspect of these findings is the fact that next to religious leaders, the Office of the President is perceived to be the *most clean* institution in the country. It is possible that this perception is driven, at least in part, by personal affection for the President himself, rather than the performance of his office.

The fact that judicial officials are seen largely as clean must be regarded as a positive reflection on the rule of law. However, of concern to the legislative arm of Government, should be the perceptions on the extent of corruption among elected leaders. Another negative aspect is the perceptions on corruption among the police.

The next step of the analysis is to construct a Corruption Perception Index (CPI) representing each respondent's average score (between 0 and 4)[2] for all 10 agencies listed in Table 1. Conceptually the 10 CPI items can be divided into two distinct clusters: *state corruption* (Office of the President, elected leaders, government officials, police, border officials, teachers and school administrators, and judges and magistrates) and *civil society corruption* (local businessmen, foreign businessmen and religious leaders).

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[2] Where 0 = *none* and 4 = *all*, and '*don't know*' is recoded as 2 (neutral values).

However, the initial Factor Analysis with all 10 items revealed two factors not in line with the conceptual classification above. It distinguished between the Presidency, elected leaders, government officials and the police as one factor, and the remaining variables as a second. Further Factor Analysis with only *state corruption* variables suggests that the 'teachers and school administrators' variable causes some conceptual problems. When this variable is omitted all *state* variables loaded on the same factor.[3] The same method was used with the *civil society corruption* variables. This Factor Analysis shows that the 'teachers and school administrators' variable loads on the same factor as the *civil society* variables, which suggests that, conceptually, Namibians view schools as part of civil society rather than the state.[4] From these two factors, two corruption indices were constructed and subjected to Reliability Analysis. Both the State Corruption Perception Index (SCPI) and the Civil Society Corruption Perception Index (CCPI) were found to be reliable.[5]

The two Indexes correlate[6] (r = 0.513; p = 0.01) suggesting that those respondents that view state agencies as more corrupt have a similar view of civil society agencies. When rural and urban perceptions are compared as in Table 2, no significant difference is found with regard to the SCPI. However, urban areas score lower than rural areas on the CCPI, meaning that in urban areas civil society is regarded as less corrupt than in rural areas, whereas civil society and the state are viewed as equally corrupt.

Table 2: SCPI and CCPI mean scores by urban and rural areas

	SCPI	CCPI
Urban	1.40	1.11
Rural	1.40	1.39
Overall average	1.40	1.29

Table 3 contains the breakdown of both SCPI and CCPI average scores by region. In four regions, Caprivi, Kunene, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa, civil society is viewed in a very positive light. The opposite is true for the four north-central regions: Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto. There is less variance between the regions on the SCPI, with Hardap, Karas and Oshana holding the most negative views.

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[3] Eigen value = 2.98; variance = 49.7%
[4] Eigen value = 2.281; variance = 57.02%
[5] For the SCPI Cronbach's Alpha = 0.759 and for the CCPI Cronbach's Alpha = 0.743
[6] Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) is used to establish the linkages between these variables. It ranges from –1 to +1 with 0 representing no correlation at all. Pearson's r indicates both the strength and direction (positive or negative) of the relationship between two variables but does not reveal causality.

Table 3: SCPI and CCPI means by region

	SCPI	CCPI
Caprivi	1.04	0.37
Erongo	1.17	1.10
Hardap	1.61	1.35
Karas	1.54	1.23
Kavango	1.43	1.09
Khomas	1.40	1.08
Kunene	1.20	0.76
Ohangwena	1.45	1.75
Omaheke	1.30	0.60
Omusati	1.48	1.86
Oshana	1.62	1.57
Oshikoto	1.36	1.59
Otjozondjupa	1.19	0.66
Overall average	1.40	1.29

Although the predominant view among ordinary Namibians is that at least some people in all the agencies are involved in corruption, some 48% view the current Government to be less corrupt than the South African colonial administration. Some 23% felt the two are about the same, whilst a substantial number (25%) felt that the current Government is more corrupt than the colonial administration.[7]

Access to Government Services

It is quite possible that citizens who struggle to gain access to essential government services might resort to bribes, gifts or favour to guarantee access. Alternatively, those who struggle to obtain services might begin to believe that the reason for them not getting access to services is the result of corruption, i.e. that those persons who include bribes, gifts or favours are first in line to be serviced. On both accounts public perceptions on corruption might be linked to efforts to obtain essential government services. The Afrobarometer Survey included a number of questions on access to various government services. The Namibian findings are presented in Table 4.

