

AFRO BAROMETER

Working Paper No. 47

**DEMOCRACY WITHOUT
DEMOCRATS?
RESULTS FROM THE 2003
AFROBAROMETER SURVEY
IN NAMIBIA**

by Christiaan Keulder and Tania Wiese

**A comparative series of national public
attitude surveys on democracy, markets
and civil society in Africa.**



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April 2005

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AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS

Editors: Michael Bratton, E. Gyimah-Boadi, and Robert Mattes

Managing Editor: Carolyn Logan

Afrobarometer publications report the results of national sample surveys on the attitudes of citizens in selected African countries towards democracy, markets, civil society, and other aspects of development. The Afrobarometer is a collaborative enterprise of Michigan State University (MSU), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, Ghana). Afrobarometer papers are simultaneously co-published by these partner institutions.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures	viii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Methodology.....	1
3. Findings	2
3.1 Preference for democracy	2
3.2 Preference for non-democratic government.....	4
3.3 Performance of democracy	7
3.4 Supply and Demand model of Democracy	9
3.5 Legitimacy	11
3.6 State Capacity and Government Performance	11
3.7 Political Trust.....	16
3.8 Responsiveness	19
3.9 Corruption.....	21
3.10 Partisanship and Political Mobilisation.....	24
4. Conclusions	26
5. Bibliography.....	28

List of Tables

Table 1: Preference for Democracy.....	3
Table 2: Support for Elements of Democracy.....	4
Table 3: Preference for Non-Democratic Government.....	5
Table 4: Regression – Support for Democracy.....	6
Table 5: Quality of Democracy.....	7
Table 6: Current versus Past Regime Performance.....	8
Table 7: Satisfaction with Democracy.....	9
Table 8: Four elements of State Legitimacy.....	11
Table 9: Ability to Enforce the Law.....	12
Table 10: Government’s Capacity to Solve Problems.....	12
Table 11: Current Government Compared to Colonial Administration.....	13
Table 12: The “Peoples’ Agenda”.....	14
Table 13: Positive Ratings of Government Performance on Selected Policy Issues.....	15
Table 14: Positive Performance of Elected Agencies.....	15
Table 15: Trust in Selected Political Actors.....	18
Table 16: Regression Coefficients: Trust in the State.....	19
Table 17: Government Responsiveness.....	20
Table 18: Contact with Elected Representatives.....	21
Table 19: Involvement in Corruption.....	22
Table 20: Difficulty with Obtaining Documents and Services.....	22
Table 21: Acquiring Permit from Government.....	23
Table 22: Actual Bribes Paid.....	24
Table 23: Cognitive and Partisan Mobilisation.....	25

List of Figures

Figure 1: Demand and Supply for Democracy 1999-2003.....	10
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on a national sample survey conducted in Namibia as part of Afrobarometer Round 2, this report finds that, even though democracy is yet to become consolidated at the attitudinal level, Namibia appears to be a “democracy without democrats.” Key findings supporting this proposition include the following:

- Only a slight majority of Namibians have a clear preference for democracy. Furthermore, the number of Namibians who believe democracy is always best has declined over the past three waves of surveys.
- A substantial number of Namibians are supportive of possible non-democratic alternatives, especially a single-party polity.
- Despite the substantial number of Namibians who do not show outright preference for democracy, most Namibians are satisfied with democracy at the moment. They show an appreciation for the current regime over the previous (colonial) one and they think the quality of democracy is quite high.
- The demand for democracy across the country is low. The demand for democracy increased from 1999 to 2002 and declined again to its lowest levels yet in 2003. The supply of democracy is much higher than the demand suggesting that Namibians “get more than they ask for.”
- Namibians generally hold the state in much higher esteem than the democratic regime. They regard the state as legitimate and with sufficient capacity to enforce its laws. However, they are more cautious about their ability to solve problems. Namibians over time have identified four main problems for the state to address: unemployment, education, HIV/AIDS and water. Some of these are among the policy issues that they feel the government has performed less well on.
- Overall, trust in government and state agencies has declined since 1999. Particularly, the low levels of trust in opposition parties are reason for great concern.
- Another major reason for concern is the overwhelming view that the state is unresponsive. There is almost no contact between elected representatives and citizens. We argued that the electoral system contributes to this trend, but political representatives take little initiative to overcome the effects of the electoral system.
- Finally, most Namibians are still mobilised through their partisanship and not through their own cognitive abilities. This implies an absence of large number of floating voters. We thus expect Namibia’s dominant party system to remain for the near to medium future.

1. Introduction

Democracy needs democrats. New democracies need a large number of democrats if democracy is to become consolidated as the “only game in town.” Democrats are those citizens in a society that display unequivocal support or preference for democracy as the most appropriate form of government, and thus disregard all other forms of (non-democratic) government.

Yet, we understand little about why or how popular preference or mass support for democracy develops in societies that have had little experience with democracy. If we accept that democrats are made and not born, we have to accept that support for democracy, as regime type, is the outcome of socio-political learning and not some innate human quality or feature. There are at least two important aspects to the analysis of support for democracy.

Firstly, what are the factors that shape, determine or instigate support for democracy? This report reviews a number of possible predictors of support for democracy: a rejection of non-democratic form of government, regime performance, policy performance, representative performance, legitimacy, trust in government; government responsiveness, and partisanship.

Secondly, we need to understand what type of support is granted to democracy. Is support for democracy a normative commitment to democracy, or is it instrumental support? A normative commitment requires citizens to express: 1) a clear preference for democracy, and at the same time, 2) an unqualified rejection of all other forms of non-democratic government. These citizens believe in and are committed to democracy because of its inherent or intrinsic qualities. They thus believe in democracy for what it is (its inherent political worth), and not what it can do (economic and material performance).¹

Instrumental support is essentially support based on economic and material performance – of the regime, of the actors within the regime, and of the policies generated by the actors in the regime. This support is conditional, and hence, potentially less permanent than intrinsic support. It co-exists with substantive popular expectations about economic and material well-being or improvement.

The factors that shape, determine or instigate support for democracy, will determine, initially at least, the type of support. Deprived citizens might initially support democracy because of their material expectations, but as citizens gain more experience with democracy and get used to the non-material benefits of democracy, the nature of their support might shift. If and where this occurs, prospects for democracy to become successfully consolidated are enhanced.

2. Methodology

This survey is the third Afrobarometer survey conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). Previous surveys were conducted in 1999 and 2002. Fieldwork for the third survey was completed in 2003.

The survey methodology for all three Namibian surveys followed the requirements of the Afrobarometer Network.² A nationally representative sample of 1,200 Namibians 18 years and older was selected by means of a three-step probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling

¹ For a summary of the intrinsic vs. instrumental debate see Bratton and Mattes (2001).

² For a detailed description of the sample and fieldwork methodology, please consult the Afrobarometer website at: www.afrobarometer.org

method. This means that firstly, each region was allocated a share of the overall sample proportionate to its share of the overall population above 18 years, and secondly, that within each region, urban and rural areas were allocated their share of interviews in proportion to their overall share of that region's overall population above 18 years. Households were selected by means of a fixed interval (based on the number of interviews required and the number of households in the settlement or Enumerator Area) by the interviewers (four in each team) following a random walk-pattern. Finally, eligible respondents were selected by means of a random number card system for each of the two genders to ensure that equal numbers of male and female respondents were included in the sample.

Research Facilitation Services (RFS), a Namibian commercial survey company, conducted all fieldwork. The same company also conducted the fieldwork in 1999 and 2002. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in the National Planning Commission (NPC) designed the sample from the provisional 2001 Population and Household Census sample frame. The CBS also provided the Enumerator Area (EA) and Constituency Maps.

3. Findings

3.1 Preference for democracy

Democrats are those citizens in a society that display unequivocal support for democracy, thus preferring democracy to any other form of (non-democratic) government. Typically this type of support is diffuse support. Norris writes that "diffuse [political] support relates to... accumulated experience" (1999: 219). She also quotes Easton who first suggested the notion of diffuse support:

"Members do not come to identify with basic political objects only because they have learned to do so... from others – a critical aspect of socialisation processes. If they did, diffuse support would have entirely the appearance of a non-rational phenomenon. Rather, on the basis of their own experiences, members may also adjudge the worth of supporting these objects for their own sake. Such attachment may be a product of spill-over effects from evaluations of a series of outputs and performance over a long period of time. Even though the orientations derive from responses to particular inputs initially, they become in time disassociated with performance. They become transformed into generalised attitudes towards the authorities or other political objects."

