

Corruption and Behaviour Change Tracking Social Norms and Values in South Africa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2020-2030 is an inclusive plan to eliminate corruption in South Africa. It aims to promote and encourage active citizenry, whistleblowing, integrity and transparency in all spheres of society. Amongst the goals of the NACS is the creation of a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption, calling on members of the public to report corruption if they witness it. The primary aim of the present study is to support the goals of the NACS by trying to understand how we can create a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption amongst the mass public in the country. In order to achieve this aim, it focuses on the social norms and values that inform both anti-corruption and corruption attitudes as well as behaviours in post-apartheid society. The multi-year study is being conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) with the support of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The report is structured into twelve chapters. The first chapter outlines the study's context, methodology and major research objectives. These objectives are:

- Assess and track over time corruption perceptions and experiences.
- Identify and track over time the social values and norms that encourage and discourage tolerance of corruption.
- Explore public attitudes towards sexual extortion (sextortion).
- Identify incentives and disincentives for engaging or participating in anti-corruption behaviours.
- Provide strategic recommendations to increase the willingness of citizens to report corrupt practices.
- Offer suggestions on how wider public backing can be fostered for current government efforts to fight corruption.

The subsequent ten chapters of the report present the study results, structured around conceptual themes that informed the survey design, while the final chapter provides a detailed summary of the main analytical findings. In this executive summary, we present a brief overview of the more important findings that emerged from the research. Before we present this summary, let us consider the study's methodological approach.

METHODOLOGY

A nationally representative public opinion survey was conducted to identify the social norms and values that inform corruption in South Africa. The survey was completed in 2023 and was restricted to persons aged 16 years and older living in private residences. The fieldwork period started in August and ended in October of 2023; 3,112 persons were interviewed as part of this process. The HSRC used the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) research infrastructure to administer the survey. This public opinion survey was supplemented by an online survey of sixty-seven experts from a wide range of different specialities (including political science, law, social policy as well as governance and public administration). These surveys were complemented by sixteen key informant qualitative engagements with key experts that focused on special areas of interest related to the research topic.

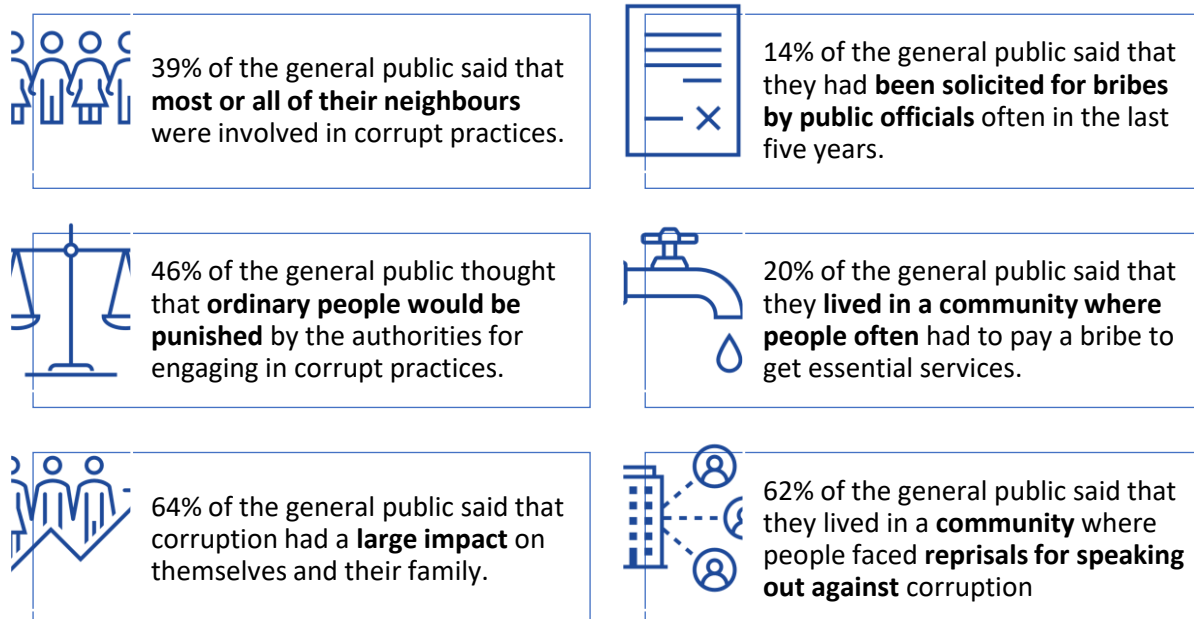
HISTORICAL ROOTS OF CORRUPTION

Using expert data, presented in Chapter 2, we explored the historical roots of corruption in South Africa. Despite some variance in viewpoint, the experts largely concurred that the country's apartheid legacy had significantly contributed to contemporary corruption. Several experts connected

corruption to the poverty and inequality caused by the apartheid system, suggesting that economic disparities and restricted access to resources and opportunities push individuals towards corrupt practices. We also examined expert opinion on how corruption had changed over the last thirty years. Most experts felt that corruption has become more systematic and organised, with criminal syndicates infiltrating the public and private sectors. Experts surveyed for this study were asked to identify several factors contributing to the growth of corruption in South Africa. Most of the answers concerned environmental factors and experts did not mention psychological factors (e.g., public tolerance of corruption). The factors mentioned included a lack of accountability, ineffective law enforcement, institutional weaknesses, and private sector influence. In addition, the cadre deployment system in the public sector, which prioritises party loyalty over integrity, was seen by many as a significant driver of post-apartheid corruption.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: PUBLIC ENCOUNTERS WITH CORRUPTION

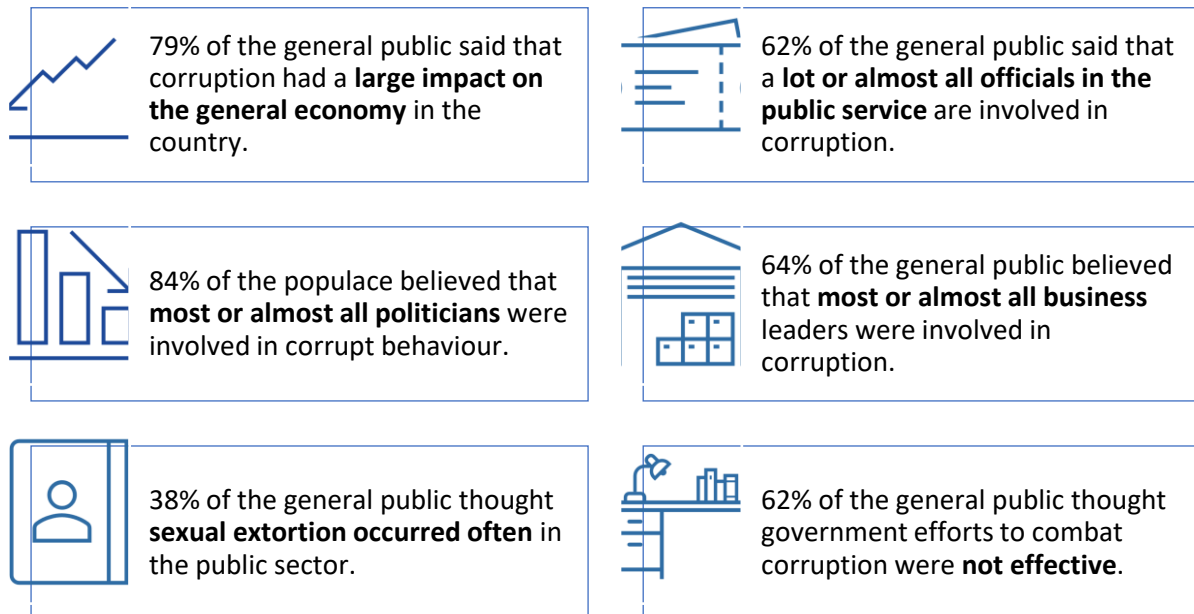
Chapter 3 of the report examined the experiences of corruption among South Africa's adult population (aged 16 years and older), revealing that a majority have encountered public sector corruption recently. Our research data showed that a significant share of the mass public lived in communities where corrupt practices were common. Using prior SASAS data, we found that reported bribe solicitation by public officials had intensified between 2006 and 2023. Certain groups (such as urban residents, men, and the employed) were more likely than others to have experienced this kind of corruption. Additionally, a significant majority felt that corruption had a very large impact on their personal lives. This sentiment was especially evident amongst older individuals, urban dwellers, as well as residents of KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Gauteng.



BENEATH THE SURFACE: THE PERCEIVED DEPTH OF CORRUPTION

Overall, the findings presented above highlight that many people in South Africa have experienced corruption in some form. Consequently, it was unsurprising to find widespread concern about corruption at the elite level in Chapter 4. Corruption was perceived to be more common amongst political leaders than business or religious leaders. Comparative SASAS data from 2004 and 2023 show a significant increase in the perceived level of corruption amongst public officials. Residents of certain provinces (e.g., Mpumalanga, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal) as well as rural dwellers were more likely than other groups to think that public officials were corrupt. This chapter further explored public concerns about the economic impact of corruption, revealing a widespread belief amongst the public

that it has a large impact on the national economy. Taken as a whole, these findings underscore that the public is generally aware of the detrimental impact that corruption has had on post-apartheid society.



EXPERT AND NON-EXPERT PERSPECTIVES ON THE DRIVERS OF CORRUPTION

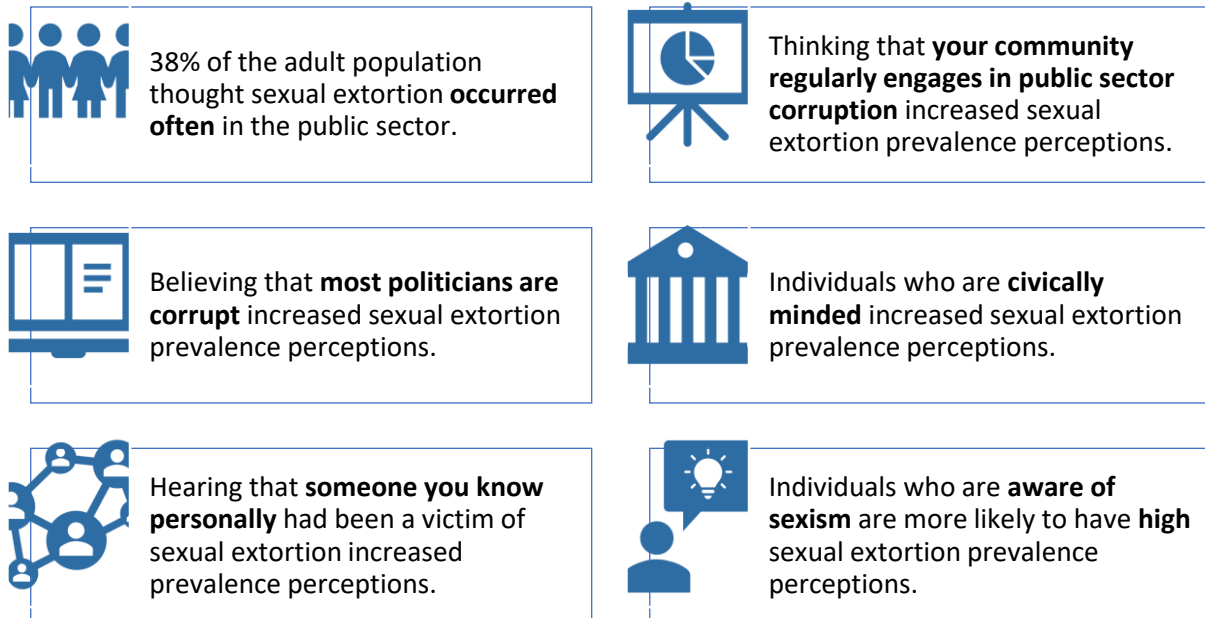
Chapter 5 investigated expert opinion on the social values and norms that drive corruption, based on the online survey (and in-depth interviews?). Here a distinction was made between elite and non-elite corruption. In general, experts tended to use psychological (i.e., internal) factors (such as greed and dishonesty) to explain why elites participate in corruption. A number of experts felt that elite corruption was driven by entitlement, materialism and opportunism. However, when asked about non-elites, experts tended to view environmental (i.e., external) factors as more significant. Experts were more likely to highlight survivalist pressures and the need to navigate an ineffective and dishonest system as drivers of non-elite corruption. Some of the environmental factors mentioned included institutional dysfunction, poverty and poor law enforcement.

The chapter also contrasted the expert opinion data on the drivers of corruption with the primary reasons that the general public used to explain corruption amongst elites and non-elites. The mass public was more likely than experts to refer to psychological factors (especially greed and a desire for quick wealth) to explain why people engage in corrupt practices. Law enforcement factors were not popular with the mass public. This was particularly true when the public was asked to explain non-elite corruption. For instance, only 27% attributed non-elite corruption to poor law enforcement. A minority (30%) supported system justification explanations, stating that the system forced people to engage in corruption. This explanation was particularly favoured by the economically advantaged, Indian and white minorities, and suburban residents.

PERCEIVED LEVELS OF SEXUAL EXTORTION AMONGST PUBLIC OFFICIALS

In Chapter 6, we explored public concerns regarding the level of sexual extortion in the South African public sector. Our results revealed that a significant segment of the population reported indirect experiences of sexual extortion by public officials. Residents of the Free State and Limpopo, along with urban dwellers and public sector employees, reported the highest rates of indirect experience with this kind of corruption. A sizeable majority public thought that sexual extortion was prevalent in the public sector, with 75% reporting that public officials extorted sexual favours from members of the

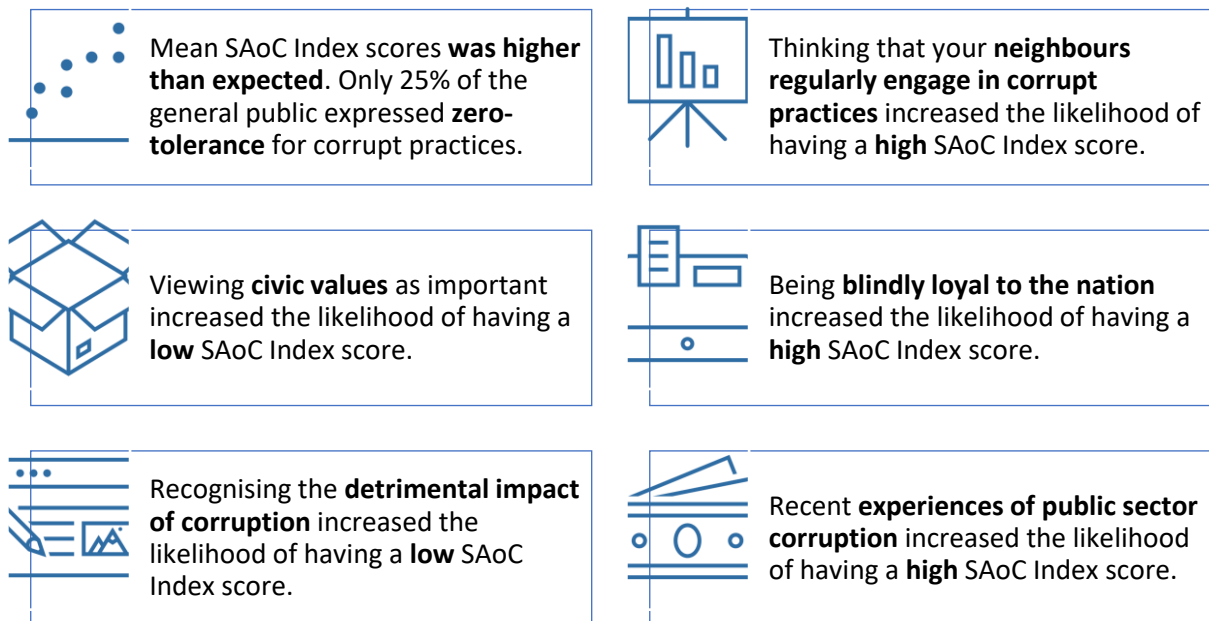
public, and 38% asserting that this type of crime happened often. Prevalence perceptions were especially high amongst the youth, rural dwellers, as well as residents of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.



We wanted to understand why a clear majority of people in South Africa felt that sexual extortion in the public sector is so high. We investigated predictors of prevalence perceptions of public sector sexual extortion amongst the public and identified several major drivers. Of these drivers, the most powerful was hearing that a person you know had been a victim of public sector sexual extortion. Another powerful driver of prevalence perceptions was awareness of sexism. Individuals who had a greater awareness of sexism in South African society were more inclined to believe that sexual extortion was prevalent in the public sector. The experts engaged for this study were asked what was driving sexual extortion in the public sector. These experts said that the pervasiveness of this kind of crime was driven by patriarchal values and power imbalances, disrespect for women, and weak law enforcement. Experts also highlighted the role of economic dependence and vulnerability, particularly among women, who may feel compelled to exchange sexual favours for jobs, food, or protection.

DECIPHERING PUBLIC TOLERANCE TOWARDS CORRUPTION

Tolerance towards corruption (TtC) is a very important social norm that can influence behaviour. The level and drivers of TtC in South Africa were investigated and are presented in Chapter 7. Our research revealed that while the majority of the adult population denounced corrupt behaviour as unjustifiable, a significant minority viewed it as permissible. This tolerance extends beyond corruption alone, however, and we found a significant level of acceptance of other unlawful behaviours among the public. In fact, we discovered that South Africans exhibit a notably higher tolerance for dishonest and illegal conduct than populations in many other countries. We created a multi-item indicator to measure TtC in the country and labelled it the Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index. The index ranged from 0 to 100, with a high score signifying a high tolerance for corrupt behaviour, and a low score a strong rejection of corrupt behaviour. While the mean SAoC Index score was 27 out of 100, pointing to a low threshold of tolerance of corruption, the survey also found that only a minority (25%) of the general public had a zero-tolerance view of corruption. Certain groups, including men, the poor, public sector workers and, somewhat surprisingly, specific religious groups (e.g., Anglicans, Muslims, and Zionist Christians) demonstrated higher SAoC Index scores than other religious groups.



Our data analysis revealed a number of major drivers of SAoC Index scores, and this data can help inform interventions. Contrary to prior expectations, materialistic values do not appear to influence index scores. This suggests that communication campaigns need not explicitly target materialism. Instead, our data showed that civic values (such as responsibility and altruism) were linked to a zero-tolerance for corruption. Encouraging reflective and discerning civic patriotic values (e.g., loyalty to constitutional values and principles), which acknowledge both the strengths and shortcomings of the country, would be effective for cultivating a culture of zero-tolerance. We also recommend that messaging aimed at producing a lower SAoC Index score amongst the public should emphasise the detrimental impact of corruption. However, caution must be exercised to avoid inadvertently normalising corrupt practices by unnecessarily emphasising their prevalence. In addition, efforts to curb bribe-seeking behaviour among public officials will be crucial for decreasing TtC. We found that exposure to bribe solicitation by public officials made people more tolerant of corruption.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CODES OF SILENCE NORMS

Chapter 8 investigated the pervasive influence of Codes of Silence (CoS) social norms that help normalise corrupt practices. These norms refer to the perceived immorality of reporting the criminal behaviour of people you know personally to the authorities. To measure CoS norms, we constructed a Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index. The index ranged from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating a greater level of support for CoS social norms. The mean SfCoS Index score was 69; implying that most people think it is immoral to report on the criminal behaviour of people they know personally. The high level of CoS norms observed here presents a challenge to the NACS goal of promoting societal transparency and accountability. Failing to report on the criminal activities of others not only hampers law enforcement’s ability to uncover and prosecute wrongdoing, but also perpetuates unethical and illegal behaviour. Subgroup analysis revealed that CoS norms transcend various socio-demographic differences in the country. Yet, we did find that men and residents of certain provinces (e.g., Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and the Free State) exhibited higher mean SfCoS Index scores than others.

Our data analysis identified five major predictors of the SfCoS Index, and this insight can be used to design communication interventions to reduce CoS norms. Our analysis showed that discouraging

blind patriotism and ethnocentrism will help reduce CoS social norms. In addition, the data suggests that encouraging civic nationalism (i.e., loyalty to constitutional supremacy and the non-discriminatory application of its values and principles) may be quite effective in combating CoS norms. Furthermore, we found that reducing bribe solicitation amongst public sector officials will weaken CoS norms. Materialistic values do not appear to be associated with the SfCoS Index, aligning with prior findings on their limited influence on TtC. Holding authoritarian law and order values increased the likelihood of having a high SfCoS Index score. Consequently, we should work to discourage these values in our society. In addition, recent experiences of public sector corruption were positively related to CoS social norms. Lowering levels of bribe solicitation by public officials will help to reduce CoS norms.



Most people in South Africa **supported codes of silence** with 45% of adult public with a mean SfCoS Index score of 90 and above.



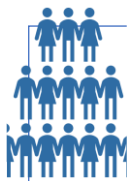
Holding **authoritarian law and order values** increased the likelihood of having a **high** SfCoS Index score.



A strong **sense of civic duty** increased the likelihood of having a **low** SfCoS Index score.



Being **blindly nationalistic** increased the likelihood of having a **high** SfCoS Index score.



Being **ethnocentric** increased the likelihood of having a **high** SfCoS Index score.



Recent **experiences of public sector corruption** increased the likelihood of having a **high** SfCoS Index score.

THE PERCEIVED CULTURE OF IMPUNITY

We examined public views on a perceived culture of impunity for corrupt practices in Chapter 9. Findings revealed that a majority of the public thought that ordinary individuals would not be held accountable for engaging in corruption. Moreover, a majority of the population perceived a significant accountability gap between elites and non-elites. The public also tended to believe that the law favoured the rich and powerful; 63% of the public said that elites would not be punished for engaging in corruption. Survey data showed low levels of public trust in legal authorities, indicating a legitimacy challenge facing law and order institutions. Only a minority (36%) of the public thought that action would be taken if they went to a government office or the police to report corrupt behaviour. Perceptions of reporting ineffectiveness were found to be especially strong in certain provinces (e.g., Mpumalanga and Limpopo), among female adults, as well as rural dwellers.

A majority of the population did not think it was safe to report corruption in their community. Roughly three-fifths (62%) said that they lived in a community where people were afraid to speak out against corruption. This finding highlights the failure of law enforcement to provide a safe reporting environment in many communities. Experts were interviewed about whistleblowers and asked if the South African public had a favourable view of them. Expert views on this issue were mixed. Some stated that the public saw whistleblowers as brave and heroic figures, while others thought the public viewed them with scepticism or even hostility. Many experts agreed that whistleblowers face significant barriers, including weak legal protections, cultural resistance, and a lack of action by

authorities, which often discourage individuals from coming forward. Overall, the results presented in Chapter 9, on the whole, demonstrate the need to safeguard whistleblowers and improve law enforcement-community relations based on effective results that build trust.

THE PUBLIC'S RELUCTANCE TO REPORT CORRUPTION

It is possible to create, and maintain, a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption by encouraging the reporting of corrupt behaviour. However, Chapter 10 revealed that the general public was polarised about whether they would report corrupt practices if they encountered them. Only around half expressed an intention to alert authorities if they witnessed corruption. We discovered that report intention varied significantly across geographic, demographic, and socio-economic boundaries. We found that the poor, the middle-aged and certain provincial groups (e.g., Mpumalanga and Limpopo) demonstrated a lower propensity to report corruption than other groups. Expert opinion on why people were reluctant to report corruption highlighted fear of retaliation and a lack of trust in authorities as significant deterrents. Some experts also mentioned cultural factors, such as the apartheid-era stigma attached to whistleblowing. In addition, experts mentioned the socio-economic dependence of the poor and vulnerable on their social networks and communities.



45% of the general public were **unwilling to report corruption** if they witnessed it.



Recent **experiences of public sector corruption** decreased the willingness to report.



Viewing **anti-corruption reporting structures** as effective substantially increased intention to report.



Believing that **law enforcement will hold elites accountable** for corruption increased the willingness to report.



Believing that **ordinary people are held accountable for corruption** increased willingness to report.

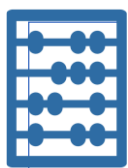


Thinking that people **faced reprisals within communities** for speaking out on corruption discouraged people from reporting.

Our data can be used to develop communication strategies to encourage people to report witnessed corruption. We investigated the predictors of reporting intention in South Africa and identified major drivers. Contrary to initial assumptions, materialistic values do not appear to undermine reporting intention. Our results showed that fear of community retaliation reduced willingness to report. Perceived effectiveness of the legal system emerged as the primary driver of reporting intention, emphasising the need for campaigns to highlight system efficacy and the willingness of authorities to take action. This could come from strengthening and promoting anonymity in reporting structures and enhancing protections for whistleblowers. We need to restore public confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of law enforcement. Publicising proactive and successful law enforcement that holds elites and non-elites equally accountable for corrupt practices will also be key in fostering a reporting-friendly environment. Our data analysis also showed that reducing public sector corruption will encourage people to report. We discovered that exposure to bribe solicitation by public officials made people less willing to report witnessed corruption.

DISCONTENT WITH GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS

Public evaluations of government anti-corruption programmes were assessed in Chapter 11, revealing a prevailing negativity among the general population. Only a small proportion (29%) of the public was satisfied with current anti-corruption efforts. Compared to what was observed in 2023, the general public held a more positive about government anti-corruption efforts in 2011. While all socio-demographic groups were quite negative, evaluations were lowest in certain provinces (e.g., Western Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal). We identified different major drivers of public evaluations of anti-corruption efforts. One of the most important was the perceived ability of the law enforcement system to hold elites accountable for corruption. Prosecuting corrupt elites and demonstrating the efficacy of anti-corruption initiatives should, therefore, help garner public backing for ongoing anti-corruption efforts. Furthermore, political trust and positive views of public services were generally associated with favourable assessments of government's anti-corruption efforts. This finding suggests the importance of restoring trust in democratic institutions.



29% of the general public thought that **government efforts to combat corruption** were effective.



Viewing corruption as **detrimental to daily life** reduced favourable evaluations.



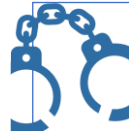
Viewing the **public service as committed to the people** increased satisfaction with state efforts.



Social **tolerance of corruption** increased favourable public evaluations of government anti-corruption measures.



Public **tust in political institutions** increased confidence in government efforts to combat corruption.



Believing that **law enforcement holds elites accountable for corruption** increased positive evaluations of the state's anti-corruption efforts.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Expert opinion was invited on how South Africa could foster a culture of zero tolerance for corruption. The experts we engaged with for this study identified a number of critical interventions but one of the most prominent was a need to improve law enforcement. Many recommendations involved sterner punishment for corrupt behaviour and favoured strengthening various accountability agencies to increase deterrence of corrupt practices. The public opinion data analysis showed improving the image of law enforcement agencies would significantly increase public willingness to report corruption to the authorities. Publicising effective and successful prosecutions and other forms of accountability for elite and non-elite corruption by law enforcement would therefore be beneficial. Strengthening whistleblower protections, including anonymity and safeguards against reprisal, was an important recommendation put forward by experts. A clear majority of the experts surveyed supported greater protections for whistleblowers.

Experts believed that ordinary citizens could make a difference in the fight against corruption and supported efforts to empower citizens to hold authorities accountable. Most experts surveyed thought that the best way that ordinary people could fight corruption was voting for a political party with a strong anti-corruption agenda and record and actively supporting greater societal transparency. We should encourage civic patriotism and active participation in civic activities through civic education

awareness campaigns. The public opinion data showed that encouraging civic patriotism will help promote zero-tolerance for corruption in the country. Many experts favoured awareness campaigns as a means of educating the public about the destructive impact of corruption. Public opinion data analysis indicated that greater awareness of the detrimental impact of corruption reduced tolerance for corrupt practices. Yet, it is also important to acknowledge that we found that the public awareness of the impact of corruption on society was already quite high.

It is also evident from the research that we need to reduce petty bribe solicitation by public officials. The public opinion data showed that frequent experiences of public sector bribe solicitation increased tolerance of corruption and reduced willingness to report witnessed corruption to the authorities. The experts we interviewed indicated that we can reduce bribe solicitation by fostering greater accountability in the public sector, as well as by depoliticising the public administration and ensuring transparent processes. Finally, a number of experts interviewed for this study noted that fighting corruption will necessitate a concrete effort to decolonise our economic structures and redress the legacy of apartheid. This will require us to meaningfully address the socio-economic inequalities and deprivations of the post-apartheid economy.

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- All the experts who participated in the study and shared their views and experiences with the research team.
- The HSRC project administrators who managed all the field logistics from training to contracts, car rentals and payments. Without their support, this project would not have been possible.

Abbreviations

CoS	Codes of Silence
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
NACS	National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020-2030
NACAC	National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council
SAoC	Social Acceptability of Corruption
SAPS	South African Police Service
SASAS	South African Social Attitudes Survey
SEO	State-Owned Enterprises
SNMs	Social Network Members
SfCoS	Support for Codes of Silence
TtC	Tolerance towards Corruption
WVS	World Values Survey

Glossary

Authoritarian Law and Order Values	A belief in strict adherence to laws, authority, and social order, often prioritizing control, discipline, and obedience over individual freedoms and rights. This perspective typically supports the use of force to maintain stability and prevent disorder.
Blind Patriotism	An unquestioning loyalty and devotion to one's country, marked by a refusal to acknowledge its flaws, critique its policies, or tolerate dissent. It often involves the belief that national interests are inherently superior, regardless of ethical or moral considerations.
Bribe Solicitation	The act of requesting, enticing, or demanding a bribe from another individual, typically in exchange for an unlawful or unethical favour or action.
Cadre Deployment	The practice employed by ruling political parties, where party loyalists are appointed to key positions within government and public institutions. This policy aims to ensure that individuals who align with the party's ideology and objectives occupy influential roles
Civic Patriotism	A form of pride in one's country that is based on shared values, principles, and civic responsibilities. It emphasizes active participation in democratic processes, respect for the rule of law, and commitment to the common good.
Codes of Silence	Unwritten rules or norms within a social group (e.g., family), workplace or community that discourage members from speaking out about wrongdoing, misconduct, or unethical behaviour.
Confidence Intervals	A range of values, derived from sample data, that are used to estimate the true value of a population parameter. The interval has an associated confidence level that quantifies the level of confidence that the parameter lies within the interval.
Culture of Impunity	An environment where corrupt actions are tolerated or overlooked, and those responsible are not held accountable. This culture allows individuals to engage in illegal or unethical behaviour without fear of punishment.
Descriptive Social Norms	Norms that are commonly observed and practiced by members of a group or society. They describe what people typically do in a given situation, shaping individuals' expectations about how they should behave based on the actions of others.
Egotropic	An individual's focus on personal self-interest when evaluating economic policies, decisions, or outcomes.
Hypothesis	A testable statement or prediction about the relationship between two or more variables. It serves as a starting point for scientific investigation, proposing a potential explanation or outcome that can be confirmed or refuted through experimentation, observation, or data analysis.

Elite Corruption	Acts of corruption that involve high-ranking public officials or politicians and result in substantial losses of public resources or significant harm to a nation's governance, economy, or society. It typically includes bribery, embezzlement, or abuse of power at the highest levels of government.
Injunctive Social Norms	Norms that specify what behaviours are approved or disapproved by a group or society. They reflect what people ought to do, based on moral beliefs or social approval, guiding individuals' actions through rewards or sanctions.
Non-Elite Corruption	Small-scale, everyday corrupt practices that involve low-ranking persons. It typically occurs in interactions with the public officials such as paying bribes for basic services, permits, or to avoid minor penalties. Also called 'petty' corruption.
Materialistic Values	Values that prioritization of wealth, possessions, and physical comfort as central goals in life. Such values often emphasize the acquisition of material goods over non-material aspects such as relationships, personal growth, or community well-being.
Mean	A statistical measure that represents the total sum of all values within a dataset divided by the number of values. It serves as a single numerical indicator describing the typical or central value of the data.
Multivariate Analysis	A statistical technique used to examine and understand the relationships among multiple variables simultaneously. This method allows researchers to analyse the impact of several variables on a particular outcome or to explore the interrelationships between variables.
Patriarchy	A system of authority in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it. This different 'sexism' which is prejudice or discrimination, , on the basis of sex (typically against women).
Public Opinion	The collective beliefs, attitudes and sentiments held by a population or a segment of society on various issues, events, policies, or individuals. It reflects the general consensus or prevailing viewpoint within a group at a given time.
Sexual Extortion	A person will abuse of their power by demanding or accepting sexual favours in exchange for services, opportunities, or the avoidance of penalties. These acts often target individuals in vulnerable positions and constitute both corruption and sexual abuse.
Social Desirability Bias	A bias that occurs when survey respondents provide answers that they believe will be viewed favourably by others, rather than reflecting their true beliefs, feelings, or behaviours.
Social Norms	Unwritten rules that govern the behaviour of individuals within a society or group. They define what is considered acceptable, appropriate, or taboo in various social situations and influence how people interact with one another.
Social Values	Shared beliefs, principles, and standards within a society or group that guide behaviour, shape social interactions, and influence decisions. These values

reflect what is considered important, desirable, or morally right in a given culture or community.

Sociotropic

The tendency of individuals to base their political attitudes and decisions on how they perceive political issues and outcomes will affect society as a whole, rather than focusing solely on personal impacts.

Standard Errors

A figure that denotes the precision of an estimate, indicating how much the estimated value of a sample statistic is expected to fluctuate due to sampling variability. It is calculated as the standard deviation of the sampling distribution of the statistic.

Statistical Algorithm

A procedure that applies statistical methods and mathematical models to process data.

Statistical Correlation:

A measure that describes the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. It indicates how changes in one variable are associated with changes in another. A *positive* correlation is a relationship between two variables where an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in the other. Conversely, a *decrease* in one variable corresponds to a decrease in the other.

Subgroup Analysis

A form of analysis that involves assessing a variable by different groups. Examples of different group classifications include age, gender, geographic location, or socioeconomic status.

Tolerance towards Corruption

The degree to which persons accept or condone corrupt practices. It encompasses attitudes and beliefs that normalize or justify corruption as an inevitable or even necessary part of different (e.g. social, political, or economic) interactions.

1. Introduction

The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2020-2030 is a comprehensive plan to eradicate corruption in South Africa. The NACS pursues its mission with due recognition of the pervasive nature of corruption and multifaceted threat that it presents for the success of the country. The strategy envisions a society-wide approach to create a zero-tolerance culture for corruption, involving all sectors and advocating for personal responsibility and active citizenship. The NACS aims to empower citizens to act against corruption, working with the authorities to root it out. The overall goal of the strategy is to create a deeply-rooted culture of probity and accountability in the country. The primary objective of this study is to contribute to the success of the NACS by enhancing our evidence-based understanding of public attitudes towards corruption in South Africa. The study aims to identify and track social values and norms that encourage and discourage corruption in post-apartheid society.

The study was commissioned by the Transparency, Integrity and Accountability Programme (TOP) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) and conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES) research division. The primary research tool was a nationally representative public opinion survey of the South African adult population. The data was analysed using a hypothesis-driven approach, considering multiple variables simultaneously to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships within the data. This approach aims to help identify the social norms and values that can assist in the creation of a zero-tolerance culture for corruption in South Africa. The public opinion data was supplemented by an online survey of experts in corruption and related topics. The data was further augmented by a series of qualitative engagements with key experts on research relevant topics.

Before the structure of the research report is laid out, it is necessary to place this report within its proper context. To this end, a brief description of the NACS is presented in the subsection that follows. Here we touch on the six major goals of the strategy, as well as the six pillars that inform how these goals will be achieved. This leads into a subsection that outlines the rationale for examining social values and norms in the context of corruption. We argue that understanding these norms and values is crucial for developing effective interventions to promote positive social change. The research design for this study is then outlined, followed by a description of the structure of the rest of the report.

1.1. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy

The NACS stands as a beacon for those committed to eradicating corruption in South Africa, reflecting a collective effort to uphold democratic values and foster ethical governance. The NACS is rooted in the recognition of corruption as a deep-seated problem that permeates both the country's public and private sectors. It views corruption as a multifaceted threat to democratic functioning, socio-economic development and public trust in our institutions and in each other as citizens and neighbours. For this reason, the strategy recognises the pervasive nature of corruption in the country as a national security threat. Against this backdrop, the NACS aligns with the National Development Plan 2030 (NPC, 2012) and advocates for a society guided by values of integrity, transparency and accountability. With this overarching goal in mind, this section provides a brief description of the strategy, outlining its main vision and priorities.

The NACS envisions a whole-of-society approach to creating a zero-tolerance culture for corruption, in which all sectors contribute to, and benefit from, anti-corruption initiatives. A rigorous process, spanning literature reviews, consultations and quality assurance, informed the strategy's formulation. Integral to the NACS' development was stakeholder engagement and public participation, ensuring broad ownership and legitimacy for the strategy. This inclusive approach underscores the NACS' commitment to a whole-of-society effort. In accordance with the needs of the strategy, a National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC) was established to oversee initial implementation efforts. This body, supported by inter-ministerial committees and social partners, will lay the groundwork for

a permanent, independent oversight body with a mandate to drive the long-term rollout of the strategy.

The 2016 NACS Diagnostic Report, commissioned by the Steering Committee overseeing the development of the NACS in South Africa, served as a foundational document for the NACS. The report draws on desk reviews, interviews and stakeholder consultations to assess past and current strategies, identify successful initiatives and highlight areas for improvement. The report concluded that, while the nation boasts a sophisticated anti-corruption legal framework, it grapples with enforcement. In addition, compliance with regulations governing public servants and executives remains inconsistent. Challenges in maintaining independence within criminal justice agencies impede effective corruption prosecution. These findings informed the design of the NACS and development of its implementation plan.

Central to the NACS is a comprehensive social compact uniting stakeholders across different sectors (including business, government, labour and civil society) in a shared commitment to ethical anti-corruption practices. The strategy contends that active citizenship is imperative for creating a nation where corruption finds no haven and accountability is upheld. Active citizenship is part of a collective vision for a corruption-free South Africa, grounded and sustained by coordinated action and unwavering commitment from all stakeholders. However, creating this kind of active citizenship will require empowering citizens to act against corruption and addressing those social norms and values that perpetuate its tolerance and practice within society. The NACS envisions an active citizenry empowered through advocacy campaigns focused on anti-corruption and governance issues. It is hoped that this whole-of-society approach will strengthen our democracy as well as achieve a corruption-free environment.



NACS GOAL#1: Government's administrative and procurement processes are strengthened to enhance monitoring, accountability, and transparency.



NACS GOAL#2: The public is educated on what constitutes corruption and empowered to act against it when encountered.



NACS GOAL#3: The public and whistleblowers are encouraged to report corruption, with robust support and protection provided.



NACS GOAL#4: Public officials are held accountable for service delivery and any failures in this regard.



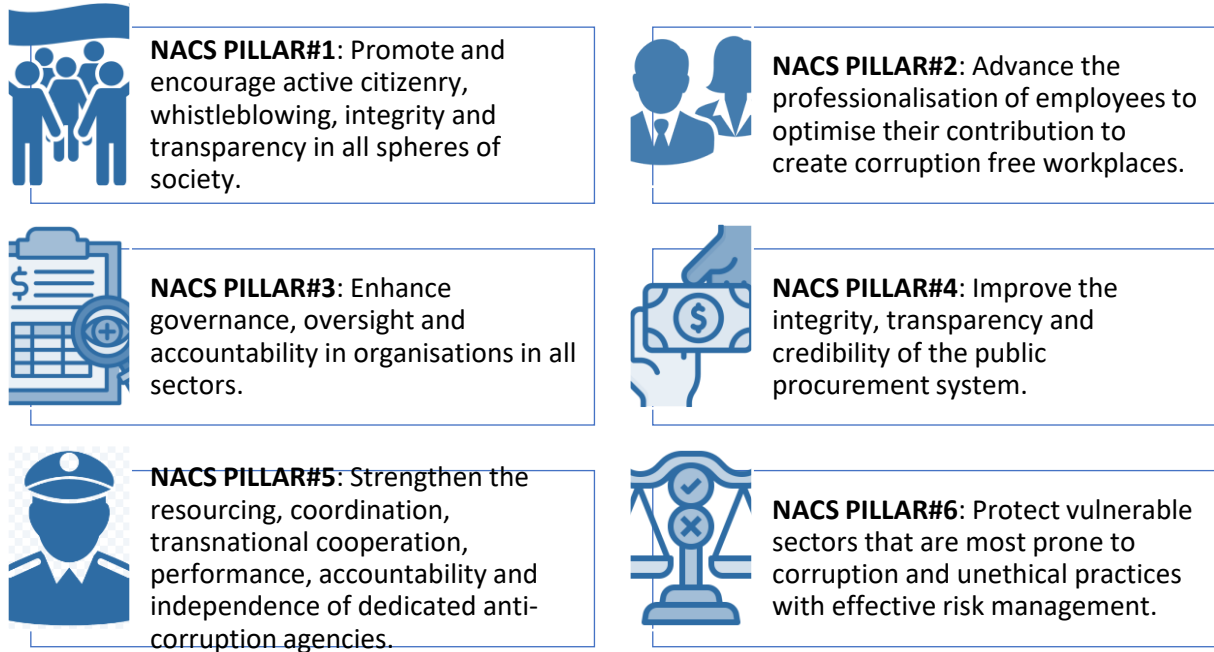
NACS GOAL#5: The business sector and civil society organisations operate ethically and are held accountable for any corrupt practices.



NACS GOAL#6: A culture of zero tolerance for corruption prevails across all sectors, ensuring full accountability for those involved in corrupt activities.

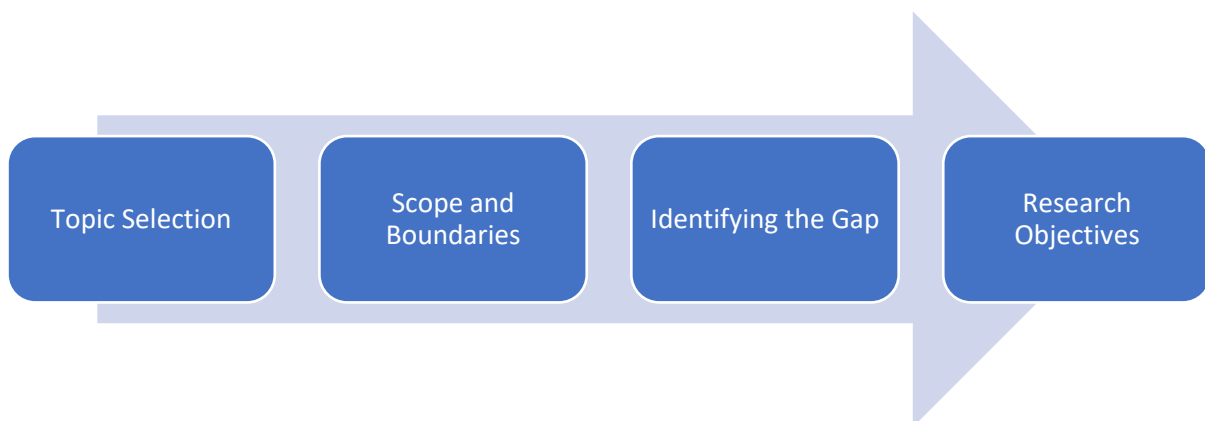
The NACS outlines a comprehensive framework and action plan for the country, aiming to foster a non-corrupt society by realising **six major goals**. To realise these goals, the NACS calls for all members of the public to take personal responsibility in preventing and addressing corruption and to work together, across political, socio-economic and ideological divides. The strategy outlines **six pillars**, each backed by a detailed implementation plan to ensure effective execution. Successful

implementation of these pillars requires collaboration and coordination among Parliament, elected representatives, government departments, institutions supporting constitutional democracy, civil society and the private sector. Of course, coordination poses challenges, as parties may have vested interests or prefer the status quo.



1.2. Study Design

First and foremost, the **primary aim** of our study is to contribute to the success of the NACS and the work of the NACAC. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to enhance our evidence-based understanding of public attitudes towards corruption in South Africa. Of **principal importance** are the social norms and values that inform corruption in post-apartheid society. The study has **six major objectives** and covers a range of topics, including corruption-reporting behaviour, sexual corruption, and the societal tolerance of corrupt practices. Through these objectives, the study aims to contribute to a more effective and comprehensive approach to combating corruption. It is hoped that this research by the HSRC will contribute towards the creation of a zero-tolerance culture for corruption in South Africa.



The **overall aim** of the study is to identify and track social values and norms that encourage and discourage corruption, and to measure change over time. A large-scale public opinion survey was used

to achieve this aim. The main advantage of this approach is that it gives us an insider’s perspective and helps us understand how ordinary people both experience and think about corruption. The public opinion data was supplemented by an online survey of experts in relevant fields. All survey data was analysed in such a way as to provide policy-relevant insights centred on the study’s overall aim. Before outlining how the study aims to achieve its objectives, it is necessary to conceptualise social values and norms and to understand *why* they may be related to corrupt behaviour.



In pursuit of the study’s research goals, we will refer extensively to relevant public opinion literature. However, this body of literature can often be a source of confusion for many readers. It is typically written in a highly academic style, which can be off-putting to those who need clear, actionable insights. Moreover, the complexity and jargon used in the literature can make it difficult to comprehend for those not deeply versed in academic discourse. Additionally, the literature often presents conflicting viewpoints, stemming from various theoretical perspectives that can sometimes be contradictory. To address these challenges, the present report will distil the existing academic work in an accessible and intelligible style for the average reader. By translating complex theoretical discussions into clear and straightforward language, we hope to bridge the gap between academic research and practical application. This approach will help to ensure that the insights derived from this report are not only understandable but also useful for a wider audience, including policymakers, practitioners and the general public.

1.3. Social Values and Norms

To restate, the primary objective of this research report is to consider the social norms and values that inform both anti-corruption and corruption attitudes and behaviours. This is because social values and social norms play a crucial role in shaping human attitudes and behaviour. By using social norms interventions and social value change techniques, individuals can be encouraged to adopt behaviours that are consistent with the NACS. Indeed, solutions that consider and address the social and cultural aspects of corruption are more likely to be sustainable. Such solutions can lead to long-term changes in attitudes and behaviour, reducing the incidence of corruption over time. This section provides a brief overview of *why* changing social values and norms may help in the fight against corruption.

Let us begin by asking ourselves *what* are social norms? Social norms can be defined as unwritten rules that govern how people behave in a particular group or society. They can be categorised into two main types: (i) descriptive norms and (ii) injunctive norms. Descriptive norms refer to an individual's or a group's beliefs about the correctness of a particular behaviour, while injunctive norms involve others' expectations of correct behaviour (Scharbatke-Church & Chigas, 2019). Norms are enforced through positive and negative sanctions (such as social approval). They are often learnt by observing others, receiving feedback and participating in group activities (also see Jackson & Köbis, 2018). Norms are often taken for granted and viewed as the "right" way to behave.

Now let us turn our attention to social values. Social values can be best thought of as the fundamental beliefs and principles that guide individual actions in social contexts. In this sense, they are much like descriptive norms. They influence how people perceive and interpret social situations and guide their decision-making (Rokeach, 1973). Examples of social values include honesty and fairness. Social values generally serve as the basis for social norms. Yet, then again, they are more abstract and enduring than norms and are often deeply ingrained in a culture (Kubbe et al., 2024). Social values are often internalised through socialisation and shape individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (also see Schwartz, 1992).

Social norms and values are, as mentioned above, closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Norms are often based on, and reflect, underlying values. Conversely, values can shape the development and enforcement of norms. They can both work together to maintain social order and promote collective behaviours. Social values and norms help individuals navigate social situations, coordinate their actions with others, and develop a sense of belonging to a group. At other times, however, social norms and values can be at odds with each other, leaving individuals facing a difficult choice on how to behave. Scholars consider understanding the interplay between norms and values as crucial for understanding social behaviour and societal change. For example, several studies (e.g., Camargo 2017; Hoffmann & Patel 2017; Kubbe, 2018; Köbis et al., 2022) have highlighted the importance of social norms and values in shaping corruption. This research, which will be referenced throughout this report, has made a meaningful contribution to how we understand the nature of corruption and what drives it (also see Köbis et al., 2020).

As aforementioned, social norms and values can significantly influence behaviour by creating social pressure and shaping individual attitudes. When individuals perceive that a particular behaviour is common or approved by others, they are more likely to adopt that behaviour, especially if they are materially or socially reliant or dependent on others in that group (Scharbatke-Church, & Chigas, 2019). Social values and norms can also influence behaviour by creating a sense of belonging and social identity (also see Kubbe et al., 2024). When individuals identify with a particular group or community, they are more likely to conform to the group's norms and values. Social identity theory suggests that individuals who identified strongly with a particular group are more likely to engage in behaviours that are consistent with the group's norms and values (for a more detailed discussion of this process, see Sagiv & Roccas, 2021).

Changing social norms and values can be a challenging but effective way to promote positive behavioural change. A number of scholars have looked at how changing social values and norms can discourage corrupt practices. One approach is to use social norms interventions, which involve exposing individuals to messages that highlight the prevalence of a particular behaviour among their peers (Agerberg 2022a). This can be done through various channels (such as social media, advertising or community outreach programmes). Another approach is to use social influence techniques, such as social comparison and social approval (also see Cheeseman & Peiffer, 2020). This report will draw on this literature when making strategic recommendations to promote social values and norms in line with the goals of the NACS.