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[7] This comparison does not mean that Namibians had an accurate view of the real level of corruption during the colonial administration. Thus whether or not they view the current Government as more or less corrupt than the colonial one should also not be treated as an accurate judgement. Rather, this judgement is a political perception reflecting on whether or not matters have improved positively or negatively since Independence. Also, one should keep in mind that (public) memory is notoriously bad.

Table 4: Access to services

	Very Difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very Easy	Never Try	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Obtaining an identity document	36.7	23.7	27.4	10.0	1.5	0.8
Primary school placement for child	12.1	21.8	44.7	14.3	6.2	1.0
Obtaining voter registration card for yourself	6.3	14.7	45.8	23.9	7.8	1.5
Obtaining household services (piped water, electricity or phone)	32.1	24.5	20.3	2.2	19.3	1.7
Obtaining loan or payment from Government (agricultural credit or welfare grants/pensions)	30.0	14.8	6.6	0.8	41.8	6.1
Obtaining help from the police	18.8	32.4	30.3	8.3	9.2	1.2

Question: Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services? Or do you never try and get these services from Government?

Of the six services listed above, most Namibians experienced no real problems obtaining a voter registration card (79%) or placement for kids in a primary school (59%). In sharp contrast, 60% found it difficult or very difficult to obtain an ID document; 57% found it difficult or very difficult to obtain household services; 45% found it difficult or very difficult to obtain a loan or payment from Government; and 51% found it difficult or very difficult to obtain help from the police. These results suggest that the average Namibian struggles to secure access to government services.

Table 5 provides an overview of the difficulty to access government services by region for those respondents who have tried to obtain these services.[8] Two services seem to present similar problems across all regions: household services and loans/payments from Government. For each of these, the mean scores are well below the scale mid-point. Furthermore, Factor Analysis confirms that these two variables do not load on the same dimension as the others and thus, that they should not be considered when compiling a single scale to measure access to state services.

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[8] The scale range is 1 to 4, where 1 = very difficult and 4 very easy. 'Never tried' and 'Don't know' have been recoded as 'system missing'. The scale mid-point is 2.5.

Table 5: Mean scores access to services by region

Region	ID document	Placement in primary school	Voter registration card	Household services	Loan/ payment from Government	Help from police
Caprivi	1.47	2.72	3.20	1.79	1.25	2.62
Erongo	2.38	2.71	3.05	2.48	1.88	2.31
Hardap	2.61	2.65	2.72	2.48	1.93	2.06
Karas	2.15	2.03	2.74	2.36	1.71	2.04
Kavango	1.43	2.40	2.80	1.86	1.36	2.09
Khomas	1.82	2.80	2.98	2.21	1.78	1.74
Kunene	1.73	2.66	3.42	1.90	1.44	2.11
Ohangwena	2.38	2.55	2.86	1.31	1.31	2.67
Omaheke	1.96	2.46	3.06	1.80	1.76	1.35
Omusati	2.63	2.79	2.91	1.41	1.33	3.02
Oshana	2.13	2.57	2.81	1.44	1.37	2.51
Oshikoto	2.57	2.97	3.06	1.47	1.27	2.84
Otjozondjupa	1.90	2.65	3.04	2.22	2.41	2.01
Overall average	2.11	2.66	2.96	1.91	1.58	2.31

Overall the regional patterns for each of the services are quite different. For example, it is quite difficult to obtain an ID document in Caprivi, Kavango, Kunene, Khomas and Otjozondjupa, whereas in Khomas and Omaheke it is more difficult to obtain help from the police. Voter registration cards are easy to obtain in all regions, but are most readily available in Caprivi, Erongo, Kunene, Omaheke, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa.

Are perceptions on state corruption related to access to state services? Table 6 suggests that they are.