Based on Easton's quote above, one can deduce that a preference for democratic rule must be based, ideally, on attitudes other than those related to how well the regime is performing. In this regard Diamond (1996: 112) identifies three paradoxes of democracy. The first is between conflict and consensus; the second sets representativeness against governability; and the third, on which we focus for this analysis, lies between consent and effectiveness. He writes that a stable democracy needs to be deemed legitimate by its citizens, i.e. they must view it as "the best, the most appropriate form of government for their society." This means that democracy rests on the sanction of those it governs.

As far as respondents' belief that democracy is the better alternative is concerned, Table 1 below shows that slightly more than half of the respondents interviewed for the most recent Afrobarometer survey (2003) believe that democracy is always preferable. This figure was slightly higher in 1999 (57 percent), increased by around 7 percentage points in 2002 and decreased again by approximately 10 points during 2003. A comparison of the three years shows that there has been a steady increase in the proportion of respondents who believe that under

specific circumstances, a non-democratic government might be preferable – it went up from nearly 12 percent in 1999 to slightly more than 14 percent in 2002, and then increased again by another 5 in 2003. Another one-in-five Namibians do not care about the form of government at all.

Table 1: Preference for Democracy

	1999	2002	2003
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government	57	64	54
In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable	12	14	20
For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	12	19	20
Don't know	19	3	5

Which of these statements is closest to your own opinion? (percent)

This means that overt support for democracy is at slightly lower levels than in 1999, whilst support for non-democratic government is significantly higher. Namibians appear to have made up their minds since 1999 when 19 percent “did not know.” In 2003, only 5 percent did not know which of the two options they preferred. Table 1 also shows that support for democracy, like most other attitudes, is not fixed. Over the three rounds of surveys, support for democracy first increased, then decreased. Although more time series data is needed to determine whether support for democracy will continue to decline, it seems as if after three rounds of surveys, consolidation is still some way away. Namibians, after fifteen years of uninterrupted democracy, are still not entirely convinced that democracy is best. In our view, this suggests that a significant proportion of Namibians do not support democracy for its intrinsic value; but rather that their support is more instrumental.

In order to assess respondents' endorsement of various key elements of democracy, respondents were asked about their support for regular free and fair elections, multi-party competition, limits on presidential terms, and parliamentary autonomy.

Support for regular free and fair elections has decreased slightly from 2002 (86 percent) to 2003 (82 percent), but remains very high overall. Support for parliamentary autonomy decreased from its already low levels of 2002 (45 percent) to 36 percent in 2003. This, we believe, is cause for concern because the Executive already dominates the Namibian legislative process, and the presidential control over the Executive is near absolute. His control over the legislature stems primarily from his powers to appoint cabinet members from the ranks of the legislature, and the fact that the incumbent President increased the number of cabinet positions to a point where more than half the National Assembly is either a Minister or Deputy-Minister. This had a negative effect on the legislative process – for all practical purposes the National Assembly has become a rubberstamp for the legislative preferences of the Executive.

On the positive side, more Namibians expressed their support for a multi-party system in 2003 (62 percent) than in 2002 (46 percent). There has also been an increase in support for the limitation on presidential terms in office. In 2002 about one-in-two (50 percent) Namibians thought the presidential term should be limited to two terms in office, whilst in 2003 slightly more than three-in-five (63 percent) thought the same way. Roughly the same percentage supported democracy for its intrinsic value in 2002 (55 percent) and 2003 (56 percent). This means that only about one-half of all Namibians show intrinsic support. This seems to confirm

our observation earlier in this section: Namibians are not entirely convinced that democracy is “truly best.”

Table 2: Support for Elements of Democracy

	2002	2003
We should choose our leaders in this country through regular, open and honest elections	86	82
Many political parties are needed to make sure that Namibians have choices in who governs them	46	62
In Namibia, the President must obey the constitution, including serving no more than two terms in office	50	63
The members of the National Assembly represent the people; therefore they should make laws for this country, even if the President does not agree	45	36
Our present system of elected government should be given more time to deal with inherited problems	49	63
Democracy is worth having simply because it allows everyone a free and equal voice in making decisions	55	56

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? (percent)

At least two of these findings are quite interesting in the current political context. Firstly, increased support for political plurality or multi-party democracy could point to the fact that citizens no longer see opposition parties as negatively as before. After fifteen years of experience with opposition parties, and coupled with the fact that the opposition is weak, it is just possible that Namibians are now, more than ever before, ready to accept their presence. They are thus no longer seen as a threat to the ruling party and the political process controlled by the ruling party.

Secondly, the large increase in opposition to unlimited presidency is rather important. The incumbent President, Sam Nujoma, already serves a third term. The third term came about as a result of a constitutional amendment prior to the 1999 presidential elections. With the next presidential elections due later this year (2004) it is not surprising that rumours about a fourth term started circulating earlier this year. Unlike the previous time when he probably had public support for his third term bid, Namibians are now against a fourth term. President Nujoma’s decision not to bid for a fourth term seems to be the correct one as far as citizens were concerned in 2003.³

3.2 Preference for non-democratic government

A commitment to, and support for democracy, is only one side of the coin. It is not simply a case of respondents being “for” democracy – support for a certain regime type necessarily requires an outright rejection of its polar opposite, which, in this context, would be various varieties of non-democratic rule. Fully committed democrats are those citizens who a) show outright support for democracy as the best system, and b) at the same time reject all forms of non-democratic rule.

Table 3 below shows support for various types of non-democratic rule. Support for one-party rule was quite low in 1999, decreased by around a further 3 percentage points in 2002 and then

³ Nujoma officially paved way for a successor during a special party congress in May 2004. The current Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and a close aid of Nujoma, Hifikepunye Pohamba was appointed as SWAPO Party’s next presidential candidate. For a detailed discussion of the issues surrounding the nomination process and the individual campaigns for the nomination see Hopwood (2004).

increased substantially to almost half of the respondents (47 percent) in 2003. Support for other forms of non-democratic rule all followed the same pattern – relatively low in 1999, with a “dip” in 2002 and then an increase in 2003 to levels well above the 1999 standard.

After one-party rule, respondents indicated the most support for military rule (30 percent), followed by traditional rule (28 percent). Presidential rule had the least support (22 percent). There are some inconsistencies when the results here are compared to the support for certain components of democracy in Table 2 above. This, we believe, is due to the fact that Namibians do not show consistent and structured support for democracy; they have yet to decide whether or not democracy is better than its alternatives. To some extent, this could also reflect the fact that Namibians have no experience with indigenous authoritarianism. They still seem to want the “best of both worlds.”

Table 3: Preference for Non-Democratic Government

	1999	2002	2003
If only one political party, or candidates from only one party, were allowed to stand for elections and hold office	24	21	47
If all decisions were made by a council of Elders, Traditional Leaders or Chiefs	22	19	28
If the army came in to govern the country	24	14	30
If Parliament and political parties were abolished, so that the President could decide everything?	24	12	22

1999: Our current system of governing with regular elections and more than one political party is not the only one Namibia has ever had. Some people say that we would be better off if we had a different system of government. How much would you disapprove, neither disapprove nor approve, or approve of the following alternatives to our current system of government with at least two political parties and regular elections?

2002, 2003: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives? (percent)

A factor analysis (with maximum likelihood used as extraction method) indicates that support for single-party rule, traditional rule, military rule and presidential rule; all load on one dimension, which we refer to as support for authoritarianism. This factor has an Eigen value larger than one and explains a cumulative percentage of variance of 61 percent. Using the above-mentioned four variables, a reliable “Authoritarianism Index” (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.7813) was compiled for use in further analysis.

Comparison of urban/rural mean scores on the support for Authoritarian Index showed that there is very little variation in support for authoritarianism between urban and rural areas.

Despite the fact that support for non-democratic alternatives has increased over the three surveys, most Namibians still prefer democracy and reject non-democratic alternatives. But what forms the basis of their support? According to Larry Diamond (1996), democratic legitimacy requires a “moral commitment and emotional allegiance,” both of which develop over time and partially as a result of performance. However, when attempting to consolidate democracy, a government must aim to achieve at mass level a “broad normative and behavioural consensus” (Diamond 1999) on the desirability of the constitutional system. Norris writes that countries might revert to authoritarian rule or never become fully consolidated democracies, if they fail to establish public support for democratic institutions (1999: 266).