1.4. Research Design

The research design used a nationally representative public opinion survey. This quantitative research instrument comprised data from a sample of adults and was collected as part of the 2023 annual round of the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS), which is administered by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). SASAS was designed to capture a representative picture of the adult population living in the country at national and provincial levels. Stratification variables (including age, province and majority population group in the area) were used to draw a representative sample, the details of which can be found in APPENDIX A. All persons living in South Africa over the age of 15 years were eligible for participation in the survey. Ethical guidelines include obtaining written informed consent from adult respondents and all interviews conducted adhered to the HSRC's Code of Ethics and were reviewed and approved by the HSRC Research Ethics Committee.

As a supplement to the public opinion survey, and as part of our research design, a separate online survey was conducted among relevant experts. Experts were selected not only for their knowledge of corruption but their understanding of and perspectives on social values and norms in South Africa. We surveyed a range of different people, including journalists, activists, political scientists, psychologists and sociologists. Sixty-seven experts were ultimately surveyed as part of this process (further information on the selection process is provided in APPENDIX A). The addition of this expert survey allowed for a more nuanced understanding of our research topic, providing insights from both the general public and individuals with specialised knowledge and expertise. By integrating these two perspectives, the study aims to identify discrepancies and commonalities between public perception and expert analysis. This method not only enriches the data but also helps us better understand the findings from the public opinion survey.

The reader should not be interested only in public attitudes towards corruption at a national level, but in how attitudes differ across the country's various socio-demographic fault lines. The report will provide a comprehensive subgroup analysis of key variables of interest, identifying where attitudes diverge among major subgroups (for our analysis, we created a number of different subgroups; for more detail see APPENDIX B), and in what way. Although subgroup analysis can provide significant and helpful insights, it often fails to capture what is driving attitude formation. It is a form of analysis that focuses solely on differences between groups. It overlooks the attitudinal and experiential factors that drive the formations of opinions and, as a result, can lead to biased or incomplete conclusions. This is especially an issue when we need to identify the social norms and values that *drive* attitudes that encourage and discourage corruption. So, while subgroup analysis certainly has its merits, a better approach is needed to uncover the full complexity of relationships within our dataset.

To resolve the problem discussed above, this report used a **hypothesis-driven approach**. Here we propose different hypotheses related to the social values and norms that encourage and discourage corruption. As part of this process, we present a series of hypotheses, elucidate their rationale, and evaluate whether there is empirical evidence to substantiate them. Hypotheses are tested using multivariate analysis techniques. This is a method that considers multiple variables simultaneously, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying relationships within the data. It offers greater statistical power and control, enabling researchers to draw more robust conclusions about the drivers of attitudes. The process promises to shed light on the underlying nature and characteristics of perceptions about corruption in South Africa.

The presentation of quantitative statistics can be quite challenging and difficult to follow for readers who are not well-versed in statistical methodologies. Indeed, the intricacies of quantitative statistical results may even appear superfluous and mystifying. To ensure accessibility and comprehension, the results will be described in a non-technical manner throughout the various chapters of this report.

However, in the interest of transparency and accountability, the detailed quantitative statistical analyses conducted for this study will be carefully documented in a series of appendices. These appendices are clearly referenced within the main text, allowing interested readers to evaluate the various statistical analyses completed for the report. This approach aims to balance the need for clear and understandable reporting of results with the rigorous presentation of detailed statistical information, thus catering to both general readers and those seeking in-depth analytical insights.

1.5. Report Structure

The report is structured into distinct themed chapters that cover public opinion as well as the attitudes of those experts surveyed for this study. The report begins by looking at expert attitudes towards corruption in South Africa. First, in Chapter 2, we look at expert attitudes towards the growth of corruption and what they consider to be factors that are driving this growth. Then we turn our attention to the public opinion data. In Chapter 3, we look at recent public experiences of public sector corruption. This is followed by an examination of public perceptions of the level of corruption in society in Chapter 4. Public understandings of the drivers of corruption at the elite and non-elite level are analysed in Chapter 5. This chapter is supplemented by an assessment of expert opinion on the social norms and values that drive corrupt behaviour. In Chapter 6, public perceptions of the level of sexual extortion in the public sector is explored; this chapter includes a section that looks at the social values and norms that experts think are encouraging this kind of crime.

The social tolerance of corruption among the adult public is analysed in Chapter 7, and an appraisal of social norms around 'codes of silence' among the general public is presented in Chapter 8. The report then turns its focus to anti-corruption behaviour. In Chapter 9, we examine public perceptions of the 'culture' (or norm) of legal impunity for corruption in the country. We then investigate public willingness to report corruption to the authorities in Chapter 10. This chapter included a section that uses expert opinion to explore the different factors that are hindering the public's willingness to report corruption. Finally, Chapter 11 explores public evaluations of the government's anti-corruption efforts. This chapter includes an examination of expert opinion on what could be done to improve current anti-corruption efforts. The final chapter of this report provides a comprehensive summary of the main findings of the research, outlining appropriate recommendations for interventions to help create a zero-tolerance culture for corruption in South Africa.

2. Unravelling the Struggle: The Deepening Post-Apartheid Corruption Crisis

In its introduction, the NACS labels corruption a dire and pressing problem in South Africa. Yet, what is corruption? It is a complex and multifaceted issue that has plagued societies around the world for centuries. It can manifest itself in various forms, from the abuse of power by public officials for personal gain to the collusion between private and public entities to circumvent regulations and laws. If corruption becomes too pervasive, it can have far-reaching and negative consequences for society. These include undermining law and order, the erosion of public trust in public and private institutions, the breakdown of interpersonal trust and the erosion of economic and social development. This chapter provides background context to the problem of corruption. It uses responses to the expert survey to look at how the problem of corruption can be understood and why it has become a major threat to our democracy.

In the first part of this chapter, we explore how experts define corruption and what it entails. We then look at expert opinion on the historical roots of corruption in the country, with a focus on the apartheid and colonial periods. The subsequent section assesses expert evaluations of whether corruption has increased over the last few decades, followed by an examination of expert attitudes on why corruption has increased in the post-apartheid period. We identify four core themes from the expert survey data, shedding light on the political and cultural factors influencing corrupt practices in South Africa. References are made, where relevant, to the wider local scholarly literature on corruption. It is hoped that this chapter will serve as an introduction to the problem of corruption and act as a foundation or backdrop for subsequent chapters.

2.1. Defining Corruption: Perspectives and Debates

Before we begin unpacking expert attitudes towards the growing level of corruption within South Africa, it is important to ask the question, ‘*what is corruption?*’ While acknowledging this term’s multiple interpretations, the 2016 NACS Diagnostic Report suggested that corruption could be defined as an ‘abuse of power’. However, to what extent is there expert consensus on this issue? In this section, we explore how the experts surveyed understood the term ‘corruption’ and how they felt it could be defined. Expert respondents were asked to reflect on their understanding of the term, prompting them to share their thoughts on what the word evokes and how they would define it.¹ When requested to define corruption, respondents highlighted similar themes but often provided differing perspectives. This is perhaps unsurprising; no existing definition of corruption has managed to cover the many dimensions of the concept. Indeed, there is no broad academic consensus on what corruption is or how it can be defined.² A detailed discussion of the common themes identified in the expert responses is provided below.

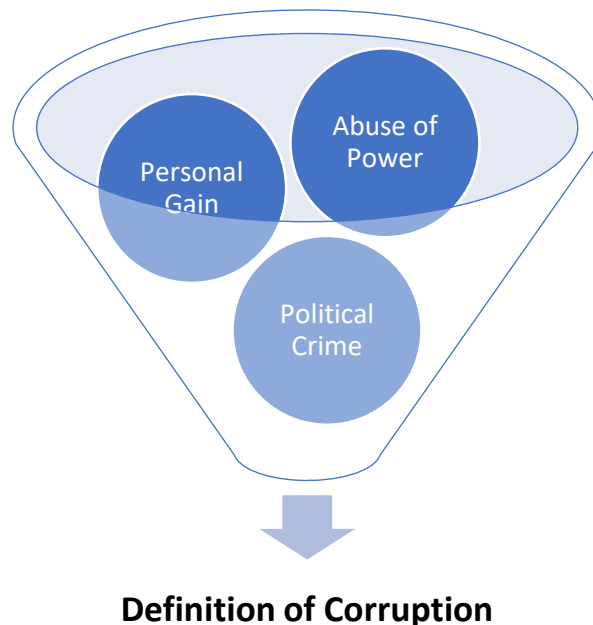
Abuse of Power

Most of the experts surveyed defined corruption as the abuse of power for personal gain. For instance, Kavisha Pillay emphasised the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain, a sentiment echoed by Deon Rossouw, who referred to the abuse of laws, power or official positions. For some respondents, corruption could cover a range of different behaviours. Sadia Khan maintained that it “encompasses various unethical or illegal practices such as bribery, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, favouritism in the workplace and extortion”. Even though corruption always involves unethical activities, it is not

¹ The exact wording of the question is: “When you hear the word corruption, what comes to mind? How would you define corruption?”

² In a review Bussell (2015) has shown that there are significant (and fraught) definitional debates around how corruption should be conceived.

always illegal in practice. Reflecting on this issue, EXPERT 14³ noted that corruption “need not only be unlawful and may include unethical conduct that is understood to fall in a ‘grey area’”. EXPERT 5 said that “actually corruption can involve a wide range of things that give unfair advantage over others or even undue benefit (be it socio-, economic, or even psychological).” EXPERT 14 observed that corruption was not always financial but could also include “using resources meant for something else for personal and family gain, providing false information in order to achieve something.”



Personal Gain

A number of respondents associated corruption with the moral failing of greed. For example, John Clarke said that it was “synonymous with selfishness and greed.” EXPERT 22 associated corruption with selfishness and the disregard for right and wrong. EXPERT 24 equated it with ‘stealing’, ‘lying’, ‘cheating’, ‘violence’ and ‘deception’. He told us that corruption manifested itself in an “utter disregard for the welfare of others and for the law.” Sam Sole and Paul Holden described it as the offering of “illicit inducements for undue gain, often involving multinational corporations and political fixers.” EXPERT 16 characterised corruption as a crime intended to defraud systems. Sekoetlane Phamodi thought motivations behind corruption can vary. Explaining further he noted that, for some, the motivation is self-esteem, or how they define their success, while others are motivated by how others see them, whether in the workplace or in their social circle or community. He said that definitions of success can vary between individuals and contended that “for some, success is defined in material terms, for others, power is more important, while for others, one is a means to the other”.

Some experts interviewed differentiated need-driven corruption from greed-driven corruption⁴. Reflecting on need-based corruption, Caroline James noted that sometimes vulnerable people see no alternative but to “participate in corruption, or to condone it or ‘look away’, because their survival is at stake”. To illustrate the point about need-based corruption, she gave an example of a mother who

³ Certain experts preferred to remain anonymous, and they have therefore been assigned general numbers. Assigned numbers were randomised to avoid comprising anonymity.

⁴ Need-based corruption occurs when individuals engage in corrupt practices to meet basic survival needs (such as obtaining food, healthcare, or housing) often due to poverty or lack of access to resources. In contrast, greed-based corruption involves engaging in corrupt activities driven by a desire for excessive wealth, power, or material gain.

pays a bribe at a busy health clinic in order to ensure that her sick baby receives urgent medical attention. She said that the motivation behind this kind of corruption was very different from greed-based corruption. Using an example of a private company who wants to secure a “big tender and feel they have to pay a facilitation fee so that they get that tender so that they can continue to increase their profits”.

Political Crime

While acknowledging that private sector individuals often participate in corrupt transactions, some experts preferred to define corruption as the abuse of public sector resources. David Lewis, for instance, said that: “corruption is the abuse of entrusted public power for private gain.” David Bruce told us that he thinks about the abuse of government power and was generally “guided by the definition of the abuse of public office for personal gain”. He said that his “preference is to use the term specifically to refer to the abuse of power for gain by politicians and people in the public sector.” Moreover, several experts associated the term with political forms of corruption. Sharon Ekambaram, for example, held that corruption was “the mismanagement of state resources and the failure to implement policy in a way that is transparent and where state officials can be held to account.”

A number of experts defined corruption as a form of unethical politics within the country. EXPERT 15 described corruption as the refusal to use public resources as agreed upon. EXPERT 6 talked about the misuse “of political power and financial systems and the trust of the public for the benefit of a minority, to the detriment of the majority.” EXPERT 45 and EXPERT 13 linked it directly to the ruling party, including notable figures like former President Jacob Zuma. EXPERT 51 referred to bad governance and misappropriation of public goods. Others, like EXPERT 17 and EXPERT 18, talked about fraud and dishonest behaviour by officials and politicians. Several experts emphasised the detrimental effects of corruption on public services and societal welfare, with a disproportionate impact on the poor. EXPERT 47 was particularly explicit in describing the societal impact of corruption, noting it results in “old people not getting help, women dying during childbirth, and children not having enough food, medical care or education.”

2.2. Historical Roots of Corruption in South Africa

In this section, we explore the historical roots of corruption in South Africa. We look at expert opinion on how the legacy of colonialism and apartheid has shaped contemporary corruption in the country. Although supplemented by expert survey data, this section is mainly reliant on qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key experts. Even though there were some divergent perspectives, most experts interviewed agreed that colonialism and apartheid laid the groundwork for present-day corruption. Particular emphasis was placed on how these historical governance systems created economic disparities that pushed people towards corrupt practices as a means of survival. In addition, experts contended that the legacy of apartheid has informed how people view compliance with the law. Let us now discuss expert opinion on this topic in more detail.

Interviewees identified colonialism and apartheid as inherently corrupt systems, designed to exploit and marginalise people of colour. A number of experts surveyed emphasised, in particular, the corruption of the apartheid period. Janine Hicks noted that apartheid was a system managed by a powerful elite who created a structure of patronage, power and privilege that was inherently corrupt. Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze labelled apartheid as “corruption at its best.” EXPERT 15 stressed that “apartheid was a system of grand scale corruption.” Sharon Ekambaram noted that corruption during the apartheid era was well documented and referred to the “Muldergate” scandal⁵. Paul Holden said

⁵ The “Muldergate” scandal (also known as the Information Scandal) in South Africa, which erupted in the 1970s, involved a covert operation by the apartheid government to use state funds to finance a media campaign that promoted the apartheid regime. At the centre of the scandal was the then

that the system of apartheid was riven with corruption and noted that, from at least the late 1970s onwards, military spending by the state was linked to corruption. He stated that during this period, an extensive multinational system of money laundering had developed to circumvent sanctions and buy weapons. By the end of apartheid, the scale of military spending and the criminality attendant upon it was extraordinary.⁶

When discussing the origins of corruption in South Africa, Sope Williams touched on the shortcomings of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). She felt that the NDR did not involve the deep systemic changes needed to address the combined legacy of colonialism and apartheid, and that the politicians involved were overly cautious. This led to political compromises that allowed the old institutional ethos to persist and contribute to ongoing corruption. She particularly expressed concern about a failure to adequately deal with the economic injustices of the apartheid period. Zoe Mthimunya and Gareth Newham also asserted that economic structures established during apartheid continue to dominate the contemporary South African economy. This continued dominance makes it difficult for new entrants, especially small businesses, to compete. The persisting predominance of large corporations that benefited from apartheid-era contracts highlights the ongoing structural challenges that limit efforts to combat corruption.

A number of experts linked the poverty and economic inequality created by colonialism and apartheid to current levels of corruption. For example, Vanja Karth argued that these historical systems have left a legacy where a significant portion of the population is economically disenfranchised. This economic desperation often drives individuals to engage in corrupt practices as a means of survival. EXPERT 32 agreed and said that an economic system “that excludes the majority promotes corruption.” Christine Hobden observed that the country’s harsh socio-economic conditions (such as poverty and unemployment) are crucial factors that shape individuals’ decisions regarding corruption. During an interview with the research team, she noted that the fear of unemployment is so pervasive that it often drives people to prioritise immediate survival over long-term civic values. This survivalist mentality is not merely a matter of personal enrichment but a response to the lack of opportunities and the very real possibility of falling into extreme poverty should current economic access be lost. In this sense, corruption becomes a coping mechanism in a system where the stakes are incredibly high for the average person.

While discussing the socio-economic conditions that contribute to corruption, Christine Hobden distinguished between economic inequality and absolute poverty. She suggested that while inequality certainly plays a role, the more pressing issue is poverty, which creates a powerful incentive to engage in corrupt practices or to turn a blind eye to them. Other experts disagreed and were more inclined to focus on inequality as a driver of corruption. Sadia Khan, for instance, contended that economic imbalances, particularly among marginalised communities, exacerbate corruption as individuals seek economic mobility through illicit means. Moira Campbell questioned the feasibility of shared values when our society lives in a “skewed reality”. Many people feel “forced to betray their own values because of the historical ... inequality, [which] sort of undercuts everything in this country.” This is a viewpoint shared by EXPERT 30, who said that since “inequality is one of the drivers of corruption, we need this to be addressed in order to combat corruption in the long run.” Sekoetlane Phamodi pointed to the continued neocolonial extractive nature of the global economic system, which contributes to the perpetuation of inequality in South Africa. Thulebona Mhlanga also linked economic inequality to corruption, stating that “South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world” and highlights how economic disparities tilt power dynamics and contribute to corruption. EXPERT 30 believed that

Minister of Information, Cornelius Mulder, and his involvement in diverting government money to pay for pro-apartheid propaganda (for a more detailed discussion, see Rees & Day 1980).

⁶ There has been recent and informative research, in particular by van Vuuren (2019) as well as Dall and Blackman (2021), on the extent of corruption during the apartheid period.

inequality was an important driver of corruption and claimed that it had “to be addressed in order to combat corruption in the long run.”

Some experts felt that the psychological scars left by apartheid and colonialism play a significant role in sustaining corruption. Amanda Gouws, in a qualitative interview, discussed the systematic dehumanisation of people of colour during apartheid. This dehumanisation contributed to a pervasive sense of powerlessness and inferiority which has had lasting social consequences. For her, the psychological trauma inflicted by apartheid has not been adequately addressed, which further exacerbates issues of corruption. This failure to address the psychological wounds of apartheid has perpetuated past forms of dehumanisation, hindering the country’s progress towards a more just society. Like other experts interviewed, she expressed a concern that the post-apartheid government did not undertake the deep systemic changes needed to fully dismantle the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Here she was particularly critical of the marginalisation of feminist movements after the NDR, a critique that Sope Williams supports.

Some experts said that apartheid helped create a political justification for contemporary corruption. Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze and Zoe Mthimunye thought that these systems created a foundation where unethical behaviour became normalised. They argued that some individuals justified their participation in post-apartheid corruption as a form of retribution for past injustices. This sense of entitlement was thought to perpetuate corruption, particularly within the government. A similar argument was made by David Bruce who asserted that corruption is often justified as a means of addressing the injustices of apartheid, with the law being dismissed on the grounds that it supposedly fails to serve the interests of the majority. The degree to which this justification is supported by the general public is a polarising question amongst the experts surveyed.⁷

Other experts offered a more cautious response when asked about whether apartheid and colonialism played a role in shaping corruption in South Africa. For instance, Trevor White offered a contrasting perspective on corruption compared to other experts highlighted in this section. He acknowledged that colonialism and apartheid have certainly played a role but cautions against attributing all the country’s problems to these historical factors. He points out that “corruption in the public sector...is not a South African isolated issue” and that similar challenges exist in Europe, America as well as other parts of the world. This is a perspective that he shares with Deon Rossouw and Kris Dobie. These experts were also cautious about the idea that apartheid and colonialism can explain unethical practices in South Africa.

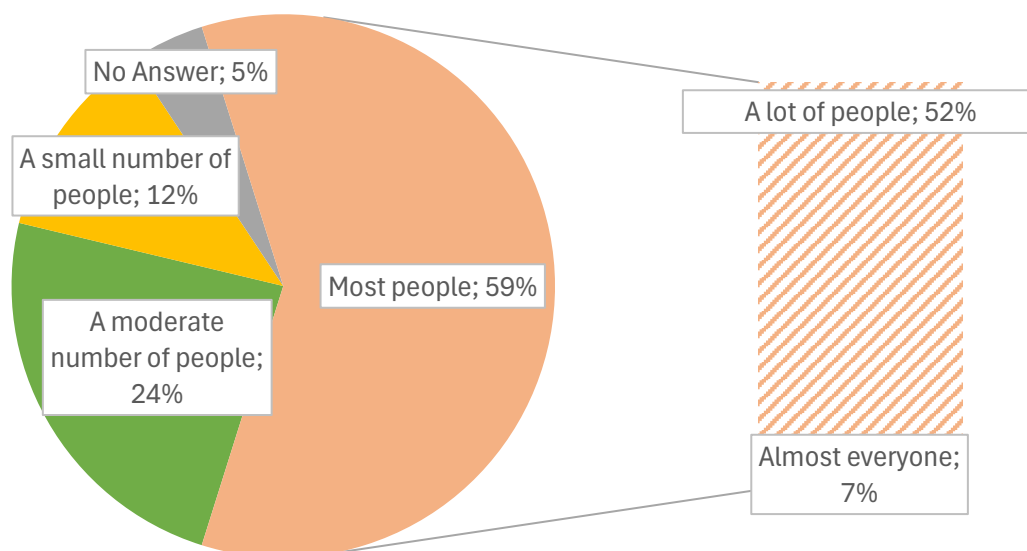
EXPERT 2 acknowledged that the role that extractive colonial capitalism (using the example of the Dutch East India Company as well as the Johannesburg mining barons) in promoting corruption in contemporary South Africa. She nonetheless acknowledged that corruption has also been a significant problem in communist and post-communist countries. Ursula van Beek agreed, observing that there are greedy people to be found in every society and “there is no value in referencing economic systems.” Marianne Camerer emphasised the importance of recognising the role of material conditions in pushing some people into corrupt conduct. Yet she felt that the specific economic system may be less relevant to understanding corruption than the basic human motivations and societal conditions that foster it. She said that the unfair opportunities available to those with proximity to unchecked power in any society should be our focus rather than the colonial or apartheid past.

⁷ When asked “how many people who were disadvantaged during apartheid believe they deserve to get something today in return for the way they were treated?”, the expert sample was found to be quite divided. About two-fifths (39%) held that a majority of all previously disadvantaged South Africans believed that they deserve to get something and 15% considered that almost all previously disadvantaged people felt this way. More than a quarter (27%) of experts judged that a moderate proportion of the previously disadvantaged population shared this belief and 12% that a minority did.

2.3. Corruption Unbound: Has Corruption Become Worse?

In this section, we attempt to answer a simple question, namely “has corruption in South Africa increased over the last few decades?” The 2016 NACS Diagnostic Report acknowledged that inconsistent reporting on corruption investigations and convictions complicates monitoring efforts. Despite this, the report concluded that the country has seen an increase in corruption over the past 15 years. Public surveys were cited to reveal growing levels of public sector corruption (particularly in traffic policing, the Department of Home Affairs, and local government). The NACS Diagnostic Report also noted that corruption was deeply entrenched in the public service and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The authors of the report also recognised that corruption was not confined to public institutions but is a widespread issue affecting multiple sectors of South African society. Drawing on the 2016 NACS Diagnostic Report, the NACS recognises that corruption in South Africa is a serious and worsening problem. Concerns about widespread corruption across the public sector have also been informed by the Zondo Commission’s inquiry into allegations of political corruption during the Zuma Administration.⁸

Figure 2-1: Expert responses to the question: “How many people do you think are involved in corruption in South African society?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

The experts surveyed for this study saw South Africa as quite a corrupt nation. When inquiring about how many people in the country were perceived to be involved in corruption, a sizeable share of the experts said that most people were involved. The results, presented in **Figure 2-1** (pg. 13), show that more than half (52%) of the sample believed that a lot of people were involved in corrupt practices. Close to a tenth (7%) of the experts held an even harsher view, contending that almost everyone in the country was engaged in such activities. Only a minority (24%) said that a moderate number of people were complicit, while 12% stated a small number were involved. The remainder (5%) did not answer the question.

Many experts surveyed for this study concurred with the NACS and asserted that the level of corruption in the country has worsened during the last few decades. We found that 57% of the expert sample believed that corruption had worsened since 1975, while 20% thought that it had remained

⁸ A history of the Zondo Commission as well as its findings and recommendations are summarised and discussed by Holden (2023).

about the same. Only a small minority (6%) told us that corruption had decreased since the mid-1970s. The overwhelming majority (87%) of respondents alleged that corruption had increased over the last three decades (since 1995). Then experts were asked if corruption had worsened since 1995. When compared to this early post-apartheid period, only a small segment of experts claimed that the situation had remained the same (9%) or improved (3%). A clear majority (82%) said that the situation had gotten worse. A significant proportion of experts also asserted corruption had increased in the last ten years. Two-thirds (67%) of this group said that corruption had increased since 2015, 29% believed that it had remained the same, and 4% felt it had decreased. Referring to this general sense of increasing corruption, Jay Kruuse, for example, said that this goes “without question...I see it at so many levels”.

During a qualitative interview, Trevor White argued that the recent growth of corruption in South Africa was largely driven by the public sector. He said that an expanding public service offered opportunities for corruption. He said that the increased access to public services (e.g., electricity, water and sanitation) for a larger portion of the South African population has created more opportunities for corruption. Speaking on changes in corruption in the country, he acknowledged the problem of corruption in the private sector but claimed that large-scale actors in the sector had made some progress in combating corruption. This had occurred through stricter corporate policies and because of awareness of the negative consequences for a conducive business environment.

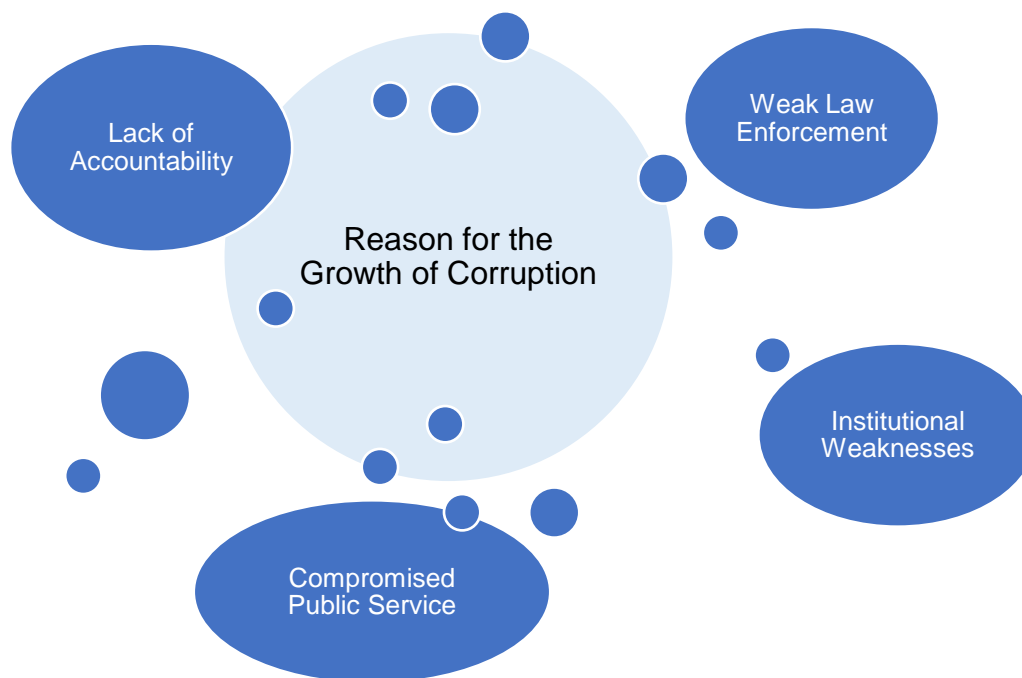
Taken as a whole, only a few experts disagreed with the position of the NACS, arguing that corruption had not increased over the last few decades. EXPERT 26, for instance, pushed back against the thesis that the problem of corruption had worsened. He alleged that “systemic corruption is not new” to South Africa and that “this myth needs to be debunked.” Some experts traced the problem of corruption back to the apartheid era, noting that it has not meaningfully increased. In addition, EXPERTS 16 and 36 argued that it is increased awareness of, and exposure to, corruption rather than an actual increase in corrupt activities that have contributed to the perception that the problem has worsened. EXPERT 48 thought that one of the main differences between apartheid and democratic South Africa was that citizens were better able to uncover cases of corruption. She said that this is “unlike [what] was the case during apartheid with its secrecy and stifling of media freedom.”

The points of view outlined above are consistent with past public opinion research on the perceived scale of corruption in South Africa. For example, research by Gordon et al. (2012) found that there was almost universal agreement amongst the public that corruption represents a major problem. This work also showed that a majority of the adult public in 2011 thought the level of corruption in the country was escalating. Later research by Roberts et al. (2017) showed that a growing proportion of the public saw corruption as one of the ‘top challenges’ facing the nation. Less than a tenth of the population saw corruption as one of the three most important challenges facing South Africa in 2003. However, by 2016, 31% of the public described corruption as a ‘top three’ challenge. These findings are consistent with Afrobarometer research, which showed that more and more South Africans regard corruption in the country as a grave threat (Patel & Govindasamy, 2021).

At this stage, it is worth noting the mood of the expert group as regards the status quo in South Africa at the time of surveying. Many experts in our sample felt that the national mood was grim. A majority thought that words like “divided” (75%), “angry” (69%) and “fearful” (52%) were appropriate descriptors for South Africa today. There was also a sense that the collective mood had grown more pessimistic over time. A large percentage (80%) of the experts surveyed said that the country was ‘optimistic’ thirty years ago, with only 11% saying that the nation was ‘pessimistic’ during that time. In contrast, more than two-thirds (68%) of experts described the country as ‘pessimistic’ at present, with only a small minority (15%) asserting that the mood was ‘optimistic’. We could therefore say that there was a general sense among the expert sample that the country is heading in the wrong direction.

2.4. Entrenched Graft: The Systematic Evolution of Corruption in South Africa

As described in the section above, a significant majority of the experts surveyed thought corruption in South Africa had worsened over the past few decades. What is behind this trend? In this section, we look at expert opinion on why corruption in the country has become worse over the last few decades. Our analysis of the expert data was supplemented by data from qualitative semi-structured interviews with key experts. Research participants were probed about the worsening problem of corruption,⁹ and by looking at their answers we were able to identify common themes. Yet, consistent with what we observed in the previous section, a minority of experts argued that corruption has deep historical roots and has not become worse or more organised during the post-apartheid period.



Amongst those experts who thought that corruption had increased, most talked about corrupt practices amongst elites and the role played by politicians in exacerbating the problem. Overall, this group chiefly attributed the growth of corruption to environmental (i.e., external or contextual) factors. Respondents particularly emphasised institutional and political failures rather than individual psychological (i.e., internal) motivations. It might be that experts favour external factors because of their knowledge approach. They often analyse issues from a macro perspective, considering systemic and structural elements (such as government policies, historical contexts and institutional frameworks). Reviewing the data provided by this group of experts, we identified four common themes. These are discussed in detail below.

Lack of Accountability

Multiple experts surveyed for this study highlighted a lack of accountability as a key reason that corruption has increased since the start of the post-apartheid period. They argued that a lack of accountability and unethical leadership have fostered a culture of impunity in South Africa, exacerbating corruption. Kavisha Pillay, for example, noted “a general lack of accountability” in the country, while EXPERT 6 talked about “the breakdown of mechanisms and culture of accountability.” When talking about this issue, experts tended to criticise the ruling party’s loyalty-driven patronage

⁹ The exact wording of this question was as follows: “During the last few decades, corruption in South Africa has become more systematic, organised and coordinated. Please describe the reasons, if any, that you think are behind this trend?”

system, which many thought had undermined accountability and allowed corruption to become entrenched. These concerns about a lack of accountability for corruption in the post-apartheid period are discussed in more detail below.

A lack of accountability among leaders was a key issue for several experts, including Stefanie Fick who mentioned the example of the previous Public Protector, Busisiwe Mkhwebane, who abused her entrusted position of power to protect particular political leaders. Ursula van Beek emphasised that it is the “quality of leadership that matters because individuals’ value systems differ” in any society. Moira Campbell said, in a qualitative interview, that we have not seen enough leadership demonstrated by CEOs of large companies, especially in terms of placing a voluntary cap on their remuneration to reduce the “huge gap between the CEO and the lowest-paid person in the company”. Ethical violations by leaders were therefore seen to have a destructive effect on the social fabric of society. Ralph Mathekga was concerned that society was “becoming more tolerant of leaders confronted with allegations of impropriety.”

Deon Rossouw expressed concern that leaders within society were “openly involved in corruption and not being held accountable for doing so.” During a qualitative interview, he said that many organisational leaders in South Africa had failed to create and maintain ethical organisational cultures. This failure perpetuated a culture of impunity, contributing significantly to corruption and unfair treatment. Zoe Mthimunye supported this perspective, noting that a lack of accountability was reflective of poor leadership. She said that even though systems and frameworks exist, “it’s the individuals who compromise, bend the rules, or present a different narrative when it suits them.” Stefanie Fick lamented that “we have lost the ideal of ethical leadership.” Once leadership is compromised, corruption spreads because there is no accountability and no consequences for corrupt leaders.

Some experts believed that there was a deliberate political project to undermine systems of accountability in South Africa. Sam Sole, for instance, noted that the “state was seen as a legitimate target/vehicle for self-enrichment” by unscrupulous actors. He thought that this had led to “the weakening/collapse of state institutions, notably the state accountability architecture.” Sharon Ekambaram singled out the Zuma Administration in this regard. She contended that former President Jacob Zuma cemented corruption and state capture, turning the state into “a looting machine”. Paul Holden supported this argument and stated that the lack of accountability for the Office of the President was a particular problem. He asserted that the considerable power held by the President (including appointments to key institutions) has facilitated corruption. These powers allowed the President to either directly or indirectly threaten the positions of individuals in accountability institutions to their detriment. A comparable argument was made by Renwick (2018), whose book detailed the corrupt patronage networks built by former President Jacob Zuma. He was quite critical of the role that the former President played in perpetuating corruption in South Africa (also see Holden, 2023).

Several experts argued that loyalty to the ruling party during the last few decades undermined accountability within the political system. Gareth Newham, for example, noted the “lack of accountability in the governing party”, while EXPERT 2 indicated that “the relationship between the party and the state underpins the coordinated corruption.” Zaakirah Vadi described a toxic political culture that has sought to prioritise the interests of a political party and protect connected individuals. She felt that this culture has had a ‘trickle-down’ effect of unethical conduct that has drawn in the private sector. EXPERT 45 said that: “loyalty to the party/movement trumps all other considerations” and this loyalty “undermines the willingness to fight corruption.” EXPERT 30 believed that “the unethical behaviour of the ruling party leadership opened the channels of corruption.” This argument aligns with Mkhabela's (2022) work on corruption within South Africa's ruling party. He contended

that the ruling party, by tolerating corrupt activities and protecting party members accused of corruption from prosecution or accountability, permitted corruption to become ingrained within the party and, consequently, within the South African government.

For some experts, cadre deployment, the policy in terms of which the ruling party deploys individuals to positions of power, primarily in the public sector, fosters corruption. Itumeleng Mongale described the problem in the following terms: “the party deploys individuals to positions of power - political power is abused for both personal and party-political gain.” Paul Hoffman said that the ruling party pursues its goals “without regard for constitutional values in a manner disrespectful of the rule of law resulting in patronage networks.” EXPERT 24 believed that “pursuit of cadre deployment [...] has set up a parasitic system of patronage.” Ryan Brunette asserted that since the start of the post-apartheid period we have “seen the articulation within the ruling party of a national, mass-based patronage system.” This expert opinion on state capture is consistent with research by Bhorat et al. (2018), which showed that the cadre deployment strategy was a powerful accelerant to corruption in the public sector. This resulted in the gradual ‘capture’ of many state institutions by corrupt patronage networks.

Weak Law Enforcement

A significant number of experts identified the weakness of the criminal justice system as the main reason that corruption had worsened in the last few decades. There was a feeling that the lack of rigorous investigations and prosecutions has created a culture of impunity, so that individuals feel emboldened to engage in corrupt activities. Many contended that law enforcement officers were complicit in corruption. Such claims relating to the incompetence and complicity of law enforcement correspond with the findings of the Zondo Commission (Holden, 2023). This argument is further made in an Open Secrets Investigation report (2022) on political interference in the country's key law enforcement agencies. Expert opinion on weak law enforcement will now be presented in more detail below.

Most experts blamed the weakness of law enforcement for the growth of corruption. EXPERT 9, for instance, stated that “law enforcement has fallen behind.” EXPERT 48 stated that “South Africa's post-1994 government is largely responsible for allowing corruption to spiral out of control.” EXPERT 17 identified “poor law enforcement and a culture of impunity.” EXPERT 23 said that “laws are not enforced, [so] people in power do not fear the legal and judicial systems.” She concluded that “people know they will get away with corruption.” Sean Tait noted the low probability of getting caught for engaging in corrupt activities, stating that there is “limited accountability”. Jay Kruuse identified “widespread failure to properly investigate allegations both within the private and public sector.” EXPERT 21 believed that the incentives for corruption now outweighed the costs, with the justice system facilitating corrupt activities.

A number of experts talked about the general failure of law enforcement to perform their duties. EXPERT 21 stated that the institutions “charged with preventing and combating corruption are making very little impact in the current environment.” Lawson Naidoo also noted the failure of law enforcement agencies to execute their constitutional and legislative responsibilities. Garth Japhet commented on “breakdown of the criminal justice system.” Patrick Giddy noted that members of the public are complicit in private sector corruption because effective prevention and law enforcement are lacking. Karam Singh recalled that a lack of accountability and a compromised rule of law have a long history in South Africa, dating back to the colonial and apartheid eras. He said that the high crime rates and recent reports of thousands of unsolved murders indicate that a lack of accountability is the norm in the country. Moira Campbell expressed concern that crime has become more organised, and that intimidation is now more common, which weakens efforts to combat corruption.

Several experts believed that the judiciary has been too slow to respond to corruption, which has resulted in a lack of consequences for corrupt actions. Janine Hicks, for example, is quite critical of the judicial system's handling of corruption cases. In a qualitative interview, she argued that slow and inefficient court processes, combined with the elite's ability to evade accountability, contribute to the problem. The lack of progress in high-profile cases (such as those involving political elites) and the ongoing issues with evidence collection and investigation are significant concerns. Chrissy Dube also pointed to a lack of corrective action and weak legal repercussions. She noted, in a qualitative interview, that while many arrests are made, few cases lead to convictions. Trevor White believed that agencies charged with fighting corruption, such as the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), are under-capacitated. He pointed out that state prosecutors are often outnumbered and under-resourced, which creates an uneven playing field when they confront wealthy and well-connected defendants.

Some experts talked about the entrenchment of organised crime within systems of governance and how this creates additional layers of difficulty in combating corruption. John Clarke, for example, drew attention to criminal syndicates in the public and private sectors that prevent effective whistleblowing through intimidation. During a qualitative interview Kris Dobie noted that the failure to address corruption in its early stages has allowed it to become more organised, making it more challenging to combat. He described the situation as a "mafia-like network" that is deeply entrenched and difficult to dismantle. This escalation poses significant risks not only to whistleblowers and investigators, but also to the overall integrity of public institutions. This form of organised crime is not only challenging to police, but it also creates an environment where law enforcement officers themselves are vulnerable to corruption.

David Lewis said that the criminal justice system was "weak and complicit" in corruption. This has resulted in a lack of accountability where those who engage in corrupt activities feel they can operate with impunity. Jay Kruise mentioned police complicity in corruption, such as accepting gifts of alcohol in exchange for not taking action against illegal shebeens. He said that police corruption has contributed to public looting at the scenes of car crashes and noted that "people don't fear any consequences". He was concerned that we "underplay the value of deterrence and ... we don't appreciate it enough because we've had so few people face criminal consequences." He asserted that when we begin to have more regular prosecutions and jail time, then people will see that "there are real consequences for criminality". EXPERT 12 contended that state capture decimated capacity in law enforcement agencies and that these agencies do not presently have capacity to prosecute complex commercial crimes. She said that the effects of state capture on the country's law enforcement architecture have been lasting and will be long-term.

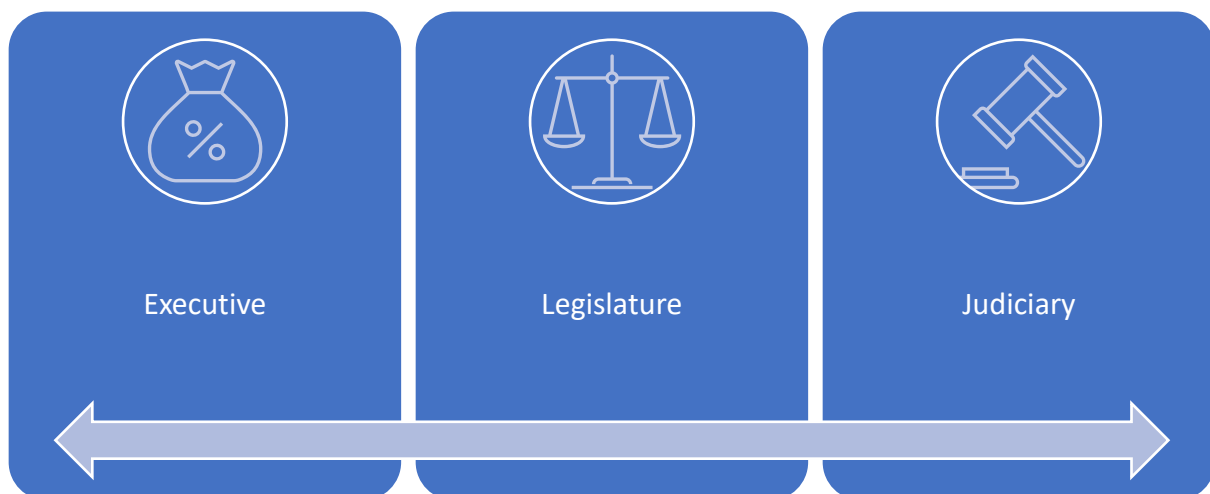
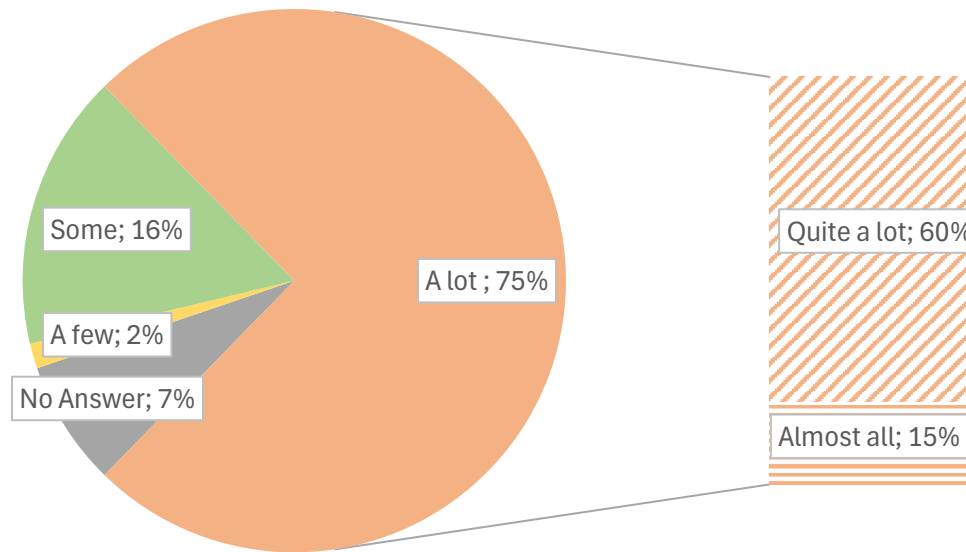


Figure 2-2: Expert responses to the question: “In your opinion, about how many police officers in South Africa are involved in corruption?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

As can be observed from **Figure 2-2** (pg. 19), a significant proportion of experts thought that the South African Police Service (SAPS) were complicit in corruption. A majority (60%) of experts surveyed asserted that quite a lot of SAPS officers were involved in corruption, while 15% alleged that almost all officers were involved. Compared to the police, the experts were more positive about the judiciary. Only a minority believed that almost all (2%) or quite a lot (6%) of judges, magistrates or prosecutors were involved in corruption. Expert opinion on SAPS can be compared to research by Roberts and Gordon (2022) on public attitudes towards the police. Polling data showed that public confidence in the SAPS fell by 20 percentage points between 1999 and 2021. Only a small minority (27%) of the adult population said that they trusted the police at the end of this period.

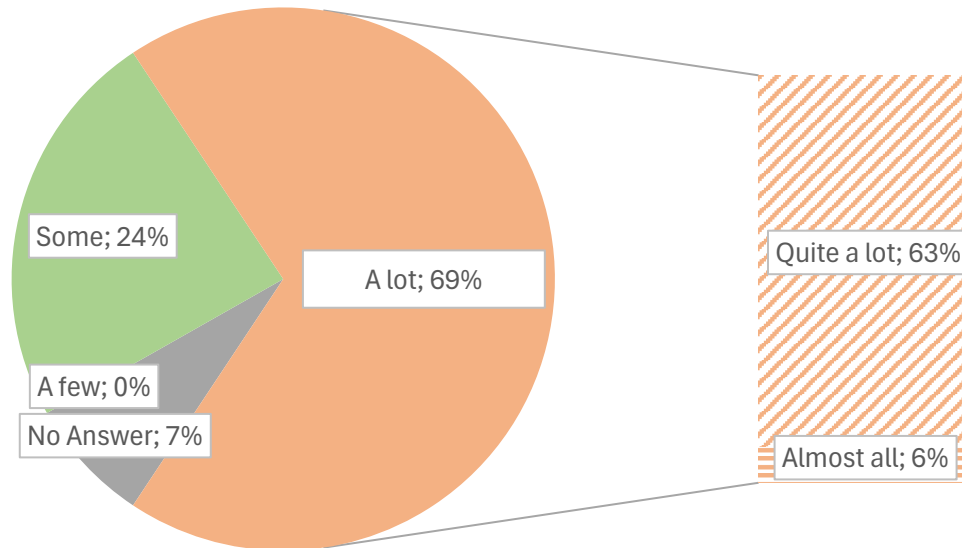
Compromised Public Service

In any country, the public service is crucial for the effective functioning of government and the delivery of essential services to citizens. It implements policies, manages public resources, ensures regulatory compliance and fosters trust in government institutions through its commitment to ethical conduct (Goodsell, 2004). Several experts identified the institutional decline of the South African public service, including resistance to merit-based recruitment and the presence of unethical leadership, as a primary cause of growing corruption in the country. Corresponding to what was found by the Zondo Commission, the experts tended to highlight how procurement systems in the public sector were vulnerable to abuse. The removal of competent staff and their replacement with loyal (yet ineffective) individuals was thought to exacerbate corruption. These problems in the public service will now be discussed in greater detail below.

When interviewed, Trevor White highlighted notable differences between corruption in the public and private sectors. In the public sector, corruption often occurs at lower levels. Trevor White stated that “in the public sector, even a very junior person can solicit a bribe for something very basic.” Conversely, private sector corruption typically involves higher-level individuals with access to significant resources. In our engagements with experts, we noted that many were concerned about levels of corruption in the South African public service. Karam Singh observed that, with our stagnant economy and lacklustre private sector, the public sector “is the only show in town”, which is why it has become a “target for extraction.” People do not seek employment in the public sector because

they are incentivised by public service. He said that “they’re very often there for economic and financial reasons, often security or extraction.”

Figure 2-3: Expert responses to the question: “In your opinion, about how many public sector employees in South Africa are involved in corruption?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

A significant proportion of experts surveyed for this study believed that corruption was rife in the public service. In **Figure 2-3** (pg. 20), responses are presented to the question “In your opinion, about how many employees of the public service in South Africa are involved in corruption?”. Most of the experts surveyed said that a majority of public sector employees were involved in corruption. About two-thirds (69%) of experts thought that quite a lot of the service is involved and 24% believed that some public service employees were complicit. Speaking about the problem of corruption, Zaakirah Vadi pointed to the “physical decay” that has become evident in our public spaces and buildings as an indication of the internal decay or corruption within those institutions.

The competence of public sector staff was identified as a source of growing corruption by some experts. Jay Kruise was especially concerned about the removal of competent staff and their replacement with persons who failed to uphold their legal responsibilities. He felt that these replacements would often pursue interests that are inconsistent with their constitutional obligations, and which often unduly benefit private interests. EXPERT 40 was also concerned about the decline in the capabilities and aptitude of public sector staff. EXPERT 14 likewise thought that public service staff incompetence was a serious problem. He said that there was “a decline in the stability and replenishment of skilled, professional and capable public sector professionals” and that this had “caused vulnerability in the state - particularly in policy interpretation and procurement.” He was especially concerned about state resistance to merit-based recruitment and management practices across the public sector. He believed that this resulted in an “inability in the public sector to resist a purposeful campaign to corrupt” state institutions.