Table 6: Correlation coefficients: SCPI by access to services

		SCPI	ID document	Placement in primary school	Voter registration card	Household services	Loan or welfare grant from Government	Help from police
SCPI	Pearson correlation	1	-.104**	-.219**	-.076*	-.021	.009	-.081*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000	.022	.559	.832	.016
	N	968	952	916	898	766	543	894

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Those Namibians who believe that it is difficult to obtain an ID document, placement for their kids in a primary school, a voter registration card, or help from the police, are also likely to think that state agencies are more corrupt. Household services, and loans and welfare grants are not linked to perceptions on state corruption.

Propensity for Corruption

Having established that many Namibians find it difficult to access certain government services, the focus now shifts to their willingness to engage in corruption to deal with the problem. The Afrobarometer Survey asked respondents what they are willing to do when they experience substantial delays in obtaining government permits or licences. Table 7 summarises these responses.

Table 7: Propensity for corruption

	Frequency	%
Don't worry, just wait, the permit will come	479	39.9
Offer a tip or a gift to the official	74	6.2
Use connections to influential people	50	4.2
Write a letter to the head office	259	21.6
Do what you want without the permit	43	3.6
Do nothing because nothing can be done	237	19.8
Don't Know	58	4.8
Total	1200	100.0

Question: What would you do if you were waiting for a government permit or licence, but kept encountering delays?

Most Namibians (40%) preferred to wait and a further 20% would do nothing because they believed nothing could be done. By far the majority of those who were prepared to take action (22%) would take legal action by writing a letter to head office. All this suggests that the propensity for corruption among ordinary Namibians is low – only slightly more than 10% would offer a bribe or use influential personal connections to speed up the process.

Table 8 contains an overview of the propensity for corruption in urban and rural areas.

Table 8: Propensity for Corruption by Urban and Rural Areas

	Urban	Rural	Total
	%	%	%
Don't worry, just wait	41.0	39.2	39.9
Offer a tip or a gift to the official	5.0	6.9	6.2
Use connections to influential people	5.6	3.2	4.2
Write a letter to the head office	25.6	18.9	21.6
Do what you want without the permit	2.7	4.2	3.6
Do nothing because nothing can be done	15.6	22.5	19.8
Don't Know	4.4	5.1	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Slightly more rural than urban respondents are willing to offer a bribe, whilst slightly more urban respondents are willing to make use of influential personal connections. Substantially more urban than rural dwellers are prepared to write a letter to head offices, whereas rural dwellers are more likely to do nothing. The differences between urban and rural areas are statistically significant (Chi square = 21.107; p=0.01).

Actual Experiences of Corruption

Thus far, it was established that: 1) a substantial number of Namibians perceive corruption levels to be high; 2) a substantial number of Namibians have difficulty accessing a variety of government services; and 3) that the propensity or willingness to engage in acts of corruption is low. The analysis now shifts to ordinary Namibians' actual experiences of corruption.

The Afrobarometer enquired about respondents' engagement in acts of corruption over the past year. The results are contained in Table 9

Table 9: Actual experiences of corruption

	Never	Once or Twice	A Few Times	Often	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	5
Ever paid bribe to get document or permit	90.2	5.0	3.5	0.8	0.6
Ever paid bribe to get child into school	85.9	8.6	3.6	1.7	0.3
Ever paid bribe to get household service	88.0	6.7	3.2	2.0	0.2
Ever paid bribe to cross a border	94.0	3.4	1.3	0.8	0.5
Ever paid bribe to avoid problem with police	91.8	5.2	1.8	0.8	0.5

Question: In the Past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour to government officials in order to:_____?

By far the majority of Namibians have never had to pay a bribe to obtain a government service. Where bribes were paid, 10% did so to obtain a document or permit; 14% to get a child into school; 12% to get a household service; 5% to cross a border; and 8% to avoid a problem with the police.

Urban and rural locations have different experiences. Table 10 summarises these.

Table 10: Acts of corruption by urban and rural areas

	Urban	Rural
	%	%
To get a document or a permit	14	6
Get a child into school	11	16
Get a household service	13	12
Cross a border	8	4
Avoid a problem with the police	11	6

(Combined %: once or twice; a few times; often)

The table shows that more urban dwellers offered bribes, gifts or favours to get a document or permit, cross a border, or avoid a problem with the police. More rural dwellers than urban dwellers offered a bribe, gift or favour to get children into school.

Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis showed that a valid and reliable index could be constructed from the items used to indicate actual experiences with corruption.[9] The Actual

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[9] Eigen value = 2.533; variance = 50.65%; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.747

Corruption Index (ACI) is thus the mean score for each respondent across all five items listed above.[10]

Table 11 compares mean ACI by region and urban and rural areas.

Table 11: ACI by region and rural/urban area

Region	Mean	N
Caprivi	0.02	55
Erongo	0.27	94
Hardap	0.29	53
Karas	0.13	56
Kavango	0.10	101
Khomas	0.08	199
Kunene	0.00	48
Ohangwena	0.15	120
Omaheke	0.04	48
Omusati	0.05	128
Oshana	0.38	94
Oshikoto	0.26	102
Otjozondjupa	0.02	87
Urban	0.17	472
Rural	0.16	713
Overall average	0.14	1185

Residents in urban areas have more experience with corruption than rural areas. The region with highest incidence of corruption is Oshana, followed by Hardap, Oshikoto and Erongo. Overall, however, most regions show a low incidence of actual corruption.

Are perceptions on corruption related to actual experiences? A correlation analysis that explored the relationship between the ACI, the SCPI and the CCPI suggests that they are. The correlation between the ACI and the SCPI is slightly lower ($r = 0.213$; $p = 0.01$) than the correlation between the ACI and the CCPI ($r = 0.231$; $p=0.01$). This is mainly due to the fact that schools were added to the CCPI.

5. Toward an Explanation of Mass Perceptions on Corruption

So far the paper has reviewed Namibians' views on and experiences of corruption in a rather descriptive manner. In an earlier section we made it clear that views on corruption are worth understanding and explaining as political perceptions. In this section, the focus deepens as these views are analysed using more complex statistical techniques, in order to arrive at a more substantial understanding of their origins. Given the low levels of experience of corruption, what

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[10] The ACI ranges from 0 (never) to 3 (often). The scale mid-point is thus 1.5. 'Don't know' was recoded as missing.

drives popular perceptions about the levels of corruption? In order to answer these questions an ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression model is presented in which a number of propositions (possible explanations) are tested for validity. These are:

- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by access to the media.* Thus those that have more access to the media and media reports on corruption have more negative perceptions about the level of corruption than those without regular access to the media.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by actual experiences with corruption.* Those Namibians who have paid bribes or given gifts to obtain government services in the past are more likely to think that corruption is high than those who have not.
- *Perceptions of corruption are driven by lack of access to government services.* Those Namibians who experience difficulties with gaining access to government services are more likely to think that Government is corrupt.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by the level of political trust*. Those Namibians that show higher levels of trust in Government are likely to have more positive views on the level of corruption.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by perceptions on democratic performance*. Those Namibians who feel that democracy is not performing very well are more likely to have negative views on the level of corruption than those that have a positive view on democratic performance.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by general perceptions on government performance*. Those that feel the current government is doing a good job are less likely to have a negative view on the level of corruption than those that feel the opposite.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by perceptions on economic performance*. Those who feel that economic performance is adequate are less likely to perceive corruption as rife than those who perceive economic performance as inadequate.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by perceptions on government responsiveness*. Those Namibians who feel that Government is not interested in their well-being or does not listen to them are more inclined to have a negative view on the level of corruption.
- *Perceptions on corruption are driven by membership of a political minority.* Those Namibians who are members of ethnic minorities and those who support opposition parties are more likely to have negative views on the level of corruption.

In addition to these propositions, the model presented in Table 12 below also include a number of socio-biographical variables. These include: age, education, residential location (urban or rural) and gender.