Below, we assess these claims, and present some evidence that it has something to do with a normative commitment to democracy. We tested five contending explanations: 1) that support for democracy is explained by an outright rejection of non-democratic alternatives and hence by the normative belief that democracy is best; 2) that support for democracy is the product of electoral legitimacy for the incumbents; 3) that support for democracy is best explained by the performance of key actors in the system; 4) that support for democracy is best explained by where citizens find themselves in the relations of power; and 5) that support for democracy is explained by the levels of trust citizens show toward key actors.⁴ Some of these independent variables consist of indexes that were constructed from several items. These are explained in more detail elsewhere in this report.

The last four explanations all have some degree of conditionality attached to them. They all place an emphasis on the actors in charge: who they are, how they were appointed, how they perform and how much they are trusted. None of these require a normative commitment to democracy itself.

An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression (see results in Table 4 below) with “support for democracy” as dependent variable, shows the support for authoritarianism index to be the only variable that has a statistically significant influence on whether or not someone would show outright support for democracy or not ($b = -0.358$; $p < 0.01$). The direction (as expected) is negative, which means that as support for authoritarianism decreases, support for democracy is likely to increase, and *vice versa*.

Table 4: Regression – Support for Democracy

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.725	.257		6.709	.000
Support for authoritarianism index	-.308	.037	-.358	-8.255	.000
Legitimacy index	.056	.056	.047	1.006	.315
Performance of political actors	.011	.079	.008	.142	.887
Supporter of ruling party	.013	.077	.008	.173	.863
Trust in government	.102	.068	.085	1.496	.135
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
.379	.144	.135		.75227	

None of the other variables, i.e. “legitimacy,” “performance of political actors,” “being a supporter of the ruling party,” or “trust in government,” has a statistically significant influence on support for democracy. It seems to indicate that commitment to democracy is, to a greater extent, based on a rejection of non-democratic rule, and hence, a normative commitment rather than a product of the workings of the political system. The R square value indicates that this model explains 14 percent of the variance as far as the variable “support for democracy” is concerned.

⁴ Please note that it is not our aim to present a comprehensive explanation of support for democracy (or any other theme for that matter) in this report. Our analysis is rather cursory as we look to cover a large number of themes in a report that is intended to be more descriptive.

3.3 Performance of democracy

Thus far, we have made mention of the intrinsic value of democracy. In this section we explore a closely related issue namely regime performance. We propose that the intrinsic value of democracy means little if this regime does not deliver the political goods that distinguish democracy from other regime types.⁵ According to Diamond, “performance of the regime is a crucial variable affecting the development and internalisation of beliefs about legitimacy” (1999: 77). Diamond also writes that citizens expect “freedom, accountability and constitutionalism” (1999: 89) from democracy. He uses a quote by Bresser Pereira in order to explain the importance of regime performance for democratic consolidation:

“Democracy is an autonomous value for which many people made sacrifices when they struggled against authoritarian regimes. The quality of the democratic process, perhaps less tangible than material welfare, affects the everyday life of individuals: it empowers them as members of a political community, or deprives them of power. And if democracy is to be consolidated, that is, if all political forces are to learn to channel their demands and organise their conflicts within the framework of democratic institutions, these institutions must play a real role in shaping and implementing policies that influence living conditions.”

As a first step we report on Namibians’ view on the quality of their democracy. This could be helpful in assessing whether public dissatisfaction with regime performance is likely to have influence. Norris writes that tensions between democratic ideals and the perceived performance of the regime could hamper consolidation, or it is possible that public opinion could fuel widespread democratic reforms (1999: 270).

Table 5 below shows that in 1999, approximately 29 percent of respondents interviewed for the Afrobarometer felt that Namibia was a full democracy. This number increased by about 5 percentage points in 2002 and decreased again in 2003 to its 1999 level. Substantially fewer people, just 30 percent, viewed the system as democratic with minor problems in 2003 than in 2002 (42 percent) and in 1999 (41 percent). Those who think that Namibia is a democracy with major problems have increased from 15 percent in 1999 to nearly 29 percent in 2003. Thus, for a substantial group of Namibians, the quality of democracy has deteriorated from 1999 to 2003.

Table 5: Quality of Democracy

	1999	2002	2003
A full democracy	29	34	30
A democracy, but with some minor problems/ exceptions	41	42	30
A democracy, but with major problems/ exceptions	15	17	29
Not a democracy	3	2	2
Do not understand question/ do not understand what a democracy is	4	4	6
Don't Know	8	1	3

In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Namibia today? (percent)

If we combine the first two categories, i.e. those who view the country either as a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems, some 70 percent of Namibians regarded the country as a

⁵ For our purposes a regime can be defined as a collection of “institutions to maintain order, collect taxes and enforce the authority of the state, and the rules of the game that informally affect how power is exercised” (Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1998).

high quality democracy in 1999. This number increased slightly to 76 percent in 2002. However, substantially fewer Namibians did so in 2004 (60 percent).

Two additional aspects of regime performance are investigated. Firstly, the current regime's performance is compared with that of the colonial dispensation. Respondents were specifically asked to rate the present Namibian system of governance against the former South African rule as they remember it – the results are presented in Table 6. Overall, Namibians are positive that the current democratic regime outperforms the colonial one on various indicators. As far as freedom of speech, the freedom to join political organisations, freedom to vote without feeling pressured, popular influence over government and equal treatment by government are concerned, the percentage of respondents who believe that these are better, has increased from 1999 to 2003.

Table 6: Current versus Past Regime Performance

	1999	2002	2003
Freedom to say what you think	80	90	92
Freedom to join any political organisation you want	85	88	92
Fear of being arrested when you are innocent	78	73	75
Freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured	86	86	91
The ability of ordinary people to influence what government does	-	60	74
Safety from crime and violence	51	66	65
Equal and fair treatment for all people by government	64	59	79
People have an adequate standard of living	57	-	-
People have access to basic necessities (like food and water)	41	-	-
Namibians are equal to one another	43	-	-

Some people say that today, under our current system of government, our political and overall life is better than it was under South African rule. Others say things are no better, or even worse. For each of these following matters, would you say things today are worse, about the same, or better? (percent)

It appears as if, with time, Namibians are more convinced about the gains under the current regime. Scores on all indicators improved over each of the three surveys. Most Namibians seem to think that the current regime is better at providing and securing basic political liberties: freedom of speech (92 percent), freedom to join political organisations (92 percent), and freedom to vote (91 percent). It is with regard to crime and violence that the current regime scores lowest (65 percent), but the trend over time is still positive.

The overall impression one gains from tables 5 and 6 above is that a) despite problems, a majority of respondents nevertheless view Namibia as a democracy; and b) that a much larger majority view it as a better system of governance than the previous regime. There is thus no evidence of “colonial nostalgia” – i.e. a longing for times past because the current regime is failing.

The second additional aspect of regime performance deals with satisfaction with democracy as it is at the moment. Table 7 below then also shows that the respondents are, to a large extent, satisfied with the general state of democracy in the country. The percentage of respondents who are either very or fairly satisfied was around 63 percent in 1999. This number increased to nearly 80 percent in 2002 and then decreased again to approximately 70 percent in 2003. The percentage of respondents who were not at all satisfied with democracy followed an inverse pattern – it started at around 6 percent in 1999, decreased by around 3 percent in 2002 and increased again to nearly 7 percent in 2003. This means that overall, the proportion of Namibians who are not satisfied with the way democracy works, remains unchanged.

Table 7: Satisfaction with Democracy

	1999	2002	2003
Very satisfied	28	25	25
Fairly satisfied	35	54	44
Not very satisfied	19	15	18
Not at all satisfied	6	3	7
Namibia is not a democracy	1	1	1
Don't know	10	3	5

Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Namibia? Are you... (percent)

The overall level of satisfaction with democracy, when read together with opinions on the quality of democracy, presents an interesting picture. While almost 31 percent Namibians had a negative view on the quality of democracy, far less, one-in-four, is actually dissatisfied with the current state of affairs. The correlation between these two items is relatively strong, and the direction positive, meaning that those Namibians who have a more positive view about the quality of democracy are also more likely to have greater satisfaction ($r = .392$; $p < 0.01$).

A means analysis shows that there is very little variation in satisfaction with democracy between rural (3.1) and urban (2.9) areas. Opinions in urban areas (standard deviation = 0.82) differ slightly more than those in rural areas (standard deviation = 0.71). Supporters of the ruling party are somewhat more satisfied (3.3) with democracy than the respondents who are not (2.76); –satisfaction levels of supporters of the ruling party are situated above the scale mean of 3.02.