Zaakirah Vadi referred to “rent-seeking networks” in the public service when people are recruited as public servants. She indicated that when someone joins the public service, “you either withstand that pressure alone or you become compliant because that’s the dominant network within the public service.” She said that public servants are “coerced into doing one or two [corrupt] things...maybe to cover your child’s school fees.” An initial proposal is made, and gradually that person becomes more involved in a corrupt network until it escalates into widespread corruption or they “end up enabling

that larger corruption". Kris Dobie noted that, in many cases, public servants are pressured to bypass rules in order to achieve personal gain, a behaviour that has become normalised. Zaakirah Vadi suggested that grand corruption in the departments of health or education becomes easier because the public officials are more distant from the victims and the impact on lives is less obvious. She wondered whether, because of this distance and because there is still a budget allocation next year, corruption almost comes to be viewed as a victimless crime.

A significant problem identified by experts surveyed was political interference in the public sector. Jay Kruse was, in particular, concerned about the over-politicisation of administrative responsibilities that then frustrate and hinder consequence management and developmental objectives. EXPERT 14 also talked about the undue influence in the deployment of unethical politicised leadership at all levels of strategic state institutions. He said that this deployment "has entrenched values, norms and behaviours that are associated with corruption in the public sector." EXPERT 3 supported this position, stating that "cadre deployment in the public sector has stifled transparency." Kris Dobie was also worried about political interference and stated that it was "much higher in the public sector." He felt that this interference not only facilitates corruption, but also demoralises public servants who might be frustrated by the corrupt practices they are compelled to engage in. He further noted that it was "frequently politically driven [...] it's almost more that the political party has become captured by people who are there for self-enrichment."

Janine Hicks believed that political corruption creates incentives for people to participate in patronage politics. In an interview, she argued that when a significant portion of government officials engage in corrupt practices, it leads to a system where individuals "align themselves with powerful elites" for protection and personal gain. This environment of corruption and patronage stifles accountability and silences officials who might otherwise address critical issues. The resulting misalignment of priorities hampers effective governance, and the implementation of policies meant to benefit all citizens. The problem of political interference in the public sector (along with poor levels of accountability, low staff morale, and growing levels of corruption) prompted the government to publish the National Framework Towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector in 2022. It sets out a series of fundamental public sector reforms, which include significant changes to performance management and recruitment.

Other experts identified public sector morale as a notable driver of corruption in South Africa. EXPERT 6, for example, contended the public service's complex regulatory environment allows those in the know to exploit the system. He claimed that "only a few know how to navigate the complex laws and regulations of public sector operations." This complexity opens the door to those who can abuse these laws to their benefit and only a few would know how to address these illegalities. This is because the present regulation regimes are so complex that, in the words of EXPERT 6, "only the public officials interested in abusing them know how to navigate them." He said that this problem was compounded by "low morality and a sense of pride in their country" amongst civil servants. He felt that public servants do not understand or "buy into" the concept of serving the public interest.

The arguments made above aligned with results from the Public Sector Ethics Survey conducted by The Ethics Institute (TEI, 2022). Data from this survey of public sector employees across local, provincial and national government identified abuse of cadre deployment and the appointment of incompetent people to positions of authority as common unethical behaviours in the public sector. Other problems discovered by the survey include a lack of consequences for unethical behaviour and an inconsistent application of rules. Many public servants also felt that people who are honest and responsible would not get rewarded or promoted. Organisational environments in the sector were also classified as spaces where people feared retaliation if they reported unethical practices. Interestingly, the survey showed parity across different spheres of government, although local

government seems to have a slightly more unethical organisational culture than national or provincial government.

Institutional Weaknesses

A number of experts sought structural reasons for the growth of corruption in the last few decades and focused on institutional weaknesses in the political system. Due of these weaknesses, the governance system failed to respond to corruption and allowed it to proliferate. These experts, in particular, highlighted problems with the current democratic system and how it failed to address corruption. In discussing these problems, some experts talked about how the racial transformation agenda had been misappropriated for corrupt purposes. Institutional failures were also thought to have eroded public trust and further entrenched corruption across various sectors of society. The role played by institutional weaknesses in explaining the increase in the scope and scale of corruption was discussed in detail below.

A few experts believed that corruption was primarily incentivised by an economic system in which business leaders drive and facilitate corrupt political activities. EXPERT 7, for example, felt that political corruption was driven by private sector actors. He described “the co-option and corruption of the state by private actors - including big business - to function through a culture of gratification and quid-pro-quo exchanges to extract administrative and/or policy outcomes.” EXPERT 17 emphasised “private actors who singularly focus on resource extraction.” EXPERT 6 blamed the intervention of neoliberal practices that “have corporatised and outsourced services that were formerly delivered by the state only.” EXPERT 41 expressed concern about the relationship between politicians, lawmakers and businesspeople. He felt that these relationships often create loopholes for corruption. This argument is illustrated by a recent Open Secrets Investigation (2020) report on how the private sector enabled public corruption during the Zuma Administration. The report focused on the role of banks, accounting firms, consultants and lawyers in facilitating the expansion of corruption in the country.

Some experts said that the current political system itself undermined accountability for corruption. EXPERT 14 thought that it is “the nature of our political system that makes accountability hard to enforce.” David Lewis thinks that “corruption is immensely exacerbated by a corrupt political system.” Lawson Nadiio and Stefanie Fick highlighted the failure of key democratic institutions, primarily Parliament, to ensure accountability. Paul Holden agreed with this position and contended that “the shortfalls of a pure proportional representation system has diminished the effectiveness of Parliament as an oversight mechanism.” He said that this led to Parliament failing to properly exercise their oversight over state expenditure.

A number of experts were concerned about how democratic institutions, such as our electoral system, promote corruption. Collette Schulz-Herzenberg talked about the lack of democratic accountability of elected and appointed officials. She added that this “is compounded by a breakdown in the rule of law” which has “created multiple opportunities for more systematic forms of corruption.” EXPERT 14 was more concerned about citizen power and talked about an “attrition in the sense of active citizenship and ownership of the state as a result of the lies and hypocrisy of public representatives and key state actors who extract from the state in the name of citizens.” EXPERT 7 was also worried about the democratic system and referred to “civil paralysis”, a situation where many communities are either unaware of or uninterested in engaging in the daily governance of their country, province or municipality. He was further concerned that “community members also do not make effective use of or do not know of the existing accountability and participatory measures.” EXPERT 33 blamed “the intellectual feebleness and moral torpor of many in public media and journalism meant to hold to account other social institutions” for the growth in corruption.

In section 2.2, we saw that some experts argued that apartheid created a political justification for contemporary corruption, with some seeing it as retribution for past injustices. In this way, the legacy of apartheid was used, particularly within certain government circles, to normalise unethical behaviour. Building on this, several experts were concerned that racial transformation policies are not being implemented to achieving genuine socio-economic equity. Indeed, EXPERT 51 contended that “grand political corruption and state capture is a ‘political project’ to justify radical economic transformation.” EXPERT 48 also felt that racial transformation policies have been ‘captured’ and exploited for the expansion of corruption. He stated that over the years these policies “were misused and redirected to benefit members of the governing party and its supporters, partly through its ‘cadre deployment’ policy.”

Other experts were concerned that public perceptions of government have changed for the worse over the last few decades. EXPERT 14, for example, asserted that a disrespect for laws in South Africa is “underpinned by a belief that government isn’t working and so it is fair to subvert rules and systems.” The lack of confidence expressed by experts in post-apartheid political institutions needs to be considered alongside the attitudes of the mass public. Public opinion research by Roberts et al. (2022) found that popular anger against the political status quo is quite high, with a significant majority stating that they distrust governing institutions. It would appear that political distrust in the country has increased during the last 15 years, with the level of trust beginning its long decline during the Zuma Administration and reaching its lowest level in 2017. Attempts during the first Ramaphosa Administration to restore political trust do not appear to have been very successful (also see Felton et al., 2023).

Experts interviewed mentioned several factors that contribute to widespread distrust in state institutions, including people’s personal negative experiences with public services, such as long queues and poor service delivery. There is a constant stream of media reports about corruption scandals, which erodes public confidence. EXPERT 50 said “there’s a general perception that senior government leaders and politicians are hypocrites” with regards to anti-corruption. There is also a perception that institutions work primarily for insiders but not for ordinary people, creating a sense of alienation and distrust. A significant disconnect exists between official statements and people’s lived experiences, further undermining trust. High unemployment rates lead to a feeling of exclusion from institutions.

When interviewed, Sekoetlane Phamodi highlighted how perceptions of an ‘ineffective state’ have created large gaps in the social fabric. These gaps have been filled by informal coping mechanisms, often in the form of social networks of various kinds. State failure, he said, “sets the stage for these dilemmas, like how can you visit ruin upon these people who have shown you Ubuntu when no one else, no institution, even those which had the authority, the power, the means and the responsibility to do so [performed their duties].” He thought that this prompts communities to critically consider the role of the government and whether it is acting properly and sufficiently to provide what society expects from it. He said that if the state “can’t deliver us protection, we have to do it ourselves.” In his view, if the state was working effectively “that doesn’t mean there won’t be corruption, but there would be more places where corruption is under control.” He said that corruption is reduced when “the state plays a key role in ensuring that the fundamental needs of the most vulnerable people are met - a common safety net that is adequate and serves as a springboard that enables people to realise their aspirations for themselves as part of society.”

3. Behind Closed Doors: Exploring Public Encounters with Corruption

The NACS aims to empower citizens to take an active role in preventing and addressing corruption. Through active citizen participation, the strategy seeks to foster a culture of integrity and ethical probity across all sectors of society. One of the first steps in realising these goals is to investigate and measure the corruption experiences of everyday people. Such experiences can have a powerful effect on a person's social values and norms, contributing not only to how they see the world, but also to how they behave.¹⁰ Consequently, if we want to understand the social values and norms related to corruption, we need to understand the corruption experiences of the South African public. In this way, we can acquire a fuller appreciation of how to create a zero-tolerance culture for corruption in the country.

In this chapter, we will investigate how common corruption experiences are in South Africa. In doing so, the geographic and demographic groups that are most exposed to corruption are identified. To accomplish this objective, the chapter explores corruption experiences from different perspectives. We first look at direct participation in corrupt practices, and then explore indirect experiences. Regarding the latter, we examine whether an individual lives in a community or neighbourhood where corrupt practices are reportedly common. Finally, the chapter assesses the perceived *personal* impact that corruption has had. This is a relatively unique approach, as most public opinion studies look at the perceived level of corruption in society, rather than the *impact*. Understanding the perceived impact will help us better understand how people in South Africa experience corruption. It will also help us to establish whether particular subgroups among the public might be more responsive to messages that emphasise the negative personal consequences of tolerating or perpetuating corruption.

In examining respondents' reported experiences of corruption, we need to remain cognisant of the possible social desirability bias that may emerge when they are asked such questions. It is well-known that respondents' concerns about the potential legal ramifications of admitting such experiences may prompt non-disclosure in some cases (Agerberg, 2022b). In other cases, interviewees may be driven by a desire to appear moral or respectful to the fieldworker (also see Lee, 1993). Respondents may also be reluctant to report experiences of, or encounters with, corruption. This reluctance may emerge from a desire to depict them in a positive light or keep them out of any kind of legal trouble. It is possible, therefore, that survey participants may under-report their experience of corruption.

3.1. Recent Experiences of Corruption

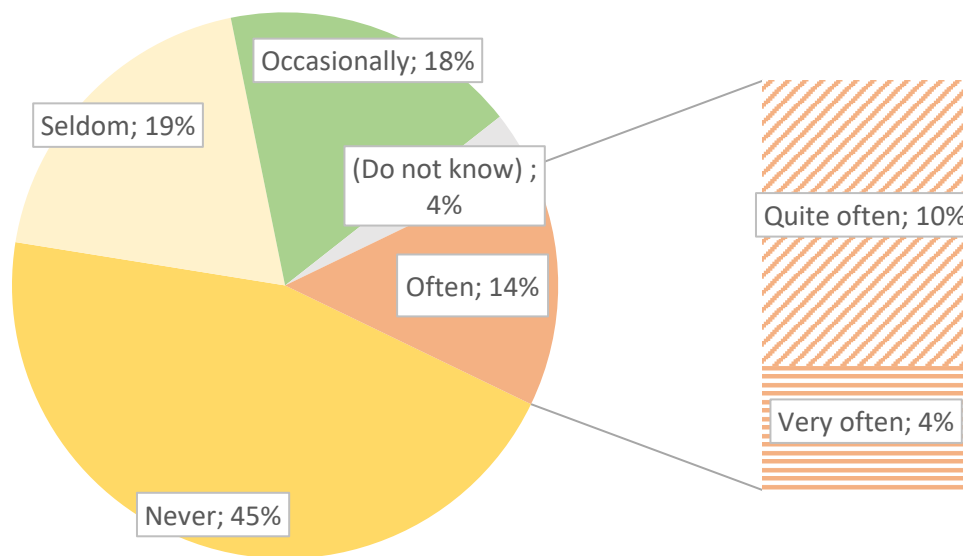
There has been a lot of prior public opinion research on the direct experience of corruption.¹¹ The type of experience that is most often studied concerns public sector corruption, especially bribery. Here scholars are concerned with the exposure of the mass public to bribe solicitation from public officials (Seligson 2006; Heath et al., 2016; Wysmułek, 2019). Typically, this type of corruption is termed '*petty*'

¹⁰ Personal experiences play a pivotal role in shaping social values and norms, serving as the cornerstone upon which people build their understanding of the world (Scharbatke-Church, & Chigas, 2019). Our experiences create a framework through which we interpret and respond to social cues (also see Fiske & Taylor, 1991). In essence, personal experiences serve as the lens through which individuals perceive and engage with social values and norms, contributing to the collective fabric of society (Jackson & Köbis, 2018). Personal encounters, for example, with corrupt public institutions (such as education and healthcare services and the legal system) can change how a person sees the world.

¹¹ Often scholars (e.g., Charron 2016; Heath et al., 2016; Gonzalez et al., 2019) try to use survey research to gauge the level of corruption within society or critique existing expert-derived estimates of societal corruption.

(or bureaucratic) corruption wherein members of the public will bribe low-ranking public sector workers (e.g., police officers, nurses, or teachers). These bribes often take the form of small amounts of money or favours in exchange for services that are otherwise expected to be provided impartially or without additional cost (for a further discussion of petty corruption, see Johnston, 2014). In this section, we look at recent bribe solicitation by public officials. We will consider change over time as well as how this kind of experience of corruption varies across the country’s various socio-demographic and geographic fault lines.

Figure 3-1: Public responses to the question: “In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?”



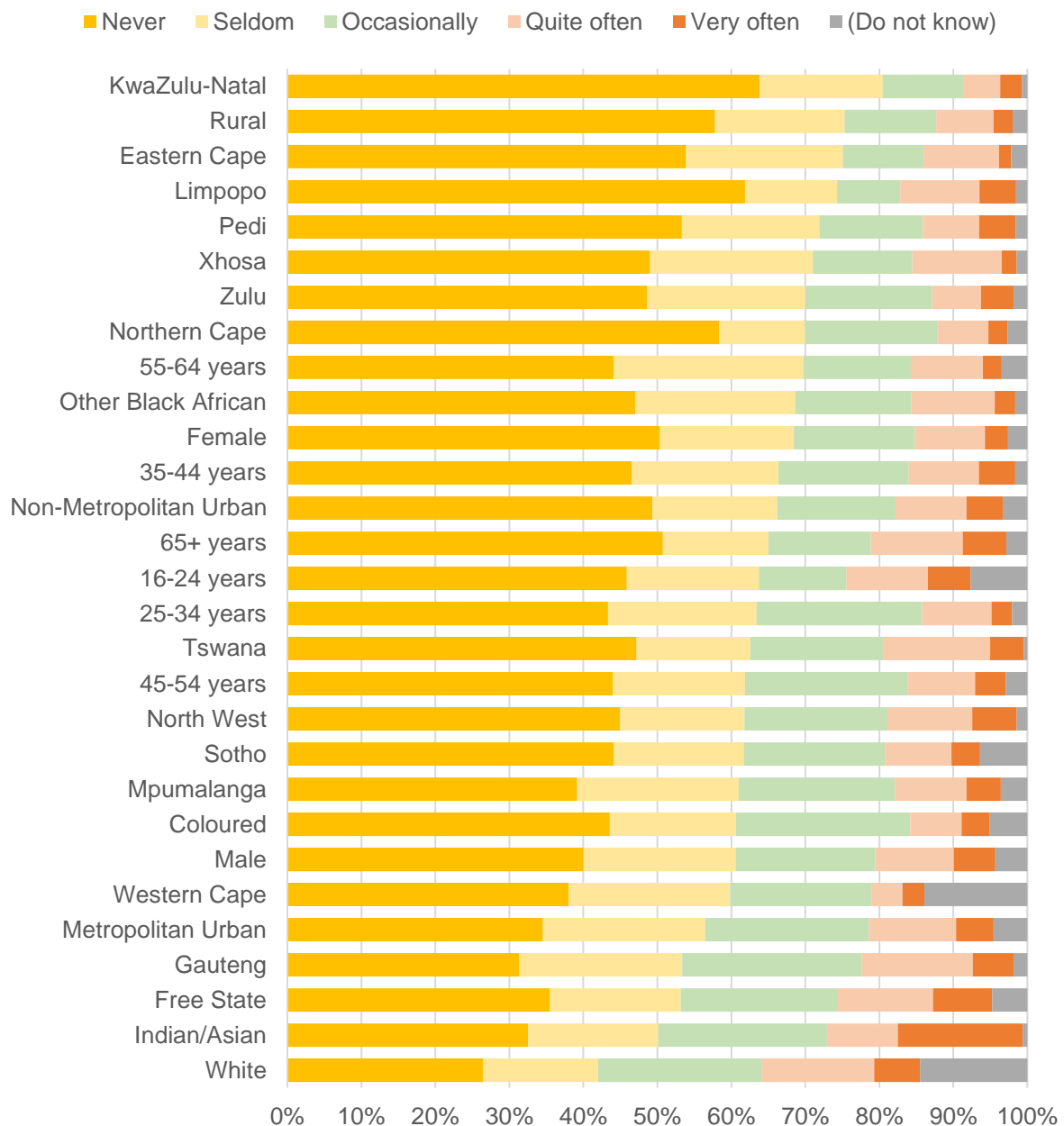
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

During the 2023 SASAS round, survey participants were presented with the following question: “In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?” Nearly half (45%) of the adult population told fieldworkers that this had not happened to them during the specified timeframe (**Figure 3-1**, pg. 25). About a fifth (19%) said that it had occurred seldomly, while 18% stated that it had taken place occasionally. A notable minority said that they were solicited for a bribe often (10%) or very often (4%) in the five years prior to being interviewed. The remainder of the adult population (4%) said that they did not know how to answer the question. We can assume that an individual’s exposure to public sector bribe solicitation would vary significantly according to their socio-demographic characteristics. To test this thesis, let us look at how different subgroups answered the bribe solicitation question. Responses to this question across various socio-demographic groups are presented in **Figure 3-2** (pg. 26).

In terms of provincial variation in direct experiences, Gauteng residents reported the highest level of bribe solicitation from public officials. We were also able to discern other notable geographic variations. Rural dwellers reported lower levels of bribe solicitation than those residing in urban areas. Amongst urban dwellers, metropolitan residents reported significantly higher levels of corruption experience compared to those living in non-metropolitan urban areas. Further analysis showed that urban residents in Mpumalanga had a higher level of recent corruption experience than urban dwellers in other provinces. Our investigation also showed that bribe solicitation amongst rural residents was highest in the North West province. Although bribe solicitation did not differ substantially by age cohort, some interesting age variation was noted. The 16-24 and 25-34 age

cohorts were more likely to report recent solicitation relative to those aged 55 years and older. This result suggests that the youth may be more vulnerable to public sector extortion than their older counterparts. This may be due to their vulnerability and dependence on the state, for example, for access to identity documents or drivers' licences.

Figure 3-2: Responses to the question: “In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?”, by select subgroups (%)



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Significant gender differences can be observed in **Figure 3-2** (pg. 26), with male adults reporting greater levels of solicitation than their female counterparts. These differences could be due to the fact that corruption affects men and women differently in South Africa. In an in-depth interview, Sope Williams said that women face harsher penalties for corruption compared to men, possibly due to societal expectations that women should be more ethical. Moreover, women do not benefit as much from corruption as men, largely because they are not often part of the “big corruption networks”. This

disparity is another manifestation of the patriarchal structures that limit women's participation and benefit from systemic corruption while simultaneously punishing them more harshly. Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze noted that women are often more ethically driven and less likely to engage in corrupt practices. This is partly because women generally have more to lose, given their roles in caring for families and their need to maintain stable employment.

Of the different race groups in South Africa, we found that white and Indian adults reported the highest level of bribe solicitation. Looking only at the different Black African ethnolinguistic groups, the Sotho were the most likely to report bribe solicitation and this was followed by the Tswana. Some experts surveyed for this study identified poverty and economic desperation as drivers of corrupt behaviour, as detailed in Chapter 2.2. It might therefore be reasonable to assume that someone who is perceived to be economically vulnerable or dependent on state-provided services would be more likely to be solicited for a bribe. However, additional analysis of the survey data (results not shown) revealed that higher socio-economic status was positively associated with exposure to bribe solicitation. More affluent persons tended to report much higher levels of bribe solicitation than those who were more socially disadvantaged. Labour market status was also found to be an important predictor of solicitation. Workers reported higher levels of solicitation than those outside the labour market. In addition, the self-employed were more likely than wage workers to be exposed to public sector corruption in the recent past. Within the wage work cohort, we found that public sector employees reported less solicitation than those employed in the private sector.

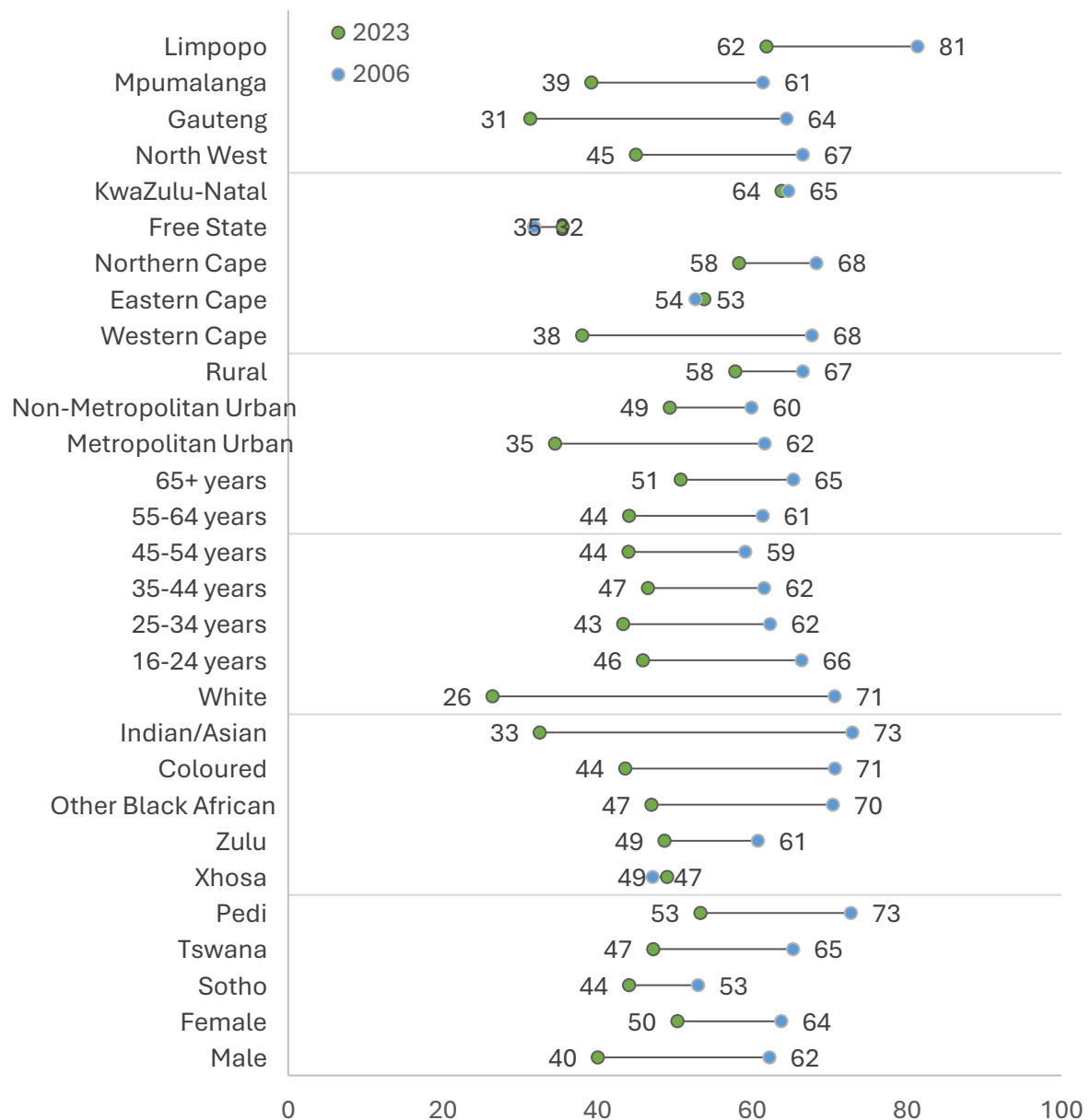
The SASAS 2023 question on recent experience of public sector corruption was also fielded as part of the SASAS 2006 round. This allows us to ascertain whether self-reported public sector bribe solicitation has changed over time. During the 2006 round, a majority (63%) of the adult population said that had *not* been solicited for a bribe by a public official in the five years prior to the interview. A tenth said that this had occurred seldomly and 12% occasionally, while 5% stated that it had happened often and 3% very often. The remainder (7%) stated that they were unsure of how to respond to the question. Comparing the 2006 and 2023 SASAS data, it is clear that reported bribe solicitation has increased substantially over the last two decades. This finding is consistent with expert assessments presented in Chapter 2.3, which highlighted an increase in corruption during this period. Given the scale of the increase observed here, it is important to examine which socio-demographic groups experienced the greatest level of change.

In **Figure 3-3** (pg. 28), we present the percentages who said that they did *not* experience public sector bribe solicitation in SASAS 2006 and SASAS 2023 for select subgroups. Almost all subgroups in the figure experienced an increase in self-reported public sector bribe solicitation over the period. The only groups that did not display such an increase were residents of the Eastern Cape and the Free State, as well as members of the Xhosa group. Of those who experienced an upsurge in self-reported bribe solicitation, notable geographic variations were identified. Compared to metropolitan dwellers, rural and non-metropolitan urban dwellers experienced a relatively small level of growth in exposure. The proportion of metropolitan urban residents who reported some kind of bribe solicitation in the recent past increased by 27 percentage points between SASAS 2006 and SASAS 2023. Provincially, we discovered that Gauteng residents underwent the largest rise in solicitation, followed by the Western Cape.

Of the different population groups depicted in **Figure 3-3** (pg. 28), white and Indian minorities experienced the largest upturn in recent bribe solicitation. Looking only at the Black African majority, we found that minority ethnolinguistic groups experienced the biggest change in self-reported bribe solicitation. The proportion of ethnolinguistic minority Black Africans who experienced recent public sector corruption grew from 30% in SASAS 2006 to 53% in SASAS 2023. Other Black African ethnolinguistic groups who suffered a relatively large increase in exposure to this kind of petty

corruption were the Pedi and Tswana. The share of workers who experienced recent public sector bribe solicitation grew by a greater level between SASAS 2006 and SASAS 2023 than what was seen for non-workers. Further statistical analysis found that private sector wage workers reported an increase in solicitation that was above the national average. The proportion of private sector wage employees who reported recent solicitation increased by 26 percentage points. This was significantly higher than what was observed among the self-employed (17 percentage points) and wage workers in the public sector (9 percentage points).

Figure 3-3: Percentage who said they or a member of their immediate family was *never* exposed to public sector bribery in the five years prior to the SASAS interview in 2006 and 2023, by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2006; 2023

A noteworthy gender differential could also be detected in **Figure 3-3** (pg. 28). Male adults reported a 22 percentage point increase in bribe solicitation, much larger than what was observed for their female counterparts. In a qualitative interview Zoe Mthimunye reflects on the finding that men are

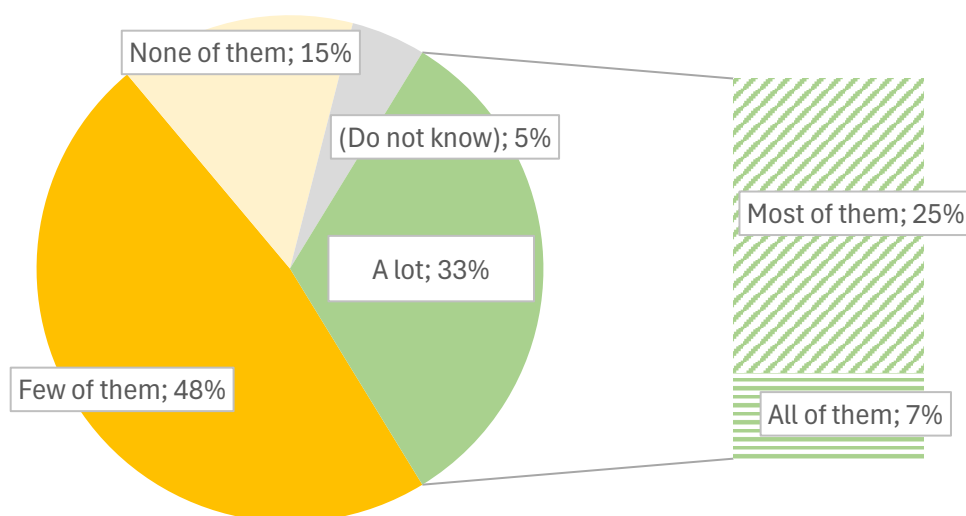
more likely than women to report being exposed to corruption. She speculated that this could be due to the greater fear of repercussions that women face, both in the workplace and in society at large. This underreporting by women could also be influenced by the fact that corrupt practices often occur in male-dominated spaces, where women may not have the same access or visibility. Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze supports this view, adding that the social and power dynamics that exclude women from key decision-making processes also make it harder for them to expose corruption. She believed that this exclusion not only silences women but also perpetuates the cycle of corruption by keeping it hidden from those who might challenge it.

3.2. Neighbourhood Corruption

Most public opinion surveys that look at corruption are primarily concerned with personal victimisation rates and tend to overlook *indirect* experiences of corruption. This is a significant knowledge gap in the existing public opinion research on corruption experience in South Africa. Indirect experiences are incidents that are ‘witnessed’ or heard about from others, rather than happening to a person directly (Tyler, 1980). To measure indirect experience in a survey, researchers typically use questions that inquire about the respondent’s exposure to specific kinds of incidents in their neighbourhood or amongst their social networks. The present chapter will examine the perceived participation of neighbours and community members in corrupt practices. First, we will investigate public perceptions about the general involvement of neighbours in corruption. Then we will examine the perceived participation of community members in a specific type of corruption (i.e., bribing public officials to provide essential services).

Before we begin this chapter, let us first ask ourselves why indirect experiences are important. A person’s social values and norms are also heavily influenced by observation and emulation of others’ behaviours. This is a phenomenon known as social learning and, consequently, scholars are interested in an individual’s social environment (Scharbatke-Church, & Chigas, 2019). Past research by Dong et al. (2012) in Europe suggests that when we see our fellow community members engaging in certain corrupt practices, it can impact our own beliefs and behaviours through processes like social comparison and social conformity. Hoffmann and Patel (2017) argue that corruption in Nigeria is often a collective practice sustained by particular social beliefs and expectations. People’s actions are heavily dependent on what others think and do, and disapproval from one’s community (such as gossip, public shaming, or loss of status) are powerful incentives to conform to corrupt norms.

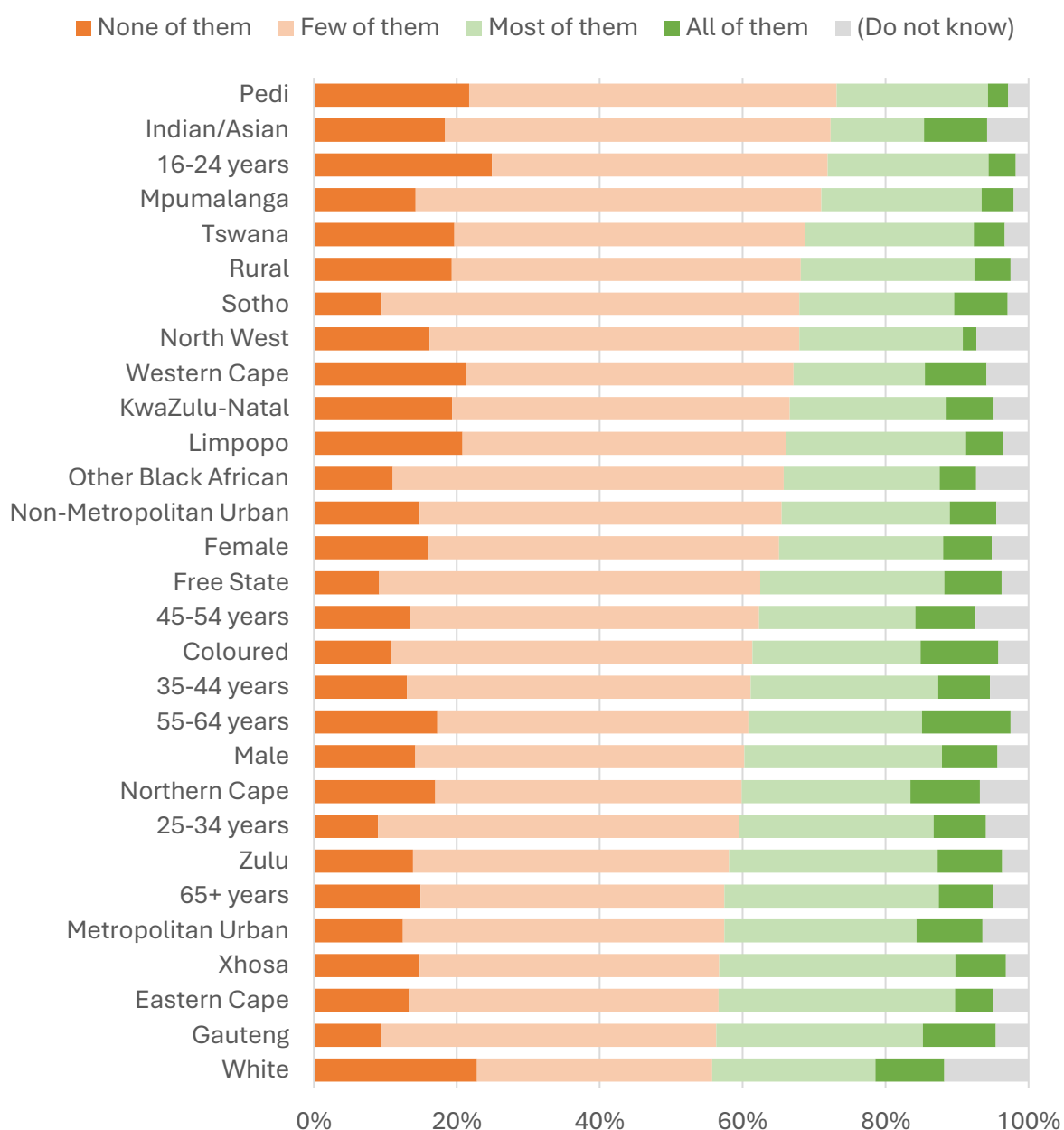
Figure 3-4: Public responses to the question: “Among people in your neighbourhood, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

To measure the perceived level of neighbourhood corruption, SASAS respondents were asked the following question: “Among people in your neighbourhood, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?” Most people said that they lived in neighbourhoods characterised by corruption, while only a small percentage (15%) said that no-one was involved in corrupt behaviour (Figure 3-4, pg. 29). Just about half (48%) of the general public believed that a few of their neighbours were involved, and 25% told fieldworkers that most of them were. Interestingly, we found that 7% of adults claimed that all of their neighbours were involved in corruption. It is reasonable, given the findings presented in the previous section, to expect that the level of perceived neighbourhood corruption will vary considerably by socio-demographic and geographic group. To examine this hypothesis, let's analyse how various subgroups responded to the question about neighbourhood corruption. The responses to this inquiry are depicted for a selected set of subgroups in Figure 3-5 (pg. 30).

Figure 3-5: Responses to the question: “Among people in your neighbourhood, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?” by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We can detect substantial provincial variations in neighbourhood corruption perceptions in **Figure 3-5** (pg. 30). Gauteng residents were found to report much higher levels of perceived corruption than other provincial populations. Nearly two-fifths (39%) of residents in that province said most or all of their neighbours were corrupt. The Eastern Cape and the Free State were other provinces where a high proportion of residents said that most of their neighbours were corrupt. When compared to urban dwellers, the level of perceived neighbourhood corruption was lower amongst rural residents. Further analysis established that perceived corruption levels were higher amongst farm residents than their counterparts in the villages. More than half (56%) of farm residents said that most or all of their neighbours were corrupt. This is about twice what was observed amongst villagers and 22 percentage points more than what was seen amongst urban dwellers. Looking at urban dwellers, we found that metropolitan residents reported higher levels of perceived neighbourhood corruption than their peers in smaller towns.

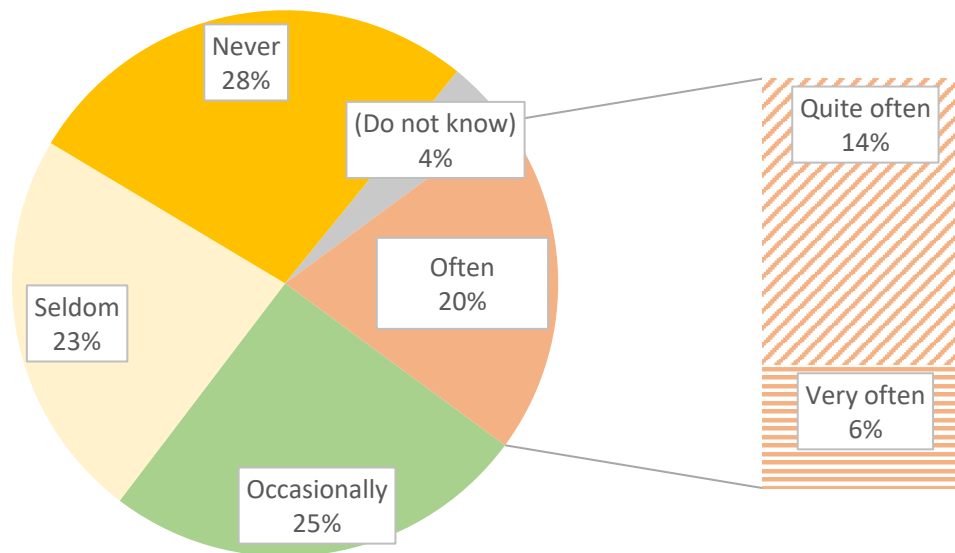
We could discern moderate differences between different age cohorts in **Figure 3-5** (pg. 30). Younger adults tended to report lower levels of perceived neighbourhood corruption than older cohorts. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the 16-24 age cohort said that none or a few of their neighbours were corrupt. This could be explained by younger people's lack of awareness of, or involvement in, their neighbours' activities and conduct. Of the different population groups listed in the figure, Zulu and Xhosa adults were the most likely to tell fieldworkers that they were surrounded by corrupt neighbours. We discovered that male adults were somewhat more prone to believe that their neighbours were corrupt than were their female counterparts. Further statistical analysis showed this gender disparity was much larger amongst urban metropolitan dwellers than among residents of either rural or non-metropolitan urban areas. More than two-thirds (43%) of metropolitan men said that most or all their neighbours were corrupt. This can be compared with 28% of female metropolitan adults who gave the same answer.

Now let us turn our attention to a different measure of local-level corruption, the participation of community members in public sector corruption. As part of the WVS 2017-2022 wave, respondents were asked "How often do you think ordinary people like yourself or people from your neighbourhood have to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favour to public officials in order to get the services you need?" About a third (31%) of adult citizens surveyed said that ordinary people never paid bribes to local officials for essential services. Approximately two-fifths (37%) of citizens stated that this occurred rarely and 22% told fieldworkers that it occurred frequently. A small minority (7%) said that ordinary people always have to pay some form of bribe to local officials to get services. Of the different countries surveyed, citizens from Germany, the Maldives and Singapore were the most likely to believe that this type of non-elite corruption was non-existent. Citizen populations who were most likely to state that needs-based public sector corruption was commonplace were China, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Kenya and Zimbabwe. About a quarter (26%) of Chinese adult citizens, for instance, said that ordinary people always had to pay bribes of some kind to public officials.

A question was included in SASAS on frequently that regular individuals were required to pay a bribe to public officials in exchange for receiving essential services. This was similar to the question that was asked in the WVS 2017-2022 wave. First, fieldworkers told survey participants that we wanted to know about their experience with public officials and civil servants in their community. Then participants were asked "How often do you think people in your community have to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favour to these people in order to get the services you need?" Data results show that only a relatively small proportion (28%) of all adults believed that they lived in communities that were free of public sector extortion (**Figure 3-6**, pg. 32). Nearly half of the public thought that this kind of corruption occurred infrequently in their community, with 23% stating that it happened seldom and 25% claiming

that it took place occasionally. A fifth believed that this kind of corruption was fairly common in their community, with 14% asserting that it happened 'quite often' and 6% 'very often'.

Figure 3-6: Public responses to the question: “How often do you think people in your community have to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favour to public officials in order to get the services you need? Does it happen...”

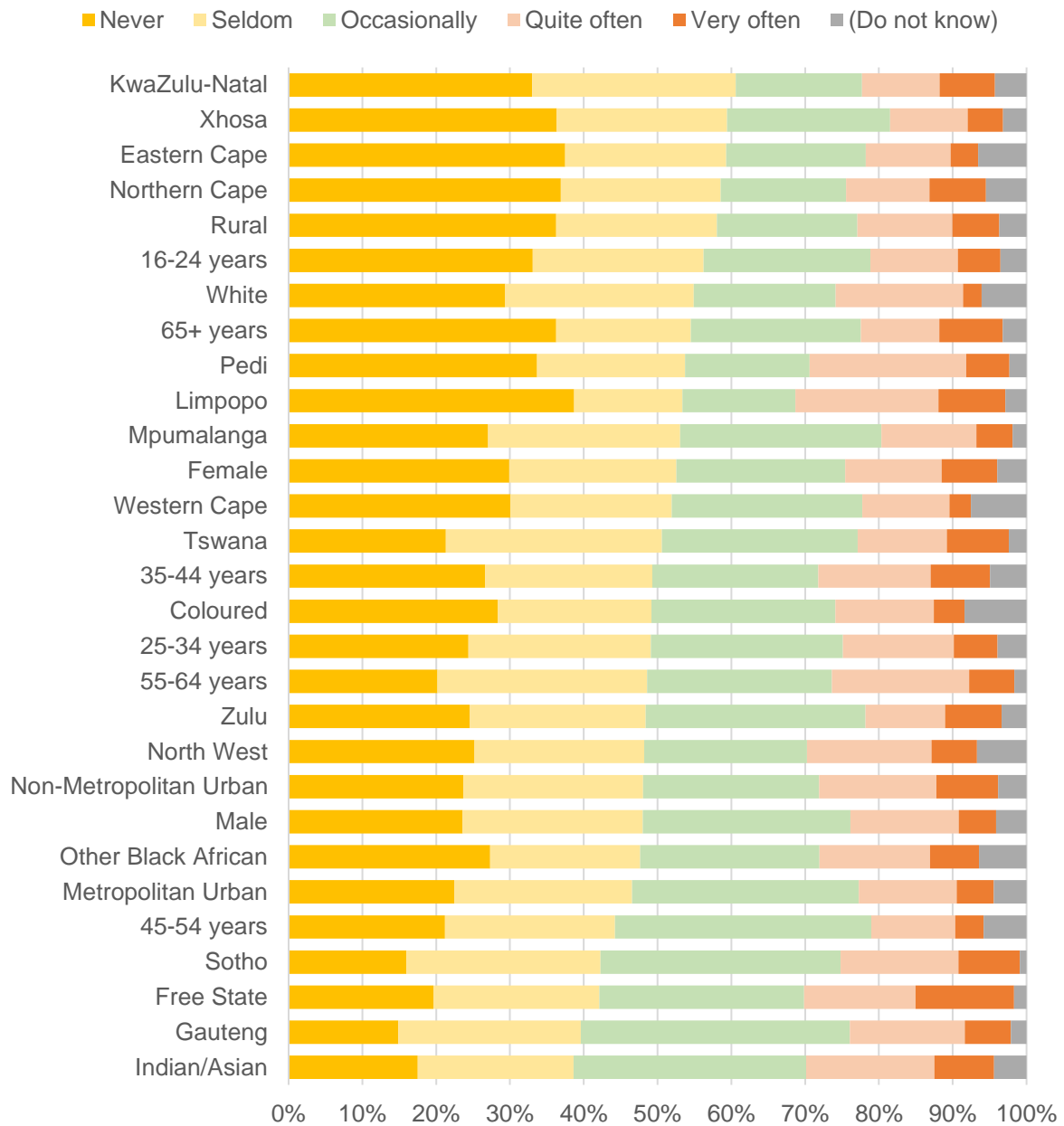


Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The WVS 2017-2022 question was different from the SASAS 2023 question; the response code structure used in SASAS was different from what was used in the WVS. But both survey questions explored similar perceptions of non-elite, needs-based corruption in the public sector. It is still worthwhile, therefore, to compare the two datasets. The perceived level of corruption in the post-apartheid nation is far above what we see in Global North countries (like Germany, Canada, and Australia). But when compared to other Global South countries in the WVS 2017-2022 wave, the level of perceived non-elite needs-based corruption in South Africa was not unusual. The country is similar to others facing significant corruption challenges but does not have the highest rates seen in the WVS dataset. The nation's results seem to be aligned with countries like Pakistan and Colombia. These nations have, historically, struggled to enact comprehensive anti-corruption initiatives and public sector corruption in these places is allegedly fairly widespread.

It's plausible to assume that exposure to public sector bribe solicitation varies considerably across socio-demographic and geographic divisions in South Africa. To explore this hypothesis, we'll examine the responses to the question about community-level public sector corruption by different socio-demographic groups. The responses to this inquiry are displayed by a wide spectrum of diverse groups in **Figure 3-7** (pg. 33). The pattern of responses that we can observe in **Figure 3-7** (pg. 33) has some important similarities to what we see in **Figure 3-5** (pg. 30). This is due to the robust positive correlation that we can observe between recent experience of bribe solicitation by public officials and perceptions of community level public sector corruption (for the details of this association see page 192 in APPENDIX C). In other words, it would seem that if a person was often exposed to bribe solicitation, then they tended to think that other people in their community were also paying bribes to public officials for essential services.

Figure 3-7: Public perceptions of how often fellow community members have to pay a bribe to public official in order to get the services that they need, by select subgroups



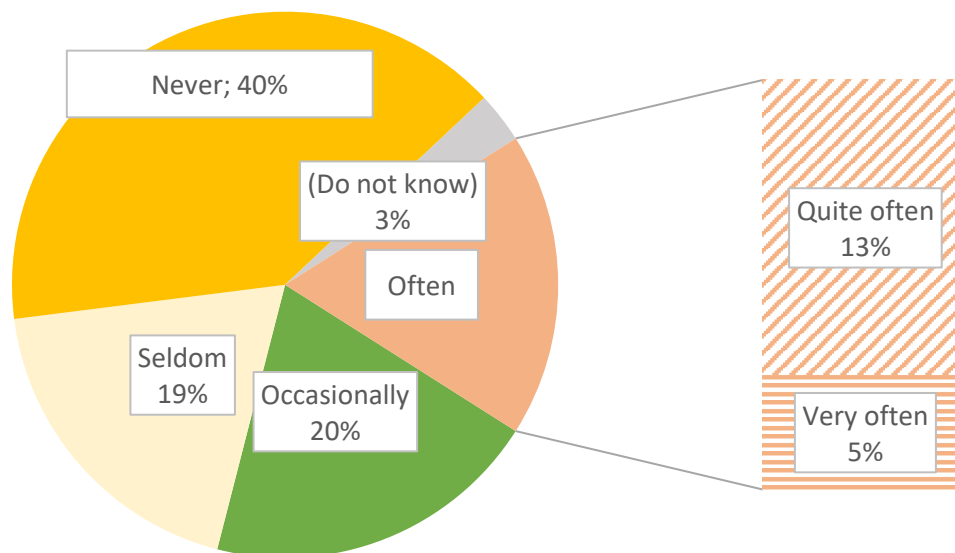
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We were able to discern some noteworthy geographic variations in **Figure 3-7** (pg. 33). Rural dwellers reported lower perceived rates of community-level corruption than did urban residents. Further analysis found that those who lived on a farm reported much higher levels of corruption than those who lived in a village. This is consistent with what we observed when we looked at the perceived level of neighbourhood-related corruption. Of the nine provinces under review, Gauteng and Free State residents reported the highest rates of community-level corruption. Notable differences were also observed amongst the nine population groups. The Sotho were the group that was the most likely to report living in a community where people often engage in public sector corruption. Other groups with high rates of community-level corruption were the Tswana and Indians.