Table 12: Regression coefficients – perceptions on corruption

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.243	0.325		3.826	0.000
Media					
News from radio	-0.041	0.058	-0.047	-0.705	0.482
News from TV	0.006	0.025	0.018	0.234	0.815
News from newspapers	0.081	0.030	0.219	2.727	0.007**
Corruption experiences					
Actual experience with corruption	0.274	0.078	0.224	3.503	0.001**
Access to documents and services is easy	-0.147	0.056	-0.168	-2.611	0.010**
Trust					
Trust in government	-0.115	0.062	-0.144	-1.849	0.066
Performance					
Satisfaction with democracy	0.103	0.056	0.138	1.839	0.067
Elected leaders performance	-0.024	0.075	-0.026	-0.313	0.755
Government's economic performance	0.024	0.061	0.028	0.383	0.702
Responsiveness					
Elected leaders look after the interests of people like me	0.062	0.058	0.090	1.072	0.285
Elected leaders listens to people like me	-0.060	0.056	-0.094	-1.061	0.290
Political minority					
Supporter of ruling party (yes=1; no=0)	0.045	0.067	0.046	0.677	0.499
Socio-biographical variables					
Gender (female=1; male=2)	-0.008	0.060	-0.009	-0.141	0.888
Age	-0.006	0.003	-0.123	-2.001	0.047*
Residential location (urban=1; rural=2)	0.173	0.080	0.149	2.169	0.031*
Education	-0.026	0.021	-0.088	-1.250	0.213

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate		
1	0.411	0.169	0.112	0.45680		

*** p<0.01*
* p<0.05

Table 12 shows that perceptions on corruption are complex and difficult to explain. With the 16 variables which comprise the model, only 17% of the variance in perceptions on corruption is explained (R square=0.169). Overall, the model is significant (F=2.96; p=0.001).

Most of the propositions posed at the beginning of this section turned out to be unsubstantiated. Of the 16 variables included in the model only five turned out to be significant. They are: getting news from newspapers; actual experiences of corruption; finding it difficult to access documents and services; and age and residential location.

Firstly, the model shows that those who have access to newspapers perceive the levels of corruption to be higher than those accessing news through radio and/or television. Since both

radio and television are effectively state-owned media, the fact that they have little impact on perceptions on corruption is also politically significant. It is possible that the significance of newspapers and the insignificance of radio and television can also be explained by their perceived degree of independence or bias. In short, it is possible that newspapers are regarded as more trustworthy than radio and television, since the latter are state-owned.

However, the distribution of responses to whether or not state-owned and independent media can be trusted is fairly similar. Some 77% trust NBC Radio and TV; some 61% trust independent radio and TV; 61% trust government-owned newspapers; and 70% trust independent newspapers. However, if trust in the various media sources is included in the original regression model, only one – trust in government-owned newspapers – turns out to be statistically significant (model not presented here). It has a negative effect on perceptions on corruption, i.e. the more news one gets from this source, the lower the perceived level of corruption in the country. If one considers the fact that trust in government-owned radio and television also has a negative implication, and that both independent sources have a positive implication (despite being statistically insignificant), the second model confirms that the ownership issue is important for understanding perceptions on corruption. Those who trust the state-owned media have more positive views on the levels of corruption than those who trust the independent media.

6. Conclusions

It is extremely difficult to explain mass perceptions on corruption in Namibia. Although this paper found links between citizens' experiences of corruption and their perceptions on the overall level of corruption, this link is not strong enough to argue that perceptions are driven or caused by experience alone. Evidence was also presented which suggests that the media cannot be blamed for current perceptions.

Although Namibia is currently perceived to be relatively free of corruption, both by citizens and elites, we believe that there is cause for concern. Firstly, access to government services and documentation needs to be improved if future perceptions on corruption are to be reversed. Scores on the SCPI and 'access to government services' correlate significantly.[11] More importantly, those Namibians who have experience of corruption were also more likely to have difficulty accessing government services.[12] Secondly, the model also suggests that to reverse current perceptions on corruption, the level of actual experiences of corruption has to be reduced. This in turn implies that successful institutional reforms and public integrity programmes would help reduce negative perceptions on corruption because they would reduce actual experiences of corruption.

One cannot, however, regard these findings as the final word on perceptions on corruption. Perceptions are subject to change. Future polls would reveal the direction in which these perceptions are developing – positive or negative. It is likely that if negative perceptions were to increase, they would do so in urban areas and among younger members of the Namibian society.

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[11] Pearson's r=-0.159, p<0.01
[12] Pearson's r=-0.100; p<0.01

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