3.4 Supply and Demand model of Democracy

For democracy to become fully consolidated, it must be regarded as “the only game in town” (Rose and Mishler 1998; Linz and Stepan 1997). Thus, citizens should no longer find non-democratic forms of government an attractive alternative to the current democratic one. In addition to the preference for democracy, citizens must perceive democracy to be successful, thus they must be satisfied with the performance of their democracy. These two dimensions of democracy are used to compile a demand and supply model of democracy (see Figure 1 below). On the demand side are the “committed democrats” – i.e. those Namibians who believe that democracy is always best, and at the same time reject the three non-democratic alternatives (presidential rule, military rule, and one-party rule). Thus, those Namibians who believe democracy is always best but support some form of non-democratic system are not regarded as “committed democrats.” The supply side is a composite index of those individuals who believe Namibia is a full democracy or a near full democracy, and those who are currently satisfied with the way democracy works.

Figure 1: Demand and Supply for Democracy 1999-2003

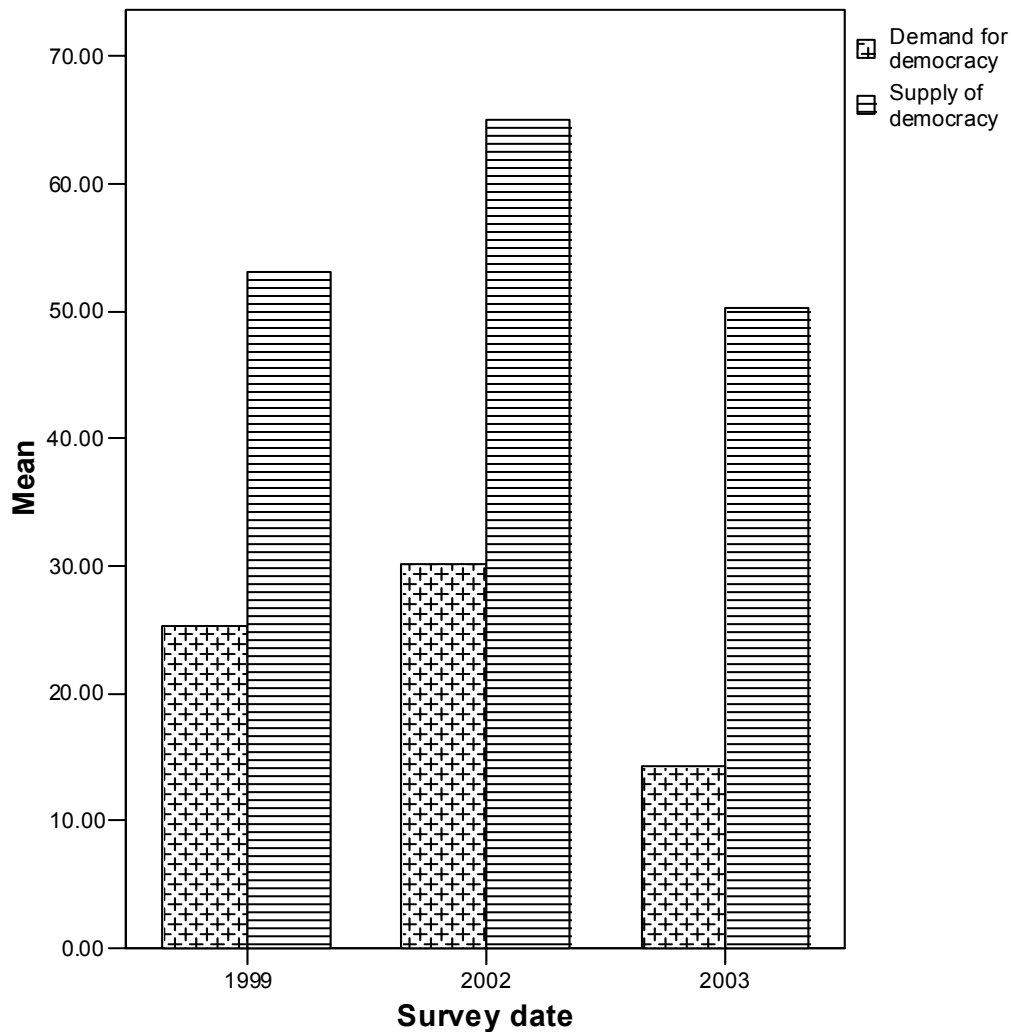


Figure 1 shows that for each of the three years, the supply of democracy has exceeded the demand for it. Both demand and supply peaked in 2002 where after supply declined to around 1999 levels and demand to below 2003 levels. The difference between demand and supply remained fairly constant from 1999 to 2002, but increased in 2003.

There are a number of ways to interpret the results. Firstly, the relatively small number of committed democrats shows that democracy is not yet “the only game in town” meaning that democracy is not yet consolidated. Future conflict thus may arise from possible contests over what form of government Namibia should have. On the positive side is the large number of Namibians who are satisfied with the way the democratic system works at the moment. This could offset some of the dangers stemming from the lack of committed democrats since there seems to be no immediate demand for the democratic system to be changed or reversed.

Secondly, the results suggest that Namibians are currently getting more democracy than what they ask for – i.e. the supply of democracy exceeds the demand. In a consolidated democracy, both demand and supply would be high. But the findings also suggest that thus far, democracy is in the hands of political elites and leaders rather than ordinary citizens. Thus whatever deepening

of democracy will take place (if it does take place) will come about as a result of elite initiatives rather than popular demand. There is a real danger however, that due to low levels of popular demand for more democracy, democratic development will become stagnant at best, or be reversed at worst.

3.5 Legitimacy

Political theory states that the legitimacy of the state is derived from the fact that citizens perceive the process by which key actors are appointed to be just and thus that these agencies have the right to design and implement policy, and discharge their duties in a manner they deem best. Citizens on the other hand have the political duty or obligation to obey the laws and regulations made by those agencies they perceive as legitimate even if they do not like them. Table 8 shows the overall picture with regard to the legitimacy of four key institutions, namely the constitution, courts, the police and the tax agency. In all four cases positive responses increased from 2002 to 2003. In 2003 three of the four institutions were perceived positively by more than 75 percent of all respondents. Perhaps not entirely surprising is the fact that the tax agency received much less support (55 percent).

Table 8: Four elements of State Legitimacy

	2002	2003
	Agree	Agree
Constitution expresses Namibian values	70	77
Courts have the right to make decisions that people have to abide by	61	76
Police have the right to make people obey the law	70	76
Tax department have the right to make people pay taxes	51	55

For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you agree or disagree? (percent)

Factor Analysis shows that the four variables (constitution, courts, police, and tax) all load strongly on one dimension, which we refer to as the *Legitimacy Index*. The factor has an Eigen value larger than 1 and explains a cumulative percentage of variance of nearly 45 percent. Reliability analysis shows that the index consisting of all four items is reliable (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.574). The Legitimacy Index is a five-point scale with the value 3 as mid-point.

Overall, on all four individual items as well as the overall index, mean scores exceed the scale mid-point. Of the four individual items, the tax agency receives the lowest mean compliance (3.56). The police received the highest overall score of all individual items (3.91). Overall legitimacy is highest in Karas, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa – all have means higher than 4.

The important aspect of these findings is that in none of the thirteen regions the mean scores are below the scale mid-point. This means that the average opinion on each of these agencies leans toward the “agree” category on the scale. At worst, respondents “did not agree” or “disagree.” There is thus little evidence suggesting an emerging legitimacy crisis for the Namibian state.

3.6 State Capacity and Government Performance

Diamond writes that political performance is partially dependent upon whether a government is able to offer its citizens physical safety and security, which implies protecting them against harm from especially criminal elements (1999: 89), but also against those who undermine the democratic system by not adhering to its laws. We asked respondents about their views on the Namibian state’s capacity to enforce the law when: a) serious crimes are committed; b) taxes are

not paid; and c) household services such as water and electricity are obtained without payment. The results are presented in Table 9.

During 2002, around 82 percent of respondents felt that the government would be likely to be able to enforce the law if someone had committed a serious crime, and this increased by 5 percent in 2003. Namibians view the state's capacity to extract taxes to be weakest of the three items. In 1999, 62 percent felt that the state could enforce the law if taxes are not paid, and in 2003 67 percent felt that way. The same trend exists for household services: in 2002, 65 percent of respondents felt that government would be able to enforce the law if water and electricity were obtained illegally.