3.3. Sexual Extortion

Sexual extortion is a special kind of crime that can be defined as a form of exploitation where someone in a position of power abuses it to demand sexual favours in exchange for providing or withholding services or benefits that ought to be provided either equally (such as water and sanitation) or on merit (such as a job).¹² This coercive practice typically involves threats or manipulation to force compliance (See Feigenblatt, 2020 for a comprehensive discussion of this type of crime). It is a traumatic and violent crime that hinders our collective efforts to achieve social justice and economic prosperity (also see UNODC, 2021). Although not often discussed by policymakers, this section shows that this kind of corruption poses a significant problem in the South African public sector. This section looks at indirect experiences¹³ of sexual extortion by officials in the public sector amongst the general public. We examine how indirect experiences may differ across the country's diverse socio-demographic and geographic divides.

Figure 3-8: Public responses to the question: “How often have you heard about an official making requests of a sexual nature from someone you know in exchange for a government service or benefit in the last 5 years?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

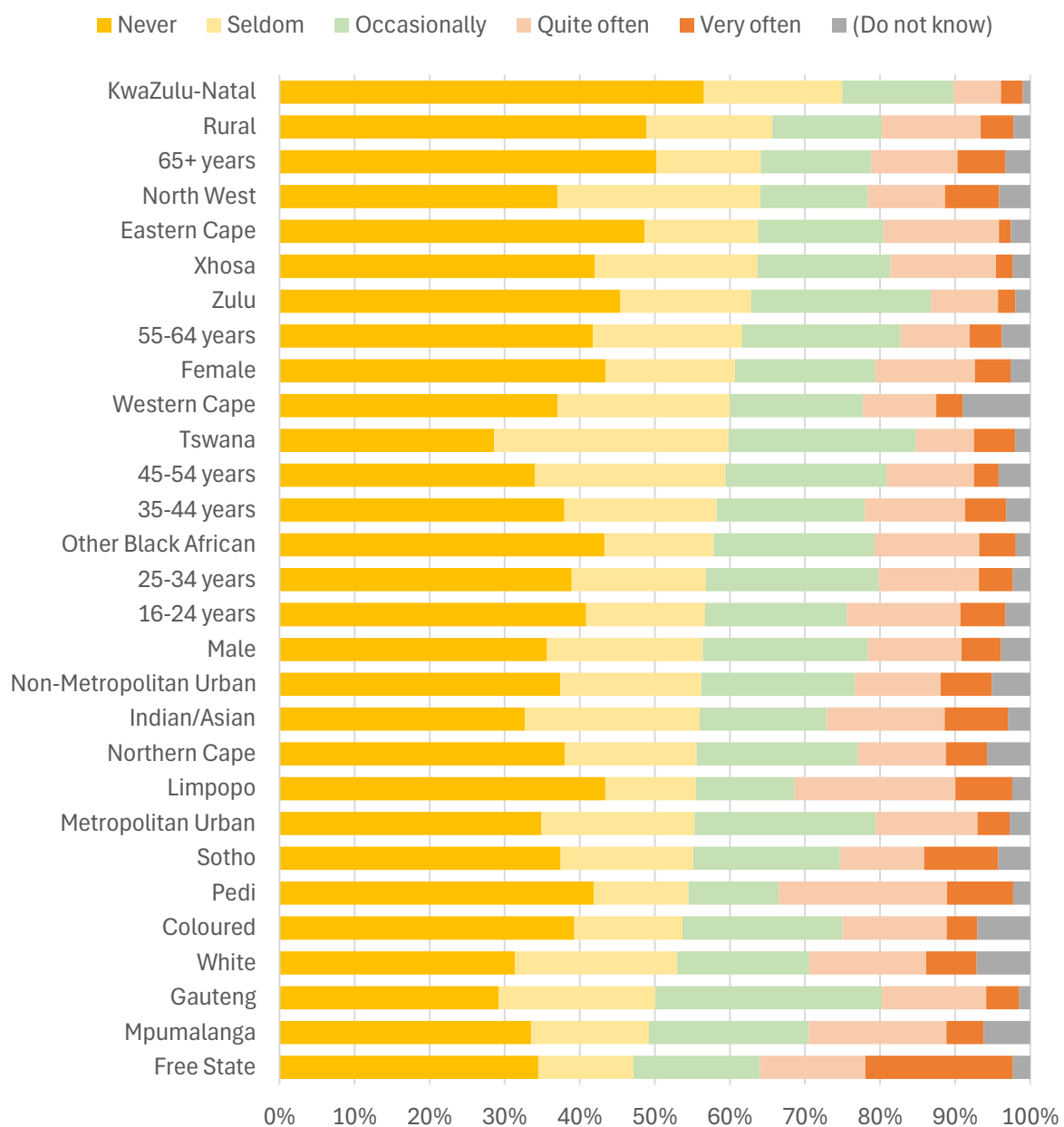
During the 2023 SASAS round, respondents were asked: "How often have you heard about an official making requests of a sexual nature from someone you know in exchange for a government service or benefit in the last 5 years?". This question was designed to measure *indirect* experience of this kind of sexual corruption. The pattern of public responses to the question is presented in **Figure 3-8** (pg. 34), showing that two-fifths of the adult population had never heard about this happening to people they know during the specified timeframe. About a fifth (19%) said that it had happened seldom, and a similar proportion (20%) reported that it had occurred occasionally. A significant minority said that they had heard about this happening to someone they know either quite often (13%) or very often (5%) in the five years prior to the interview. The remainder of the adult population (3%) said that they did not know how to answer the question.

¹² While it is possible to envisage that the opposite proposition could be made (i.e., the offer of sex for an undue benefit) the study did not explore that scenario. It was decided that the study needed to limit its focus to the abuse of public power.

¹³ Researchers were concerned that asking people about their direct experiences would be too sensitive and would provoke response bias.

To better understand patterns of indirect experiences of sexual extortion in South Africa, we conducted a subgroup analysis to evaluate this hypothesis, and the results are presented in **Figure 3-9** (pg. 35). Indirect experience of sexual corruption was found to be highest in the Free State and this was followed by Gauteng and Mpumalanga. We also learnt that rural dwellers were less likely than their urban counterparts to have recently heard about people they know being victims of sexual extortion. Further data analysis showed that this disparity between urban and rural residents was particularly large in the North West. Although indirect experience did not differ markedly by age cohort, some noteworthy differences between these cohorts were noted. The 16-24 cohort was somewhat more likely to report an indirect experience of this kind of crime than other age groups. It could be that the youth are also likely to be better networked and more online than their older counterparts and hear more of these instances than older cohorts.

Figure 3-9: Response to the question: “How often have you heard about an official making requests of a sexual nature from someone you know in exchange for a government service or benefit in the last 5 years?” by select subgroups (%)



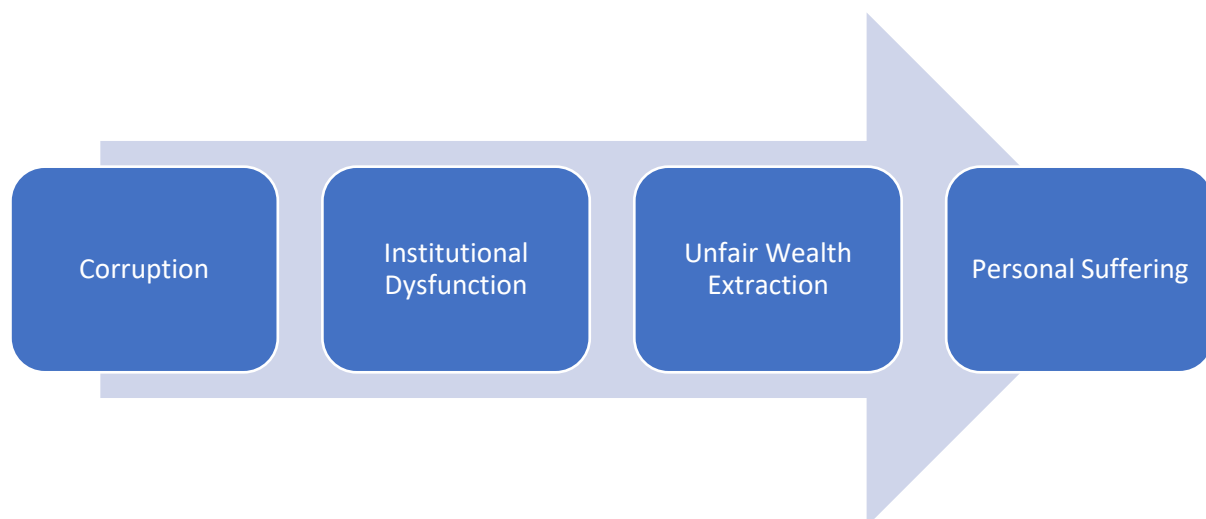
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

White and Indian adults were more likely than Black African and coloured adults to have heard about a public official extorting sex from someone they know. Among the different Black African ethnolinguistic groups, the Pedi had the highest level of reported indirect experience of sexual corruption. Further data analysis showed that there were moderate differences in how different socio-economic groups responded to this question. Compared to poorer adults, those at the top of the socio-economic ladder were more likely to have heard about sexual corruption affecting someone they knew in the recent past. Workers also reported higher levels of indirect experience than those outside the labour market. Within the worker cohort, public sector employees reported greater levels of indirect experience than employees in the private sector or the self-employed.

Living in a community where people have to engage in corruption in order to get essential services was found to be positively associated with indirect experience of sexual corruption. Statistical testing found that the greater the level of perceived community-level public sector corruption, the greater the level of indirect experience of sexual exploitation (for the details of this test see page 192 in APPENDIX C). In addition, we also discovered a positive correlation between indirect experience of sexual corruption and direct experience of bribe solicitation by public officials. Testing showed that persons who were likely to frequently experience bribe solicitation were also likely to have heard about sexual corruption from people they know personally (the specifics of this test can be found on page 192 in APPENDIX B). It would seem that exposure to public sector corruption was positively associated with indirect experience of sexual exploitation.

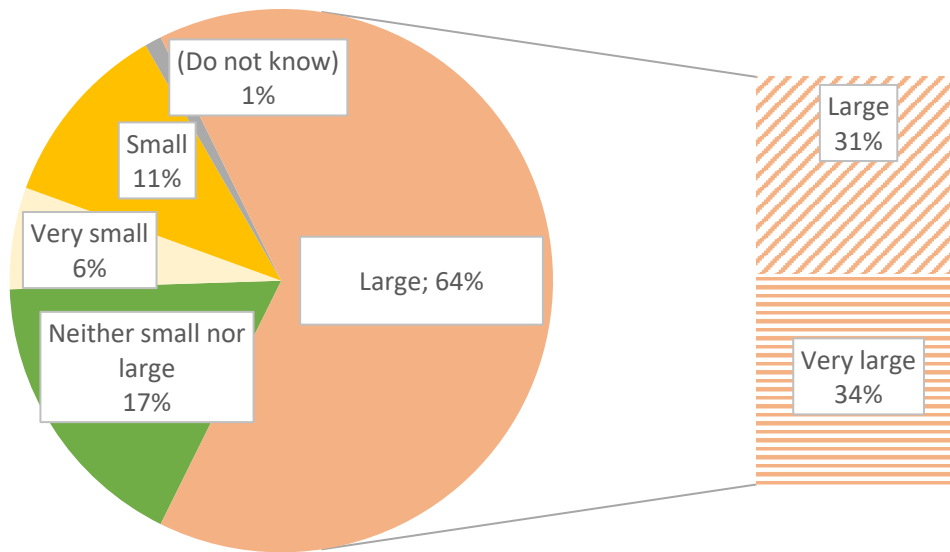
3.4. Perceived Impact

A number of scholarly works (e.g., Olken, 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2019; Wymułek, 2019) have looked at the perceived level of corruption within society, as we did in Chapter 3.2. However, most studies do not measure the perceived *personal* impact of corruption, and there is far less research on how people feel about the effect of corruption on their daily life. As a result, we do not know whether people believe that corruption has had a big or small influence on their personal lives. This section fills this knowledge gap and looks at the perceived impact of corruption from an egotropic perspective.¹⁴ We investigated how egotropic concerns vary across a set of key socio-demographic and geographic groupings.



¹⁴ In the context of this study, an "egotropic" (or an egocentric lens) refers to individuals basing their attitudes on their personal economic situation (for a further discussion, see Lockerbie, 2006).

Figure 3-10: Public responses to the question: “Do you think that corruption has had a small or large impact on you and your family?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

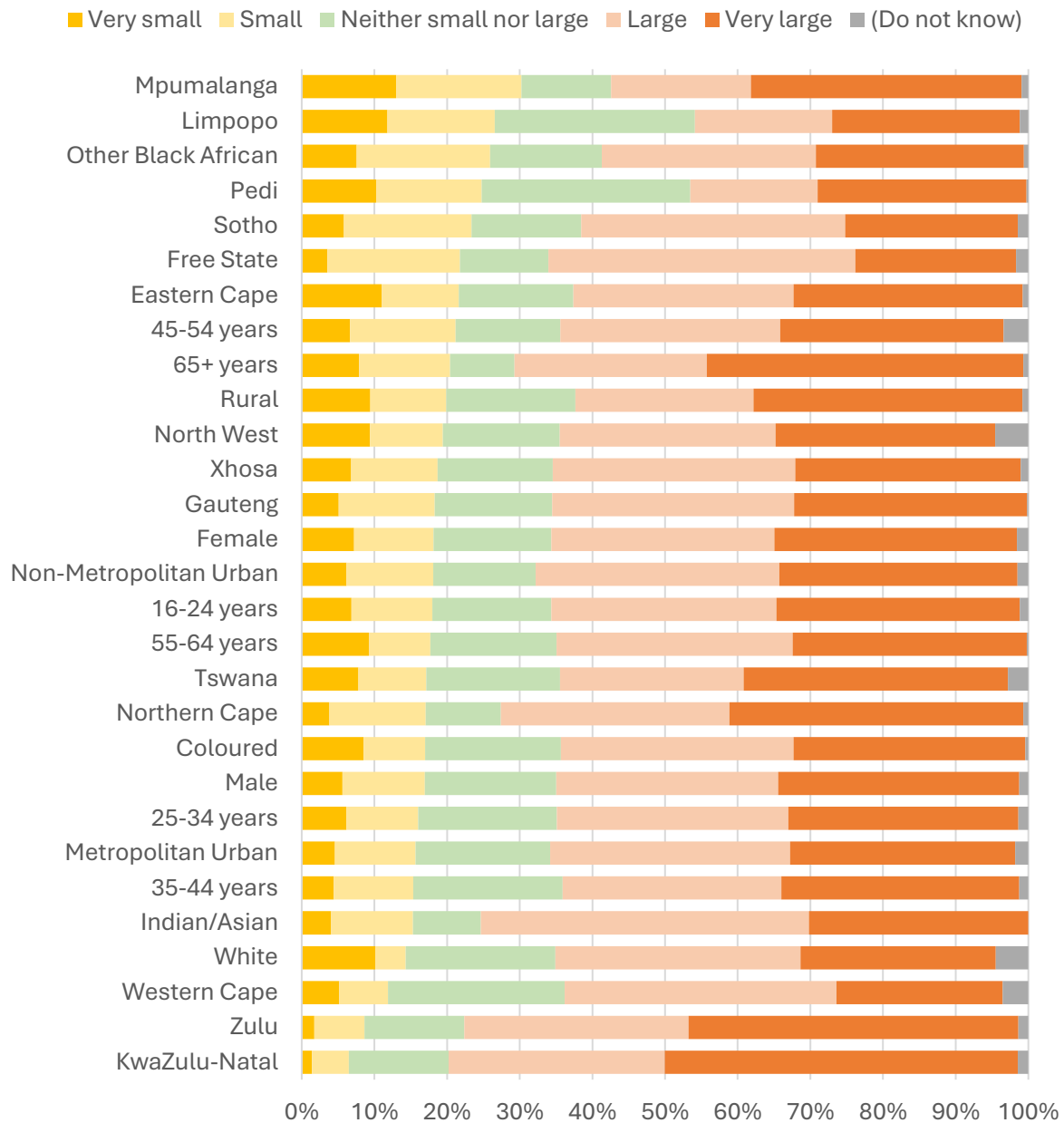
As part of SASAS 2023, survey participants were asked to rate how corruption was affecting their personal and family life. The bulk of the public told us that corruption had a large effect on them and their family (**Figure 3-10**, pg. 37). About a third (31%) of the public stated that the impact was large and 34% claimed that it was very large. Only about a fifth (17%) said that corruption had a small impact. The remainder told us that it had neither a small or a large impact (17%) or were uncertain of how to respond (1%). Public opinion on the perceived impact of corruption presented here can be compared to a recent nationally representative survey by Corruption Watch (2024). The results showed that a majority of those interviewed in the nationally representative survey felt that corruption had a serious impact on people's daily lives.¹⁵ A subgroup analysis was performed to assess how the perceived personal impact of corruption varied across a set of different subgroups. The results of this subgroup analysis are presented in **Figure 3-11** (pg. 38) and show significant variation between socio-demographic and geographic groups.

Perceived personal impact was found to be highest amongst residents in KwaZulu-Natal compared to other provinces. More than three-quarters (78%) of adults in the province said that corruption had a large or very large impact on their personal lives. Provincial publics in the Northern Cape and Gauteng also reported relatively high levels of perceived impact. Urban dwellers tended to rate the impact of corruption on their personal lives as higher than what was observed among rural residents. Additional analysis of rural areas showed that farm residents were more worried about the personal impact of corruption than those living in rural villages. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of farm residents described the impact of corruption on their personal lives as large; 14 percentage points higher than what was observed for village dwellers. We did not see substantial differences between age cohorts in the

¹⁵ Looking at the data from Corruption Watch (2024) survey we find that a majority of those interviewed felt that corruption had a serious impact on people's daily lives. About three-fifths (62%) of respondents thought that corruption impedes a person's rights and dignity. A slightly larger proportion (66%) of the sample agreed that corruption should be viewed as a violation of people's basic rights. Over half of all respondents in this survey strongly concurred that corruption exerts pervasive effects across all facets of society. Respondents thought that corruption had a large effect on the vulnerable in society (e.g., people living with disabilities, children and women).

figure. However, older persons were more likely to rate the perceived impact of corruption as large than their younger peers.

Figure 3-11: Responses to the question: "Do you think that corruption has had a small or large impact on you and your family life?" by select subgroups (%)



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Janine Hicks, in a qualitative interview, contended that corruption undermines the rights and wellbeing of women. She noted that corrupt environments mean that “there's a long queue of people lining up to give and pay bribes,” which often puts women at a disadvantage. Women struggle to compete for resources or opportunities when they are pushed down the line due to systemic corruption. This scenario not only affects individual women but also undermines broader policies designed to support gender equality. Given the different ways in which corruption can be gendered, it was interesting to note that there was not a significant gender differential in **Figure 3-11** (pg. 38). It is clear that further research is required to assess the different ways in which corruption can affect men and women differently.

Of the different population groups in **Figure 3-11** (pg. 38), Zulu adults were the most likely to report that corruption had a large impact on their personal lives. Other groups that reported comparatively high levels of perceived personal impact were Indians. Further analysis showed that perceived impact differed by educational attainment of the individual. Persons with post-secondary education were more likely to report that the impact of corruption was small than their less educated counterparts. Consider, for example, that 34% of adults with advanced degrees said that corruption had a small impact on their personal lives; this is about twice the national average. In addition, we discovered that perceived impact did not differ significantly by employment status.

4. Beneath the Surface: Exploring the Depths of Corruption Perceptions

Most experts surveyed for this study, as outlined in Chapter 2.3, believed that the level of corruption in South Africa is a major problem, and that the scale of this problem has grown since the 1990s. But how does the mass public feel about this important issue. One of the central goals of the NACS is to empower citizens with knowledge. An informed and aware citizenry is better equipped to identify and fight corruption. For the country to promote a values-driven society where corruption is not tolerated, the strategy stated that we need to educate people about the problem. Expanding citizen knowledge of the level of corruption in South Africa is considered vital for promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in all sectors of society. There is a concern, expressed in the NACS, that the citizen body is not aware of the *severity* of corruption and does not understand the *scale* of the problem.

In this chapter we analysed corruption perceptions in South Africa, assessing how widespread people think this problem is in the country. This is not a new area of research and past survey research by other scholars (e.g., Patel and Govindasamy, 2021) has focused extensively on pervasiveness of corruption. But the emphasis of this prior work has been government and which public institutions (e.g., the police) are the most corrupt. Less consideration is given to business or religious elites. In addition, prior work has tended to look closely at the perceived *scale* of corruption and has ignored attitudes towards the *impact* of the problem.

The chapter aimed to improve on previous research and provide unique insights into public views on the magnitude of corruption in the country. To achieve this, the chapter investigated corruption perceptions from a number of different angles. First, we look at elite participation in corrupt practices with a focus on politicians and business leaders. Second, we explore the perceived pervasiveness of corruption within the public service. Third, public attitudes towards the involvement of religious leaders in corruption were assessed. Finally, popular attitudes towards the impact of corruption on society were analysed. In each chapter, the geographic and demographic groups that are most concerned about corruption were identified. Where possible, we evaluated how attitudes may have changed over time.

4.1. Business and Political Leaders

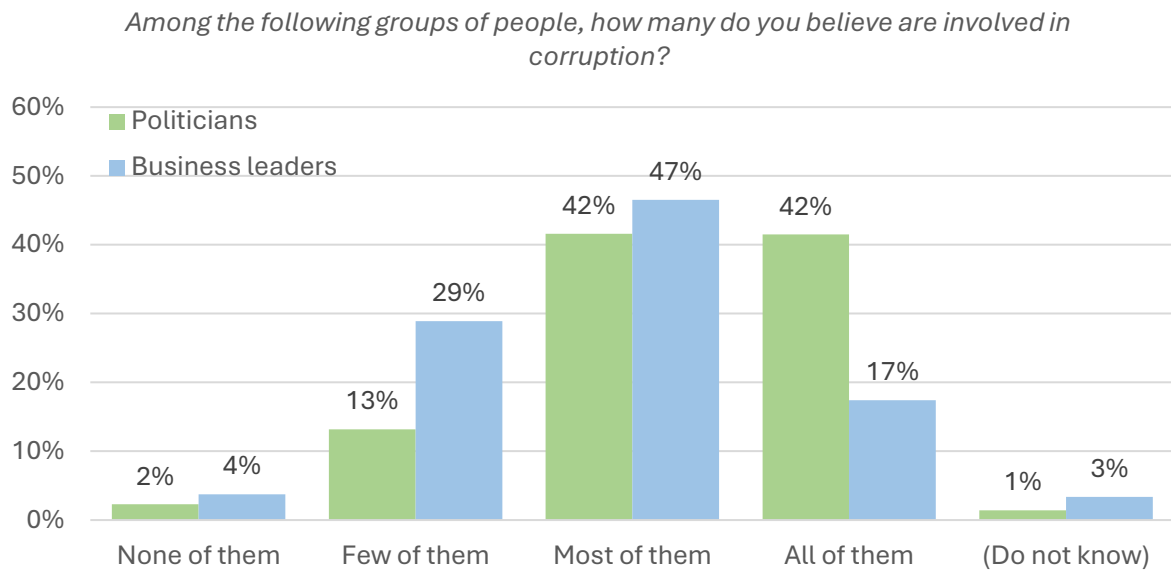
Experts surveyed for this study displayed substantial dissatisfaction with elites in South Africa. Expert respondents highlighted the greed and opportunism of the elite on page 58 in Chapter 5.2. When presenting reasons for growing levels of corruption in the country, elites were identified as major actors. But experts, on the whole, thought that the political class was more complicit in corruption than the business class. Does the general public share this perspective? The present section assesses public attitudes towards corruption amongst the elite with a focus on business and political leaders. It explores, in particular, whether different socio-demographic and geographic groups in the country hold opposing views on corruption perceptions.

As part of SASAS 2023, respondents were asked to think about politicians and business leaders and then requested to indicate "How many do you believe are involved in corruption?" The general public tended to perceive politicians as the most corrupt kind of leaders in South Africa (**Figure 4-1**, pg. 41). Approximately two-fifths (42%) of the mass public believed that all politicians were involved in corrupt behaviour and a similar proportion claimed that all of them were. Business leaders were seen as far less corrupt. Consider that only 17% of adults thought that all business leaders were corrupt while 47% believed that most were¹⁶. Testing showed that there was a strong association between perceptions of business leaders and politicians here (for the details of this test see page 192 in

¹⁶ Similar findings were produced by prior research by Patel and Govindasamy (2021) on the perceived level of corruption in South African society.

APPENDIX C). Our tests showed that if a person thought that politicians were corrupt, they were more likely to think that business leaders were corrupt.

Figure 4-1: Public assessment of politicians and business leaders involved in corruption



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The results presented in **Figure 4-1** (pg. 41) can be compared to expert opinion on corruption amongst elites. When questioned about the extent of corruption among business leaders and owners in South Africa, 49% of experts surveyed asserted that a considerable number were involved. The remaining experts were divided: 6% claimed almost all were corrupt, 35% suggested some were, 8% indicated a few, and 2% contended almost none were implicated. The perceived level of corruption amongst business leaders is lower than what was observed for politicians. Most of the experts surveyed had a very unfavourable view of the South African political class. This can be clearly seen if we look at how respondents answer the following question: "In your opinion, how many politicians in South Africa are involved in corruption?", About half of the sample (52%) alleged that a majority of the politicians were involved while 35% said almost all were. Only a small minority told us that some were involved (9%) or that a few were (1%)¹⁷. In summation, it would seem that most of the expert sample thought that the lion's share of politicians were complicit in corruption.

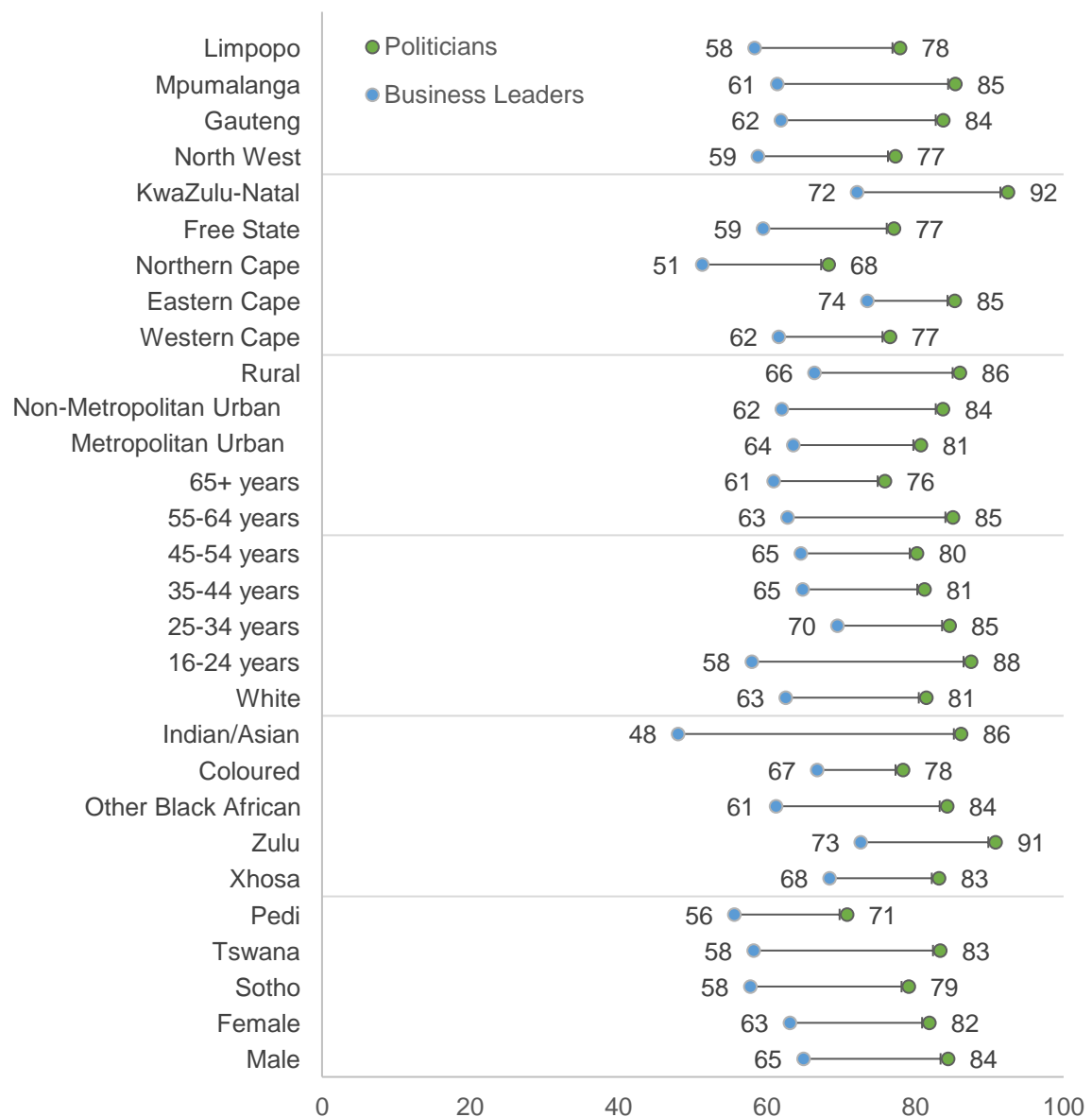
Given the results presented above, we asked Thulebona Mhlanga about corruption in the private sector. She said that while corruption exists in both sectors, it is often easier to conceal and manage in the private sector. The ability of the private sector to handle corruption internally through financial resources contrasts with the more visible and bureaucratic nature of public sector corruption. Zoe Mthimunya also offered an explanation for why public perceptions of corruption are often skewed towards the public sector rather than the private sector. She felt that this attitudinal difference arises because more people (especially the poor, many of whom are unemployed or work outside the formal economy) interact with public institutions than with private ones. The public sector is thus more visible, and its corruption is more easily exposed. Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze argued that the belief in the private sector's relative cleanliness is misplaced. Corruption in the private sector is often seen as isolated incidents involving specific companies rather than a systemic issue. She stressed the need

¹⁷ When asked which was the most corrupt part of the government, different answers were given by our expert sample. But, on the whole, it would appear that local government was seen as more corrupt than the other levels of government.

for more comprehensive research and focus on the private sector to understand the true extent of corruption in the country.

Kris Dobie thought that the South African private sector was less corrupt than its public sector counterpart. He claimed that the private sector has built-in mechanisms that encourage professionalism and ethical behaviour. He explained that in the private sector, the survival of an organisation is closely tied to its performance and profitability, which drives a higher standard of governance. He stated that "if you don't work for achievement of organisational ends and profitability, then you are likely not to survive as an organisation." This inherent pressure to succeed fosters an environment where corruption is less likely to take root. This argument aligns with the South African Business Ethics Survey conducted by the Ethics Institute (2023). This survey tracks developments in ethical culture and focuses on ethical culture maturity within private sector organisations. The 2023 survey found a notable improvement in the overall ethical culture maturity of South African private sector organisations when compared to 2019.

Figure 4-2: Percentage who claimed that most or all of politicians and business leaders were involved in corruption by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

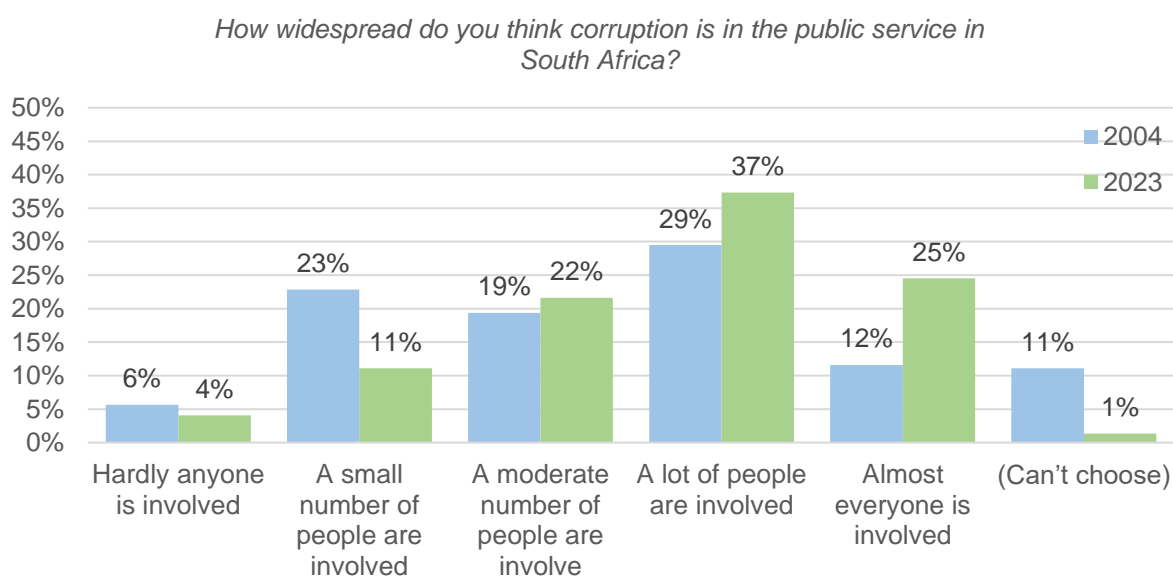
It is reasonable to expect that corruption perceptions for political and business leaders will differ markedly among the country's diverse socio-demographic and geographic segments. To examine this hypothesis, we looked at the proportion who claimed that most or all politicians and business leaders were involved in corruption by select subgroups. Corruption perceptions were high for all subgroups in **Figure 4-2** (pg. 42). But we could discern substantial differences between provincial populations. Adults living in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape were most likely to view these two elite groups as corrupt. We also detected a significant difference between rural and urban residents. Rural dwellers were more likely than their counterparts in urban areas to believe that elites were corrupt. Looking at the different population groups in the figure, the Zulu and Xhosa were the most likely to have high corruption perceptions.

Perceptions of political leaders were almost uniformly negative, and all subgroups in **Figure 4-2** (pg. 42) appeared to have a negative opinion of politicians. Indeed, we found very little variation on this measure. Evaluations of business leaders were, in contrast, far more diverse. For some subgroups in the figure, we could observe a large dissimilarity between their evaluations of business leaders and politicians. Interestingly, such dissimilarities were discovered to be particularly large amongst the youth (i.e., the 16-24 age cohort). Other large dissimilarities were evident amongst the Indian and Tswana groups as well as residents of Mpumalanga. Dissimilarities were, in contrast, smallest amongst residents of the Eastern Cape as well as the Coloured and Xhosa groups.

4.2. Officials in the Public Service

Having provided detailed data on citizen ratings of the business and political leaders in the previous section, we now narrow our focus and concentrate on the public service. This section examines mass attitudes towards corruption amongst officials in the public service and how these attitudes have changed between 2004 and 2023. We also investigate how attitudes vary across the nation's distinct socio-demographic and geographic groupings. The findings presented in this section can be compared with expert opinion on public sector corruption. As noted on page 19 in Chapter 2.4, most experts surveyed for this study believed that a significant share of the public service were involved in corruption. The compromised nature of the public service was identified by as experts as a one of the main reasons that corruption has grown in the last few decades.

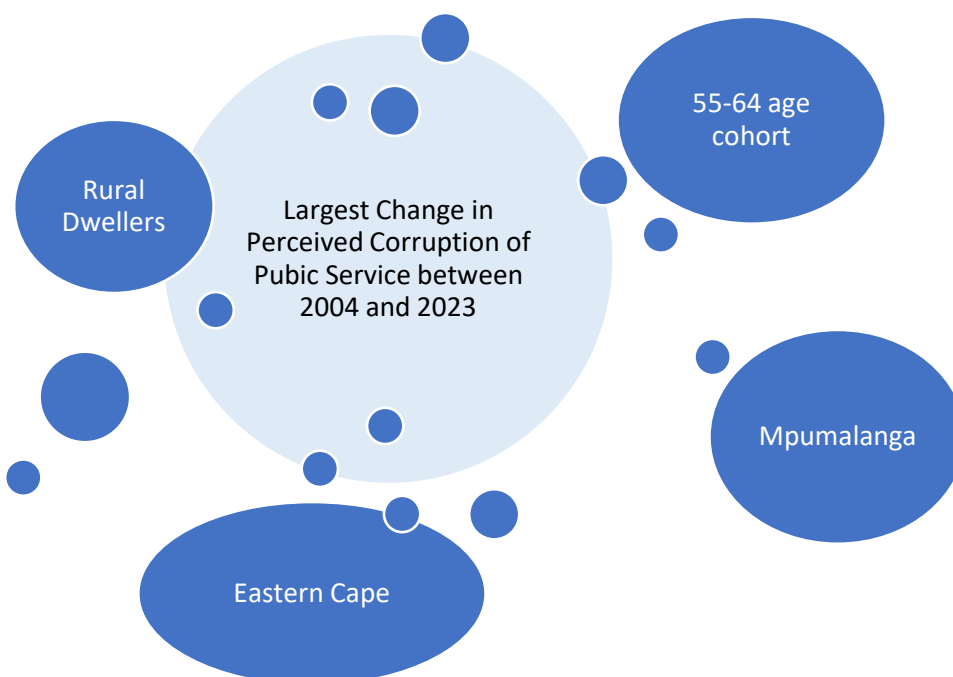
Figure 4-3: Public evaluations of the involvement of public service in corruption in South Africa, 2004 and 2023



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2004; 2023

The following query was put to survey participants in both SASAS 2004: “How widespread do you think corruption is in the public service in South Africa?” About a quarter (23%) of the adult public in SASAS 2004 thought that a small number were involved and 6% that hardly anyone was (**Figure 4-3**, pg. 43). Nearly a fifth (19%) stated that a moderate number of officials were complicit, 29% that a lot were and 12% that almost everyone was. When the question about corrupt officials was fielded again in the 2023 round of SASAS, it was clear that the mass public had become even more worried about corruption in the public service. A quarter of adults said that almost all public officials were involved in corrupt behaviour. A notable proportion (37%) of the public felt that quite a lot of them were implicated and 22% thought that only a moderate number were complicit.

The findings presented above are consistent with prior research by Felton et al. (2023) on service delivery perceptions in South African society. Using Afrobarometer data from 2022, the authors found that 53% of the adult population thought that all or most civil servants were involved in corruption. Comparing the data from SASAS 2023 with earlier public opinion surveys we find the perceived pervasiveness of public sector corruption appears to have grown. For example, using data from the World Value Survey¹⁸ (WVS), we analyse attitudes on this topic in the 1990s. The following question was asked to South Africans during the 1994/1998 round of the WVS: "How many public officials in South Africa are involved in corruption?" A sizeable share (15%) of the adult public said that almost all public officials were involved and 30% told fieldworkers that most were. This suggests that the mass public has been concerned about the level of corruption within the public service.

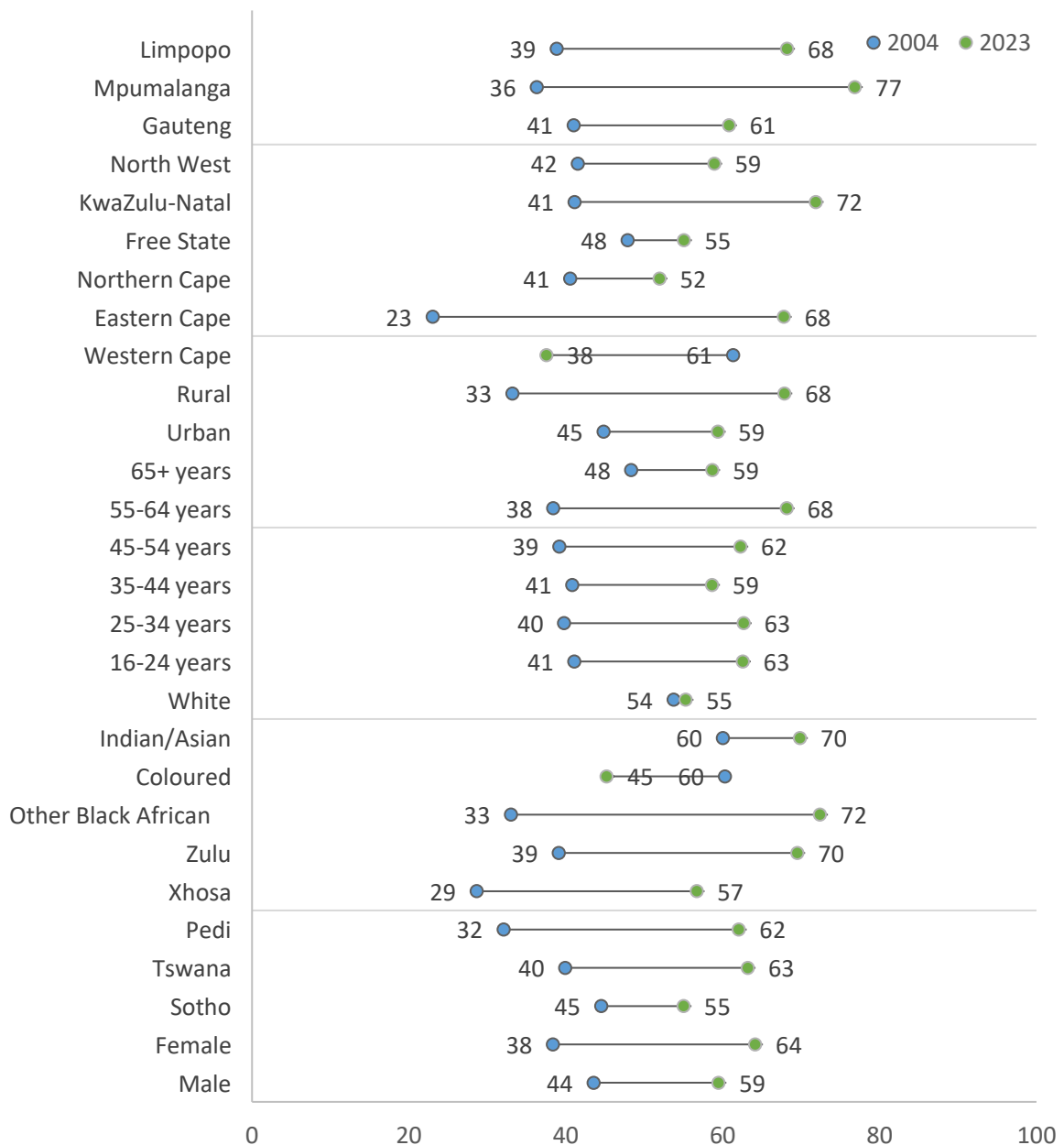


We can assume that perceptions about the level of corruption in the public service would differ considerably across the different socio-demographic groups in the country. To assess the validity of this assumption, we looked at the proportion that thought a lot or most officials in the public service were involved in corruption by select subgroups for SASAS 2004 and SASAS 2023. As can be observed

¹⁸ The World Values Survey is a comprehensive global research project that examined people's values and beliefs, how they change over time, and their impact on social and political life. Conducted through a series of nationally representative surveys, the WVS covers topics such as culture, politics, economics, religion, and social well-being. Since its inception in 1981, it has collected data from over 100 countries, providing insights into global trends and cultural differences.

from **Figure 4-4** (pg. 45), perceptions here varied considerably by province of residence in SASAS 2023. Adults living in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal were much more likely to think that public officials were corrupt than residents of other provinces. We were also able to identify other notable geographic variations in the figure. Rural dwellers perceived higher levels of public service corruption than their urban peers. Further analysis of urban dwellers showed that those living in metropolitan areas were less likely than their counterparts in non-metropolitan areas to think that the public service was corrupt.

Figure 4-4: Percentage who claimed that a lot or almost all officials in the public service are involved in corruption for the 2004 and 2023 round of SASAS by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2004; 2023

Of the different population groups under review in SASAS 2023, we uncovered that members of the Indian minority were the most likely to think that public officials were involved in corruption. Other groups that were inclined to view this branch of government as corrupt were the Zulu and Tswana. We would have imagined that employment status was an important determinant of perceptions here.

But further data analysis showed that there were only modest differences in how workers evaluated the public service. Interestingly, public sector workers were not found to be less or more likely than other workers to think that officials were corrupt. Attitudes here also did not significantly differ much by age group. However, we did find that the 55-64 age cohort was more likely than other cohorts to think that the public service was corrupt.

To better understand why South Africans are so negative about the public service, let us look at how evaluations of the service changed between SASAS 2004 and SASAS 2023. Almost all subgroups in **Figure 4-4** (pg. 45) experienced an increase in corruption perceptions. Of those that experienced an increase, notable variations were identified by geography. Rural dwellers became more likely to see officials as corrupt during the period. The proportion of rural residents who thought all or most officials were involved in corruption increased by 35 percentage points between SASAS 2004 and SASAS 2023. Of the nine provinces, we discovered that Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape residents underwent the largest change in attitudes. In these two provinces the scale of change was larger than 40 percentage points. Only one provincial population experienced a decrease in corruption perceptions. The share of the Western Cape population who viewed most or all officials as corrupt declined from 61% in SASAS 2004 to 38% in SASAS 2023.

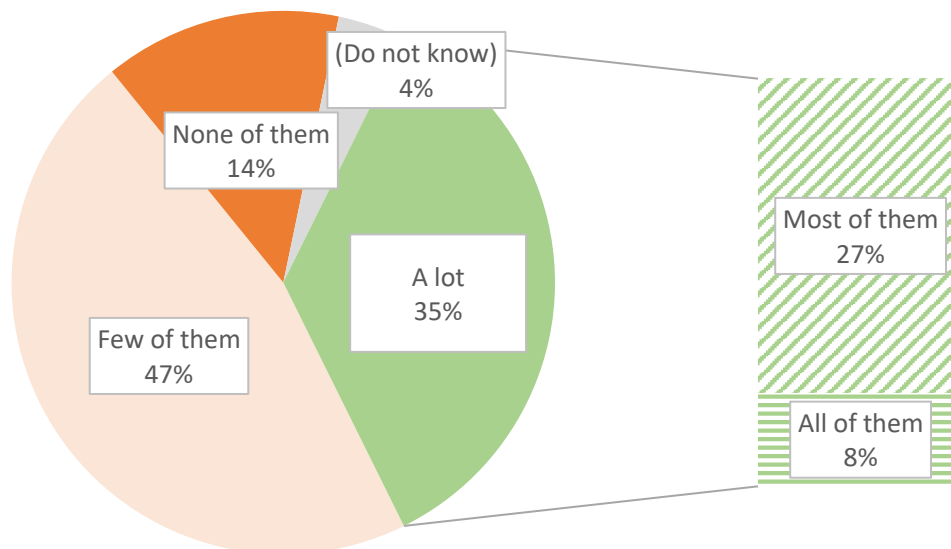
Some population groups, as can be observed from **Figure 4-4** (pg. 45), underwent much greater levels of change than others. The groups that experienced the largest change were the Zulu and the Pedi. The proportion of these groups who thought that most or all public officials were corrupt increased by 30 percentage points. Certain age groups were found to have gone through more attitudinal change than others. The age cohort that experienced the most change was the 55-64 cohort while the oldest cohort (i.e., aged 65 years and older) experienced the least. Interestingly, we could observe a noteworthy gender differential in SASAS 2004 with female adults as more likely to see officials as corrupt. But this differential vanished due to an above average increase in corruption perceptions amongst the female public between 2004 and 2023.

4.3. Religious Leaders

When discussing the problem of corruption, we have so far not remarked on religious corruption. Our focus has, instead, been on corrupt practices amongst politicians, public officials and business leaders. But religious corruption poses significant challenges to the nation. Despite their alleged role as moral compasses, some religious leaders have been implicated in corrupt practices. For instance, some church leaders and officials have been implicated in embezzling church funds for personal gain, exploiting congregants through so-called "miracle cures," and using their positions to engage in sexual misconduct. These instances of corruption are not confined to a single denomination but span a number of them. This section evaluates public opinion on religious corruption in South Africa. It specifically examines whether various socio-demographic and geographic groups have differing opinions on this issue.

Before this section begins, it is worth acknowledging the nature of the religious landscape in South Africa. Members of the expert sample do not consider South Africa to be a religious society. A majority of this group stated that religious social values and norms were practiced in the country to a considerable extent (39%) or to a great extent (16%). The remaining experts selected a moderate extent (27%) or a minor extent (14%). It would seem that, on the whole, religious factors were not seen as major drivers of corrupt behaviour in the country. Roberts et al. (2020) examined changes in religious beliefs in the country using public opinion data from 2008 to 2018. The authors found that about three-quarters of the adult population are some kind of religious affiliate, a figure that has remained stable since 2008. However, there has been a decline in the perception that organised religion is necessary for a connection with God, with many preferring more individualistic religious paths.