Table 9: Ability to Enforce the Law

	2002	2003
	Likely	Likely
Committed a serious crime	82	86
Did not pay tax on some of the income they earned	62	67
Obtained household services (like water & electricity) without paying	65	70

How likely do you think it would be that the authorities could enforce the law if a person like yourself... (percent)

The three variables in Table 9 above were used to construct a state capacity index. This index is a 5-point scale, where 1=not likely at all and 5=very likely. The scale midpoint is 3. As far as trusting government's ability to enforce the law is concerned, an analysis of means shows that there is little difference between those who support the ruling party (3.65) and those who do not (3.68). When means differences between rural and urban areas are analysed, the same situation occurs namely that urban respondents (3.61) have slightly less faith in government's capacity to enforce the law than rural respondents (3.70).

Table 10: Government's Capacity to Solve Problems

	2002	2003
All of them	4	19
Most of them	24	36
Some of them	53	33
Very few of them	19	11
None of them	-	1
Don't Know	1	-

What proportion of the country's problems do you think the government can solve? (percent)

This question deals with government's general capability to solve the country's problems. Respondents were asked to rate government performance in a more general sense, by indicating what proportion of the country's problems they think the government would be able to solve. Table 10 below shows the subsequent results. The percentage of respondents who believe that the government would be able to solve all, or most, of the country's problems has increased by around 27 percent from 2002 to 2003, while the percentage of respondents who believe that the government would only be able to solve some of the country's problems, has decreased by around 20 percent from 2002 to 2003. More than half of all respondents in 2003 (55 percent) felt that the government could solve either all, or most of, the country's problems, against only 28 percent in 2002. These views have thus improved significantly from 2002 to 2003.

Miller and Listhaug (1999: 212) write that citizens of a country can use many different criteria for measuring their satisfaction with governmental performance. Amongst these are the absolute levels of outputs or benefits; comparing what they receive with what they think the average citizen ought to receive; or comparing past benefits with current outputs. We have several questions (see below) that measure government's performance by means of absolute outputs or benefits. Namibians were also asked to compare current outputs with past benefits, in this case benefits produced by the colonial administration.

Table 11 shows that respondents generally believe that government is performing better in comparison to the previous regime on all items. The overall trend is upward across all surveys: ability to enforce the law is up with 12 percent and effective service delivery is up by almost 7 percentage points –from 2002 to 2003. The perception that the current government is more trustworthy is up from 48 percent in 1999 to 67 percent in 2003. Corruption is the only item where the majority of Namibians are not convinced that the current regime is better than the past one. In 1999 only about one-in-four Namibians felt that the current government was either less or much less corrupt than the previous regime, and this increased slightly in 2003 to about three-in-ten.

Table 11: Current Government Compared to Colonial Administration

	1999	2002	2003
More able to enforce the law	-	52	64
More effective in the delivery of services	-	59	66
Less corrupt	26	25	30
More trustworthy	48	61	67

Comparing the current government with the former South African administration, would you say that the one we have now is more or less... (percent)

In the next two subsections we explore opinions on two more specific aspects of the current government's performance, namely policy performance and agency performance.

Policy Performance

In order to determine how respondents rated the Namibian government in terms of policy performance, we first looked at what they deemed to be important policy problems – a so-called “people's agenda” – and then we analysed Namibian's perceptions of government's performance in a much wider set of predetermined policy areas.

Table 12 shows which policy areas respondents believe should receive attention from government. Respondents indicated that, in their opinions, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, and education are the most pressing issues facing the country. These three policy areas have been on top of the list, in both 2002 and 2003. Unemployment is by far the most dominant problem. A recent study by the IPPR suggested that government's performance in this area has been less than satisfactory. It created less than 30,000 jobs since independence (Sheefeni, Humavindu and Sherbourne 2003).

Table 12: The “Peoples’ Agenda”

	2002	2003
Unemployment/Job creation	77	72
Poverty/Destitution	20	20
Food shortage/Famine	12	16
Wages, income and salaries	12	9
Education	29	24
Health	21	11
HIV/AIDS	35	28
Crime/Security	15	14
Water supply	14	27

In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (percent)

Given the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 21 percent among adults and 16,000 HIV/AIDS related deaths in 2003 one can expect this issue to be given priority by ordinary citizens.⁶ Government’s track record is mixed: on the one hand, HIV prevalence rates as well as HIV/AIDS related deaths are still on the increase; and on the other hand, the Government plans to roll out Anti-Retroviral drugs through selected hospitals.

The single largest government budget item since independence has been education. The biggest allocation hereof is toward primary education. It is also the area in which the government has achieved its most significant successes: it has built substantial number of new schools, literacy rates have improved and enrolment rates for both males and females have risen. On the other hand, schools are often overcrowded, the quality of teachers (especially in deep rural areas) is not up to standard, student to teacher ratio’s are large, and secondary school pass rates leave much to be desired.

What is quite striking about the various issues is not only that the same ones consistently appear at the top of the list, but also that their popular emphasis has remained fairly consistent. This means that Namibians know what they want and their preferences are quite clear. The next table shows that these popular priorities are also among the policy areas in which the government is perceived to do less well.

Table 13 below indicates how respondents perceived the degree of success with which the government is handling certain policy issues. The areas in which the government is perceived to do well include managing the economy; improving basic health services, addressing educational needs; reducing crime, resolving conflict between communities and fighting HIV/AIDS. For all these areas the government has met the approval of more than two-thirds of Namibians.

⁶ The numbers are quoted from UNAIDS (2004).

Table 13: Positive Ratings of Government Performance on Selected Policy Issues

	1999	2002	2003
Managing the economy	45	80	73
Creating jobs	47	47	46
Keeping prices stable	38	35	39
Narrowing income gaps	-	30	37
Reducing crime	46	65	62
Improving basic health services	62	79	83
Addressing educational needs	62	79	83
Delivering household water	55	63	54
Ensuring food security	-	41	41
Fighting corruption in government	-	58	53
Resolving conflict between communities	-	70	64
Combating HIV/AIDS	-	78	66

How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters? (Only responses “fairly well” and “very well” included here) (percent)

Most significant perhaps is the fact that, given the popular emphasis on unemployment as a most serious problem, less than one-in-two Namibians approve of government’s performance in job creation consistently over the three surveys. Furthermore, the government is negatively perceived with regard to job creation, keeping prices stable, narrowing income gaps and ensuring food security.

On seven of the twelve items, government’s performance is perceived to have declined from 2002 to 2003. The biggest decline was with HIV/AIDS where performance declined by 12 percentage points. Other significant declines were resolving conflict between communities by 6 percent, delivering household water by 9 percent and managing the economy by 7 percent. The areas in which government’s performance is seen to have increased the most from 2002 to 2003 are the following: narrowing income gaps (7 percent), improving basic health services (4 percent) and addressing educational needs (4 percent).

Agency performance

The second aspect of government performance is related to how the different elected agencies are perceived to have performed their duties. In order to determine how respondents view the performance of these agencies, they were asked to rate various representatives on a scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disapprove) to 4 (strongly approve) according to how well these agencies are perceived to have performed their jobs during the preceding twelve months. The results, summarised in Table 14, show that the respondents generally approve of the performance of the various representatives they were required to evaluate.

Table 14: Positive Performance of Elected Agencies

	1999	2002	2003
President	79	87	91
National Assembly	64	74	61
National Council	-	68	-
Regional Councilor	-	68	-
Local Government Councilor	54	71	44

Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months? (Only responses “approve” and “strongly approve” included here) (percent)

Of all the agencies, the President received the most positive rankings. His approval rate increased from 79 percent in 1999 to 91 percent in 2003. Local authorities on the other hand had an increase in approval from 1999 to 2002, and then a decrease from 2002 to 2003. The same trend applies to the National Assembly.

3.7 Political Trust

Political trust can be defined as “a basic evaluative orientation toward the government founded on how well the government is operating according to people’s normative expectations” (Hetherington 1998). It is very important for the consolidation of democratic governments, because, as Mishler and Rose (1997) quoted Gamson, “it serves as the creator of collective power.” This puts the government in a position to make decisions and apply resources without having to resort to coercion, or needing specific approval for its decisions from citizens. Furthermore, trust is essential to the representative relationship that forms the basis of democracy, since without it the establishment of a civil society is impossible.

According to Hetherington, higher levels of political trust translate into the positive reception of both elected officials and political institutions. This in turn gives leaders more scope to govern effectively, and provides institutions with enduring support, irrespective of how those who are running the government perform (1998: 803). Too little or too much trust can also prove problematic. Whereas with insufficient trust, civil society disintegrates, excessive trust promotes political apathy and encourages a loss of citizen control of government – neither bodes well for the consolidation of democracy (Mishler and Rose 1997).