Figure 4-5: Public responses to the question: “Among your religious people, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Survey participants in SASAS 2023 were gauge the corruption level of religious leaders in South Africa. Specifically, they were asked: "how many do you believe are involved in corruption?" When compared to what was seen in the previous section, the general public perceived religious leaders as less corrupt than politicians or business leaders. About a tenth (8%) of the adult population believed that all religious leaders were involved in corrupt behaviour and 27% claimed that most were (Figure 4-5, pg. 47). A clear majority stated that either no (14%) or only a few (47%) leaders were involved in corruption. It is expected that perceptions of corruption will vary significantly by religious affiliation. To explore this hypothesis, we explored how different religious affiliates responded to this question, subgroup analysis results are shown in Table 4-1 (pg. 47).

Table 4-1: Responses to the question: “Among religious leaders, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?” by religious affiliation (row percentages)

	None of them	Few of them	Most of them	All of them	(Do not know)
<i>Unaffiliated</i>					
Atheists	11 (2.172)	36 (4.614)	31 (3.985)	13 (2.991)	9 (3.123)
Other	18 (3.341)	48 (4.752)	23 (4.072)	9 (2.269)	3 (1.041)
<i>Christian Affiliated</i>					
Roman Catholic	8 (2.604)	58 (6.944)	25 (6.022)	8 (2.874)	2 (0.756)
Anglican	4 (1.587)	52 (8.407)	36 (7.697)	5 (3.480)	3 (1.842)
Methodist	14 (3.467)	44 (6.265)	29 (6.346)	9 (2.988)	4 (2.585)
Pentecostal/Evangelistic	15 (2.702)	44 (4.432)	29 (3.342)	8 (1.644)	5 (1.996)
African Independent Churches	16	47	26	8	2

	(2.414)	(3.286)	(2.680)	(1.963)	(1.241)
Reformed Church	12	58	18	6	6
	(4.132)	(7.504)	(5.941)	(2.666)	(5.675)
Non-denominational	17	46	24	8	4
	(4.044)	(6.854)	(4.864)	(3.057)	(1.896)
Other	14	47	31	6	1
	(3.016)	(4.293)	(4.271)	(1.633)	(0.515)
<i>Non-Christian Affiliated</i>					
Islam / Muslim	11	50	25	11	3
	(6.093)	(11.730)	(11.290)	(7.684)	(1.189)
Hinduism / Hindu	31	54	8	3	5
	(6.417)	(6.596)	(2.540)	(1.524)	(2.316)
Other	18	45	29	3	5
	(4.763)	(7.821)	(6.666)	(1.477)	(2.751)

Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

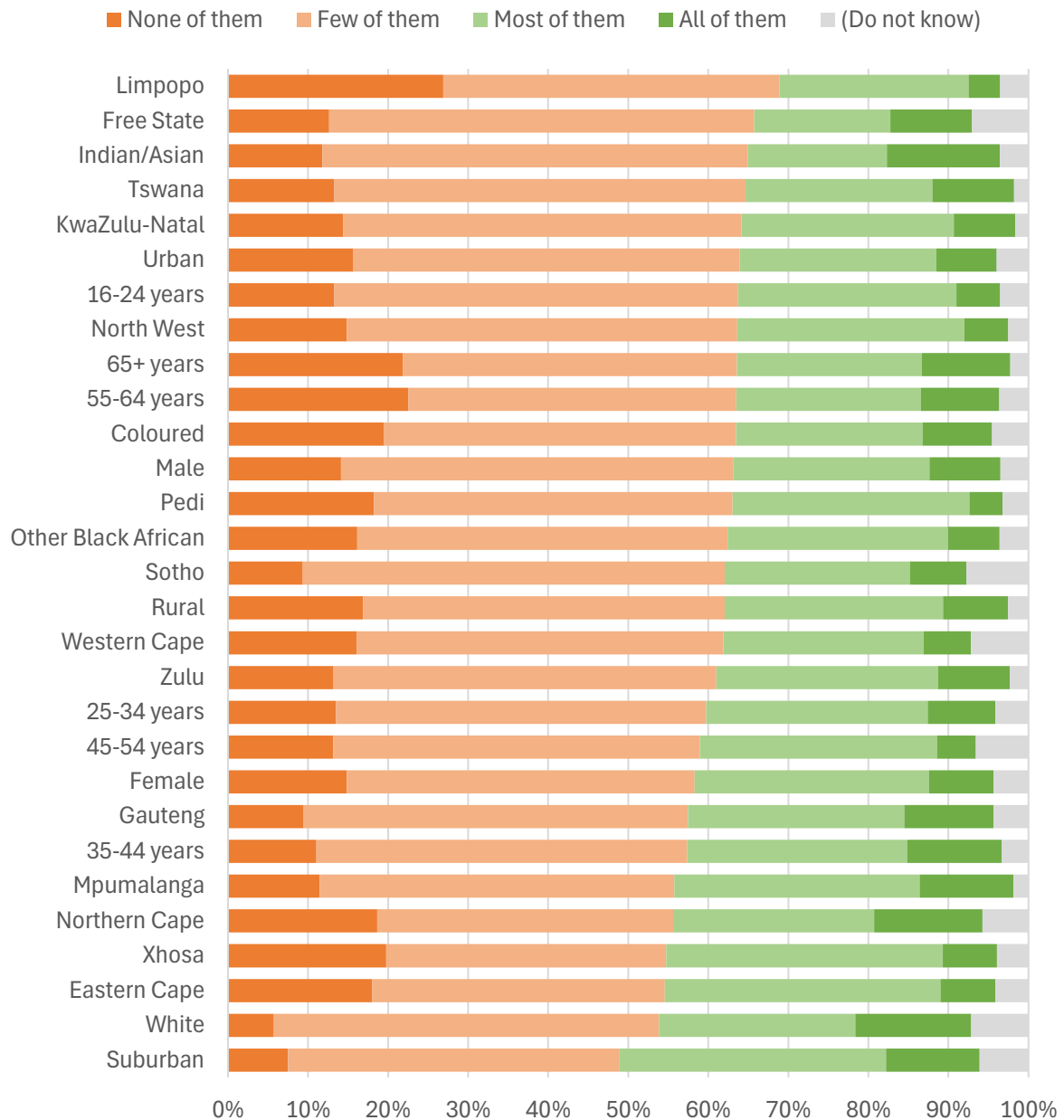
We did find substantial variation in religious corruption perceptions between affiliation groups, confirming our hypothesis. Non-affiliates were somewhat more likely to think that religious leaders were complicit in corruption than either Christians or non-Christians. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we found that atheists were, on average, more negative than other groups in **Table 4-1** (pg. 47). More than two-fifths of this atheists thought that most (31%; SE=3.985) or all (13%; SE=2.991) religious leaders was complicit in corruption. Persons who were unaffiliated but religious were, by contrast, much less prone to thinking of religious leaders as corrupt. Looking only at Christians, we found that Anglicans and Methodists were the groups with the highest religious corruption perceptions. Reformed Church members were the Christian group with most positive evaluations of this issue. Less than a quarter of these affiliates thought that either most (18%; SE=5.941) or all (6%; SE=2.666) religious leaders were corrupt. Amongst non-Christian affiliations, we discovered that Muslims had the highest corruption perceptions and Hindus had the lowest.

The results from **Table 4-1** (pg. 47) show that many religious people in South Africa think that religious leaders are corrupt. When speaking about corruption within religious spaces in a qualitative interview, Maria Frahm-Arp asserted that the hierarchical nature of some religious organisations fosters a culture where questioning leaders is discouraged. She said that this leads to a lack of accountability and openness within the organisations, making it difficult to challenge or address corrupt practices. Many religious communities lack mechanisms for internal whistleblowing and cultural norms may discourage individuals from reporting unethical behaviour. Practices that might be seen as corrupt, such as lack of transparency in handling donations, are often accepted within certain religious contexts. She contended that this is especially true for some Pentecostal and African independent churches. With reference to religious institutions, Zaakirah Vadi expressed a concern about celebrity culture. She urged them to “isolate” not “fawn over ... celebrity culture” as it sends the wrong message about what values ought to be valorised if we are to build a society that prioritises integrity and inclusion and zero tolerance for corruption.

Now let us turn our attention to the socio-demographic and geographic subgroup differences in religious corruption perceptions. We can detect substantial provincial variations in **Figure 4-6** (pg. 49). When compared to other provincial populations, Mpumalanga residents were found to report higher levels of perceived corruption. The Eastern Cape and the Northern Cape were other provinces where religious corruption perceptions were relatively high. Suburban residents were more negative about religious leaders than either urban or rural dwellers. Probing deeper into the matter, we discovered that rural farms had higher corruption perceptions than their village peers. We could not discern a

gender differential in the figure. But further analysis showed that religious affiliation mediated the relationship between gender and corruption perceptions. Male non-affiliates were much more likely to think that most or all religious leaders were corrupt than female non-affiliates.

Figure 4-6: Responses to the question: “Among religious leaders, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?” by select subgroups



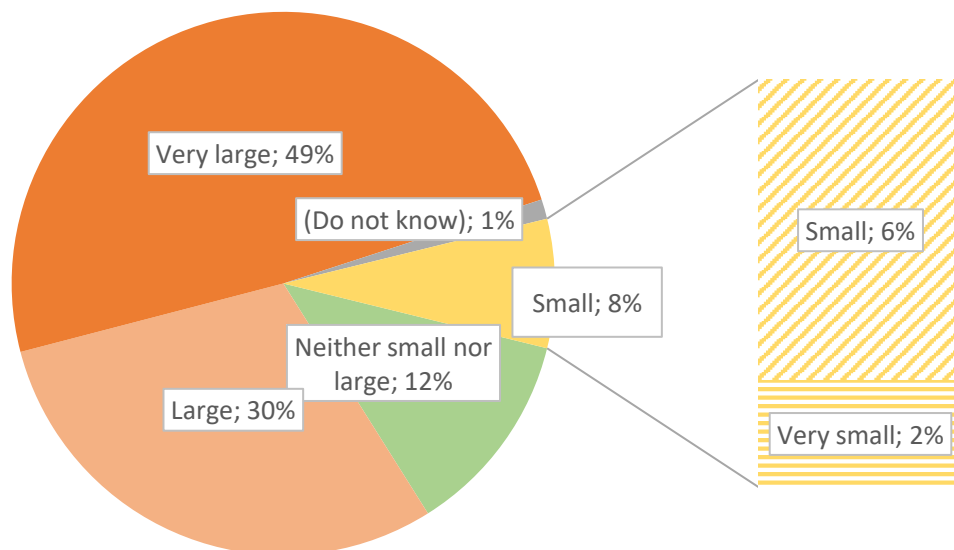
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Of the nine population groups in South Africa, we found that members of the Xhosa were the most likely to think that religious leaders were corrupt. White adults, on average, also had comparatively high religious corruption perceptions. In contrast, Sotho and Indian adults had the lowest perceptions of corruption. There were moderate gender differences in the figure; male adults had higher religious corruption perceptions than their female counterparts. Some noteworthy age cohort differences could be observed. The 35-44 cohort had the highest corruption perceptions while the 16-24 cohort had the lowest. Supplementary analysis detected an educational attainment differential here. The more educated a person was, the more likely they were to think that religious leaders were corrupt.

4.4. Economic Impact

Several studies (e.g., Mauro, 1995; Aid, 2009; Melgar et al., 2010) have concluded that corruption has a large adverse effect on the economic and political development of a country. But does the mass public understand this? To put it another way, what are the sociotropic evaluations of corruption amongst the general public in South Africa. Sociotropic evaluations are judgments that individuals make about the overall state of the economy or society, rather than their personal situation (Mutz & Mondak, 1997). These evaluations reflect broader assessments of national or community well-being and often influence political and social opinions. (also see Lockerbie, 2006) This section looks at sociotropic concerns about corruption and the threat that it poses to the collective good. We explored how sociotropic concerns vary among different socio-demographic and geographic groups within the country.

Figure 4-7: Public responses to the question: “Do you think that corruption has had a small or large impact on the economy in general?”



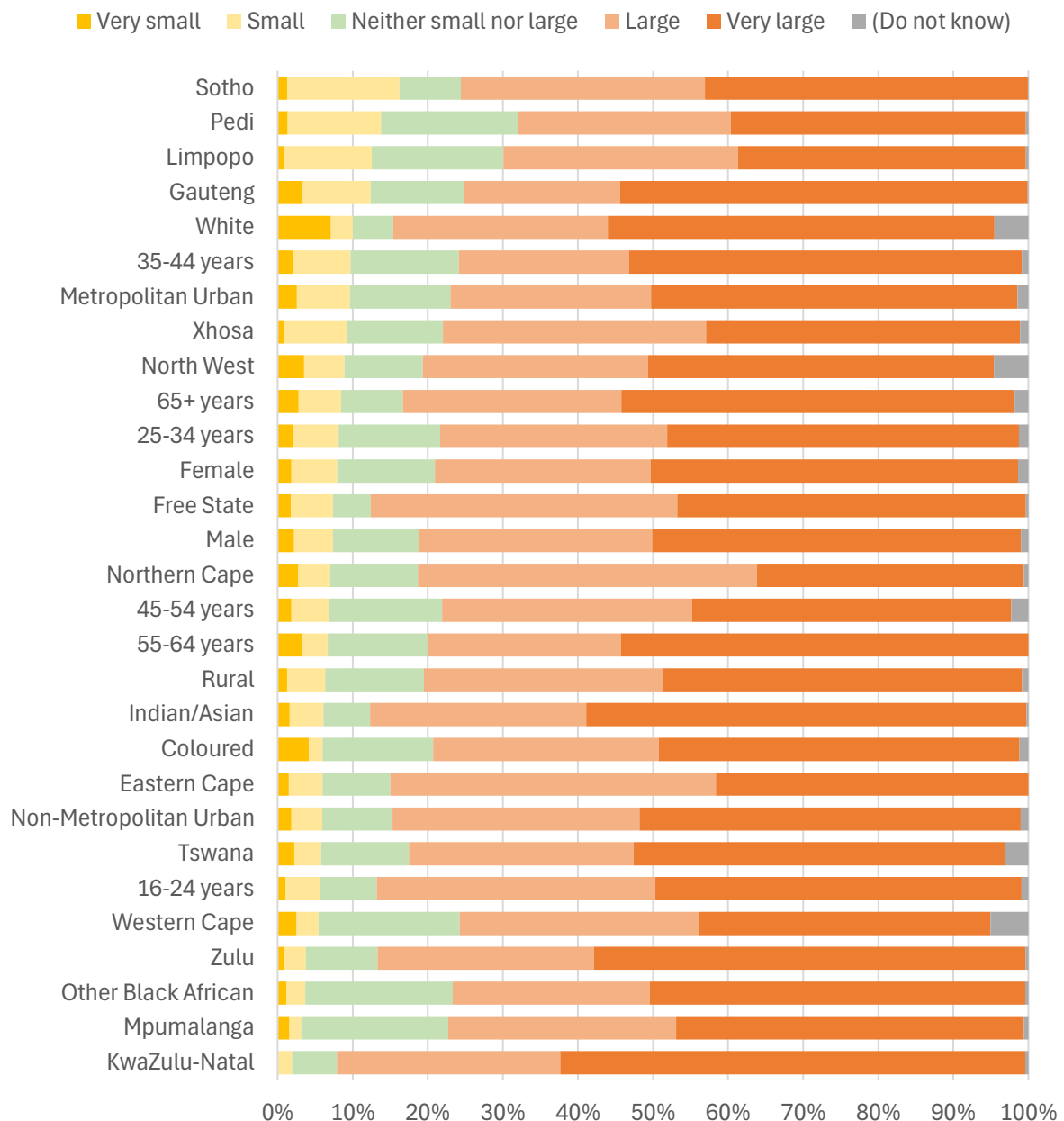
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Survey participants in SASAS 2023 were requested to evaluate the impact that corruption has had on the South African economy in general. More than three-quarters (79%) of the adult population believed that the economic impact of corruption had been large (**Figure 4-7**, pg. 50). The pattern of responses here has some important similarities to how people answered the perceived level of political corruption question (for more information, see Chapter 4.1). Testing showed a robust correlation between the perceived level of political corruption and the perceived impact of corruption on the economy (for the details of this test see page 192 in APPENDIX C). If a person thought that most politicians were involved in corruption, then they tended to think that the economic impact of corruption was large. It's reasonable to assume that the perceived impact of corruption on the national economy would vary considerably across socio-demographic and geographic divisions within the country. To explore this hypothesis, we examined the responses to the economic impact question among various subgroups. The responses to this inquiry are displayed across a spectrum of diverse groups in **Figure 4-8** (pg. 51).

The level of attitudinal variation that we can observe in **Figure 4-8** (pg. 51) is quite modest. Most groups in the figure tended to believe that corruption has had a large impact on the national economy. But there were some interesting subgroup variations that could be identified. Residents of KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State were more likely than other groups to think that corruption has had a large

impact. Of the nine different population groups in the figure, Indian adults were the most likely to believe that corruption had a substantial effect on the national economy. The Zulu were, on average, more concerned about the economic impact of corruption than most other groups. Further data analysis found that there was a correlation between educational attainment and attitudes here. We discovered that those with higher levels of formal education were more likely than their peers to think that the economic impact of corruption was large.

Figure 4-8: Responses to the question: “Do you think that corruption has had a small or large impact on the South African economy in general?” by select subgroups

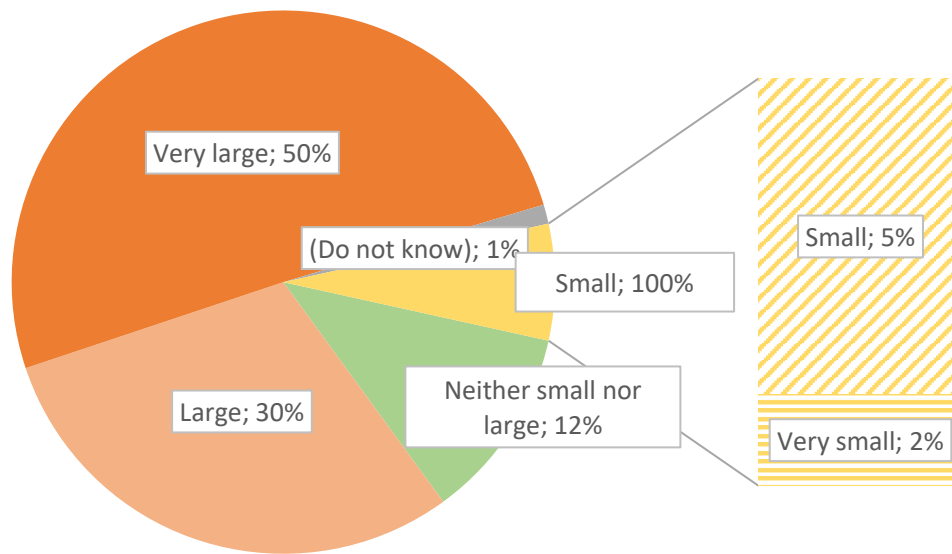


Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

As a follow-up to the question on the economic impact of corruption, SASAS 2023 respondents were requested to state the degree to which they thought corruption had impacted on State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the country (Figure 4-9, pg. 52). Four-fifths of all adult South Africans said that the impact was large and only a small minority (7%) asserted that it had been small. The public's views on the perceived effects of corruption here can be contrasted with findings from a recent Corruption

Watch survey (2024). The survey results revealed that most respondents believed corruption significantly affected the delivery of government services¹⁹. Additional testing show that there was a strong association between how people evaluate the impact of corruption on the economy and SEOs (for the details of this test see page 192 in APPENDIX C). If an individual thought that the impact on the economy was large, then they were much more likely to think that the impact on SEOs was also considerable. Overall, people in the country tended to exhibit strong and robust sociotropic concerns about the negative impact of corruption.

Figure 4-9: Public responses to the question: “Do you think that corruption has had a small or large impact on state-owned enterprises?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

In Chapter 3.4 we outlined data on egotropic evaluations, showing that a majority of the public thought that corruption had significantly impacted their personal lives. Additional data analysis revealed that sociotropic attitudes towards the impact of corruption were linked to these egotropic evaluations. If a person believed that corruption had a substantial sociotropic effect, they were much more inclined to think that it had a considerable effect on their personal life. Statistical testing showed that perceived personal impact had a stronger correlation with perceived SEO impact than perceived impact on the general economy (for the details of this test see page 193 in APPENDIX C). This may be due to how the general public identifies SEOs with service delivery and the public sector. Reviewing these findings, we can conclude that people used their egotropic concerns to construct their sociotropic concerns about corruption.

The section has so far looked at the perceived economic and governmental impact of corruption, but we must also consider that corruption can have a political effect. Janine Hicks, in a qualitative interview, highlighted that corruption disrupts the functionality of democratic institutions. She said that corruption contributes to a widening gap between citizens and their government, a phenomenon she referred to as a "democratic deficit." When corruption skews the system, it erodes public trust and leads to disengagement from democratic processes. She pointed out that citizens may withdraw from public participation because they feel that "democracy is not really working out for us," which

¹⁹ Studying the data from Corruption Watch (2024) survey in more detail, we find that clear majorities of the sample thought that corruption impacted six different areas of service provision. These included the provision of housing and land (73%), safety and protection of communities (69%), quality education (68), access to quality healthcare (67%), justice by courts (64%), and food security (62%).

further undermines the effectiveness of democratic institutions. This lack of engagement results in a less responsive government and a diminished focus on addressing gender-specific issues, as the voices of affected communities are not being heard.

5. High Stakes: Expert and Non-Expert Perspectives on the Drivers of Corruption

From the previous section it is clear that the mass public is significantly worried about the economic impact of corruption and views corruption as a serious problem. Moreover, we found, in Chapter 3, that a majority of the adult population had recently experienced corruption and many lived in communities where corrupt practices were common. Given this level of public concern and experience, we need to ask how the mass public understands the problem of corruption. Understanding the lay attributions that surround a societal problem provides rich information on how a nation views and understands a given point in its history (Soroka & Wlezien 2010). Such attributions, in effect, represent the social values that underpin the problem in question. By looking at causal opinion we will gain a greater appreciation for the extent to which we, as a society, assess the problem of corruption.

Before we begin this chapter, let us ask ourselves what ‘lay attributions’ are? When looking at the world around them, non-experts have to make judgments about why something happened or why someone acted in a certain way. Rather than utilising empirical data or specialised academic frameworks to make these judgements, non-experts typically rely on their own observations, experiences, beliefs and cultural norms. Social psychologists term this process ‘lay attribution,’ defining attributions as the causal explanations used by lay people (i.e., non-experts) to explain a phenomenon (Hewstone, 1989). Most scholars of attribution theory differentiate between internal and external attributions. The latter refer to environmental causes of an individual's behaviour or the outcomes they experience. Internal factors, on the other hand, are those that are seen as originating from within the individual, such as their personality, abilities, or effort²⁰.

In this chapter we investigated what non-experts thought about the main drivers of corruption. Because not all types of corruption are the same, this investigation differentiated between corruption at the elite and non-elite levels. The chapter also examined how lay attributions differ by the main geographic and demographic groups in the country. Public opinion on what drives elite and non-elite corruption was compared to expert opinion on these topics. The chapter paid close attention to the differences between experts and non-experts. We enhanced our analysis of the expert data by incorporating insights from qualitative semi-structured interviews with key experts. By dissecting and analysing different kinds of data, we hope to achieve a nuanced understanding of expert and non-expert opinion on what is driving corruption in South Africa.

5.1. Lay Attributions for Elite Corruption

In Chapter 4 we saw that a majority of the general public thinks that elite corruption (especially amongst politicians) is high. Given how high levels of concern about elite corruption in South Africa are, we need to ascertain how the mass public understands the problem of elite corruption. This section investigates the lay attributions that the public use to explain corruption amongst elites in South Africa. When delineating lay attributions, we made a distinction between the following types of attributions: (i) psychological; (ii) system justification; and (iii) law enforcement. We were interested, in particular, in how the popularity of these different types of attributions may vary across diverse socio-demographic groups.

²⁰ in the context of attribution theory research, an internal factor typically involves examining how individuals attribute the causes of events or behaviours to characteristics or traits inherent to the person in question. On the other hand, external factors are attributed to outside influences or situational factors. For a further discussion of the difference between internal and external attribution, see Hewstone (1989).

SASAS included the following attribution question: “In your opinion, what are the main reasons why the rich and powerful in South Africa might engage in corruption?” Survey participants were then read a list of options and requested to select the most appropriate. Public responses to this question, portrayed in **Table 5-1** (pg. 55), show that most people provided multiple answers. The average number of responses was two, and only a trivial fraction of all adults did not provide an answer to the question. A small proportion (3%; SE=0.608) responded ‘don’t know’ and 1% (SE=0.580) gave an answer that was not on the list provided to respondents. The most common responses in **Table 5-1** (pg. 55) concerned internal (i.e., psychological) factors, 74% (SE=1.484) of the public selected a psychological attribution. The most popular of these was greed (48%; SE=1.582), this was followed by the normalisation of corruption (33%; SE=1.456) and then inherent dishonesty (28%; SE=1.334).

Table 5-1: Main attributions identified for why there is corruption amongst the rich and powerful (multiple response)

	%		[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>Psychological Factors</i>				
Elites are greedy and want to get rich quick	48	(1.582)	45	51
Elites think corruption is normal	33	(1.456)	30	35
Elites are by nature dishonest	28	(1.334)	26	31
<i>Enforcement Factors</i>				
Politicians do not do enough to fight corruption	38	(1.488)	35	40
The courts and police do not punish people for corruption	32	(1.530)	29	35
Anti-corruption policies are not enforced	19	(1.134)	16	21
<i>System Justification</i>				
It is the only way to get things done in this country.	25	(1.410)	22	28
Elites want to avoid government harassment	9	(0.894)	7	10
<i>Other Responses</i>				
Other reason	1	(0.580)	0	2
There is no elite corruption	0	(0.151)	0	1
Do not know	4	(0.608)	3	5

Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

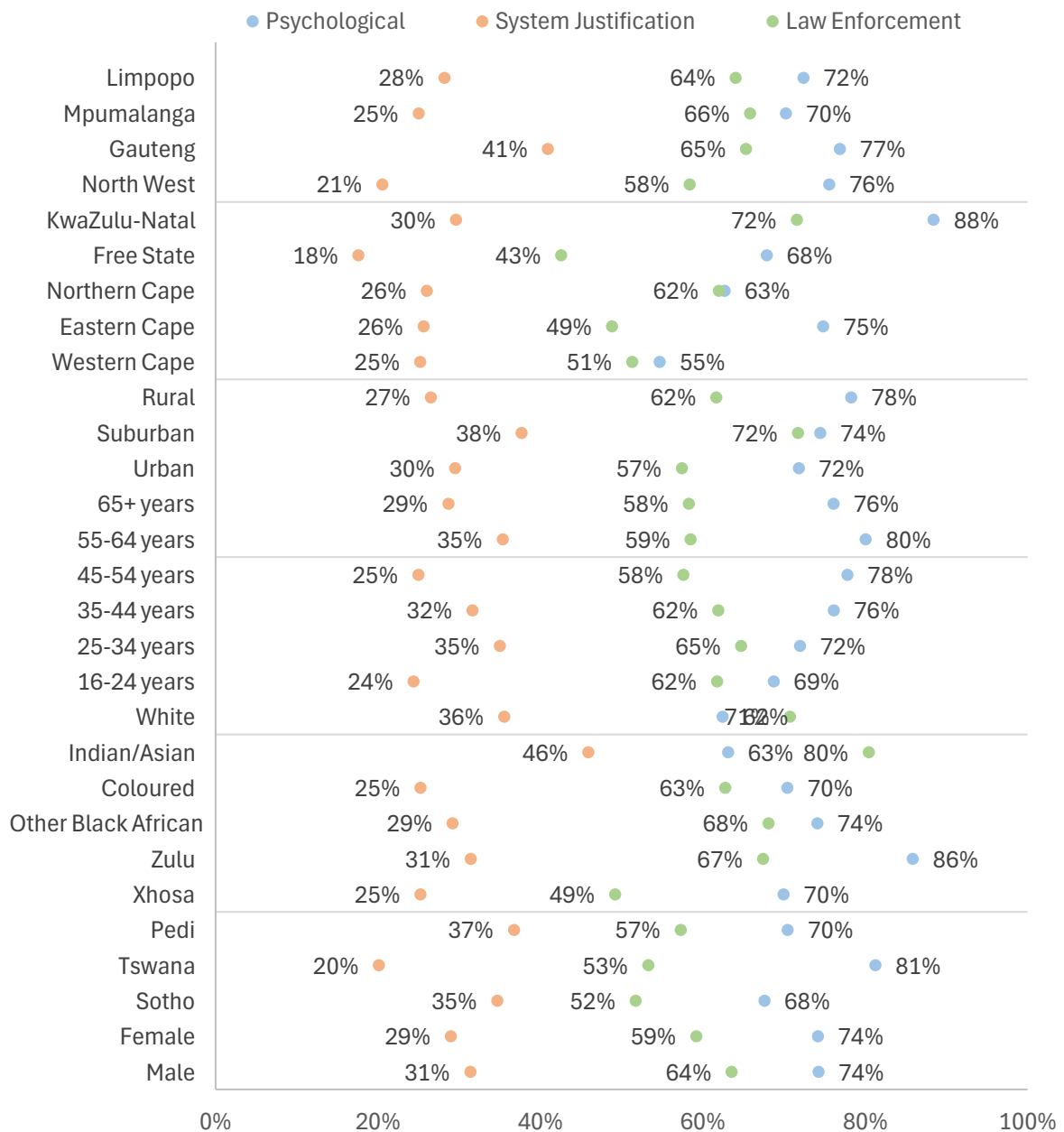
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

One of the most popular rationales for elite corruption put forward in SASAS 2023 was the lack of political-legal constraints or enforcement factors. About three-fifths (61%; SE=1.530) of the mass public selected law enforcement factors. Nearly two-fifths (38%; SE=1.488) of the adult population attributed elite corruption to a lack of political will, and 32% (SE=1.530) blamed the inaction of the courts and the police. A significant minority (30%; SE=1.479) of the general public, perhaps surprisingly, justified elite corruption as necessary. A quarter (25%; SE=1.410) asserted that it was the only way to get things done and 9% (SE=0.894) told fieldworkers that elites just wanted to avoid government harassment.

Now let us look at how different subgroups responded to the elite corruption attribution question discussed above. We assessed the percentages of different groups who used the following types of attribution: (i) psychological; (ii) system justification; and (iii) law enforcement. Results are presented in **Figure 5-1** (pg. 56), and we can see some noteworthy subgroup differences here. Although psychological attributions were popular with a majority of the subgroups examined but certain groups were more likely to select this option than others. There were marked provincial group differences here. Amongst the nine provincial populations in the figure, residents of KwaZulu-Natal (88%; SE=1.845) were the most likely to select psychological attributions. By contrast, Western Cape residents (55%; SE=5.866) were the least liable to attribute elite corruption to non-environmental

factors. Other provinces where a relatively low proportion of the public opted for psychological factors included the Free State (68%; SE=4.037) and the Northern Cape (62%; SE=4.453).

Figure 5-1: Percentage who selected psychological, law enforcement and system justification attributions to explain elite corruption by select subgroup (multiple response)



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Population groups tended to differ on whether psychological attributions were the main drivers of elite corruption. Members of the white (62%; SE=8.025) and Indian (63%; SE=8.316) minorities were the least likely to select psychological factors while the Black African majority (76%; SE=1.489) was the most likely. Looking closer at the Black African majority we can detect a lot of variation by ethnolinguistic identity. Members of the Zulu (86%; SE=2.451) and Tswana (81%; SE=3.469) groups were found to be more apt to select psychological attributions than members of the Sotho (68%; S=4.913) or the Xhosa (70%; SE=3.374) groups. Whether an individual selected psychological factors here did not differ much by age group or gender.

Turning our attention to law enforcement factors, we can discern some interesting geographic differences in **Figure 5-1** (pg. 56). Rural dwellers (72%; SE=3.495) were found to be much more likely to opt for enforcement factors than their urban (62%; SE=2.456) or suburban (57%; SE=2.275) peers. There were also noteworthy population group differences on law enforcement attributions. Amongst the nine population groups in the figure, the Indian group (80%; SE=5.789) were the most likely to select this option and this was followed by the white group (71%; SE=6.593). Xhosa (49%; SE=3.660), Sotho (52%; SE=5.057) and Tswana (53%; SE=4.990) adults, by contrast, were the least liable to attribute elite corruption to enforcement factors. Certain provincial populations were much more likely to opt for enforcement attributions than others. KwaZulu-Natal residents (72%; SE=3.121) were the most liable to select this option and Free State residents (43%; SE=4.390) were the least.

System justification attributions were a minority position for all groups in **Figure 5-1** (pg. 56). However, certain groups reported comparatively high justification attributions. Of all the population groups listed in the figure, justification options were the most popular amongst members of the Indian (46%; SE=7.907), Pedi (37%; SE=4.693) and white (36%; SE=5.884) groups. We can also discern age cohort dissimilarities here. The 25-34 (35%; SE=3.107) and 55-64 (35%; SE=4.473) cohorts were the most likely to utilise system justification attributions. This type of attribution was, by contrast, much less popular amongst the 16-24 (24%; SE=3.245) and 45-54 (25%; SE=3.442) cohorts. Suburban dwellers (38%; SE=3.691) were more apt to select justification factors to account for elite corruption than either their rural (27%; SE=2.296) or urban (30%; SE=2.150) counterparts. Remarkable levels of provincial variation could be identified in the figure. System justification attributions were found to be quite popular, from a comparative perspective, amongst Gauteng residents (41%; SE=3.657). This attribution type was much less common amongst residents in the North West (21%; SE=3.536) and the Free State (18%; SE=3.947).

5.2. Expert Opinion on the Rich and Powerful

The previous section looked at lay attributions for elite corruption. We found that the general public tended to think that psychological factors (especially greed) as well as weak law enforcement were the primary drivers of this kind of corruption. Building on this work, this section looks at expert attitudes towards the social values and norms that drive corrupt practices amongst elites. Utilising expert survey data, we are able to identify three main themes: (i) rational behaviour; (ii) greed and selfishness; and (iii) culture of impunity. It is interesting to note the similarities between expert opinion on this subject and what was observed in the previous section.

As part of the expert survey, respondents were asked to identify the main social values and norms that drive corruption at the elite level²¹. A variety of different answers were put forward. But in summation, most experts agreed that rich and powerful individuals engage in corruption because of a sense of entitlement, materialism and opportunism. Social norms identified included a disregard for the broader community, an emphasis on self-advancement, and a perception that they are above the law. It is interesting to note some similarities in the answers provided by experts to this question and expert opinion, discussed in Chapter 2.4, on the growth of corruption. We were able to group expert answers into three main themes; let us discuss these themes in more detail below.

²¹ The exact wording of the question in the expert survey was: "Please describe the social values and norms, if any, that you think rich and powerful people in South Africa adopt to engage in corruption?"



Rational Behaviour

A number of experts surveyed said that wealthy individuals exhibit a cynical view of the system, seeing corruption as normal or even a necessity. According to EXPERT 13 elites tended to have "[a] sense of it's my turn to eat at the trough". A sentiment echoed by EXPERT 26 who considered that many elite members think that it is "our turn to eat". Ralph Mathekga blamed the failures of the political system. He said that "when political leaders are too distance from those they represent" elites will take advantage. Sensing opportunity this group will use the system "to their advantage at the expense of many". EXPERT 4 contended that the incentives attached to corruption are greater than the costs of being corrupt. He said that corruption is currently "seen as a shortcut to material comfort in a system that is easy to pervert and where political and business leaders are themselves drivers and facilitators of corrupt activities".

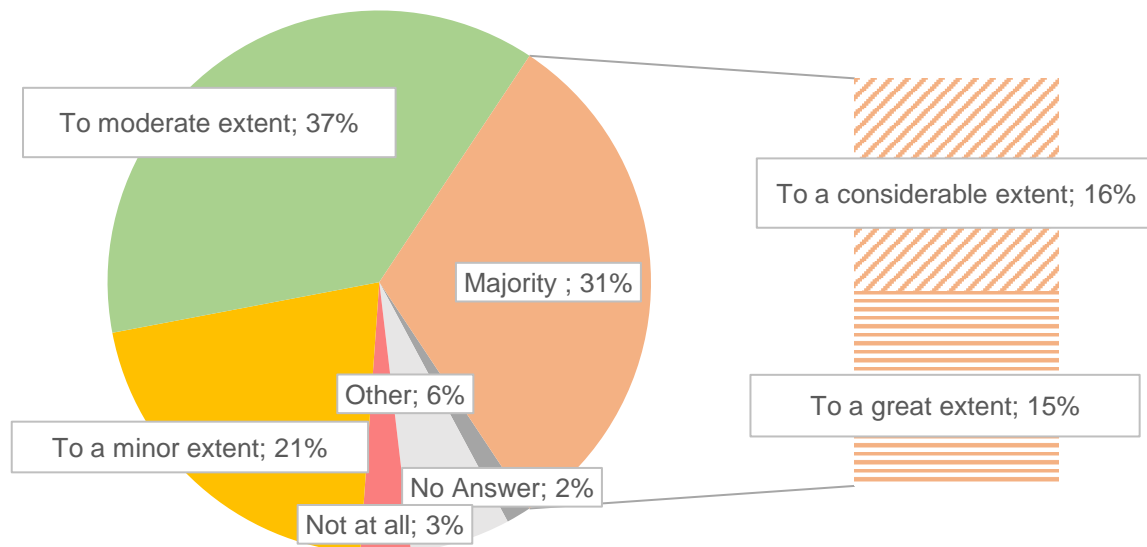
Some experts said that engaging in corruption was seen by elites as essential for maintaining their power and influence. EXPERT 41 acknowledged that "people get rich through corruption". Itumeleng Mongale said that elites needed to "retain position of power by all means in order to have access to public resources". Elites may rationalise corruption as a normative part of doing business, particularly in environments where it is widespread. Experts thought that there was a tendency amongst elites to justify corrupt actions by downplaying their social harm or viewing them as necessary evils. This cynicism is accompanied by a lack of empathy and concern for the broader population. Paul Holden, for instance, contended that "[a] lack of social empathy combined with explicit or implicit entitlement can drive actors to believe that their actions carry no social harm; or lead the actors to underplay their harm".

Greed and Selfishness

Many experts said that the rich and powerful often feel entitled to engage in corrupt practices, believing they deserve more than others. The pursuit of luxury and social status reinforces corrupt behaviour as a means to achieve and maintain these goals. EXPERT 3, for example, talked about the "[p]olitics of the belly". EXPERT 7 believed that the "rich and powerful are extremely materialistic" and have "no social conscience". Paul Holden, in particular, noted that elites are driven by a "conspicuous consumption as a means of achieving social status and influence". These kinds of

psychological factors, as we showed in Chapter 5.1, were also utilised by the mass public to explain elite corruption.

Figure 5-2: Expert responses to the question: “To what extent do you think that South Africa is an individualistic society?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

Some experts said that elite corruption was driven by an ethos of individualistic self-advancement. EXPERT 29, for example, identified "individualism" as a driver while EXPERT 3 talked about "individualistic self-advancement". EXPERT 12 said that individualistic culture in South Africa "is a prominent feature of the tiny minority who are rich and middle class". He remarked that there is very little acknowledgement of unfair privilege of apartheid past. EXPERT 38 thought that elites were just responding to the capitalistic system. He talked about how "[t]he capitalist ethos rewards individualistic behaviour". This individualism undermines the recognition of societal interdependencies, and the risks posed by deepening inequality. Surveyed experts were asked about whether South African society was, on the whole, individualistic (i.e., a place where people are viewed as "good" if they are self-reliant and independent). As can be observed from **Figure 5-2** (pg.59), most respondents were, on the whole, divided on this question. A minority said that the country was individualistic to either a great extent (15%) or to a considerable extent (16%).

Culture of impunity

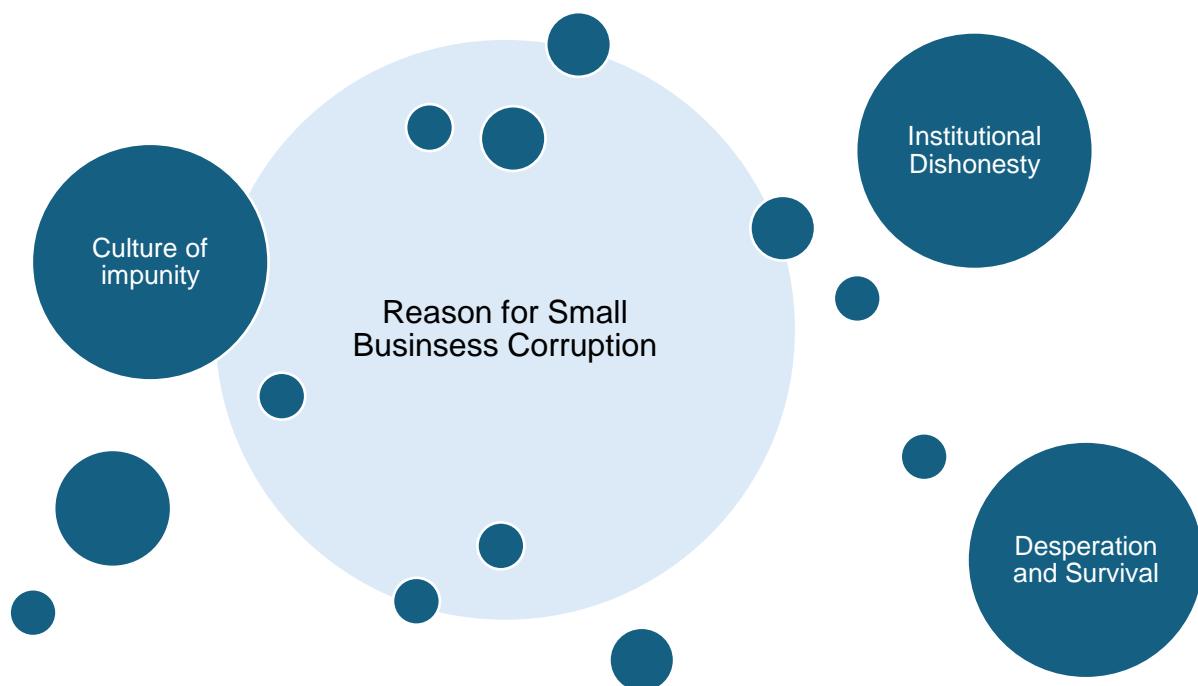
Some experts believed that the rich and powerful engage in corruption because they are not held accountable for illegal behaviour. EXPERT 33 thought that the rich are not subjected to the same level of scrutiny that poor South Africans are subjected to. When talking about the drivers of elite corruption, EXPERT 31 highlighted a culture of impunity and said that this was "due to the weakness of accountability mechanisms". EXPERT 9 said that elites felt above the law and EXPERT 13 said that rich and powerful people "have no sense of accountability". Some respondents feel that the elites can easily conceal their corrupt activities from public scrutiny. EXPERT 15 argued that the elites can hide information from ordinary people "through their control of media outlets". She went on to claim that the rich control the information well enough that what the public knows regarding corruption is just the tip of the iceberg". Law enforcement was also identified, as outlined in Chapter 5.1, as a driver of elite corruption by a significant proportion of the mass public.

Experts thought that there was a prevalent belief among elites that they can act with impunity due to weak enforcement and oversight. EXPERT 35 talked about "impunity and lawlessness" while

EXPERT 22 highlighted the "[i]mpunity of privilege". David Lewis claimed that the elite have a "justified belief that there will be no consequences" and felt that "everyone is doing it". A number of experts also identified weak law enforcement, discussed in Chapter 2.4 on page 15, as a major reason that corruption in South Africa had gotten worse during the last few decades. Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze highlighted the significant role that patriarchal structures, play in facilitating a culture of impunity for the elite. In an interview, she explained that corruption often thrives in environments where power is concentrated among a few individuals, often men, who create exclusive networks that make corrupt practices easier to execute and harder to expose. This is particularly prevalent in the private sector, where informal networks often dictate decision-making processes outside formal structures. Zoe Mthimunye adds that these power dynamics are reinforced by societal norms that exclude women from key decision-making spaces.

5.3. Expert Opinion on Small Business Owners

Building on the findings of the previous section, we look at expert opinion on social norms and values driving corruption amongst small business owners. This group constitutes a *petite* elite within many township and rural communities and should be given consideration when we look at issues related to elite corruption. Moreover, small businesses form the backbone of many local economies, playing a significant role in job creation and economic development. Understanding the drivers of corruption amongst this group is essential if we want to design interventions to foster a fair and competitive business environment in South Africa. It is hoped that the analysis provided in this section helps us better comprehend the social values and norms that drive small business owners to participate in corruption.



During the expert survey, respondents were asked to provide their perspectives on the social values and norms that encourage small businesses in South Africa to engage in corrupt practices. A diverse set of reasons were given by experts with the most prominent involving external survival pressures (such as the desperation to clear bureaucratic hurdles and the need to access opportunities). The desire for self-enrichment and rapid business growth was also thought to drive corrupt behaviour. The responses collectively illustrate the complex interplay of economic, institutional and social factors that influence corruption among small businesses in South Africa. We were able to identify three main

themes (i.e., culture of impunity, institutional dishonesty as well as desperation and survival) in the answers provided by respondents; These themes are discussed in more detail below.

Culture of impunity

A culture of impunity was identified with experts arguing that weak law enforcement allowed small business-owners to engage in corrupt practices. Paul Hoffman, in particular, attributed corruption among this group to a free-for-all culture fostered by ineffective law enforcement agencies. Sharon Ekambaram thought this culture of impunity was due to the "state not enforcing policies once a bribe is paid, especially environment policies intended to protect the rights of communities". For EXPERT 15 the reasons for this distrust are "historical" and "come from never experiencing genuine justice, or procedures that are just, even in the" democratic post-apartheid period. Deficits of accountability, transparency and competence among public sector employees were also identified as factors contributing to corruption. The legal and regulatory framework is often seen as intrusive and difficult to navigate, leading to non-compliance and allowing corrupt practices to flourish. A related line of reasoning, as outlined in Chapter 5.2 on page 59, was presented to explain why elites participate in corrupt activities.

Institutional Dishonesty

One of the main motivations for the corrupt practices of small business-owners, according to experts, was the need to navigate harassment by authorities, the necessity of accessing public services and overcoming barriers to business operations. Small businesses face significant hurdles due to inefficient and corrupt public institutions. Corrupt practices are required to expedite processes and navigate through cumbersome regulations. Ralph Mathekga argued that "small business are pushed to survive in such circumstances". Corruption is, in other words, used to bypass exclusionary practices and gain unfair advantages. EXPERT 2 talked about "[u]nfair or manipulated permitting and contract management" and how this is used by corrupt officials to hold entrepreneurs to ransom. Some see it as the only way business-owners can level the playing field or survive in a challenging economic environment. EXPERT 1 was concerned about "the lack of trust in the institutions that are supposed to provide the services required". EXPERT 4 pointed to unequal paths to success, where securing government tenders or increasing profits might necessitate corruption. Experts also identified Institutional weakness, on page 22 in Chapter 2.4, as one of the main reasons that corruption had increased in South Africa during the last thirty years.

Desperation and Survival

Several experts provided survivalist pressures show small business-owners to engage in corrupt practices. Competition, lack of adequate opportunities for development and resource constraints further drive corruption among small businesses. These experts thought that owners often had to engage in corruption to compete for contracts and avoid exclusion from the system. EXPERT 18 asserted that "competition is so great that in order to succeed, corruption may be a quick way to achieve this". Lack of adequate opportunities for small enterprise development and growth in general, means that "these enterprises can resort to corruption in order to be first in line". EXPERT 13 emphasised the broader economic context in his answer, arguing "[o]ur macro-economic system is highly regulated by an intrusive state, making it difficult for small businesses to operate". For other experts, intense competition fosters an environment where corruption is used to gain competitive advantages. The intertwining of business and political interests creates a conducive environment for corruption. EXPERT 3 stated that "financial stability is so fragile that anything that will secure money will be welcomed".

Speaking about the causes of corruption in a qualitative interview, Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze and Zoe Mthimunye talked about how economic pressures and the desire for advancement can lead to corrupt practices amongst small business owners. Zoe Mthimunye noted that enterprise owners

frequently feel trapped in a system where they must comply with corrupt demands to survive economically. Small business owners face unique challenges when dealing with the public sector according to Kris Dobie. During a qualitative interview, he claimed that these enterprises lack the robust ethics programmes of larger companies and small businesses "don't do work with the public sector because it's very difficult to do that work without paying a bribe". But while survival is a major factor put forward by the experts surveyed, some did indicate that personal greed and opportunism also play significant roles.

5.4. Lay Attributions for Non-Elite Corruption

Chapter 5.1 examined the most popular lay attributions for elite corruption amongst the general public. Psychological factors (such as greed) were found to be more popular than external environmental factors. Experts, as we saw in Chapter 5.2, tended to put forward similar drivers of elite corruption. This section now shifts focus to look at public opinion on the drivers of non-elite corruption. To facilitate a comparison with the analysis presented in Chapter 5.1, we examine the following types of attributions in this section: (i) psychological; (ii) system justification; and (iii) law enforcement. Our main focus is on how the prevalence of these various attribution types might differ across different socio-demographic groups.