According to Mishler and Rose, there are two broad theoretical perspectives that attempt to explain variations in political trust. The first of these is cultural theories, which incorporate both sociological and psychological arguments. These postulate that basic political values and beliefs, including political trust, are a form of diffuse support that is the outcome, mainly, of political socialisation experiences. In their various forms, socialisation theories are all in agreement that political values and beliefs are gained through learning. This educational process is generally a result of experiences early in life based on a person’s position in society relating to education, age, gender and socio-economic status (1997: 433).

On the other hand, political, economic and rational theories of political behaviour view political trust as a form of specific support that is primarily dependent upon assessments of institutional performance. Mishler and Rose write that, from this performance perspective, trust rests upon individual evaluations of the competency with which political institutions provide what they deem to be valuable social, economic and political benefits (1997: 434). If a government is trusted, its mistakes will be disregarded as an inevitable part of an attempt to cope in difficult circumstances – if it is viewed with distrust, dissatisfaction with performance will be viewed as proof of incompetence or dishonesty (Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer 1998).

However, Mishler and Rose argue that the distinction between the two sets of theories is overemphasised (1997: 434). Both view trust as a product of experience, albeit it in different time frames. Socialisation theories look to early life experiences for its motivation, while performance theories draw on more recent experiences. Based on research specific to post-Communist Europe, they write that the socialisation *versus* performance debate can be reduced into a dispute about the relative importance of cultural values and beliefs that were shaped by the experience of growing up under Communism, *versus* the performance of institutions as experienced during the post-Communist period.

It is possible to apply this argument to the Namibian situation, if one takes into consideration that it is only during the last decade and a half that Namibia has gone from being governed under South Africa's regime of Apartheid, to becoming independent and democratic. Most, if not all of the respondents in this survey, would have grown up and become politically socialised during the era of South African rule although they have only had, in comparative terms, a relatively short time to experience the performance of the new Namibian government after Independence in 1990. This is another aspect where the two perspectives on performance overlap, because it is only natural for individuals to judge the performance of the current regime against memories of the previous one (Mishler and Rose 1997).

To conclude their debate on which of the two theories explain variations in political trust to a greater degree, Mishler and Rose quote work done by Rose and McAllister in saying that both arguments can be integrated into a developmental or "lifetime learning model" due to the fact that they are experience based. This model states that trust in political institutions begins to form early in life and evolves continuously thereafter as early attitudes and beliefs are reinforced or challenged by subsequent experiences. They write that citizens may be predisposed to trust or distrust political institutions based on past experience, but a lifetime learning model implies that the legacy of the past is subject to periodic revision based on more recent experiences and evaluations of contemporary performance (1997: 436).

Newton writes that political trust is different from social trust, because it is not built on personal knowledge of the other, and because it belongs to the public political sphere where there are "more unknowns, greater risks and less predictability" (1999: 179). He also argues that whereas earlier, political trust was dependent upon "social identities and ideological loyalties" (1999: 179), now it is more "pragmatic, instrumental and dependent on second-hand political information and performance" (1999: 179). This means that policy records and personal performance will be more influential when it comes to determining levels of trust.

Hetherington agrees that policy considerations should explain trust – if people perceive that government is pursuing the policy goals they deem important, then, they should in theory trust the government more (1998: 793). Furthermore, he also narrows his focus to concentrate on the figurehead of the political arena, the one person about whose actions the public is usually well informed. He quotes Citrin by arguing that political trust is "most strongly a function of presidential approval and the President's personal characteristics" (1998: 793).

Table 15 below shows to what extent the respondents indicated that they trust specific political figures.⁷ In almost every case for which comparable data is available, there has been an overall decrease in levels of trust. The results show that trust in the President is the highest across the board: –more than 70 percent of the respondents who answered this specific question, both in 1999 and 2002, indicated that they trust the President "most of the time/a lot" or "just about always/ a very great deal."

⁷ The 2002 and 2003 survey instrument contained some 19 *trust* items. In addition to those listed here these surveys also enquired about trust in media and trust in business.

Table 15: Trust in Selected Political Actors

	1999	2002	2003
President	73	79	76
National Assembly	51	65	48
Electoral Commission	66	66	41
Local Authority Councils ⁸	42	50	32
Ruling Party	-	63	59
Opposition Parties	-	27	16
Army	66	62	51
Police	69	59	48
Courts of law	64	72	43
Traditional leaders	50	62	42

How much do you trust the following? (percent)

Two agencies that have a serious shortage of trust are the opposition parties and local authority councils. To compound their problems, the levels of trust have declined significantly from 2002 to 2003. It is perhaps not surprising that these two agencies have low levels of trust. Opposition parties are weak and come and go with regularity. At the same time, their Parliamentary record is not much to speak of, due to the fact that combined they currently occupy about 25 percent of all seats. Crippling financial problems caused by mismanagement and frequent allegations of corruption, on the other hand, plague local authorities. In recent times local residents in some of the smaller local authority areas had to do without basic services due to outstanding debts by their local authority to the national bulk service providers.

On a more positive note, following Mishler and Rose's (1997) warning that too much trust is not a good thing, Table 15 shows that with the exception of their faith in the President, Namibians are not "blind believers" – their trust in institutions is not overwhelming.

Factor analysis showed that seven items loaded on a single factor, which we will call the State Trust Index. These items are: trust in the President, the Ruling Party, the National Assembly, the Electoral Commission, the Police, the Army, and the Courts. Reliability analysis showed that all items could be combined into a reliable scale or index (Cronbach's Alpha = .853). The State Trust Index ranges from 0 (not at all) to 3 (a very great deal).

Based on the above-mentioned theoretical arguments, we propose two propositions to be tested in the Namibian context:

- Proposition 1: High levels of policy performance should lead to high levels of trust in the government.
- Proposition 2: Being a supporter of the ruling party should increase trust in state institutions.

To test these propositions more rigorously we did an OLS regression of the effects of economic policy performance and party support on political trust. Table 16 shows that both propositions are supported.

⁸ Only asked in urban areas.

Table 16: Regression Coefficients: Trust in the State

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.531	.082		6.496	.000
Economic Policy Performance Index	.317	.032	.288	9.825	.000
Ruling party supporters	.364	.040	.266	9.058	.000

Having established some of the predictors of trust, we now turn to one of its possible outcomes. Larry Diamond argues that institutional trust has significant positive effects on support for the existing regime and also on the rejection of non-democratic regimes, and this effect seems to be linear (1999: 206). In this line of argument more trust in government is good for the consolidation of the democratic regime because it enhances the legitimacy of the democratic regime.

We conducted correlation analysis between trust and regime legitimacy. Firstly, trust in the state is positively and significantly correlated with support for democracy ($r = .147$; $p < 0.01$). However, this correlation is perhaps weaker than argued by Diamond. Secondly, there is no significant correlation between trust in the state and overall support for authoritarianism (as measured by the Support for Authoritarianism Index). We then looked for correlations between trust and each of the individual items in the Support for Authoritarianism Index. We discovered that:

- There is a positive, significant correlation between trust in the State and the extent to which one-party rule is rejected ($r = .191$; $p < 0.01$).
- There is no significant correlation between trust in the State and the extent to which traditional rule is rejected. The direction of the coefficient is however, in the expected direction (positive).
- There is also no significant correlation between state trust and the extent to which presidential rule is rejected. The direction of the coefficient is as expected positive.
- Finally, there is a significant, but negative correlation between trust in the State and the extent to which military rule is rejected ($r = -.151$; $p < 0.01$). This is unsuspected for it suggests that those who have higher trust in the State are also less likely to reject military rule.

The findings above do support the propositions to some extent. But with regard to Namibia, some qualifications are in order. Although trust and support for democracy go together, the relationship is weak. Also, trust seems to have very limited impact on the rejection of non-democratic alternatives. Given this, we conclude that the current levels of trust in the State add very little to the prospects for consolidation of democracy because it has a very weak positive effect on support for democracy and no real effect on the rejection of non-democratic alternatives.

3.8 Responsiveness

Modern day democracies are representative democracies. This means that citizens appoint others to rule on their behalf and in their interest. Lamounier identifies 4 concepts of representation found at various stages of democratic development (1995: 126):

- The first one he refers to as its original meaning, which corresponds to establishing the framework within which contestation may later take place.

- Social conflict and representation demands give rise to the descriptive notion of representation, i.e. that representative bodies should be like miniature samples reflecting a society's diversity.
- Increased conflict and cultural strains may also give rise to the demand for symbolic representation, which requires institutions or charismatic leaders that embody a collective self-image of the nation.
- The behaviour of elected representatives, especially in terms of their accountability, becomes important.

Schmitter and Karl (1996: 54) argue that elected representatives do most of the work in modern democracies, and that the main issue is related to how these representatives are chosen and then held accountable for their work. Thus, representation and accountability are two sides of the same coin. Representation serves no purpose if not accompanied by accountability. One of the key elements of representation is responsiveness, i.e. the ability of representatives to “stay in touch” with their constituencies, to represent as accurately as possible the interests of their constituencies, and to act in their best interests. Ultimately, responsiveness is one of the criteria on which representatives will be held accountable.

Norris (1999: 24) writes that a lack of accountability is very likely in countries that have divided governments, semi-permanent coalitions or a predominantly one-party government (such as Namibia). She might as well have added “countries with closed-list proportional representation electoral systems” to her list of potentially unresponsive governments. Being unresponsive means that it becomes difficult for citizens to use elections as a means of removing political agents from power who are not performing satisfactorily. Namibia has both a single-dominant party government and a closed-list PR electoral system. This means that the government of the day is fairly insulated from the workings of the (weak) opposition, faces no regular threats at the polls and has almost complete autonomy from the electorate when it presents its candidates. In addition the party holds ownership over seats in the legislative body and thus has substantial control over representatives' policy and legislative agendas. This means that the onus for responsiveness lies with the party and its central leadership, rather than the individual candidate. Given these factors, one would not expect a great deal of responsiveness in the Namibian political system.

Table 17: Government Responsiveness

	Never	Some of the time	Most of the time	Always	Don't Know
Look after the interests of people	34	41	14	3	2
Leaders listen to what people have to say	46	40	8	3	2

How much of the time to you think elected leaders try their best to... (percent)

Favourable scores increased substantially from 2002 to 2003 in three regions, namely Kunene, Otjozondjupa and Omaheke. These two items of responsiveness is strongly and positively correlated ($r = .635$; $p < 0.01$). Thus, those citizens who feel that elected leaders are looking after their interests also believe that leaders listen to people like them.

Another aspect related to representation and responsiveness is, how much contact citizens have with their elected leaders. Table 18 below indicates that in general, respondents do not have much, or regular, contact with their elected representatives. Local councillors are doing best: in 2004, contact with them doubled from 20 percent in 2002 to 40 percent. Traditional leaders,

despite the fact that contact declined from 2002 to 2003, are second best. Worst are National Assembly representatives. In 2003 only 5 percent of citizens indicated that they had contact with an MP. This seems to confirm the standard critique against closed-list PR systems. Since it is a single-district, multi-member system that does not elect representatives from clearly demarcated, geographically defined, constituencies, representatives have little incentive to service any specific constituency.

Overall, more than 75 percent of respondents indicated that they have “never” had contact with a local government councilor, national assembly representative, national council representative or a government ministry official.

Table 18: Contact with Elected Representatives

	2002	2003
Local Government Councilor	20	40
National Assembly Representative	12	5
Traditional ruler	45	30
Government ministry official	23	17
Political party official	26	17

During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons for help to solve a problem or to give them your views? (percent)

Of all the findings thus far, these dealing with responsiveness are the most negative. It appears to be one of the most problematic areas in the development of Namibia’s young democracy. No doubt the electoral system in use has something to do with it, and so does the fact that a single party dominates electoral politics. The problem is getting worse. During the recent local authority elections, the lists containing the names of candidates were published only a few days before election-day, thereby giving voters no time to get to know their potential representatives. Furthermore, supporters of the ruling party openly challenged leadership over party lists in some constituencies. Ultimately the party got its way: after a court ruling it fired its own list of candidates in Ongwediva before they could be sworn in, and replaced them with new candidates who never appeared on any list. The court ruling stated that since the seats belong to the party and not to individual candidates, it is the party’s prerogative to replace its candidates at any time. Soon after the court ruling was issued, opposition parties adopted the same tactic in other constituencies.

3.9 Corruption

In this section we measure perceptions on corruption. Although these perceptions are not necessarily reflections of real instances of corruption they remain important political attitudes shaping public perceptions toward the state, government, and regime.

Table 19 below lists the proportions of citizens that felt “most” or “all” of the following were involved in corruption for all three rounds of the survey. Four agencies stand out for their relatively high scores over at least the last two rounds of the survey: government officials, the police, border officials, and foreign businessmen. In each of these instances at least one-in-three Namibians felt that “most” or “all” were involved in corruption. Religious leaders and officials in the office of the President are seen to be the least corrupt.

Table 19: Involvement in Corruption

	1999	2002	2003
Officials in the Office of the President	25	18	15
Elected leaders	19	27	22
Officials in local government	17	-	-
Government officials	24	39	30
Police	-	36	37
Border officials	-	25	28
Judges & magistrates	-	15	23
Local businessmen	-	20	22
Foreign businessmen	-	32	28
Teachers and school administrators	-	24	25
Religious leaders	-	18	18
Traditional leaders	9	-	-

How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption? (percent)

It could be argued that one aspect of corruption that involved ordinary citizens stems from citizens' struggle to get access to the state. They require access for a number of reasons but two of the most important reasons are to obtain official documentation and to obtain special services. Both these types of goods can only be obtained from the State and are in high demand. Hence, they provide an ideal environment for corruption.

How difficult is it for Namibians to get access to important documentation and services? Table 20 contains the responses for those who firstly, tried to obtain these documents and services, and secondly found it either "very difficult" or "difficult."

Table 20 Difficulty with Obtaining Documents and Services (percent)

	2002	2003
Obtaining an ID	60	56
Getting a placement for a child in primary school	34	25
Obtaining an voter registration card	21	10
Obtaining household services	57	45
Obtaining a loan or payment from government	45	34
Getting help from the police	51	48

Obtaining an ID document remains a serious problem for most Namibians. Close to three-in-five who have tried found it either difficult or very difficult to obtain an ID document. The ministry responsible for the issue of ID documents, the Ministry of Home Affairs, has always found it difficult to issue ID documents in an effective and speedy manner. Even in major urban centers such as Windhoek it is not uncommon to wait more than a year to obtain an ID card. The Ministry's inefficiency has major consequences for the average citizen who has to use formal identification almost on a daily basis. One special area for concern is the absence of formal identification among prospective voters. In the past, the Electoral Commission of Namibia allowed those voters without formal identification to register by means of sworn statements. This practice, although beneficial to many voters, has compromised the registration process in the past (see Keulder Van Zyl and Wiese, 2003).

Most Namibians struggle to get help from the police when they need it. On average nearly one-in-two who have tried found it either difficult or very difficult. Given the importance attached to crime as an important national problem, not having easy access to the police is a compounding

factor. Police efficiency is compromised by a lack of infrastructure, personnel shortages and shortage of equipment and vehicles. Recent increases in crimes will result in more demand for policing services, and this in turn will demand an improvement in the quality of policing.

A third problem area is obtaining household services such as water and electricity. Here too, nearly one-in-two had difficulties. This problem is located at the local government level, where many local authorities have been ineffective in providing adequate services to a growing number of residents. The service that presents the least problems is obtaining a voter registration card. Last year, the Electoral Commission acquired new technology to improve the registration process. The use of digitized cameras and scanning equipment shortened the actual registration process, meaning that more prospective voters could register in the prescribed period.

To assess the extent to which difficulty with obtaining formal documents and services is linked to perceptions of corruption, we did an OLS regression with the six items in Table 20 as independent variables and the PCI as dependent variable. Together these items explain very little of the PCI (R square = .070). Of all the individual items it is only “obtaining an ID” that has a significant impact (b = -.234; p<0.01). Thus, at this point in time the ineffectiveness of the state has no real impact on whether or not Namibians see corruption to be frequent or not.

The next question asked what Namibians are likely to do when they struggle to obtain a crucial document from government (in this case a permit).

In 2002 most Namibians would simply wait (40 percent). In 2003 most Namibians would write a letter of enquiry (34 percent). In 2003, less Namibians were willing to wait than in 2002, and more Namibians were willing to write a letter than in 2002. The third most commonly used strategy across both years is to “do nothing because nothing can be done.” Approximately one-in-five Namibians gave this as their preferred option.