SASAS 2023 contained a question about the reasons that normal people might participate in corrupt practices. This question was worded as follows: "In your opinion, what are the main reasons why ordinary people in South Africa might engage in corruption?" Respondents were then read a list of options and requested to select all that applied. Responses to this question are depicted in **Table 5-2** (pg. 62), and the results show that most people were able to answer the question. Only a small percentage were unable to provide an answer, with 3% (SE=0.558) being unsure and 1% (SE=0.245) remarking that there was no corruption in South Africa. Many members of the general public provided multiple responses, with only a minority (32%) providing a single response when asked to answer this question.

Table 5-2: Main attributions identified for why there is corruption amongst ordinary people (multiple response)

	%		[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>Psychological Factors</i>				
People are greedy and want to get rich quick	50	(1.586)	46	53
People want better treatment	35	(1.508)	32	38
People are by nature dishonest	29	(1.422)	27	32
People think corruption is normal	26	(1.373)	24	29
<i>System Justification</i>				
It is the only way to get access to essential services	23	(1.275)	20	25
People want to avoid government harassment	12	(1.081)	10	14
<i>Other Responses</i>				
The courts and police do not punish people for corruption	27	(1.241)	24	29
Poor socio-economic conditions lead to corruption	27	(1.324)	24	29
Other reason	1	(0.330)	1	2
<i>Non-response</i>				
There is no corruption among ordinary people	1	(0.245)	0	1
Do not know	3	(0.558)	2	5

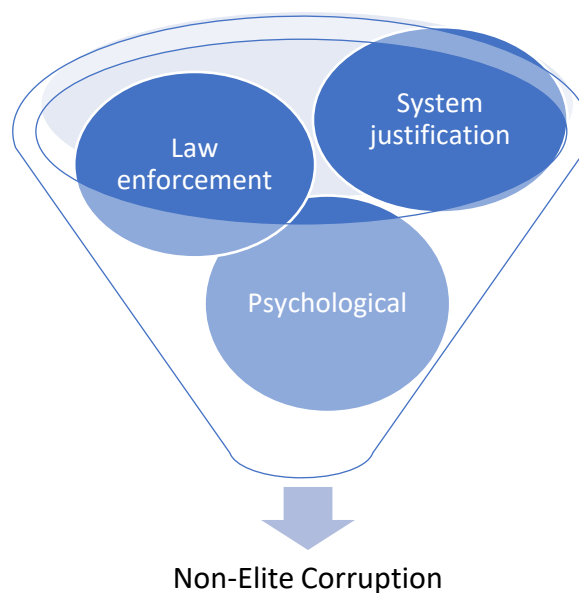
Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The most common lay attributions offered in **Table 5-2** involved psychological (i.e., internal) factors, with 82% (SE=1.274) of the general public identifying at least one of these factors. Of the four different internal factors listed, greed and the pursuit of quick wealth (50%; SE=1.586) was the most popular response, and this was followed by a desire for better treatment (35%; SE=1.508). This implies that the root of non-elite corruption is perceived to originate in the prioritisation of material wealth over integrity and ethical standards. Although the least popular internal attribution concerned the inherent dishonesty of people, 26% (SE=1.373) of all adults selected this option. It appears that a significant proportion of the public believed that materialistic values are a major driving force behind non-elite corruption in South Africa.

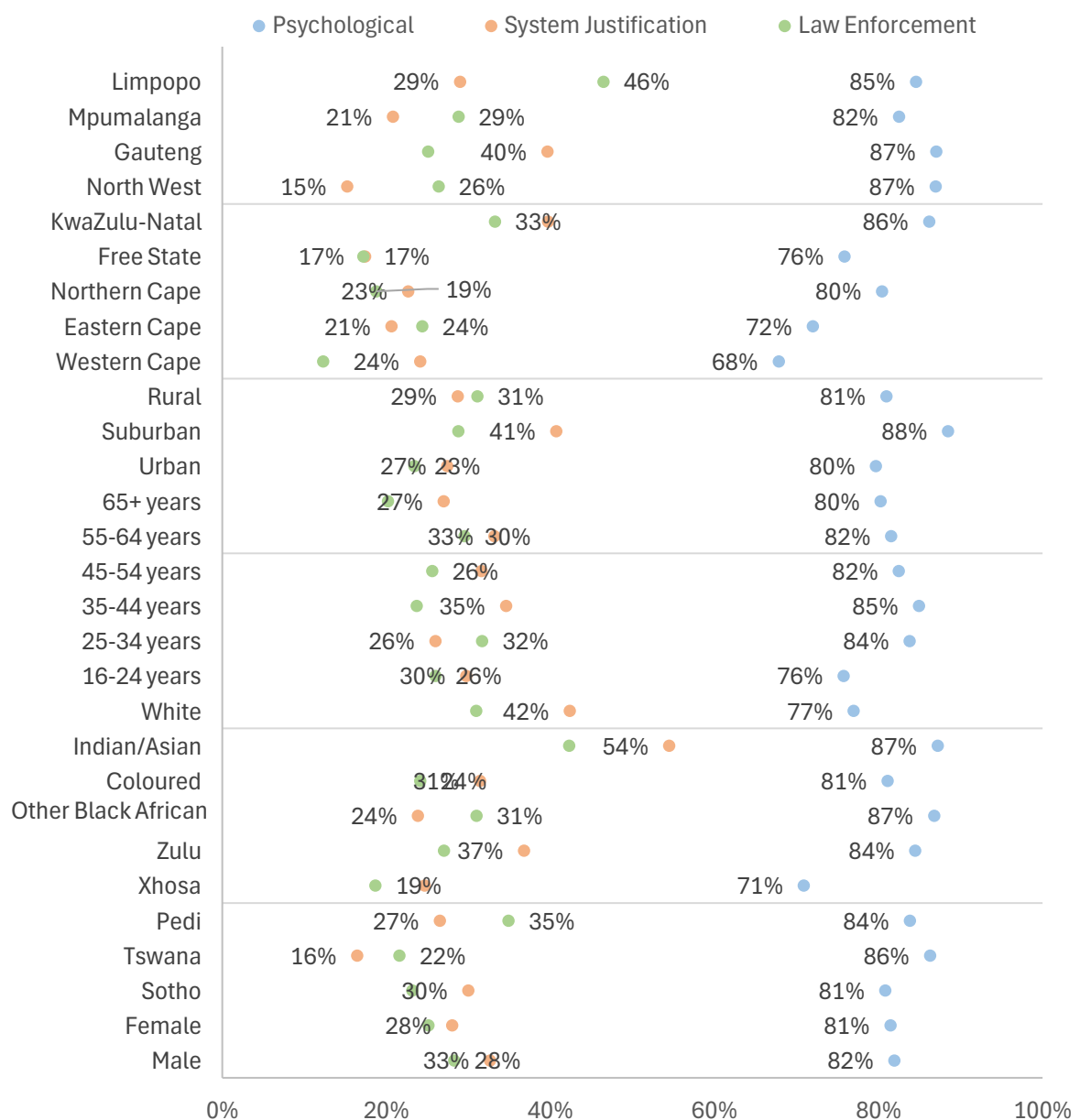
As aforementioned, when discussing the growth of corruption in South Africa in Chapter 2.4, the experts surveyed paid particular attention to the weakness of the legal system. Considering these results from the expert survey, it is noteworthy that law enforcement factors garnered limited backing from the general public. Only 27% (SE=1.241) of the public said that the courts and police do not punish people when asked about the main drivers of non-elite corruption. In addition, only a minority of the mass public (27%; SE=1.324) selected poor socio-economic conditions as a main driver of this kind of corruption. This finding is interesting given that research in other African contexts (e.g., Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) shows survey participants were more liable to identify socio-economic conditions as drivers of corruption (Camargo 2017).

The least common external factor identified in **Table 5-2** (pg. 62) concerned system justification. Only a minority (30%; SE=1.429) attributed non-elite corruption to the need to navigate a dishonest system. Nearly a quarter (23%; SE=1.275) of the adult population said that non-elite corruption was primarily driven by the need to access essential services and 12% (SE=1.081) that it was mainly caused by a desire to avoid harassment from the state. Recent bribe solicitation was linked to selecting a justification attribution. Those who had been solicited very often (47%; SE=8.117) or quite often (37%; SE=5.157) in the five years prior to the SASAS interview were more likely to select this attribution than those who had not been solicited (27%; SE=1.888) during this period. Further investigation found that those with recent corruption experience were, in particular, more likely to attribute non-elite corruption to the desire to avoid harassment from government officials (such as police).



Now let us examine how different subgroups answered the non-elite corruption attribution question discussed earlier. To compare this with our analysis of lay attributions for elite corruption in Chapter 5.1, we looked at the percentages of various groups using the following types of attribution: (i) psychological; (ii) system justification; and (iii) law enforcement. The results are shown in **Figure 5-3** (pg. 64), and some notable subgroup differences can be observed. Psychological attributions were favoured by most subgroups in the figure. While there was little variation among subgroups on this measure, a few differences are noteworthy. Among the nine provincial populations, residents of Gauteng (87%; SE=2.620) and the North West (87%; SE=3.094) were the most likely to choose psychological attributions. In contrast, residents of the Western Cape (68%; SE=5.267) and Eastern Cape (72%; SE=3.111) were the least likely to attribute non-elite corruption to psychological factors. There were also some significant population group dissimilarities in the figure. The Xhosa group (71%; SE=3.452) were the least liable to select psychological factors while the Indian group (87%; SE=7.656) was the most liable.

Figure 5-3: Percentage who selected psychological, law enforcement and system justification attributions to explain non-elite corruption by select subgroup (multiple response)



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Turning to law enforcement attributions, **Figure 5-3** (pg. 64) revealed some moderate geographic differences. Urban residents (23%; SE=1.709) were significantly more inclined to choose enforcement factors when compared to their suburban (29%; SE=2.933) or rural (31%; SE=2.223) counterparts. There were notable differences between the nine population groups here. Of the nine population groups, the Indian group (42%; SE=7.779) was the most likely to select enforcement attributions. In contrast, Xhosa (19%; SE=2.369), Tswana (22%; SE=3.742) and Sotho (23%; SE=3.925) adults were the least likely to attribute non-elite corruption to enforcement factors. Certain provincial populations also showed marked differences, with Limpopo residents (46%; SE=3.915) being the most likely to choose enforcement attribution while Western Cape residents (12%; SE=2.312) were the least likely. We were able to identify some noteworthy age cohort differences in the figure. Law enforcement attributions were most popular with the 25-34 (32%; SE=2.666) and 55-64 (30%; SE=3.707) cohorts. This option was, in contrast, less popular amongst those 65 years and older (20%; SE=3.250).

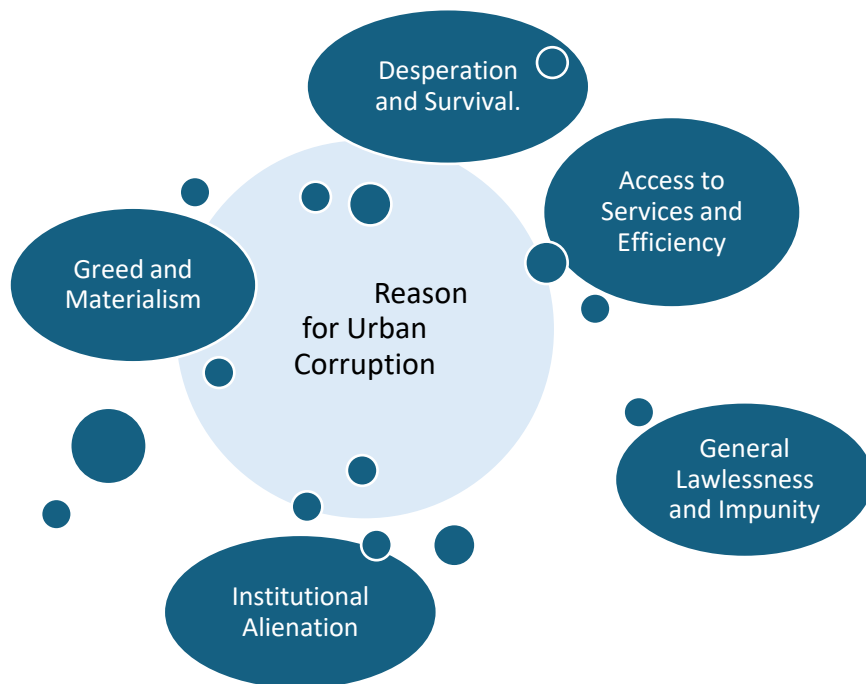
Examining system justification attributions, **Figure 5-3** (pg. 64) showed significant differences among population groups. The Indian (54%; SE=7.299) and white (42%; SE=6.498) groups were the most likely to use justification attributions. These attributions were far less common among the Tswana (16%; SE=3.405) and Xhosa (25%; SE=3.511) groups. When compared to rural (29%; SE=2.321) or urban (27%; SE=2.056) dwellers, suburban residents (41%; SE=3.581) were more likely to choose justification factors to explain non-elite corruption. Our data analysis also revealed notable provincial variations here. System justification attributions were relatively popular among residents of KwaZulu-Natal (40%; SE=3.255) and Gauteng (40%; SE=3.592), while they were much less common among those in the North West (15%; SE=2.925) and the Free State (17%; SE=4.234). Further analysis showed that the economically advantaged were, by a considerable margin, more likely than other groups to identify system justification attributions. About half (53%; SE=6.295) of those at the top of the economic ladder selected justification attributions for non-elite corruption while only 25% (SE=1.952) of those at the bottom of the ladder opted for the same answer.

5.5. Expert Opinion on Corruption in Urban Landscapes

During the last few decades, there has been a significant migration from rural to urban areas in South Africa, leading to rapid urban population growth. This shift has resulted in diverse and densely populated urban centres, changing the demographic landscape of the country. Exposure to diverse cultures and modern values can create a different set of social values and norms, changing cultural traditions. Urban communities tend to be more anonymous and diverse, with weaker social bonds, than their rural peers. Rapid urbanisation also places immense pressure on social services and infrastructure. Government tends to be more prominent in cities as local authorities struggle to keep up with the demand for housing and essential services (e.g., law enforcement, sanitation and healthcare). Keeping these factors in mind, this section looks at expert opinion on the social values and norms driving corrupt practices in urban areas.

Surveyed experts were asked "How often do you think those living in urban areas engage in corrupt behaviour (for example, paying a bribe or doing a favour to get access to goods and services)?" A significant proportion said that urban dwellers engaged in corruption quite often (44%) or very often (20%). This finding aligns with public opinion data presents in Chapter 3.2 which showed that corruption tends to be more prevalent in urban areas than in rural regions. As a follow-up to this question about urban corruption, expert respondents were requested to: "Please describe the social values and norms, if any, that you think encourage those living in urban areas to engage in corruption?" Although there were some dissenting voices who refused to answer the question and should be

acknowledged²², the expert sample put forward a number of different answers to this question. Five different themes were identified by experts, these included: (i) greed and materialism; (ii) access to services and efficiency; (iii) desperation and survival; (iv) institutional alienation; and (v) general lawlessness and impunity. A more detailed overview of the main themes to arise are provided below.



Greed and Materialism

A number of respondents highlighted greed and materialism as key social values driving corruption in urban areas. There was a belief that urban people were seeking personal enrichment and higher social status, often at the expense of moral integrity. Itumeleng Mongale talked about a "desire to amass wealth and be seen as successful". Sekoetlane Phamodi, in a qualitative interview, described how some people justify their corrupt behaviour on the grounds that it will enable their success and promotion to higher positions in which they will have more power that they can wield for the greater good. He suggested that workplace expectations or organisational culture can lead staff to believe that "this is how I need to behave in order to succeed here". But he felt that they leave "this value system at the door when they go home, into their community or to their church".

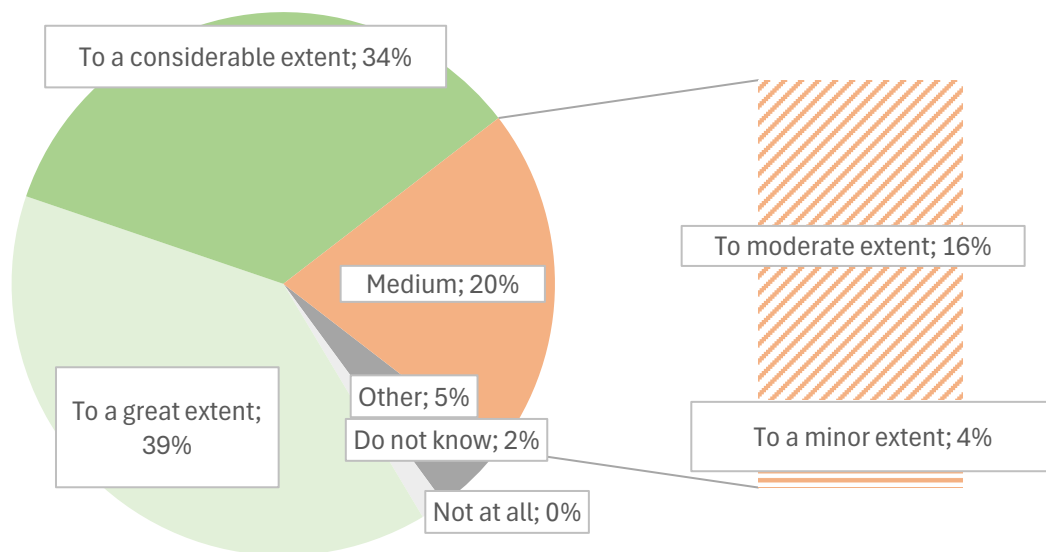
Other experts focused on a culture of individualistic self-enrichment. EXPERT 37 identified a "culture of materialism, of self-enrichment". EXPERT 33 told us that corruption is "exacerbated by the growing individualism and materialism which blight South Africa". EXPERT 9 felt that urban people often seek personal enrichment and higher social status, leading them to engage in corrupt practices. She said that "it is about getting materialistic gains and quick and fast upward mobility". She expressed a concern that there is far more greed, pride and egoistic values that people have today than before. Together with competitiveness and wanting to be the best, people are motivated to get "into middle and richer class, drive the big cars and live in fashionable exclusive locations". A similar argument, outlined in Chapter 5.2 on page 58, was given for why elites engaged in corrupt practices.

According to some respondents, the pursuit of wealth and success, coupled with a lack of moral integrity, encourages illegality and dishonesty. Sadia Khan argued that "[p]eople in the urban areas are

²² EXPERT 49, for example, did not think that social norms and social values influenced corrupt behaviour. He said that "[t]o say corruption is about 'norms and values' is victim-blaming. It is putting the onus on ordinary people to be better, rather than holding the rich and powerful to account".

very materialistic and wealth-driven” and that many “resort to corruption to ensure they live up to their expensive lifestyle”. Speaking about the private sector, Thulebona Mhlanga identified greed and lifestyle aspirations as key drivers of corruption. She suggested that higher salaries in the private sector contribute to a culture where individuals are more willing to engage in corrupt practices to maintain or enhance their lifestyles. This drive for luxury and status, rather than mere survival, motivates individuals to engage in corrupt practices. EXPERT 2 called it “a culture of expediency, of being prepared to benefit at the cost of others” and related this to “a culture of materialism, of self-enrichment”. Another expert described a culture of ‘rampant conspicuous consumerism and consumption’ in South Africa.

Figure 5-4: Expert responses to the question: “To what extent do you think that South Africa is a materialistic society?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

Expert surveyed were asked “To what extent do you think that South Africa is a materialistic society?” (Figure 5-4, pg. 67). Most of the experts surveyed for this study think that South African society is materialistic (i.e., a place where people conisgn great importance to material wealth and possessions). About three-quarters of this group asserted that South African society was materialistic to either a great (39%) or considerable extent (34%). There was a sense amongst the experts surveyed that the country is more materialistic today than it was in the past. When asked if the word ‘materialistic’ best described South Africa thirty years ago, only 5% of experts said yes. But 43% of this group thought that the word ‘materialistic’ best described the country today. This finding is interesting as greed was one of the most popular drivers of non-elite corruption put forward by the general public in Chapter 5.4.

Access to Services and Efficiency

A number of our expert respondents noted that the inaccessibility of services in urban areas push individuals towards corruption. Frustration with institutional dishonesty was also identified as a main driver of corrupt practices amongst small business-owners in Chapter 5.3 on page 61. In many cases, paying a bribe is seen as the only viable option to navigate a dysfunctional system. EXPERT 19 stated that “[r]efusing to pay a bribe could leave you at a disadvantage compared to others, which drives people to engage in corrupt practices”. As Natasja Holtzhausen claimed that “[t]he need for services makes people desperate”. Others also highlighted how the inefficiency of government services push individuals towards bribery as a seemingly efficient alternative, normalising this practice. David Lewis said that corruption was “the only way to acquire basic public services”. This environment fosters a

culture that encourages people to pay bribes to obtain quicker and better services. Vanja Karth thought that "[f]rustration with slow delivery and services" made people see corruption as the "only option".

Experts interviewed gave examples of how corrupt practices had become normalised in different areas of life. Some noted that one must pay a bribe to an examiner in order to obtain a driver's licence, or to a traffic officer in order to be able to drive a taxi on a particular route, or to a headmaster to secure a teacher's job. Patrick Giddy gave the example of how dishonesty and corruption have become normalised in the second-hand car market, with cars being bought and sold without compliance with roadworthiness regulations. EXPERT 51 said that people do not think corruption "is not wrong if everyone is doing it". As we see on page 19 in Chapter 2.4, the compromised nature of the public service was identified by experts as a major reason that corruption has worsened in South Africa during the last few decades. Expert attitudes here are thought-provoking given that necessity was only identified as driver of corruption by a minority of the general public in Chapter 5.4.

Desperation and Survival

Poverty and the need to survive were frequently mentioned by some respondents in the expert survey. EXPERT 48 talked about "the rampant unemployment, poverty and disadvantages, especially in the poor and black (including Indian and Coloured) areas". Additionally, systemic poverty often erodes trust in institutions, making corruption seem like a viable method to navigate bureaucratic inefficiencies and get access to essentials. EXPERT 43 contended that "[f]or ordinary people, it is a combination of poverty or constrained resources, not having other options to get things done or avoiding worse consequences if procedures were followed". Reza Omar concurred with this sentiment and asserted that, for some people, corruption can be "[a]n escape from either actual or potential poverty". The argument that high levels of poverty and unemployment force individuals to resort to corruption as a means of accessing essential services is not unique to this section. Certainly, as we saw in Chapter 5.3 on page 61, survival was identified as one of the main drivers of corrupt practices among small business-owners. In addition, a similar argument was put forward in Chapter 2.2 which looked at the historical roots of corruption in South Africa. On the other hand, economic conditions were, as the data presented in Chapter 5.4 showed, not a popular reason for corruption amongst the adult public.

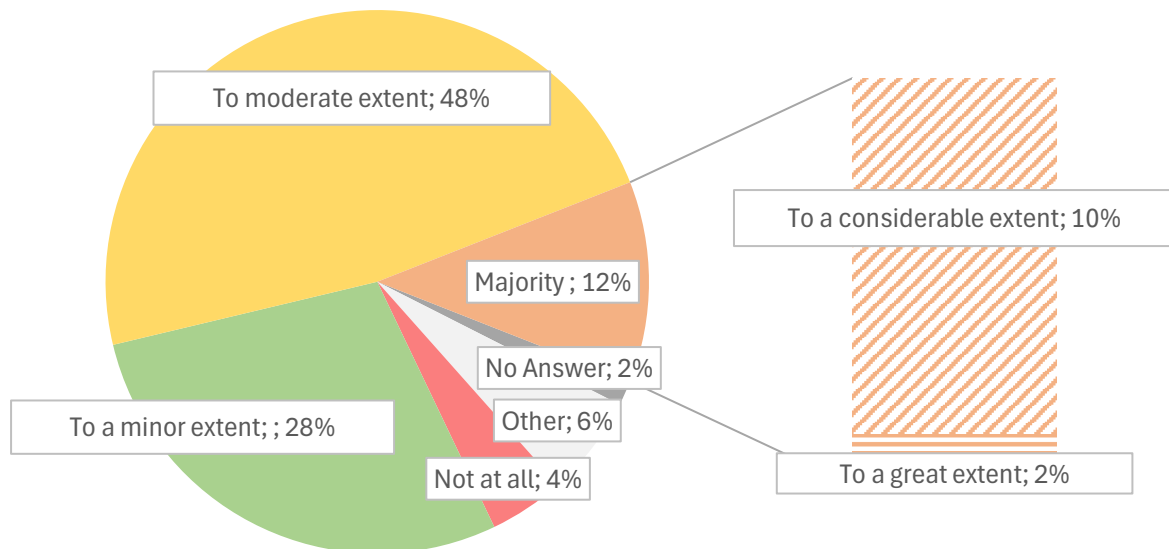
Christine Hobden, in a qualitative interview, discussed the trade-offs that individuals face when engaging in corrupt behaviour. She argued that corruption is often not a simple case of personal enrichment but involves complex decisions where individuals must choose between competing values. For example, a person might choose loyalty to a political party or a family member over civic fairness, particularly in environments where survival is at stake. This decision-making process, Christine Hobden suggested, is deeply influenced by the socio-economic context in which individuals operate, as well as by cultural norms that emphasize loyalty and communal support. She argued that in a society where economic hardship is widespread, and where personal networks are crucial for survival, corruption can become normalised as a necessary evil. She contended that simply labelling individuals as "bad apples" or attributing corruption to personal greed misses the larger picture.

Institutional Alienation

A significant number of respondents pointed to the erosion of trust in democratic institutions and law enforcement as a catalyst for corruption. Experts said that people do not seem to be aware of or to trust channels for reporting forms of corruption, and they are often too afraid of the negative consequences to resist. Gareth Newham attributes it to "[a] sense of distrust of and alienation from of authority, along with a sense that involvement in corruption does not attract much official or unofficial opprobrium or accountability." Collette Schulz-Herzenberg identified a "breakdown in trust in democratic institutions". EXPERT 50 talked about a "[g]eneral societal apathy to intervene based on erosion of public trust in government/authority". She felt that in urban areas "communities and

individuals have all but abandoned taking responsibility". EXPERT 38 claimed that the legacy of apartheid and colonialism has ingrained a sense of mistrust and a perception that breaking the rules can be justified. Expert concerns about public alienation from democratic institutions was also presented in Chapter 2.4, on page 22, to explain why corruption has increased in recent decades.

Figure 5-5: Expert responses to the question: "To what extent do you think that South Africa is such a society?"



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

It is important to note that the experts surveyed did not blame collectivistic social values for corruption within South Africa. Indeed, a few experts blamed corruption in urban spaces on individualism, egoism and selfishness. Ralph Mathekga talked about "[l]ack of connectedness with others" while EXPERT 21 identified a "[l]ack of community spirit" and EXPERT 12 talked about a "lack of belonging". Many of the experts said that the country was not collectivistic (i.e., a place where people are viewed as "good" if they value the needs of the community over the needs of the self). In fact, a majority of the sample tended to think that a culture of community solidarity and Ubuntu was weak in the country (Figure 5-5, pg.69). Only a small minority told us that the country was to a great extent (1%) or a considerable extent (10%).

General Lawlessness and Impunity

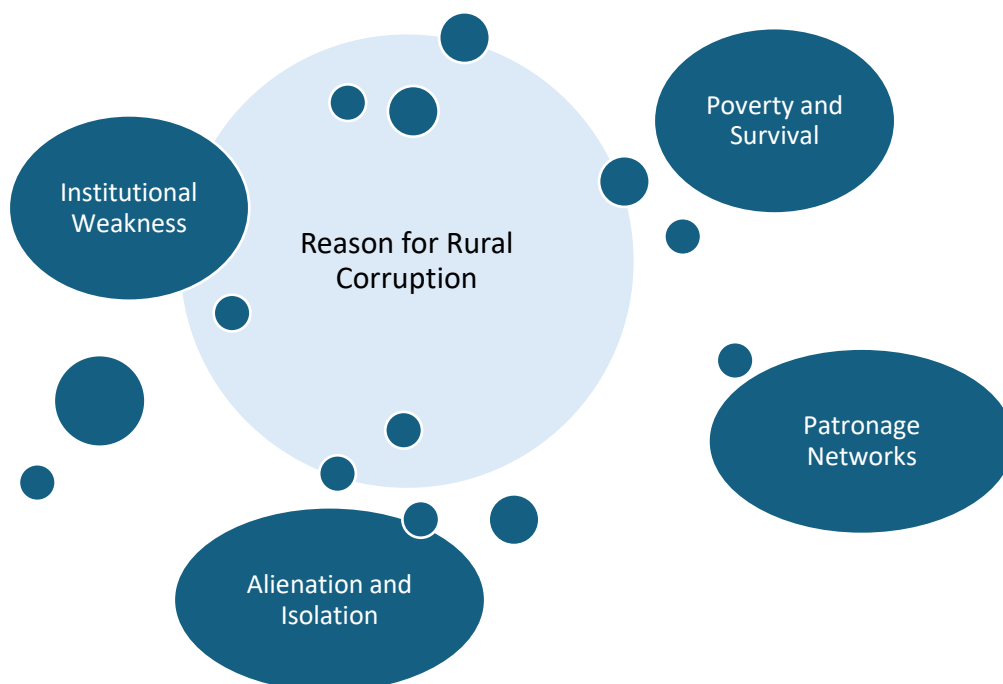
When asked about urban corruption in South Africa, many expert respondents about a culture of impunity. Deon Rossouw alleged that "lawlessness" and "taking the easiest way out has become socially acceptable to engage in corruption". The belief that corrupt activities go unpunished and are widely accepted emboldens individuals to engage in such practices. A similar claim, described in Chapter 5.2 on page 59, was offered to explain why elites engage in corruption. EXPERT 24 talked about "[i]neffectual and corrupt policing and legal systems". EXPERT 11 blamed the political system for corruption in urban areas. He indicated that the ruling party "seems to reward corruption and fails to take stern action against it and its members who are caught up in corrupt activities". This culture of impunity undermines efforts to combat corruption and reinforces its prevalence in urban areas. Paul Hoffman said that the "gutting of the criminal justice administration" has guaranteed impunity for those who want to engage in corruption. The perceived or actual ineffectiveness of police and courts leads individuals to believe that engaging in corruption is both necessary and consequence-free.

The assertion by experts that inadequate law enforcement encourages corruption is not unique to this section. As noted in Chapter 5.2 on page 59, a culture of impunity was outlined as a significant factor

driving corrupt behaviour among elites. This argument was similarly presented in Chapter 5.3, on page 61, to explain corruption among small business owners. Weak law enforcement was also highlighted by experts as a main reason that corruption had grown in South Africa in Chapter 2.4. Conversely, as indicated by the data in Chapter 5.4, weak law enforcement was not widely regarded as a reason for corruption among the adult population. On the whole, the experts surveyed were divided on whether they thought South Africa was a lawless place. A distinct majority (59%) of the expert sample described the country as a lawless. Probing further we found that a small segment (24%) of the experts surveyed for this study thought only a minority of people in South Africa respected the rule of law and 3% said that almost no one respected the law. Nearly half of our sample stated that a moderate proportion respected the rule of law and 22% thought that a majority did.

5.6. Expert Opinion on Rural Corruption Patterns

Building on the reasons of the previous section, this section investigates expert opinion on the social values and norms that drive corrupt practices in rural areas. As previously mentioned, rural and urban communities in South Africa differ significantly in a number of ways. Rural areas often face greater economic hardships, more limited access to resources and fewer job opportunities. Many rural dwellers have more limited access to essential public services (such as healthcare and education). Similarly, law enforcement and government oversight are typically weaker. In addition, rural communities tend to be more homogenous and close-knit than their urban counterparts with strong social ties and networks. Traditions and cultural practices tend to be more longstanding and less diverse. When considering expert opinion on rural corruption, these factors need to be kept in mind.



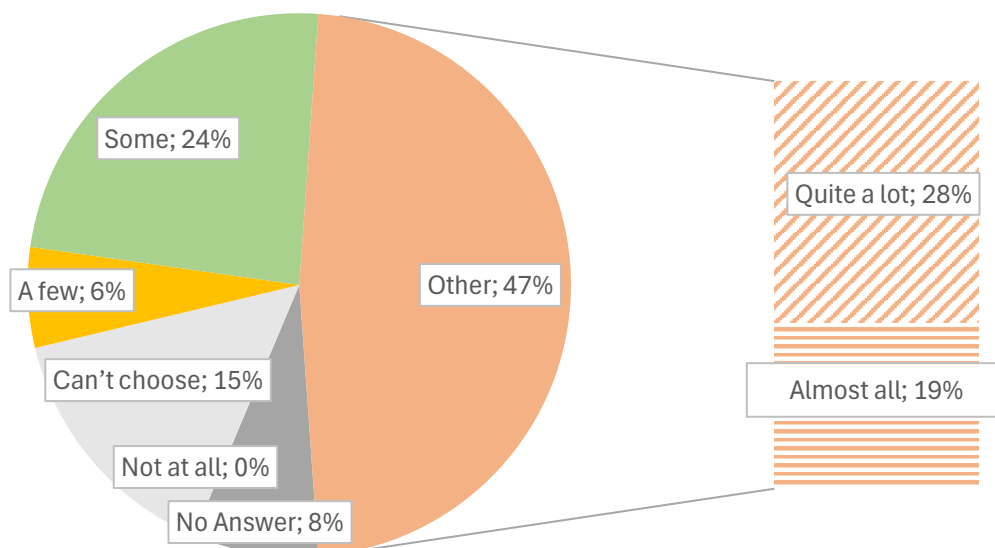
Surveyed experts were asked "How often do you think those living in rural areas engage in corrupt behaviour (for example, paying a bribe or doing a favour to get access to goods and services)?" When comparing the answers from this question with what was seen in Chapter 5.5, it is clear that the experts surveyed tended to think that urban dwellers engage in corrupt behaviour more often than their rural counterparts. Only about a quarter of experts believed that rural dwellers participated in corrupt behaviour either quite often (21%) or very often (5%). As part of the expert survey, respondents were asked: "Please describe the social values and norms, if any, that you think encourage those living in rural areas to engage in corruption?" From their responses, we can identify four themes:

(i) poverty and survival; (ii) institutional weakness; (iii) alienation and isolation; and (iv) patronage networks. These explanations are discussed in more detail below.

Institutional Weakness

For a number of experts, distrust and alienation from authority, coupled with weak law enforcement mechanisms, exacerbate the problem of corruption. A comparable argument, described in Chapter 5.5 on page 69, was presented to explain why urban dwellers participate in corrupt practices. EXPERT 4, for example, identified a "lack of oversight" and "poor governance systems". EXPERT 13 talked about "[a] lack of personal responsibility and accountability" as well as "a sense of impunity". Institutional weaknesses in the traditional authority system and weak provincial governments also contribute to corruption in rural areas. EXPERT 49 argued that the problem lies more with institutions than values, criticizing the ruling party's support of traditional authorities. Sharon Ekambaram thought that "traditional leaders play a role in extortion". Lawson Naidoo said that corruption is so "easy to get away with" in rural areas that "there is little fear of any adverse consequences".

Figure 5-6: Expert responses to the question: "In your opinion, about how many traditional authority leaders in South Africa are involved in corruption?"



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

Nearly a quarter (23%) of the expert sample believed that traditional leaders were involved in corruption. About a third (30%) of the experts surveyed thought that quite a lot of them were while 25% claimed that some of them were. A small minority (6%) stated only a few traditional leaders were involved in corruption and 15% said that they were unsure of how to answer the question (**Figure 5-6**, pg. 71). EXPERT 49 called for the abolition of chiefs and strengthening provincial governments to foster better values. David Lewis pointed to the complexity of rural governance and isolation from media and civil society organisations as factors that necessitate corrupt practices to receive public services. Additionally, the abuse of preferential procurement and affirmative action, along with gatekeeping practices, was thought to restrict career opportunities and make corruption a more viable option.

Poverty and Survival

Desperation for survival and access to basic services was identified by a number of experts as a cause of corrupt practices. EXPERT 47 pointed to a "[s]ense of desperation when those charged with delivering public services demand inducements" as a driving factor". EXPERT 31 talked about "poverty" and the need for "self-preservation" in rural areas. Limited opportunities and resources can push people to exploit any available means, including bribery and fraud, to improve their living conditions.

This is what John Clarke called "[b]asic survival pressure". Jay Kruise pointed out that people in rural areas were desperate, that "the need to obtain a service overrides the concern that engaging in a corrupt act is unlawful and unethical". An analogous claim, detailed in Chapter 5.5 on page 68, was provided to explain why urban dwellers engage in corrupt practices.

Other participants blamed corruption on the particular character of economic development in rural areas. EXPERT 14 contended that "shopping centres and brand name fast food and other consumer driven and debt creating outlets which reify the dreams peddled in broadcast television entertainment about what 'belonging' in post-millennial post-apartheid South Africa's success means". EXPERT 8 talked about the failure by the national and provincial government to think of rural development beyond 'trappings of neoliberal capitalist pseudo-modernity'. Sadia Khan attributed rural corruption to "poor service delivery and a shortage of supplies," along with the exploitation of the poor by officials. EXPERT 15 took another approach and argued that poverty that shielded rural areas from corruption. She said that "there are less resources to be corrupt with, and so the extent of corruption is not as much as it is in the urban areas".

Patronage Networks

Some respondents noted that the reliance on informal networks of patronage for survival create an environment where corruption becomes normalised and widely accepted. In this way, the intimate social structure of rural communities can encourage corruption. EXPERT 45 mentioned that family ties and kinship in rural areas drive nepotism. EXPERT 14 was more concerned about political networks in rural areas, however, and mentioned the "insular patronage networks among the party connected". Some experts blamed this on the traditional authority system in the rural areas. EXPERT 4, for instance, believed that "[t]raditional systems of patriarchy and patronage require residents to pay for protection and access to land and services enabled by traditional leaders". EXPERT 48 thought that "the ethnic/tribal patronage links also largely exacerbate the corruption practices" in rural areas. EXPERT 12 noted that certain behaviours are perceived not as corruption but as "cultural reciprocity," pointing to a lack of ownership of public resources and the abuse of power as key issues.

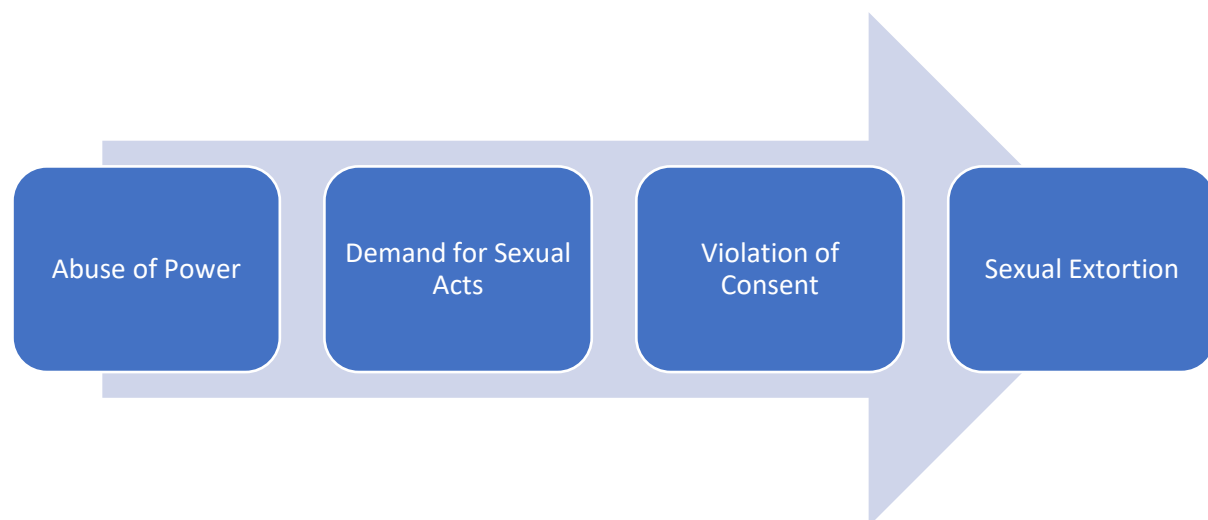
Alienation and Isolation

Some experts felt that a sense of isolation and alienation reduces personal responsibility and accountability amongst rural dwellers. One key factor is the belief of being overlooked by urban society. EXPERT 5 highlighted the belief among rural residents that they are "a forgotten part of the nation", fostering a sense of entitlement to resources based on their geographic location. This perception contributes to the normalisation of corrupt practices as a means of securing what they feel is rightfully theirs. This was especially true, according to certain experts, when individuals believe that engaging in corrupt acts is the only way to secure essential services. Tsietsi Kekana blames corruption on undereducation. He claimed that "[r]ural corruption is sometimes influenced by youth apathy due to a lack of political awareness and knowledge as well as high illiteracy levels". Ralph Mathekga pushed back on corrupt networks in rural areas, commenting that rural dwellers were less corrupt than their urban peers. He held that this was because "[u]rban areas do not have that connectedness and intimate social structure that rural areas have".

6. Blackmail Nation: Perceived Levels of Sexual Extortion amongst Public Officials

Transparency International defines "sextortion" (also known as sexual corruption) as the misuse of power to sexually exploit vulnerable people (Feigenblatt, 2020). In practice, sextortion is a form of exploitation where a person, often using coercive tactics or threats, blackmails another into providing sexual favours (for a more detailed discussion of this definition, see Bjarnegård et al., 2024). While women are commonly targeted, sextortion affects individuals of all gender identities²³. Victims of sextortion may experience significant psychological distress, and the emotional toll of this crime can have long-lasting effects on a person's mental health (UNODC, 2021). Moreover, sextortion can escalate into more severe forms of harm (including physical violence). In summation, it is a form of abuse and coercion that undermines the safety, autonomy and dignity of all those targeted by perpetrators.

Unfortunately, not much is known about the problem of sextortion in South Africa; this is an understudied issue. The current chapter sought to contribute to our collective understanding of this problem by focusing on one specific type of sextortion. In this chapter we scrutinised the perceived prevalence of sexual extortion in the South African public sector. Given the power of public officials in the daily lives of ordinary people, it was decided to focus on this type of sextortion. Indeed, as data presented in Chapter 3.3 showed, we identified that the level of indirect experience of sexual extortion by public officials amongst the general public was quite high. But the reader should be cognizant of the fact that sexual extortion by public officials is just one type of sextortion and there are many others.



Data presented in this chapter will show that a significant share of the general public thinks that sexual extortion by public officials is fairly commonplace in South Africa. But why is this the case? To answer this question, we first ascertained how perceptions differed by socio-demographic and geographic groups. Then we looked for the most important drivers of the perceived prevalence of sexual extortion in the public sector. We were able to identify five main drivers of attitudes here. The data presented in this chapter can be used to understand why the general public is so concerned about the problem

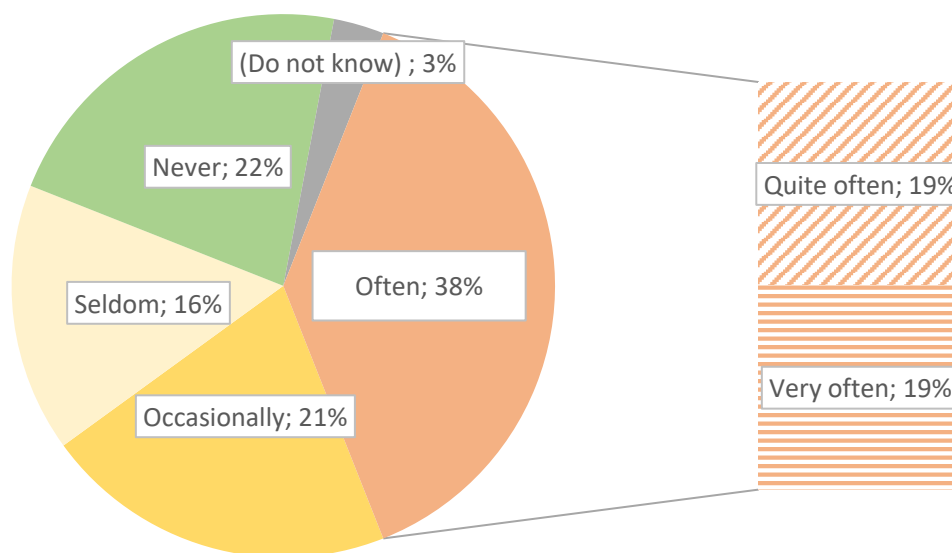
²³ When speaking about rates of sextortion in South African society, Vanja Karth noted that sexual corruption can extend beyond traditional gender roles and affect men as well, though it is often underreported due to stigma. She told us that "there's a cohort of men out there who just simply don't speak about sexual corruption because they're too embarrassed". This acknowledgment underscores that while sexual corruption is most visibly harmful to women, it can also affect men, particularly in contexts where power dynamics and embarrassment inhibit open discussion.

of sexual extortion in the public sector. In the final part of this chapter, we assessed expert opinion on the main drivers of sexual extortion by public officials. Expert assessments of this issue provide valuable insight into the problem and help us understand how it might be addressed.

6.1. Who is Worried about Sexual Extortion in the Public Sector?

Before survey participants were asked any questions about sexual extortion, they were first read a statement that constitutes a brief lay person’s definition of sextortion in the public sector. The exact wording was as follows: “Sometimes public officials will ask for sexual favours in exchange for a government service, a job, or to avoid a fine. This could include sexual intercourse, inappropriate touching, or posing for sexual photos.” SASAS respondents were then asked how often they thought that this kind of sextortion happened to people in South Africa. Most of the adult population said that it had happened at least sometimes and only a small minority (22%) said that it never occurred (**Figure 6-1**, pg. 74). Almost a fifth (16%) of the public thought that it took place seldom while 21% told us that it occurred occasionally. A significant proportion of the population stated that it happened quite often (19%) or very often (19%). The remainder (3%) stated that they did not know how to answer the question.

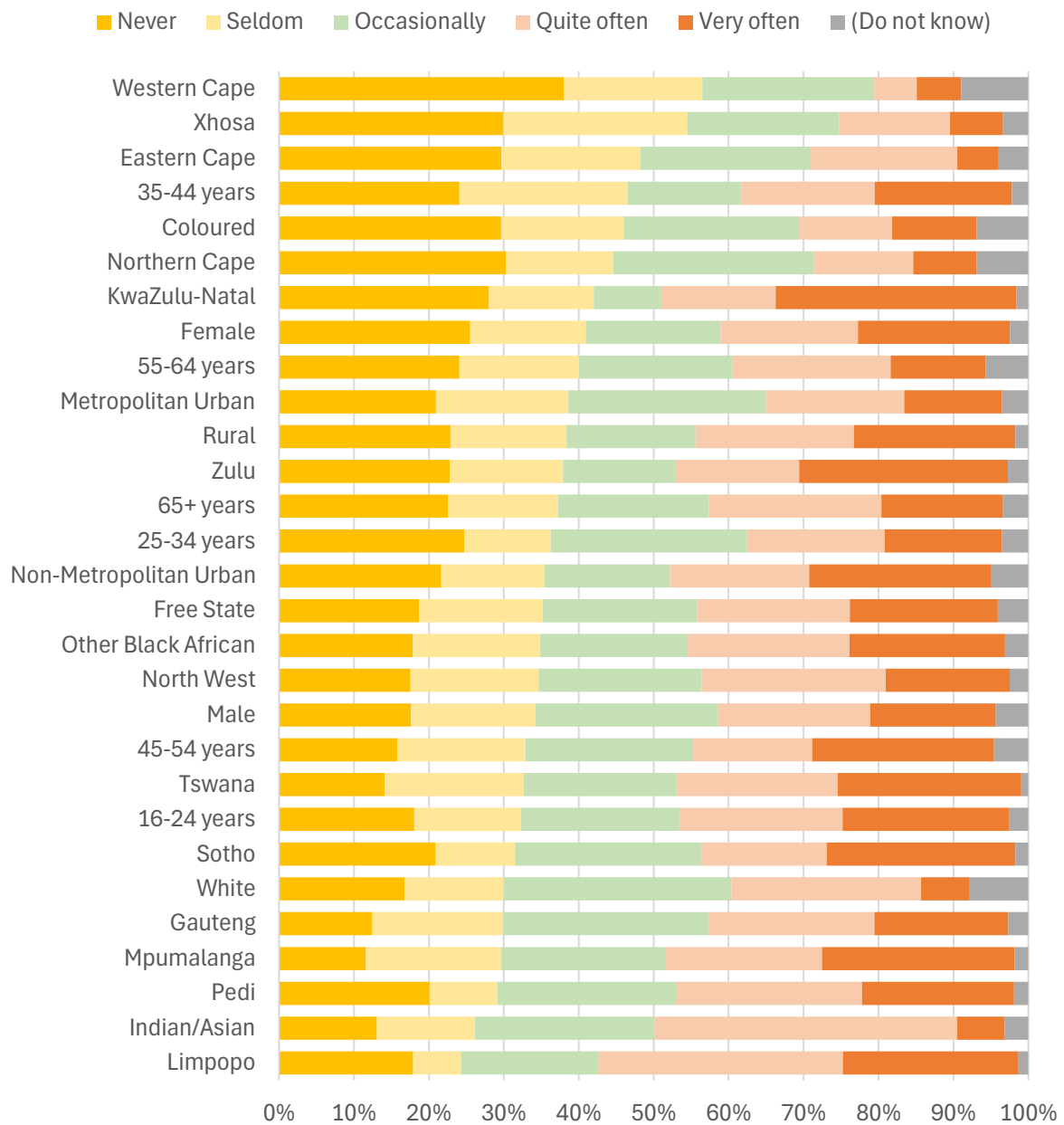
Figure 6-1: Public appraisals of how often public officials engage in sexual extortion in South Africa across gender groups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We can assume that the perceived level of sexual extortion in the public sector would notably differ across the nation’s various socio-demographic fault lines. To appraise this proposition, we looked at how a select set subgroups answered the extortion question. The results of this subgroup analysis are displayed in **Figure 6-2** (pg.75). We can detect substantial provincial variations in perceived prevalence of extortion in the figure. When compared to other provinces, Limpopo residents were found to report much higher levels of perceived sexual extortion. Nearly half of this group said that public officials quite often (33%) or very often (23%) engaged in this crime. Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal were other provinces where residents said that sexual extortion was very prevalent amongst public officials. We also discovered that rural residents were more likely to think that this type of sextortion was common in the public sector than their urban peers. Further analysis showed that prevalence perceptions were higher amongst farm residents than among their village counterparts. Looking at closer at urban dwellers, we discovered that non-metropolitan residents had higher prevalence perceptions than metropolitan residents.

Figure 6-2: Perceptions of how often sexual extortion by public officials takes place in South Africa by subgroup



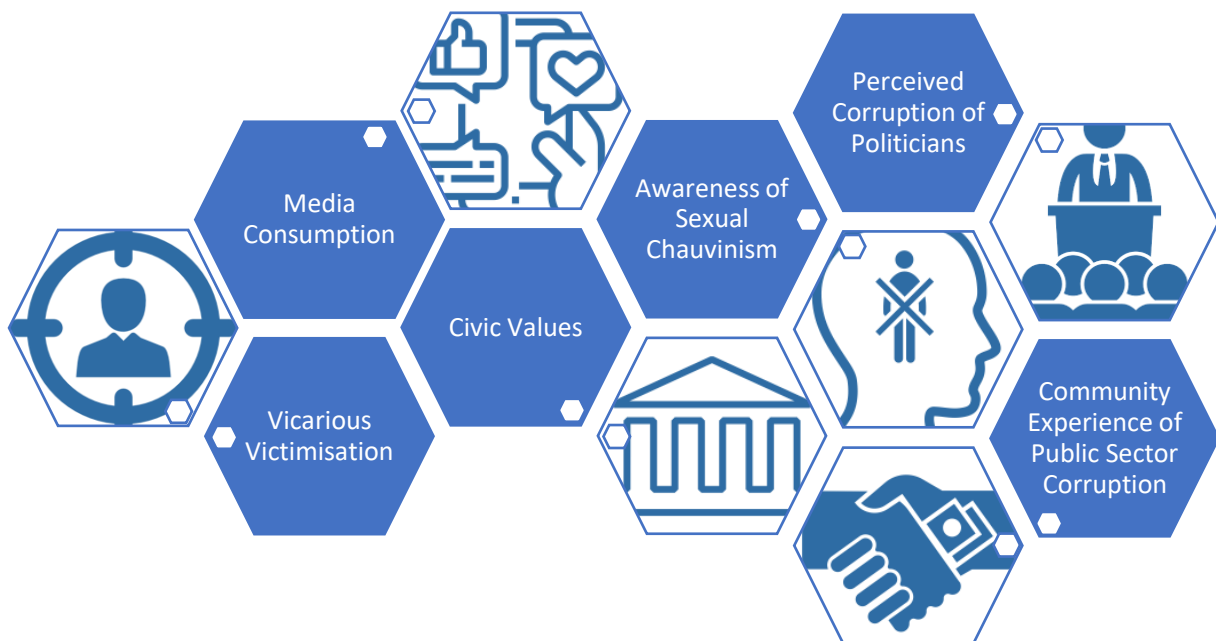
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Reviewing the perceived level of sexual extortion amongst different population groups in **Figure 6-2**, we found that most thought this kind of sextortion was common in the public sector. Of the nine population groups under review, the Coloured and Xhosa were the least likely to think that sexual extortion was common. Members of the Tswana were, on the other hand, the *most* likely to think that extortion was widespread. We learnt that about half of the adult Tswana thought that public officials engaged in sexual extortion quite often (21%) or very often (25%). We could imagine that socio-economic status was an important determinant of prevalence perceptions. But further data analysis showed that there were only modest disparities in how different socio-economic groups evaluated the level of sexual extortion in the public sector. Some interesting age cohort differences could be observed in the figure. The 16-24 as well as the 45-54 cohorts were more likely than other cohorts to think that this kind of sextortion was common.

We may imagine that the patriarchal nature of South African society would make women more vulnerable to sextortion. Consequently, we would expect the perceived level of sexual extortion by public officials to be higher among women than men. But our analysis in **Figure 6-2** (pg. 75) showed that this was not the case. Male adults were found to have higher prevalence perceptions than their female counterparts. Given the nature of sextortion, we explored this gender dissimilarity more thoroughly. The gender gap on this issue was observed to be particularly large in the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape as well as KwaZulu-Natal. Looking at the various population groups in South Africa we discovered that the gender gap was widest amongst the Zulu as well as the Indian and white minorities. Older men were also found to be much more likely to think that sexual extortion was common in the public sector than their female peers. The gender gap was, in contrast, much weaker amongst younger cohorts.

6.2. What Drives Concern about Sexual Extortion in the Public Sector?

The subgroup analysis in the previous section provided valuable insights for those seeking to understand *why* the general public thinks sexual extortion is a major problem in the South African public sector. However, it fails to identify the primary drivers of the perceived level of extortion in the public sector amongst the mass public. To identify the main determinants, we need to use advanced statistical algorithms to explore the SASAS data. Here we are guided by the hypothesis-driven approach outlined in Chapter 1.4. In this section, a hypothesis is proposed and the rationale behind it explained. We then assess whether our empirical evidence supports this hypothesis. Six hypotheses were tested in this fashion (for those readers who are interested, the details of these empirical tests are portrayed in APPENDIX D).

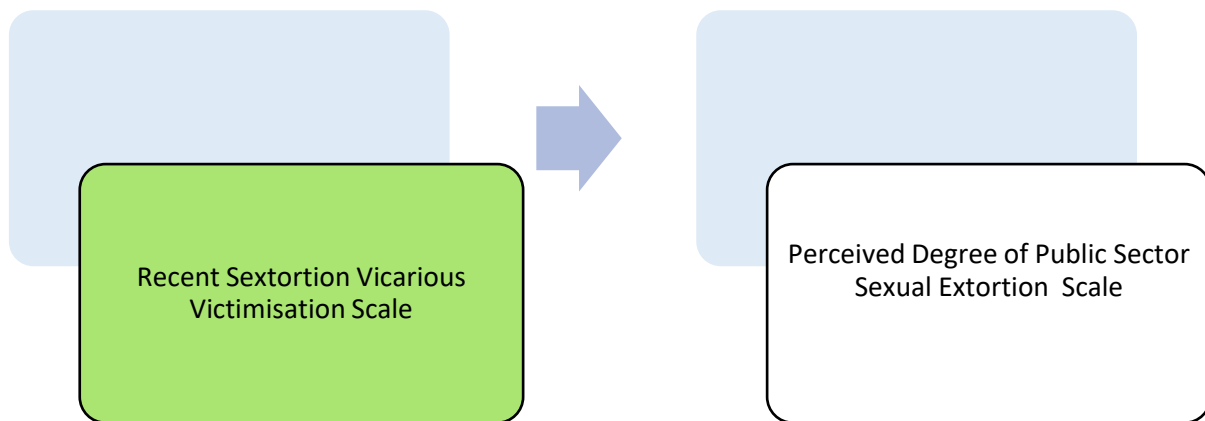


Before we begin our hypothesis testing, it is worth remarking on an interesting finding that emerged from our preliminary analysis. We may have expected, given the patriarchal nature of South African society, that gender identity would play a role in shaping the perceived prevalence of sexual extortion in the public sector. But our statistical testing found that gender identity did *not* significantly affect the perceived level of sexual extortion in the South African public sector (test outcomes are detailed in APPENDIX D on page 194). In other words, identifying as a male or a female did not affect the way

you thought about this issue. it would appear that it is other factors (e.g., personal experience or knowledge) that are influencing prevalence perceptions in the country.

Vicarious Victimization

When asked to think about a national problem, scholars have shown that people use their experiences to make judgements²⁴. But ‘indirect’ experience can also provide individuals with a contextual understanding of national issues by grounding abstract concepts in real-world situations. Hearing about a crime from kinsfolk, colleagues, or friends increases awareness and fosters conversations about this issue. It is a process that can lead people to change their opinion about the prevalence of a certain type of crime (Tyler, 1980). Learning about a crime from people you know may be an emotionally charged experience that can have a powerful effect on attitude formation. Borg (1998) has labelled this kind of ‘indirect’ experience ‘vicarious victimisation’. This refers to the psychological impact experienced by individuals who are closely associated with a primary victim of a traumatic event. Recent cross-national public research in Europe by Vazquez et al. (2021) on perceptions of the prevalence of violence against women show that vicarious victimisation has a powerful effect on attitude formation.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

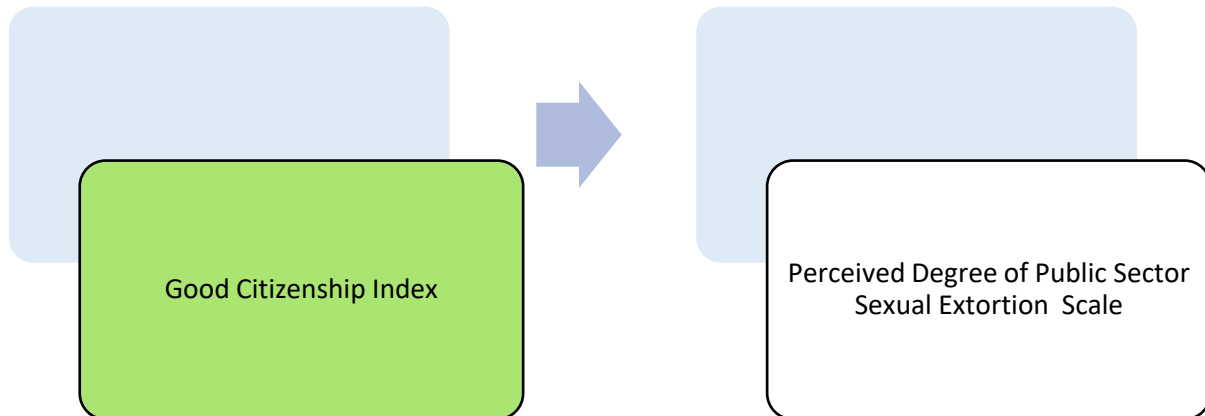
When individuals repeatedly hear about sextortion from people they know, we hypothesis that they will use this knowledge to evaluate the level of sextortion at the national level. We utilised the ‘Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimization’ Scale to provide an adequate test of this thesis. The scale assessed how often a person had heard that people they know personally had been victims of sexual extortion by public officials in the five years prior to the interview (for a description of how this scale was created, see APPENDIX D on page 195). Statistical testing revealed that the ‘Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimization’ Scale had a large (and positive) effect on the perceived prevalence of sextortion (test outcomes are provided in APPENDIX D on page 195). It would seem that people use information gathered from their social network to make judgements about the extent of sexual extortion in the South African public sector.

Civic Values

Civically minded individuals are actively involved in politics, which often includes joining a variety of different groups. Their engagement in community organisations, advocacy groups and grassroots movements could expose them to information about problems in public institutions (Dalton & Welzel,

²⁴ Cross-national public opinion research by Gonzalez et al., (2019) show that generalised perception of corruption was associated with the personal experience of bribery. The authors argued that people use their experiences of petty corruption to form “mental images” of societal corruption (also see Charron, 2016).

2014). Moreover, civically minded persons tend to possess critical thinking skills that enable them to analyse and evaluate information critically (Norris, 2000). Consequently, civically minded citizens actively seek out information about the public sector from diverse sources. They are also less susceptible to misinformation and propaganda and more likely to recognise signs of unethical behaviour in government and public institutions (also see Soroka & Wlezien, 2010). This should make them more aware of corruption scandals and the misdeeds of public officials. For these reasons, we hypothesise that civic mindedness would make people more attuned to the problem of sextortion within the South African public sector.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

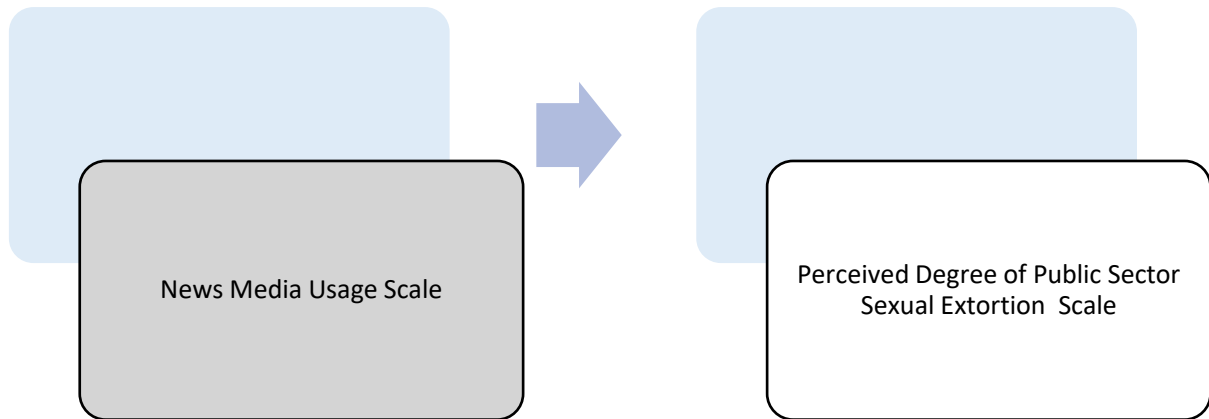
To test our hypothesis we used, as a proxy for civic mindedness, the 'Good Citizenship' Index. This metric assesses the descriptive social norms around 'good' civic citizenship (for a description of the manner in which this index was put together, see APPENDIX D on page 197). Statistical testing demonstrated that this index had a significant effect on the perceived level of sexual extortion in the public sector (for a detailed description of the results of these tests, see APPENDIX D on page 197). Our results showed that the more civic minded the individual, the more liable they were to see this kind of sextortion as widespread in the South African public sector. Further statistical testing revealed that socio-economic status mediated the relationship between the index and the perceived prevalence of sexual extortion. Socio-economic status had a more robust (and negative effect) on prevalence perceptions, implying that civic mindedness had a stronger effect on the attitudes of the economically disadvantaged than the advantaged.

Media Consumption

A free press often covers stories related to corruption, including scandals, investigations and legal proceedings. The press invests resources in investigative journalism to uncover instances of corruption and hold wrongdoers accountable (for a further discussion of the role played by a free press, see Brunetti & Weder, 2003). Prior research suggests that people often use the media when making judgements about the level of crime in society (Tyler, 1980). Persons who watch or read investigative media reports may be more likely to be informed about corrupt activities and their implications (Mazzoni et al., 2021). Given this past work, we would expect media consumption to also help people structure their opinions about the level of sexual extortion in the public sector. If individuals are exposed to political news via the media, they may be more likely to believe that public officials engage in a range of unethical behaviours (such as sextortion).

We constructed the following hypothesis based on the research presented above: frequent news consumption will lead individuals to believe that sexual extortion is commonplace in the South African public sector. To examine this hypothesis, we utilised the News Media Usage Scale. This measure was designed to assess how often people consumed political news (the construction of this scale is

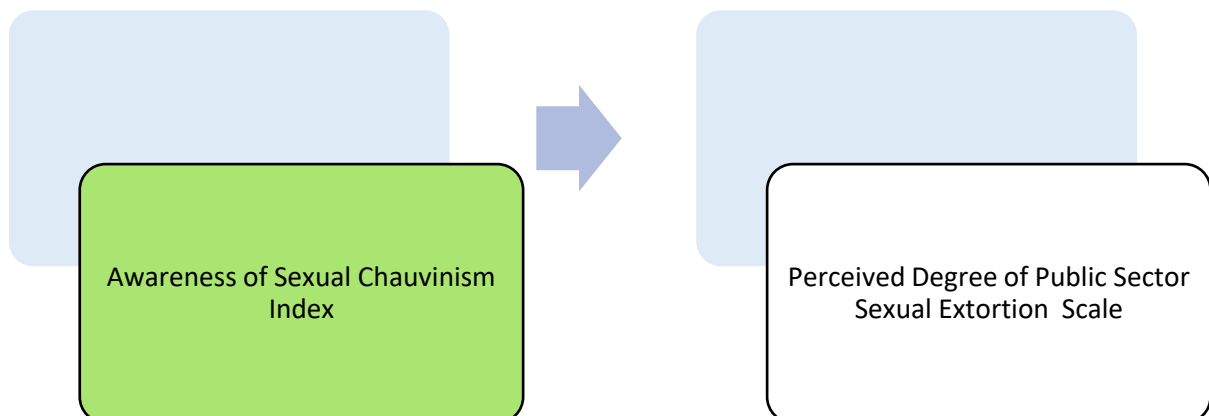
outlined on page 198 of APPENDIX D). Although we found a positive relationship between the scale and the perceived level of public sector sexual extortion, this relationship was not statistically significant (detailed findings are presented in APPENDIX D on page 198). We were, in other words, unable to validate our hypothesis using empirical evidence. Consequently, we must conclude that news media consumption did not influence prevalence perceptions in our study. This may be due to underreporting of this problem in the South African news media.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Awareness of Sexual Chauvinism

Awareness of sexism often involves critical analysis of societal structures and power dynamics. Individuals who are aware of sexism may be more engaged and informed about important social and political issues (Radke, 2018). They could also be attuned to societal forms of injustice (for a discussion of gender awareness and neo-sexism, see Martinez et al. 2010). Awareness of sexism may come from exposure to advocacy efforts highlighting gender-based discrimination and inequalities. This analytical mindset extends to recognising corruption as a systemic issue rooted in unequal distribution of power and resources, as well as lack of accountability and transparency in institutions. Individuals who are aware of sexism may, therefore, be more receptive to information about corruption as part of their broader commitment to social justice causes. Considering these arguments, we tested the thesis that awareness of sexism was a significant determinant of the perceived level of sexual extortion in the public sector.



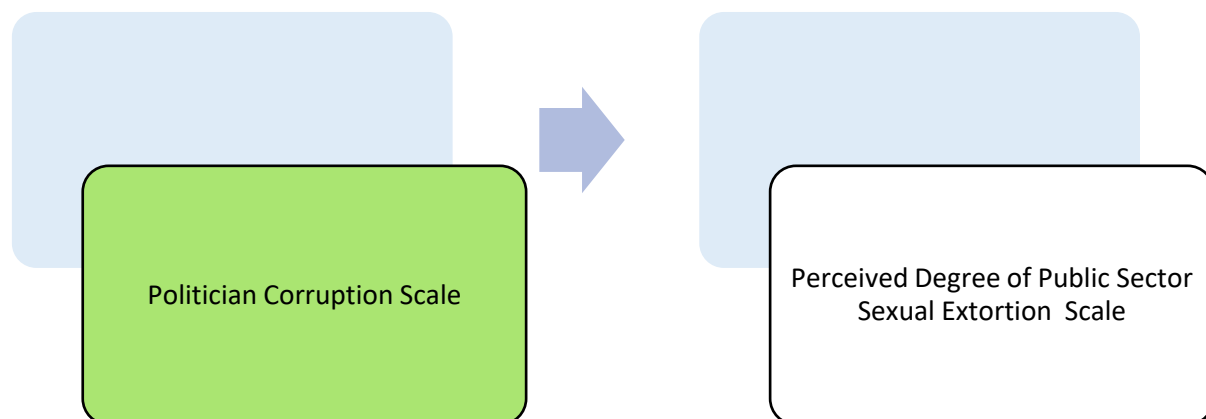
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

To perform the test described above, we used an index that measured the level of awareness of sexual chauvinism within South Africa. This measure was labelled the 'Awareness of Sexual Chauvinism' Index

(on page 195 of APPENDIX D we present the particulars of how this index was assembled). Statistical testing verified that this measure had an effect on the perceived extent of sexual extortion (the results of these tests are provided in APPENDIX D on page 195). We found that the more aware an individual was of sexism, the higher the level of sexual extortion they perceived in the public sector. Further statistical testing revealed that gender identify mediated the relationship between perceived level of extortion and the Awareness of Sexual Chauvinism' Index. Identifying as a female *increased* the impact that the index had on the perceived extent of sexual extortion. This noteworthy finding may be due to gender consciousness. Because of a sense of shared fate with other women, female adults may be more likely to use their knowledge of sexism when asked to make judgements about the world (see Gurin, 1985 on gender consciousness).

Perceived Corruption of Politicians

When individuals are asked to think about a particular problem in the public sector, they may employ their opinions about politicians to form judgments about that problem. Research shows that if a person believed that politicians routinely abuse their power for corrupt purposes, they may also believe that similar abuses occur in other parts of government (Wroe et al., 2013). Moreover, if a person thought that corruption was widespread among politicians, they would be more likely to think government oversight mechanisms in public institutions were weak and unethical behaviour more common (also see Anderson & Tverdova, 2003). Given that people may have limited access to information about sextortion at the national level, they may rely on their perceptions of politicians to help them make judgements. Based on this assumption, we put forward the hypothesis that attitudes towards the level of corruption amongst politicians will influence an individual's perceptions about the prevalence of sexual extortion in the public sector.

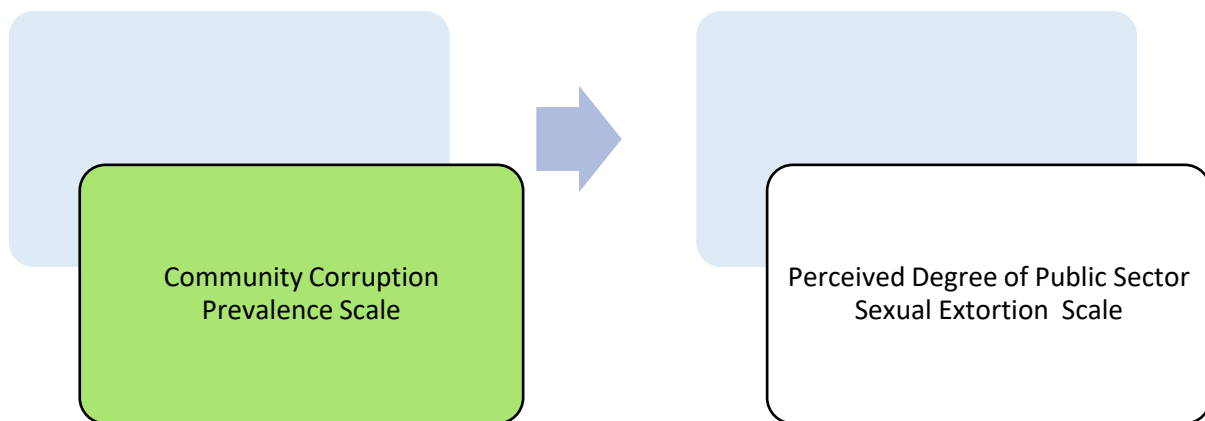


Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

To assess the thesis sketched out above, we utilised the 'Politician Corruption' Scale. This measure gauges how widespread corruption is amongst politicians in South Africa (on page 196 of APPENDIX D we provide the specifics of how this scale was created). Statistical testing confirmed that this scale had a meaningful association with the perceived prevalence of sexual extortion (test findings are presented in APPENDIX D on page 196). The more corrupt politicians were thought to be, the greater the perceived level of sexual extortion in the public sector. This confirms our hypothesis and suggests that many people view sextortion as just another manifestation of the moral decay they perceive amongst the political class.

Community Experience of Public Sector Corruption

When individuals observe (or hear about) a particular type of corruption, they can use this as a 'reference point'²⁵. These 'reference points' can help individuals make sense of their national environment by filling in gaps with assumed information. In this way people can use information about their community to make judgements about the scale of national problems. Scharbatke-Church and Chigas (2019) work on corruption shows how important community-level schemas are to attitude formation in African contexts. Residents who live in communities where people have to pay bribes to access essential services may be exposed to information about a variety of different types of corrupt practices by public officials. They may then use this information to make judgements about the problem of sexual extortion at a more national level. Given the arguments made here, we theorised that living in a community characterised by public sector corruption would make individuals more likely to think that the problem of sexual extortion is widespread.



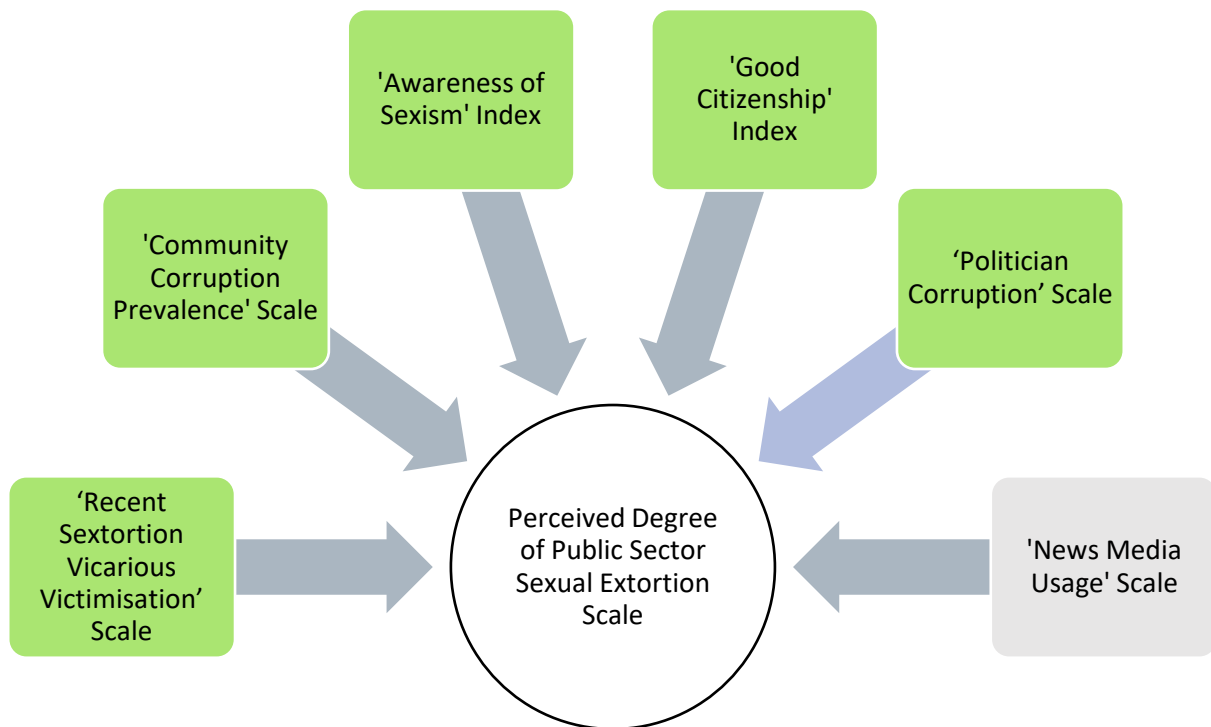
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlations are in grey.

To test the thesis outlined above, we used the 'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale, this measure assessed the perceived level of public sector corruption at the community level (on page 196 of APPENDIX D we provide details on how this scale was generated). When we evaluated the association between this scale and the perceived prevalence of public sector sexual extortion, we found a robust and positive relationship (for the results of the test, see APPENDIX D on page 196). It would seem that people use their perceptions of community-level corruption to make judgments about the level of sexual extortion in the public sector. This is consistent with the argument that community-level information is an important source of knowledge that people use to evaluate wider societal issues.

Comparative Evaluation

We now compare the predictive power of the six different variables discussed so far in this section. To make this comparison, we constructed a fully specified algorithm incorporating all six variables. This multivariate analysis allowed simultaneous examination of the effects of each variable. By including all relevant covariates, we were able to isolate unique effects of each while holding others constant. The results of this analysis are presented in APPENDIX D on page 198. Of the six variables, only the News Media Usage Scale was *not* a good predictor of the perceived prevalence of sexual extortion in the public sector. The strongest predictor was the 'Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimization' Scale, and this was followed by the 'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale.

²⁵ People use 'reference points' to help construct 'cognitive schemas'. These are mental structures that help individuals organise and interpret information. Schemas allow for the generalisation of experiences across similar contexts (for further discussion of this process, see Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

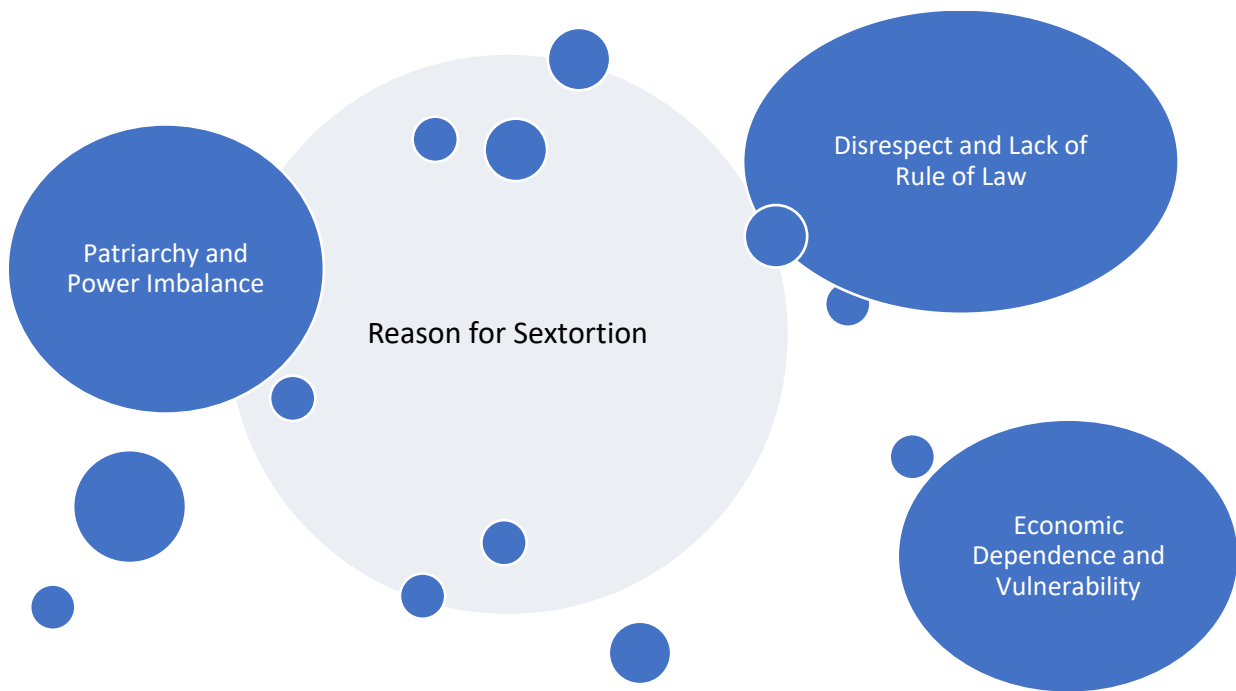


Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

6.3. Beyond Blame: Understanding Attributions for Sextortion

As aforementioned, the problem of sextortion in South Africa has *not* been the subject of close academic study. Research priorities in the country have often focused on other issues (such as broader gender-based violence) leaving sextortion understudied. It is clear from the findings presented in this chapter so far that this lack of attention is out of step with popular concerns about the problem. In an effort to correct this knowledge gap, the present section examines expert opinion on the main drivers of sexual extortion in the South African public sector. We augment our assessment of this data with insights gathered from qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with key experts. Here the focus is on the social values and norms that encourage this type of crime. It is hoped that this investigation yields valuable insights that will assist interested parties in identifying and developing strategies to combat sextortion more effectively.

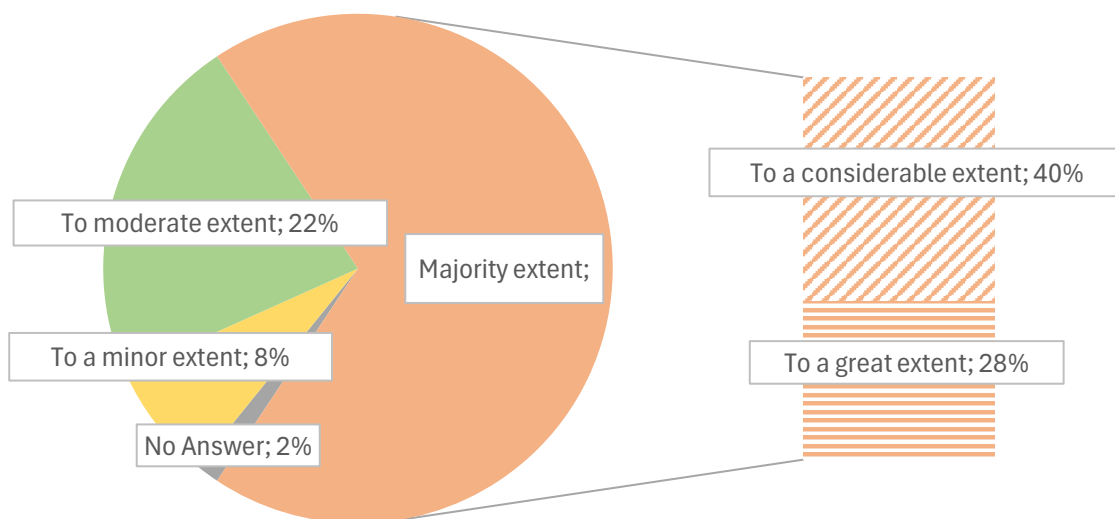
Surveyed experts were asked "How often do you think that sextortion happens to people in South Africa?" A significant proportion of the experts surveyed thought that sextortion occurred very often (16%), quite often (37%) or occasionally (29%). Only a small minority said that it happened seldom (5%) or rarely (2%). Given what we observed in Chapter 6.1, it would seem that the expert sample thought that sextortion in the public sector was more widespread than the mass public did. As a follow-up to this question, expert respondents were requested to: "Please describe the social values and norms, if any, that encourage sextortion in South Africa?" This group put forward a number of different ideas and we grouped these into three themes: (i) patriarchy and power imbalance; (ii) disrespect and lack of rule of law; and (iii) economic dependence and vulnerability. A more detailed analysis of these themes was provided below.



Patriarchy and Power Imbalance

Several experts believed that the persistence of patriarchal values in South African society creates a significant power imbalance, where men often feel entitled and superior to women and children. This sense of entitlement fuels behaviours such as sextortion, as men exploit their power and view women as subservient and available for their gratification. Referencing sextortion, EXPERT 1 called out "[a] belief that these behaviours are common and tolerated by society". EXPERT 21 talked about a "male dominated society" and EXPERT 38 talked about "[a] history of patriarchal power". Indeed, EXPERT 26 claimed that "[d]espite the provisions of our constitution, South Africa is still very much a patriarchy". During a qualitative interview, Amanda Gouws underscored that South Africa remained deeply patriarchal and male-dominated society. This pervasive patriarchy influences various aspects of society, including corruption, gender relations and governance.

Figure 6-3: Expert responses to the question: “To what extent do you think that South Africa is a patriarchal society?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

There was widespread agreement amongst the expert sample that patriarchy was a common feature of the post-apartheid nation. A sizeable proportion of surveyed experts describe South Africa as a patriarchal society (i.e., a culture where male dominance and the control of women is viewed as "good"). When asked "To what extent do you think that South Africa is a patriarchal society?", most experts contended that it was. As is clear from **Figure 6-3** (pg. 83), nearly three quarters of this group described society as patriarchal to a great (29%) or a considerable (42%) extent. Only a minority thought that it was patriarchal to a moderate (22%) or a minor (7%) extent. In addition, most experts surveyed thought that many South Africans hold attitudes that are sexist or misogynist. Nearly two-fifths (37%) believed a majority held such attitudes and 49% said that a moderate proportion did.

EXPERT 33 linked the existing system of patriarchy to the historical process of economic and political change in the country. She claimed that "[t]he patriarchal values of colonial conquest which displaced the (by no means entirely progressive) precolonial indigenous political arrangements have become calcified as [indigenous] traditional values" These values, she believed, had been exacerbated by the ways in which neoliberal capitalist exploitation of the "most vulnerable and the commodification of human lives as profitable or expendable". This process has worsened the extant sexism inherited from the past and rearticulates it in a society riven with other forms of inequality. The persistence of patriarchal attitudes has significant implications for both governance and social interactions, particularly in terms of gender equality. Janine Hicks argued that the failure to dismantle patriarchal structures has allowed corruption to persist and adversely impact women. She said that the shift from radical feminist approaches to more tokenistic responses to gender issues (such as focusing on women's empowerment through social welfare) has not adequately addressed the country's deep-rooted gender imbalances.

For Zakhona Mvelase any discussion of sextortion must begin with a conversation about power and where it resides in society. In a qualitative interview she identified patriarchy as a fundamental driver of this form of corruption. She stated that patriarchy enables men to use their power for personal gain, often unchecked, perpetuating gender inequalities and corruption. She thought that cultural norms in South Africa reinforce patriarchal attitudes, relegating women to secondary roles and valuing them primarily for their bodies. This cultural backdrop makes it difficult to challenge sextortion because the systemic undervaluation of women is deeply ingrained. Women are often socialised to view their bodies as their most valuable asset, leading to the normalisation of exchanging sexual favours for professional or social advancement. Zakhona Mvelase contended that the internalisation of patriarchal norms is deeply rooted in patriarchal values that commodify women in the country.

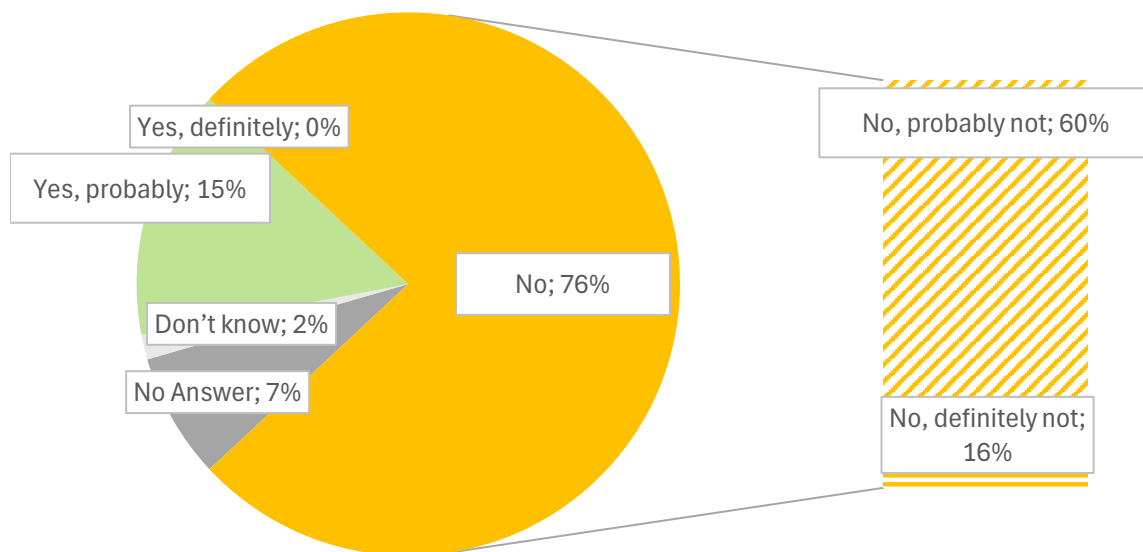
Disrespect for the Rule of Law

A number of experts identified disrespect for the rule of law as a critical factor driving sextortion in South Africa. In a society where legal and moral codes are weakly enforced, opportunistic individuals exploit the system to their advantage. EXPERT 21 talked about a "culture of impunity" around the issue of sextortion while EXPERT 19 said that, because of the vulnerability of victims, those in power had the ability "to act with impunity". EXPERT 15 contended that "the systems of acquiring justice are tainted in favour of the rich and powerful, thus placing those without money - usually the victims of sextortion - in positions where they cannot make their perpetrators account". This lack of accountability leads to a predatory environment where individuals in positions of power feel they can act with impunity, knowing that their actions are unlikely to be challenged or punished. Expert attitudes towards a culture of impunity are consistent with what we saw in Chapter 2.45 which identified weak law enforcement as a major driver of corruption in the country.

As part of our expert sample, respondents were asked whether a victim of sextortion would generally receive equal and effective access to justice. Most of the sample was quite negative on this issue. As can be observed from **Figure 6-4** (pg. 85), 16% of experts asserted that a victim of sextortion would

definitely not receive effective access to justice and 60% said that such a victim would probably not receive justice. Vanja Karth noted that the inefficacy of internal complaints bodies in many organisations further perpetuates a culture of impunity. During a qualitative interview, she explained that "the complaints bodies take very long" and are not well-equipped to handle sexual corruption cases effectively. She also noted that even general corruption cases often face delays, citing an example of a case involving a chief magistrate that took "9 or 11 years" to process. This sluggishness not only hampers justice but also discourages victims from coming forward, reinforcing a cycle of impunity.

Figure 6-4: Expert responses to the question: "Imagine a person was a victim of sextortion and wanted justice. Do you think they would generally receive equal and effective access to justice?"



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

Some experts suggested that victims will not report abuses due to their distrust of law enforcement institutions. Janine Hicks, in particular, highlighted the role of institutional distrust as a barrier to reporting sextortion. She drew a parallel between the reporting of corruption and sexual violence, stating that people are discouraged from reporting due to their negative experiences with state officials. She adds that sexual violence victims often encounter unsympathetic and poorly trained responses from police, which further undermines their trust. Expert views here align with the findings from Chapter 5, which highlighted institutional distrust as a key factor contributing to corruption in the country. Zakhona Mvelase believed that sextortion in South Africa is often minimized or mischaracterized as less severe forms of misconduct (such as sexual harassment) rather than being recognized as a corrupt abuse of power. She said that this minimisation is part of a broader societal pattern that fails to take gendered forms of corruption seriously.

Sope Williams discussed how the court system is often "unfriendly" to women, especially in cases of sexual crimes. She emphasised that women frequently do not believe they will be taken seriously or that they will receive justice, leading to a lack of faith in the system. She pointed out that the court system can cause "traumatisation" for women, further discouraging them from pursuing legal action. Sope Williams concludes that the system carries "a certain level of patriarchal bias against women" which is evident in how difficult it is for women to navigate it, particularly in cases of sexual crimes. Women often feel that they will not be taken seriously, or that their experiences will be dismissed. This perception is rooted in a broader societal disbelief in women's testimonies and experiences, which is reinforced by the court's handling of such cases.

Victims of sextortion may choose to remain silent about such corruption due to fear of reprisal or because they see no viable alternatives for achieving their goals in a patriarchal society. Zakhona Mvelase critiques the lack of effective enforcement of anti-corruption laws and the insufficient focus on gendered corruption within these frameworks, indicating that institutional sexism is a barrier to addressing these issues. She believed that institutions in South Africa often fail to protect women or hold perpetrators of gendered corruption accountable. The legal and political systems, often dominated by men, do not prioritise or even recognise the seriousness of gendered corruption. This argument is consistent with what we saw in Chapter 2.4 which identified poor law enforcement as a major reason that corruption had worsened in the last few decades.

Amanda Gouws asserted that the lack of effective policies and enforcement mechanisms is seen as a significant barrier to addressing sextortion. She emphasised that a lack of accountability discourages whistleblowing on sextortion and reporting of such cases. In her discussion with the team, the regression in gender equality efforts (particularly during the Zuma Administration) was a recurrent theme. The dismantling of structures designed to promote gender equality by that administration was cited as a significant setback. The weakening of these structures undermined efforts to address gender inequality and entrenched patriarchal practices within governance. She said that this process undermined the progress towards gender equality that had been made during the early post-apartheid period.

Ariella Scher, in a qualitative interview, commented that trade unions should protect vulnerable workers from sextortion and help victims seek justice. She said that her work revealed that unions in patriarchal workplaces tend to represent the interests of male workers predominantly. This male-dominated representation leads to the neglect of the specific needs and protections required by women and LGBTIQ workers. She argued that patriarchy deeply influences every aspect of the workplace, contributing to corruption and the exploitation of the most vulnerable, particularly black women and LGBTQ individuals. The systemic nature of patriarchy means that without intentional and sustained efforts to challenge these attitudes, they will continue to perpetuate corruption and inequality in the workplace.

Economic Dependence and Vulnerability

Economic dependence and social power imbalances between men and women were thought to further exacerbate the issue of sextortion. Sharon Ekambaram said that "[i]n the context of inequality, joblessness and excessive levels of poverty, sextortion thrives". Some experts talked about how the absence of economic power leaves individuals, especially women, more susceptible to being manipulated and exploited. Women, often economically disadvantaged, may feel compelled to exchange sexual favours for jobs, food, or protection. EXPERT 18 contended that "the materialistic tendencies in people also make them privy to sextortion so that they can gain in whatever ways". EXPERT 4 identified a "[s]ocial power imbalance" in the country and the "commodification of sexual favours". This commodification of sexual favours is a direct consequence of the vulnerability of many in a society where lack of opportunities and financial desperation make people easy targets for exploitation by those in power. This stance aligns with, as discussed in Chapter 2.2, the broader concern amongst some experts that economic factors drive corrupt practices.

Ariella Scher identifies South Africa's socioeconomic issues (e.g., poverty, unemployment and inequality) as the primary drivers of sexual extortion, with labour brokering playing a significant role in exacerbating these issues. She emphasised that vulnerable individuals, particularly in precarious employment situations, are at higher risk of sexual exploitation. She provided an example from a report related to sexual extortion in the private sector, where casual workers were coerced into providing sexual favours in exchange for job opportunities. But she stressed that labour brokering is not the root cause, but rather an aggravating factor. The economic vulnerability of women and LGBTIQ

individuals makes them more susceptible to such exploitation. In patriarchal workplaces, these vulnerabilities are exploited, with the expectation of sexual favours becoming a norm for career advancement or other work-related benefits.

Zakhona Mvelase underscored the intersection of economic vulnerability and patriarchy in driving gendered corruption. Poor women, in particular, are often forced into compromising situations due to their economic needs, and their exploitation is normalised as part of their socio-economic reality. Under financial pressure, women or their families feel compelled to trade sexual favours for services or goods. She contended that this exploitation is both a result and a reinforcement of their economic marginalisation. Amanda Gouws also believed that poverty and desperation, exacerbated by patriarchal structures, normalised sexual extortion. Janine Hicks argued that the normalisation of sexual favours and exploitation reflects a broader societal problem where "men can take it if it's offered" and "believe that they can do with women's bodies as they want". She linked violence and sextortion, noting that "sexual violence and the use of sexual violence " are prevalent in South Africa.

Vanja Karth, in a qualitative interview, argued that sextortion in South Africa was not a simple problem of the poor. She said that her work in the legal field showed that individuals with high levels of education and professional status often face severe issues related to sexual harassment and extortion. Speaking about professionals in the legal field, Vanja Karth underscored a widespread reluctance to expose corruption due to fears of career damage and professional repercussions. Such fears were even present amongst high skilled professionals who felt they could not report because such actions will ruin their careers. <TEXT>

7. Bending Morality: Deciphering the Mystery of Public Tolerance towards Corruption

One of the main goals prioritised by the NACS is establishing a zero-tolerance culture for corruption. It is hoped that the creation of such a culture will deter individuals from engaging in unethical practices. Viewing corruption as unacceptable should encourage people to uphold ethical standards and to sanction wrongdoers. In addition, a zero-tolerance approach fosters trust and confidence in institutions, as citizens and stakeholders feel assured that corruption will be swiftly and effectively addressed. Zero-tolerance also promotes good governance by ensuring that citizens hold public institutions and officials accountable for their actions. The end result of zero-tolerance will be a just and equitable society for everyone in South Africa.

To create a society where corruption is not tolerated, it is important to understand the level of public Tolerance towards Corruption (TtC) in South Africa. TtC, as a concept, is understood as the readiness that individuals have to tolerate or endure behaviours that can be deemed 'corrupt' (Heidenheimer, 1970). In the context of this study, it is best to think of TtC as a social norm. At this stage, it is important to acknowledge that TtC has been the subject of extensive study by public opinion scientists over the last twenty years. To the best of our knowledge, however, none of this research has focused exclusively on the South African case. Indeed, as is common in public opinion research, a lot of the more recent studies have been focused on the European Union (Gouvêa, 2021). This is especially true after the Special Eurobarometer on Corruption recently included a dedicated module on corruption (also see Wysmulek, 2019).