Table 21: Acquiring Permit from Government

	2002	2003
Don't worry, just wait, the permit will come	40	25
Offer a tip or gift to the official	6	3
Use connections to influential people	4	8
Write a letter to the head office	22	34
Do what you want without the permit	4	5
Do nothing because nothing can be done	20	21
Don't know	5	3

What would you do if you were waiting for a government permit or license, but kept encountering delays?
(percent)

The least preferred option is bribery (offering a tip or gift to the official). On average less than one-in twenty Namibians would consider this an option. About the same number would simply proceed to do what they intended to, without the permit, or use their connections to influential people.

The findings above suggest that Namibians have a low propensity to bribes. Moreover, the data below in Table 22 suggest that very few citizens are forced to pay bribes to obtain government services.

Table 22: Actual Bribes Paid

	1999	2002	2003
Get a document or a permit	-	4	5
Get a child into school	-	5	6
Get a household service (like piped water, electricity or phone)	4	5	4
Cross a border (like a customs or immigration post)	-	2	4
Avoid a problem with the police (like passing a checkpoint or avoiding a fine or arrest)	-	3	3
A job	1	-	-
A government maintenance payment, pension payment or loan	3	-	-
Housing or land	4	-	-

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: (percent)

Overall 89 percent of all Namibians indicated that they have never paid a bribe on any of the items listed in Table 22. Furthermore, correlation analysis suggests that the frequency of bribery on one item is correlated with the frequency of bribery on all other items. This means that the same people often have to bribe more than once. Furthermore, although the overall levels of bribes paid are low, the scores generally increased from 2002 to 2003.

3.10 Partisanship and Political Mobilisation

Political theory explains citizens' mobilisation in politics in two ways. Firstly, some would argue that citizens are primarily mobilised through their attachment to political parties. Partisanship (measured as "closeness to a political party") develops over time: as voters repeatedly vote for the same party, they become more attached to the party. Thus, one would expect older generations to have higher partisanship than younger generation who have not voted repeatedly. In this explanation prospective voters rely on their parties for information; in fact the party is the information shortcut that informs voters' choices and preferences. Thus, where partisanship is high, the party system will be stable due to the stable, long-term attachment to political parties.

Secondly, others would argue that voters, as their overall levels of education increase over time, and as mass media develops, rely less on political parties and more on they own cognitive skills to obtain the information needed to exercise a vote choice. Thus, one would expect a decline in partisanship to coincide with an increase in cognitive skills. Cognitive mobilisation is predicted to be higher among the younger generations due to their higher levels of education and more exposure to mass media. Where cognitive mobilisation is high, the party system will be unstable because attachment to parties is low. Voters who are mobilised through their own cognitive skills are 'floating voters' who show no 'permanent' attachment to any party but would or could vote for any party depending on their judgment on any single or combination of issues. Parties are thus no longer the 'cue' that informs the vote choice.

On the partisanship dimension, we distinguished between those Namibians who felt close to a party and those who don't. On the cognitive dimension we compiled a 6-point composite index of respondent's education levels and their interest in politics. Below 3 on this scale is treated as low cognisance and above 3 as high cognisance. Following Dalton (1984), we have compiled a 2x2 grid of Namibian voters based on the two dimensions of mobilisation (partisanship and cognitive mobilisation). This renders four types of citizens:

- Apoliticals: Those who have both low partisanship and low cognitive mobilisation.
- Ritual Partisans: Those with low cognitive mobilisation but high partisanship.
- Apartisans: Those with low partisanship but high cognitive mobilisation.
- Cognitive Partisans: Those with high cognitive mobilisation and partisanship.

Table 23: Cognitive and Partisan Mobilisation

Apoliticals	Ritual Partisans
2002 (16 percent) 2003 (11 percent)	2002 (40 percent) 2003 (17 percent)
Apartisans	Cognitive Partisans
2002 (11 percent) 2003 (24 percent)	2002 (33 percent) 2003 (47 percent)

Table 23 shows that:

- Approximately one-in-ten Namibians are currently “apoliticals.” This number stayed fairly constant from 2002 to 2003.
- Approximately one-in-five Namibians are currently “ritual partisans.” This number is down by more than 50 percent from 2002.
- About one-in-four Namibians are currently “apartisans.” This number is up about 50 percent from 2002.
- About one-in-two Namibians are currently “cognitive partisans.” This number is up some 10 percent from 2002.

We would expect younger generations to be mobilised more through their cognitive abilities than older generations because of their higher levels of education. Conversely we would expect older generations to be mobilised more through their partisanship, because they are more likely to be repetitive voters.

We tested these two propositions by means of OLS regression. We found the expected correlation between age and cognitive ability ($b = -.165$; $p < 0.01$). The negative sign indicates that as age increases, cognitive ability decreases. We also found the expected relationship between age and partisanship ($b = .152$; $p < 0.01$). The positive sign indicates that as age goes up, partisanship also increases.

Two other additional factors have an effect on both the cognitive and partisan components. Firstly, living in a rural area has a positive impact on partisanship ($b = .154$; $p < 0.01$), and being female has an insignificant impact on partisanship ($b = -.028$; $p = .331$). Secondly, living in a rural area has an insignificant impact on cognitive ability ($b = -.034$; $p = .246$). Being female has the same impact ($b = -.047$; $p = .100$).

The data presented thus far suggests that substantially more Namibians are mobilised through their partisanship than through their own cognitive abilities. This means firstly, that one expects the party system to remain fairly stable in the near to medium future. Secondly it also means that parties are important as agents of mobilisation.

Namibia does not have a large number of “apartisans,” which means that there is not a great number of floating voters prepared to mobilise themselves on particular issues and who feel themselves free to move between parties. But this number is growing. The existing party system is changing but at a slow rate. Changes in partisanship will occur over generations, and as urbanisation increases.

4. Conclusions

Namibia is one of Africa’s most stable and enduring democracies. It has had almost fifteen years of uninterrupted plural democracy and most signs are that it would remain a stable democracy for some time. Although the data presented in this report suggests that democracy is yet to become consolidated at the attitudinal level; Namibia is very much a democracy without democrats. We have discussed a number of reasons why we believe this to be the case.

In the first instance, only a slight majority of Namibians have a clear preference for democracy. Furthermore, the number of Namibians who believe democracy is always best has declined over the past three waves of surveys. The fact that most Namibians prefer individual elements of democracy but not the entire system could point to an incomplete understanding of how the individual items relate to the whole.

Secondly, substantial numbers of Namibians are supportive of possible non-democratic alternatives, especially a single-party polity. Further reason for concern is the fact that across all items support for non-democratic alternatives has increased over the three waves of surveys.

Thirdly, despite the substantial number of Namibians who do not show outright preference for democracy, most Namibians are satisfied with democracy at the moment. They show an appreciation for the current regime over the previous (colonial) one and they think the quality of democracy is quite high. This, we believe, points to opportunistic support: many Namibians are happy with what they got, but might consider an alternative regime type when matters get tough.

Fourthly, the demand for democracy across the country is low. The demand for democracy increased from 1999 to 2002 and declined again to its lowest levels yet in 2003. The supply of democracy is much higher than the demand suggesting that Namibians “get more than they ask for.” This means that the democratic future of the country is in the hands of the political elites who are under little pressure to increase the supply.

Fifthly, Namibians generally hold the state in much higher esteem than the democratic regime. They regard the state as legitimate and with sufficient capacity to enforce its laws. However, they are more cautious about their ability to solve problems. Namibians over time have identified four main problems for the state to address: unemployment, education, HIV/AIDS and water. Some of these are among the policy issues that they feel the government has performed less well on.

Sixthly, trust in government and state agencies has declined since 1999. Trust in some crucial agencies such as the National Assembly, the Electoral Commission and local authorities are reason for concern. The low levels of trust in opposition parties are reason for great concern.

Seventhly, another major reason for concern is the overwhelming view that the state is unresponsive. There is almost no contact between elected representatives and citizens. We argued that the electoral system contributes to this trend, but political representatives take little initiative to overcome the effects of the electoral system.

Eighthly, although perceptions on the amount of corruption have remained fairly stable over the past two surveys, they remain significant. Namibians still have difficulties obtaining crucial documents and services, but at this point in time these difficulties do not increase perceptions of corruption. On a more positive side, Namibians show little inclination to bribe and their actual experiences with bribes are low.

Finally, most Namibians are still mobilised through their partisanship and not through their own cognitive abilities. This implies an absence of large number of floating voters. We thus expect Namibia's dominant party system to remain for the near to medium future. The biggest challenges to this system will come over time as younger, less partisan generations replace older ones, and as more Namibians take up residence in urban areas.

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