The TtC research tradition is often considered part of a more general body of work on morally debatable behaviours (for more information, see Marozzi, 2021). Much of this scholarship has drawn on the Morally Debatable Behaviours Scale (Harding & Phillips 1986) that looks at the perceived justifiability of different kinds of behaviour. In other words, the social norms of correct conduct within a society. Katz et al. (1994) modified the scale, highlighting that the items in the morally debatable behaviours scale can be categorically split cross-culturally into two groups: (i) dishonest-illegal behaviours and (ii) personal-sexual behaviours. The first group is what concerns us here and relates to anti-social behaviours usually categorised as criminal by the state. As part of its investigation into TtC, this chapter explored public tolerance of dishonest-illegal behaviours.

The data presented in this chapter can be used for the creation of stratagems to reduce TtC. It can help communication specialists identify groups with high TtC and help tailor effective messaging content for them. To assist in this tailoring, the chapter presented a detailed analysis of subgroup differences, identifying those groups most in need of attention. But the main goal of this chapter is to identify the drivers of TtC in South Africa. We conduct hypothesis testing to achieve this, detecting the factors that act as robust determinants of this important social norm. A range of different predictors were examined, and the chapter concluded with a comparative assessment of them. This should help communication specialists and interested parties design interventions to help decrease TtC in the country.

7.1. Morally Debateable Behaviour

Since the 1980s the World Value Survey (WVS) has included questions on the perceived rightness or wrongness of certain morally debatable behaviours. Respondents were asked to evaluate a list of behaviours in terms of their justifiability. One of these questions touched on bribery; survey participants were asked if they thought that 'accepting a bribe in the course of their duties' can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between. The responses of interviewees were captured on a 0-10 scale with the higher value representing always justifiable. A number of scholars have used this type of question as a proxy for TtC (Swamy et al., 2001; Gatti et al., 2003; Heath et al., 2016).

Utilising data from the different rounds of the WVS, this section examines the permissiveness of corrupt practices in South Africa. The WVS data was used to provide a cross-country comparison and judged against the SASAS 2023 data to gauge change over time.

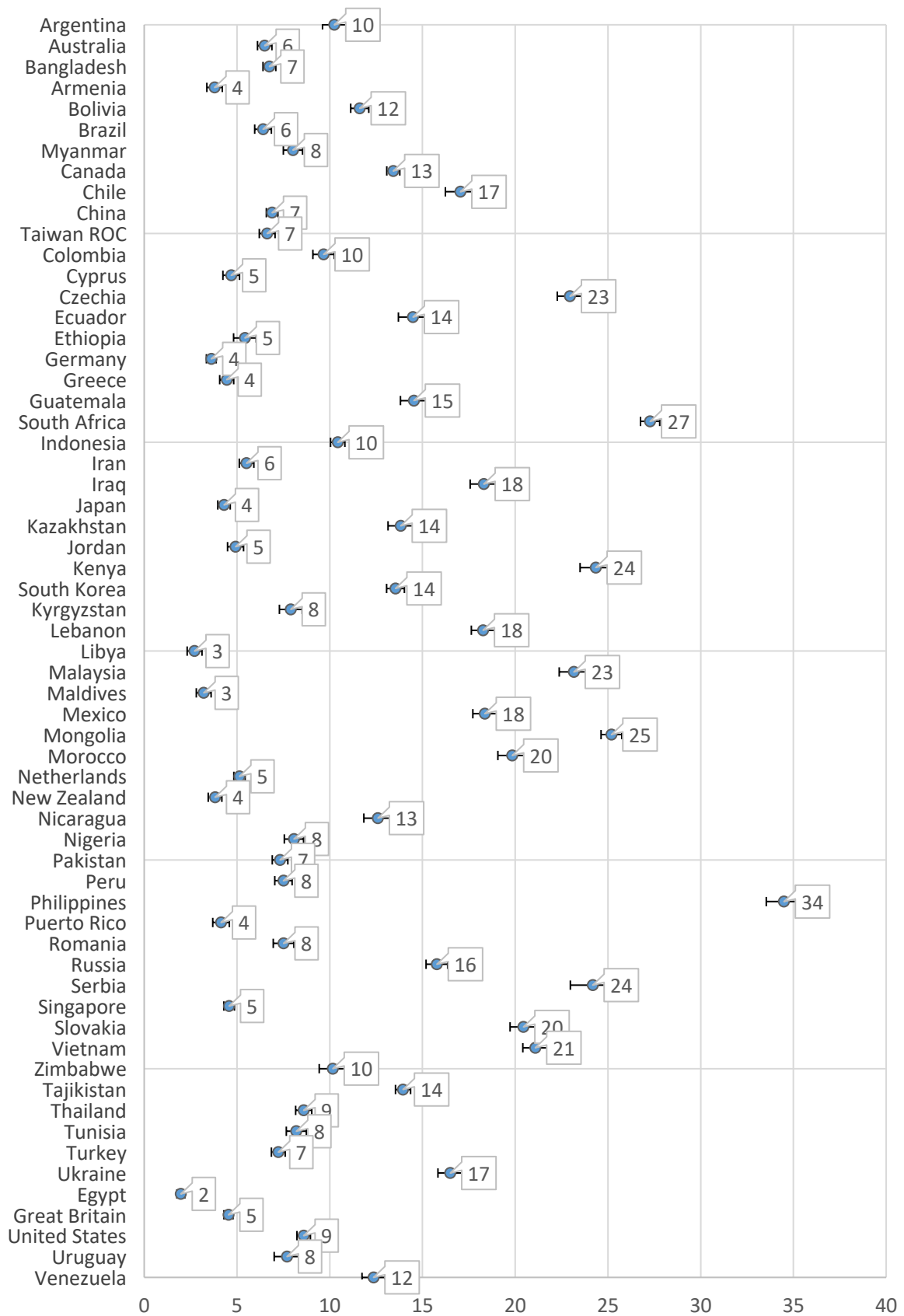
Let us begin with mean scores on the WVS bribery question. For ease of interpretation, responses to this bribery question were converted onto a 0 to 100 range; the higher the value the greater the level of acceptability. The mean score on the permissiveness of bribery scale for South Africa was 10 (SE=0.372) in the 1994/1998 WVS round. But when the question was asked again in the 1999/2004 round, the mean score was 17 (SE=0.525). The national average remained within a similar range in 2005/2009 (M=15; SE=0.459) but increased substantially to 34 (SE=0.563) in the 2010/2014 round. Looking at this change from another perspective, 85% of the general public scored below 30 on the scale in the 1994/1998 WVS round. This can be compared to 52% who gave the same answer in the 2010/2014 round. When the question on the justifiability of bribery was fielded as part of SASAS 2023, the mean score was 27 (SE=0.882), a result similar (more or less) to what was seen during the 2010/2014 round.²⁶ In summation, we can observe growing levels of public tolerance for bribery in the country over the last thirty years.

Let us now turn our attention to how attitudes in South Africa compare with other countries around the world. Utilising the 2017/2022 WVS dataset, we compared other countries, ranging from Argentina to Malaysia, with South Africa. As can be observed in **Figure 7-1** (pg. 90), most countries included in the WVS tend to display an aversion to bribery. Mean permissiveness scores were lowest in countries like China (M=7; SE=0.311), the Netherlands (M=5; SE=0.304) and Germany (M=4; SE=0.263). South Africa reported relatively high levels of bribery tolerance, and only a few other countries, such as Vietnam (M=21; SE=0.671), Malaysia (M=23; SE=0.788) or Serbia (M=24; SE=1.205), had similar scores. Overall, it is clear that the mean justifiability of bribery in South Africa is now much higher than most of the countries included in the WVS. The only country that had a much higher permissiveness score than South Africa was the Philippines (M=34; SE=0.952).

We should be critical of the proposition that we can measure TtC using only the permissiveness of bribery question. Only using this question, as scholars like Andersson (2007) have argued, traps the researcher into a one-dimensional perspective that conceptualises corruption solely in terms of bribery. Corrupt behaviour varies greatly in both form and scale and the bribery question only touches upon one aspect of it (also see Johnston 2014). And, of course, certain kinds of corrupt behaviour are more morally ambiguous (e.g., nepotism) than bribery. A review of related studies found that many scholars do not just look at the acceptability of bribery to investigate TtC but instead use a composite set of measures. The most well-known index was developed by Moreno (2002) who looked at a range of practices that can be considered corrupt. In addition to the acceptability of bribery, he looked at the acceptability of the following behaviours: (i) “claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled”; (ii) “avoiding a fare on public transport”; and (iii) “cheating on taxes if you have a chance”. This index was labelled the ‘Corruption Permissiveness’ Index and was placed onto a 0 to 100 scale. The higher the value, the more permissive corrupt practices were seen to be.

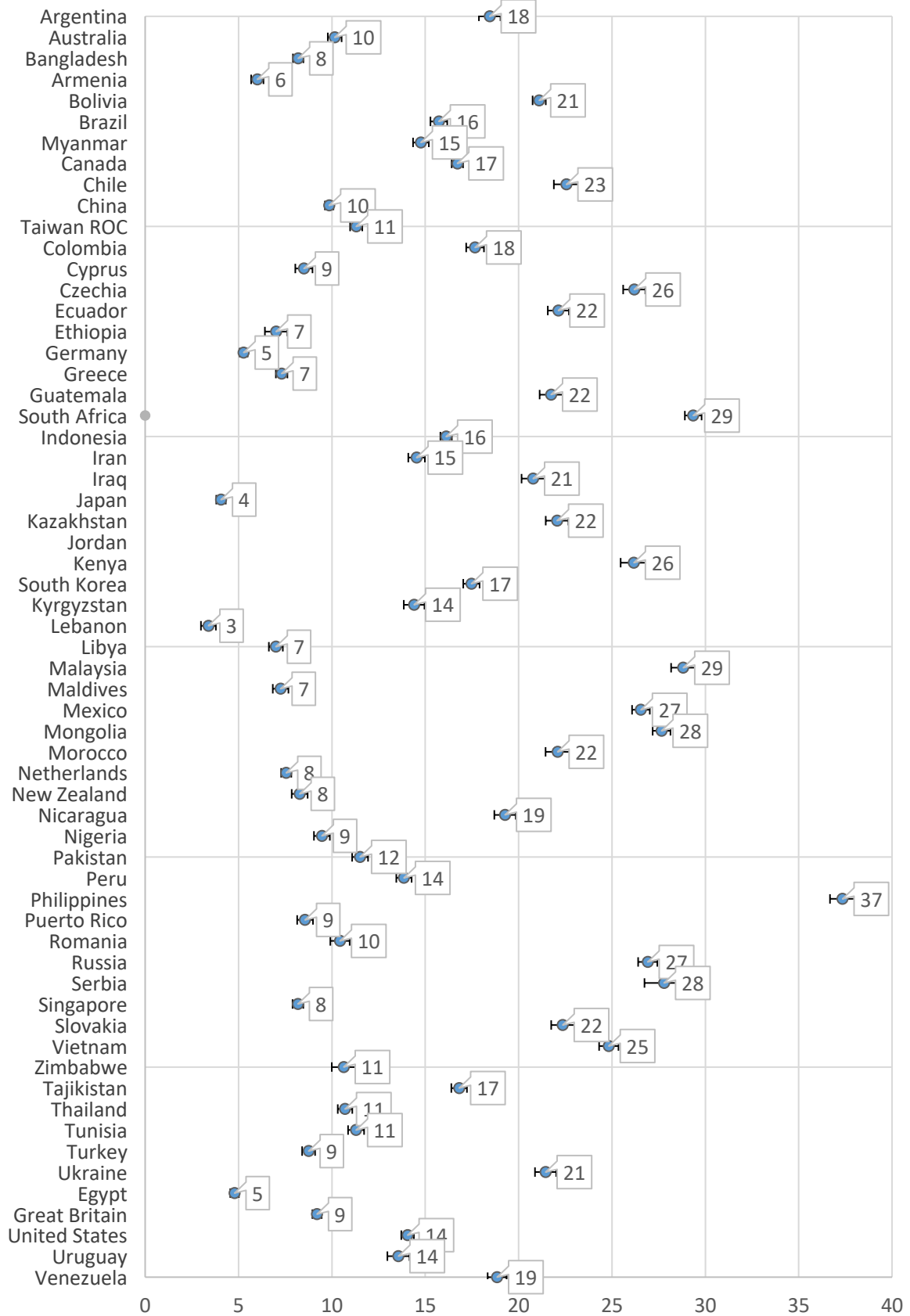
²⁶ The reader should be aware that there was a moderate difference in which the response scales for the WVS and SASAS were designed. The scales had to be transformed so that they were comparable.

Figure 7-1: Mean justification of someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties (0-100) amongst sixty nations



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (2023); World Value Survey (2017/2022)

Figure 7-2: Mean Moreno's 'Corruption Permissiveness' Index (0-100) amongst sixty nations



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (2023); World Value Survey (2017/2022)

We can draw on the WVS dataset to recreate Moreno (2002) ‘Corruption Permissiveness’ Index for this study. Looking at the results for South Africa, we find that the average score on the index was 13 (SE=0.341) in the 1994/1998 WVS round before increasing to 19 (SE=0.422) in the 1999/2004 round. It stayed at a similar level (M=17; SE=0.426) in the 2005/2009 round before increasing to 36 (SE=0.534) in the 2010/2014 round. The ‘Corruption Permissiveness’ Index was reconstructed using data from SASAS 2023 (for a discussion of how this scale was constructed for the SASAS dataset, see APPENDIX E on page 200); the mean index score was 30 (SE=0.745) in that survey round. Investigating cross-national differences in index scores using the 2017/2022 WVS dataset in **Figure 7-2** (pg. 91), it is apparent that South Africa is an outlier on this measure. The mean scores on this measure in South Africa are much higher than most other nations in the WVS. This is consistent with what we observed in **Figure 7-1** (pg. 90) and suggests that TtC in South Africa is relatively high.

Reviewing the data presented in **Figure 7-1** (pg. 90) and **Figure 7-2** (pg. 91), it is important to consider that expert opinion of corruption may differ significantly from how corruption is viewed by much of the general public. EXPERT 12, in a qualitative interview, contended that when researchers speak about corruption, we often have a highly Western perspective of corruption. She asserted that this perspective "moralises corrupt conduct, as always evil and bad". Noting that some in South Africa tolerate corrupt practices, she asserted that corruption is sometimes unavoidable or sometimes the only logical behaviour in the circumstances. EXPERT 7 was concerned that "[p]eople tend to regards acts as 'corrupt' only if the financial amount is high, which means a lot of corruption goes unchecked and thrives".

7.2. A National Index

The previous section shows that the general public was, on average, more tolerant than those in many other nations of criminal or unlawful behaviour. But does this mean that the South African public is tolerant of corruption? The items that comprise the Moreno (2002) Corruption Permissiveness’ Index are not typically classified as acts of corruption under the strictest definition of the term. Nevertheless, they serve as significant indicators of civic morality overall and reflect attitudes towards behaviours that might be perceived as "moral" or "societal" corruption. To further explore public tolerance of dishonest-illegal behaviours, let us look at how survey participants in SASAS 2023 responded to eight questions about unlawful behaviour.

Survey participants were first told “Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between”. They were then read a list of eight different types of unlawful behaviours, which ranged from defrauding the state (e.g., avoiding paying for public transport) to contact crime (e.g., violence against other people). The list also included three items on specific types of corrupt behaviour. Using the justifiability question structure employed in the WVS, respondents had to indicate whether these behaviours can always be justified or never be justified on a 0 to 10 scale. Each scale was converted onto a 0 to 100 range with the higher value representing the higher level of justifiability. National averages for the eight scales on dishonest-illegal behaviours are portrayed in **Table 7-1**.

Table 7-1: Perceived justification scales (0-100) of different lawbreaking activities

	Mean		[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>Defrauding the State</i>				
Avoid paying for public transport	33	(0.962)	31	35
Improper claiming of social grants	30	(0.933)	28	32
Cheating on your taxes	29	(0.914)	27	31
<i>Corrupt behaviour</i>				
Having sex with someone to get a job.	26	(0.923)	24	28

Accepting bribes	27	(0.882)	26	29
Nepotism in the public sector	27	(0.912)	25	29
<i>Contact crime</i>				
Stealing goods from a shop.	27	(0.831)	25	28
Violence against other people	27	(0.872)	25	29

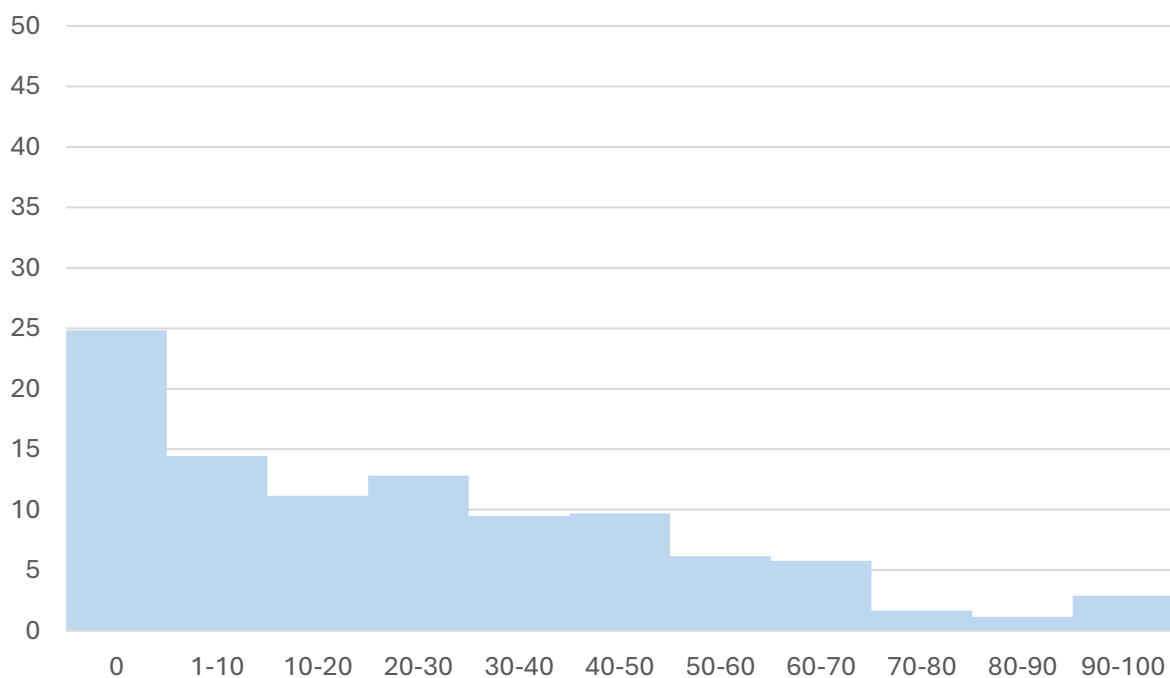
Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

It was apparent from the data presented in **Table 7-1** (pg. 92) that a noteworthy minority share of the public viewed corrupt behaviour as justifiable. Remarkably, corrupt behaviours like nepotism were not seen as more or less justifiable than more overt forms of corruption (e.g., accepting bribes). Although the level of difference here was not large, the least justified behaviour in the table was sexual favours for employment (M=26; SE=0.923). It was also interesting to note that a sizeable number of people viewed contact crime as justifiable. The observed mean justifiability score for stealing from a shop (M=27; SE=0.831) was, for example, not too different from the justifiability scores for less serious crimes. It is important to acknowledge the potential for response bias here. Given that respondents may feel reticent about admitting that they find certain types of unlawful behaviour acceptable, the high scores evident on certain measures was quite astonishing.

Statistical testing showed that the different scales represented in **Table 7-1** (pg. 92) were very strongly interrelated with one another (the results of these are presented in APPENDIX E on page 200). In other words, if a person thought that one unlawful act (e.g., avoiding paying for public transport) was acceptable then they were more likely to think that others (e.g., accepting bribes or nepotism) were. Perhaps unsurprisingly, viewing corruption as acceptable was most strongly associated with thinking that stealing from a shop was permissible. The fact that the perceived acceptability of corrupt behaviour was found to be correlated with the acceptability of other kinds of illegality is instructive. It showed that the general public is quite tolerant of criminal behaviour in general rather than corrupt behaviour per se.

Figure 7-3: Population distribution on the Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index (0-100)



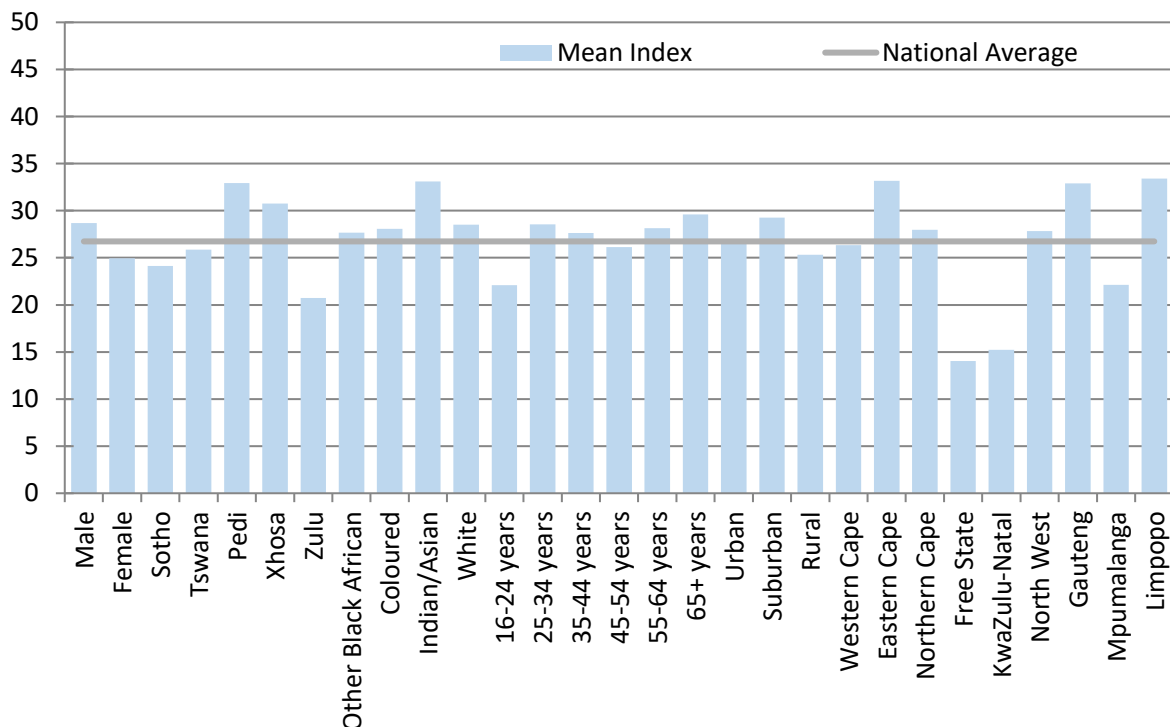
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Based on the statistical testing described above, we explored constructing an index to measure societal TtC using the three ‘Corrupt Behaviour’ items in **Table 7-1**. Statistical tests confirmed the internal consistency of this set of items and the results suggested that the items could be reliably combined into a single index (on page 201 of APPENDIX E we offer the results of this test). An index was, therefore constructed from the proposed set of items and was transformed so that it ranged from 0 to 100. The higher the value on the index, the greater the TtC. The measure was labelled the Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index. The national mean score on this metric was 27 (SE=0.822) and a histogram presented in **Figure 7-3** (pg. 93) showed that population distribution on the index was skewed towards the left.

7.3. Who Tolerates Corruption?

Do certain socio-demographic groups in South Africa display greater levels of TtC than others? To answer this question, we conducted a subgroup analysis of mean SAoC Index scores. The results of this analysis are presented in **Figure 7-4** (pg. 94), and it is evident that we did not find substantial levels of subgroup variation. This seems to suggest that we are looking at a cross-cutting social norm here. Nevertheless, there were some important variances between subgroups in the figure that should be highlighted. There was a moderate age group dissimilarity in the figure. The youngest (i.e., the 16-24) age cohort had an index score (M=22; SE=1.937) that was somewhat lower than older cohorts. We were able to discern notable differences in SAoC Index scores by province of residence. Mean index scores were highest in Limpopo (M=33; SE=2.296), the Eastern Cape (M=33 SE=2.330) and Gauteng (M=33; SE=1.783). In contrast, the provincial population that had the lowest score was the Free State (M=14; SE=1.526) and this was followed by KwaZulu-Natal (M=15; SE=1.048).

Figure 7-4: Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index mean scores (0-100) by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We were able to observe striking levels of variation by population group in **Figure 7-4** (pg. 94). The Black African majority had lower average SAoC Index scores than their minority peers. Of all the race groups listed in the figure, members of the Indian minority had the highest average index (M=33; SE=1.650) score. Certain Black African linguistic groups reported much higher scores than others. As

can be observed from the figure, the group with the highest average index score was the Pedi (M=33; SE=2.491) and this was followed by the Xhosa (M=31; SE=1.525). There was a moderate gender differential in the figure. Mean SAoC Index scores of female adults (M=25; SE=0.608) were somewhat lower than their male peers (29; SE=0.723).

Supplementary subgroup analysis was conducted to try and identify index score differences by employment status. We found that people who were working had somewhat higher mean scores (M=31; SE=1.737) than those who were not (M=26; SE=0.916). Further data analysis showed that individuals who were employed in the public sector scored much higher on the index (M=42; SE=1.741) than those who were in private sector (M=20; SE=1.309) or in self-employment (M=33; SE=2.442). Moreover, amongst those who were not working, past public sector employees (M=31; SE=1.800) had higher scores than their private sector peers (M=22; SE=1.153). Significant differences were also noted by trade union membership. Persons who were current union members (M=37; SE=2.222) had higher SAoC Index scores than past members (M=29; SE=1.830) or those who had never been members (M=25; SE=0.508).

In an interview with researchers, Sekoetlane Phamodi described how religious organisations can have a positive effect on ethical behaviour. Based on his work with the public service, he had found that good, ethical public servants had “social institutions organised around them or which they belonged to, and which they felt deeply accountable to”. He said that “nine times out of ten, those institutions were their religious community or their spiritual community”. To look at the role played by religious organisations in explaining societal tolerance of corruption, we looked at how SAoC Index scores differed by religious affiliation. Mean index scores varied significantly by a person’s religious identification. Individuals who said that they were religiously unaffiliated (M=31; SE=2.023) were found to have higher average SAoC Index scores than those who identified with a Christian (M=25; SE=0.860) or non-Christian (M=26; SE=3.262) religion.

Table 7-2: Mean Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index mean scores (0-100) by religious affiliation

	Mean		[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>Unaffiliated</i>				
Atheists	26	(2.774)	20	31
Other	37	(2.681)	32	42
<i>Christian Affiliated</i>				
Roman Catholic	28	(3.498)	21	35
Anglican	31	(4.267)	23	40
Methodist	27	(3.069)	21	33
Pentecostal/Evangelistic	24	(2.083)	20	28
African Independent Churches	27	(1.429)	24	30
Reformed Church	16	(2.923)	10	21
Non-denominational	21	(1.662)	18	24
Other	26	(2.671)	21	31
<i>Non-Christian Affiliated</i>				
Islam / Muslim	37	(5.564)	26	48
Hinduism / Hindu	10	(1.547)	7	13
Other	22	(3.507)	15	28

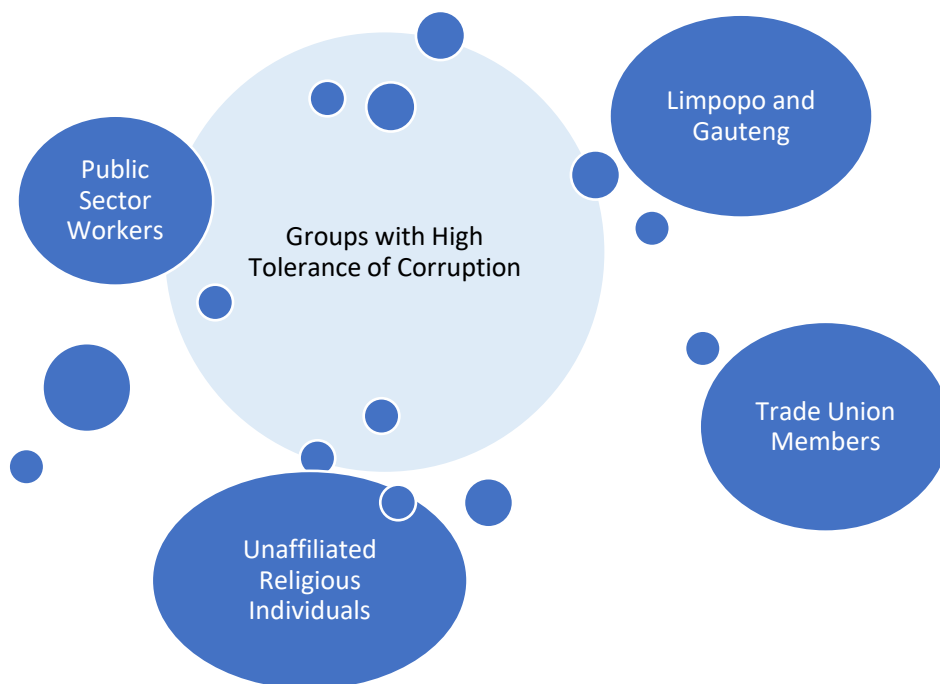
Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Mean SAoC Index scores differed significantly between South Africa’s different Christian affiliations. This can be observed if we look at how differed by religious affiliation in **Table 7-2** (pg. 95). Of those

who identified with a Christian affiliation, members of the Reformed Church (M=16; SE=2.923) had much lower index scores than others. The Christian group with the highest average SAoC Index score were Anglicans (M=31; SE=4.267). Although affiliates of African Independent Churches had mean index scores that were in line with other religious groups, further analysis showed an interesting disparity amongst this group. Members of the largest independent church, the Zionist Christian Church, had SAoC Index scores (M=30; SE=1.940) well above the national average. Of the non-Christian affiliates, Muslims (M=37; SE=5.564) reported the highest mean index score. We found interesting differences between non-aligned groups. Persons who identified as atheists had mean index scores (M=26; SE=2.774) that were close to the national average. Those who were unaffiliated but considered themselves religious (at least to some extent) had, by contrast, quite high SAoC Index scores (M=37; SE=2.681).

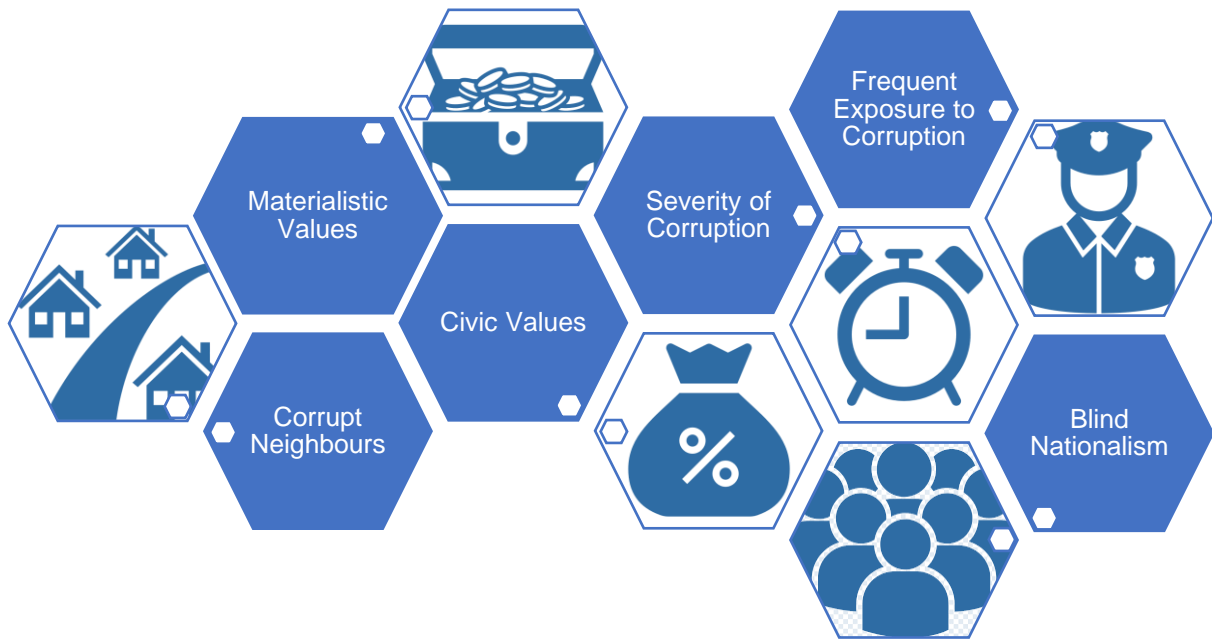
It is perhaps surprising to note from that **Table 7-2** (pg. 95) religious people were not less tolerant of corruption than atheists. In addition, we noted that some religious groups expressed relatively high levels of tolerance. When questioned about whether religious values play a role in driving corrupt practices in a qualitative interview, Maria Frahm-Arp noted a noticeable lack of anti-corruption discourse within many religious communities. She asserted that this could be due to a focus on individual salvation and prosperity theology, which often emphasizes personal success rather than social justice or collective accountability. Generally religious organisations lack the political will or resources to actively engage in anti-corruption efforts. She contended that while some churches attempt to address corruption (such as through projects with the police) broader anti-corruption initiatives within the religious community are often limited.



7.4. Why are People Tolerant of Corruption?

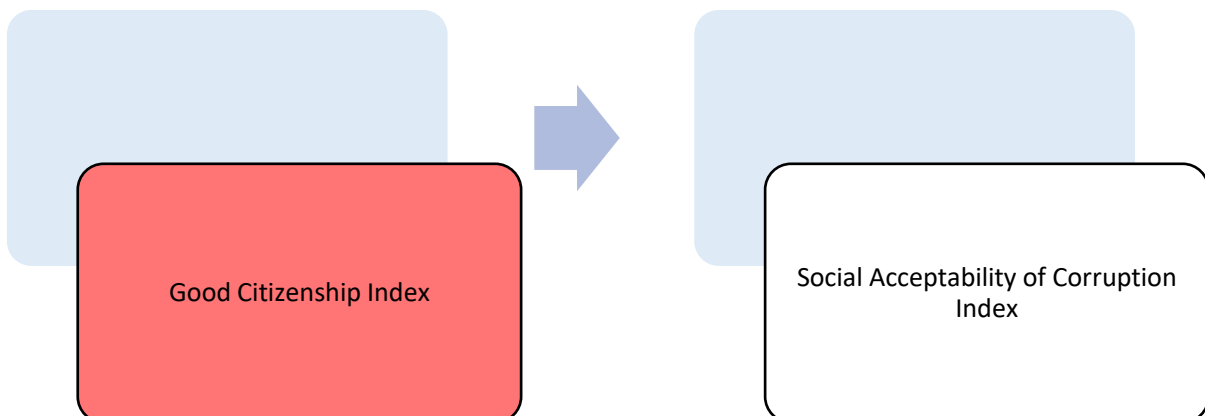
Imagine you wanted to design a communication campaign to decrease public TtC in South Africa. A good place to start would be the subgroup analysis presented in the previous section. It would help you understand which groups have lower levels of TtC than others and show which groups to target in your hypothetical campaign. Yet, it does not answer an important question, *what* are the main drivers of TtC? This is the question that you need to answer if you want to design an effective communication campaign. To provide this answer, we need to examine the SASAS 2023 dataset using sophisticated statistical algorithms. Here we use a hypothesis-driven method, testing six hypotheses

of interest. In this section we start by introducing a hypothesis and then explaining the reasoning behind it. Next, we outline whether empirical evidence was found to support this hypothesis (for interested readers, the specifics of these empirical tests can be found in APPENDIX E).



Civic Values

It could be argued that adherence to civic values plays a pivotal role in reducing TtC and fostering good governance. Civic values are characterised by principles of accountability, transparency and the rule of law (Dalton & Welzel, 2014). They provide a framework for citizens to evaluate society that emphasises equality, justice and the protection of individual rights. Citizens who adhere to these values are more likely to demand ethical behaviour from their leaders and resist corrupt practices that undermine democratic principles (also see Dalton, 2008). These values encourage citizens to support a system of checks and balances that holds public officials accountable for their actions. By upholding civic values, societies promote a culture of integrity and civic responsibility, where corruption is seen as a betrayal of the fundamental principles upon which the nation is built (for a discussion of how the consensus on “good citizen” norms can change over time, see Goodman, 2022).

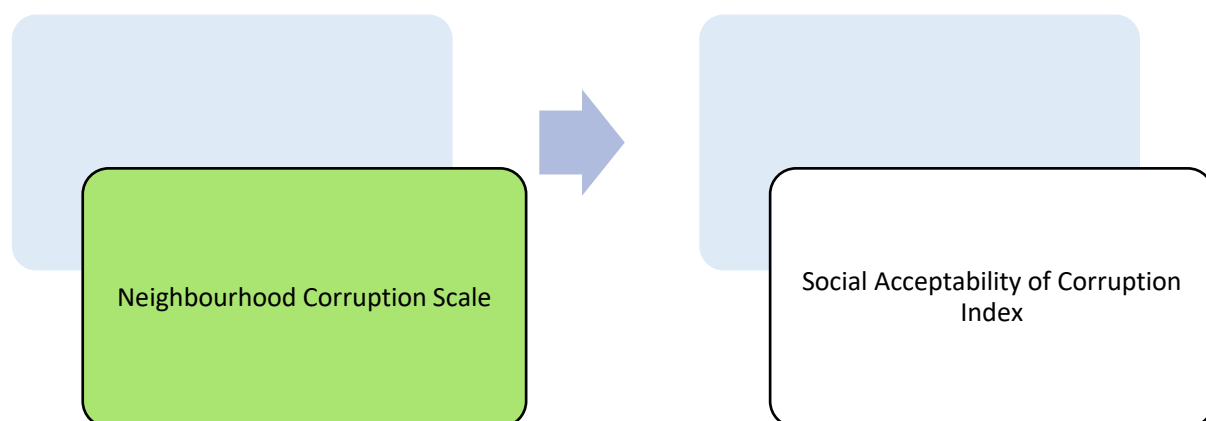


Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Based on the arguments made above, we can hypothesise that holding civic values will be negatively associated with TtC. We utilised the 'Good Citizenship' Index to evaluate this hypothesis; this metric assessed the descriptive social norms around 'good' constitutional citizenship (we provide a description of how this index was developed on page 197 of APPENDIX D). We conducted a statistical analysis to explore the connection between the Civic Values Index and the SAoC Index. Our statistical testing showed that there was a robust (and negative) association between these two variables (test outputs are provided in APPENDIX E on page 202). This result seems to suggest that holding civic values reduces TtC by encouraging citizens to value the societal principles of accountability and transparency.

Corrupt Neighbours

Societal conformity is driven by a desire to adhere to social expectations and avoid social sanctions for deviating from the perceived norm. When individuals perceive corruption as prevalent within their neighbourhood, they may conform to these perceived norms, leading to a greater acceptance of corrupt behaviour. This is due to the way injunctive social norms in a neighbourhood influence how people think about corruption (Köbis et al. 2022). Additionally, if people believe that others are engaging in corrupt practices, they may feel justified in engaging in similar behaviour themselves. In two studies fielded in Mexico, Agerberg (2022b) showed that injunctive social norms were a powerful determinant of how individuals viewed the permissibility of corruption. Consequently, the normalisation of corruption within an individual's environment can erode ethical standards and contribute to a cycle of misconduct (also see Camargo 2017).



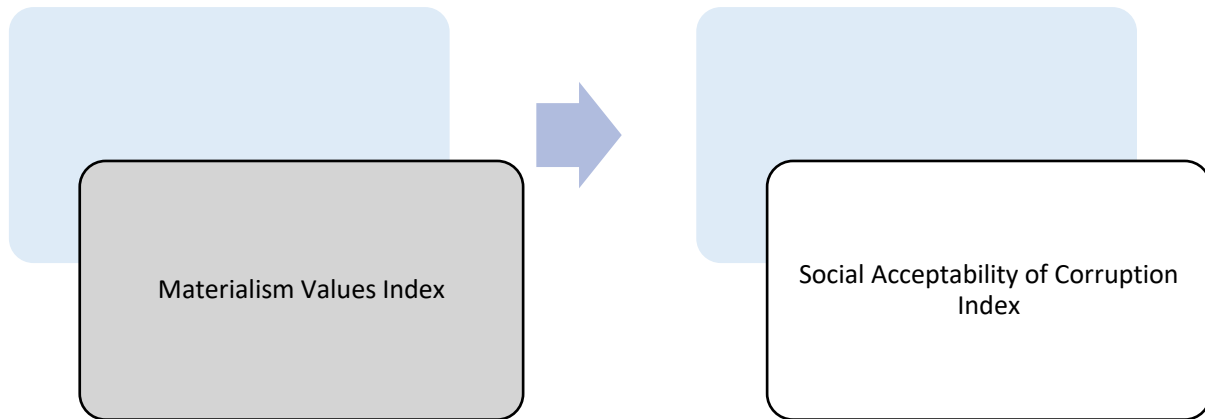
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

The research detailed above leads us to theorised that viewing one's neighbours as corrupt will increase a person's TtC. The 'Neighbourhood Corruption' Scale was used to test this thesis. The scale measured the perceived level of corruption in a neighbourhood (we outline how this scale was created on page 204 of APPENDIX E). Our statistical analysis confirmed that there was a positive relationship between the scale and the SAoC Index (the results of this analysis are displayed in on page 204 of APPENDIX E). Individuals who thought their neighbours were corrupt were inclined to have a higher SAoC scores than those who did not. In other words, the data showed that when corruption is perceived as widespread and deeply entrenched in a neighbourhood this reduces TtC.

Materialistic Values

Many members of the experts surveyed felt that corrupt practices, and their normalisation, was informed by materialistic values. Reviewing the data presented in Chapter 5, in particular, it was evident that materialism was considered an important driver of corruption in the country. Certainly, researchers (like Kasser, 2002), contend that materialistic values can undermine social norms of good conduct, contributing to an environment where corruption is more readily accepted. A materialistic mindset often places emphasis on personal gain and success at any cost, fostering a culture where

achieving wealth and status is prioritised over ethical considerations. This can desensitise individuals to the moral implications of unethical behaviour, leading them to justify or overlook unethical actions in pursuit of material goals (also see Kasser, 2016). Moreover, materialism may foster a culture of consumerism and competition, where people prioritise their own interests over ethical considerations (Chowdhury & Fernando, 2013). Materialistic persons may also see unethical practices simply as another means to gain a competitive edge or maintain one's lifestyle.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

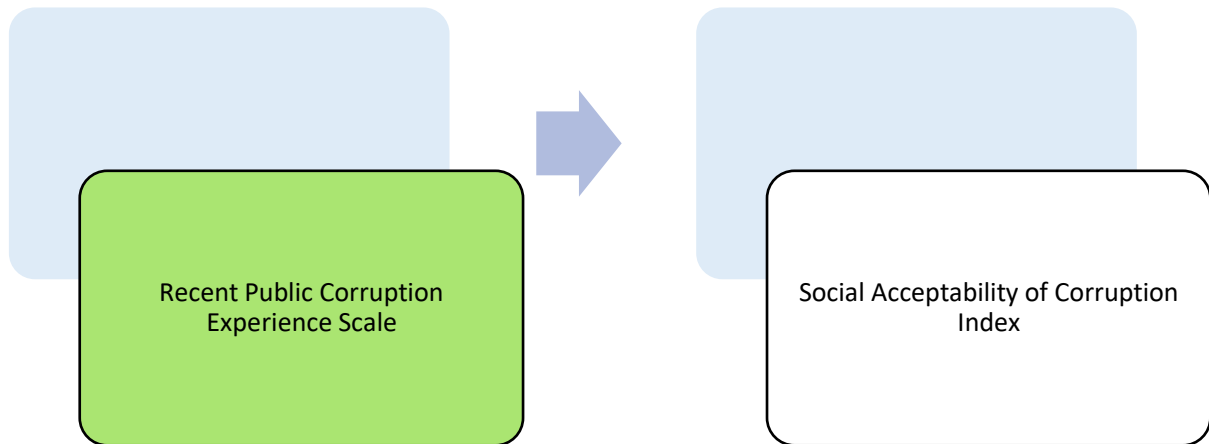
Taking the arguments made above into account, we hypothesised that materialism values positively influenced TtC in South Africa. We employed the Materialism Values Index to evaluate this hypothesis. This index assessed the degree to which a person had materialistic values (see page 204 of APPENDIX E for a description of how this index was built). Our testing showed that the index was negatively correlated with the SAoC Index. But this association was *not* found to be statistically significant, and we could *not* establish a clear relationship between these two variables (analysis results can be located in APPENDIX E on page 204). Further statistical examination revealed that the link between the Materialism Values Index and the SAoC Index was mediated by socio-economic status. Based on this test, we can conclude that materialistic values affected TtC but only for those who were economically advantaged.

Frequent Exposure to Corruption

Personal experience is an important determinant of how social norms form (see Scharbatke-Church & Chigas 2019 on the influences of experience on attitude formation). Consequently, we would assume that direct experience of public sector corruption would change attitudes towards corruption. If public officials are witnessed behaving in a corrupt manner and soliciting bribes, this will could undermine a person's moral principles (or foundations) that inform compliance with the law (Barr & Serra, 2010). It could also weaken respect for the authorities, eroding trust in the system. This could undermine the social values of fairness and justice under the law which, in turn, could weaken the moral aversion to corrupt behaviour (also see Olken, 2009). In addition, it could be argued that bribe solicitation by public officials can help normalise such behaviour and weakens societal condemnation against it (Gächter & Schulz, 2016). Repeatedly exposure to instances of bribery, in other words, sends a message that engaging in such unlawful practices are acceptable or even expected.

We hypothesise that personal experience of public sector corruption will increase TtC in South Africa. As our measure of personal experience, we used the 'Recent Public Corruption Experience' Scale. This indicator gauges the frequency to which a person has been exposed to bribe solicitation from public officials in the five years prior to the SASAS 2023 interview (the details of the scale's construction are provided on page 203 of APPENDIX E). Statistical testing showed that this type of personal experience had a *positive* association with the SAoC Index (test results can be located on page 203 of APPENDIX

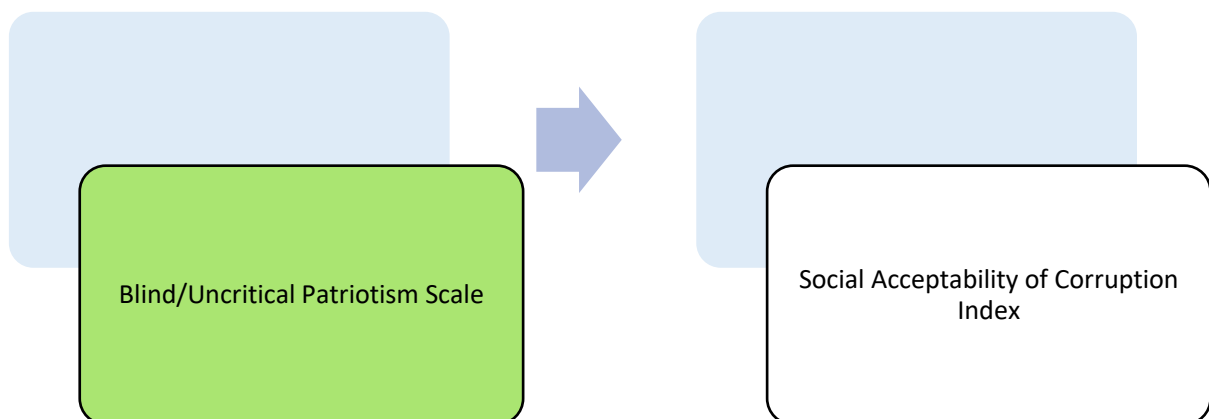
E). The more frequently someone had experienced public sector corruption recently, the more tolerant they were of corrupt practices. This outcome seems to suggest that exposure to corruption erodes the societal shame related to lawbreaking and undermines social norms that censure criminal behaviour.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Blind Nationalism

Nationalism, as an influential social identity, can have a powerful effect on human behaviour²⁷. Research showed that national identity, and the images it conjures in the collective imagination, can perpetuate corruption in an African context (Camargo 2017). A blind national loyalty may discourage dissent and critical thinking, creating a culture that discourages questioning authority or speaking out against unlawful behaviour (Staub, 1997). It can create a mindset that is resistant to acknowledging and addressing systematic problems, undermining efforts to promote ethical governance and social justice (also see Schatz, 2020). In such an environment, criticisms of corruption may be dismissed as unpatriotic and disloyal. National pride, therefore, could serve as a powerful motivator for behaviour in South Africa. Based on these arguments, we hypothesised that there would be a *positive* association between the SAoC Index and blind patriotism.



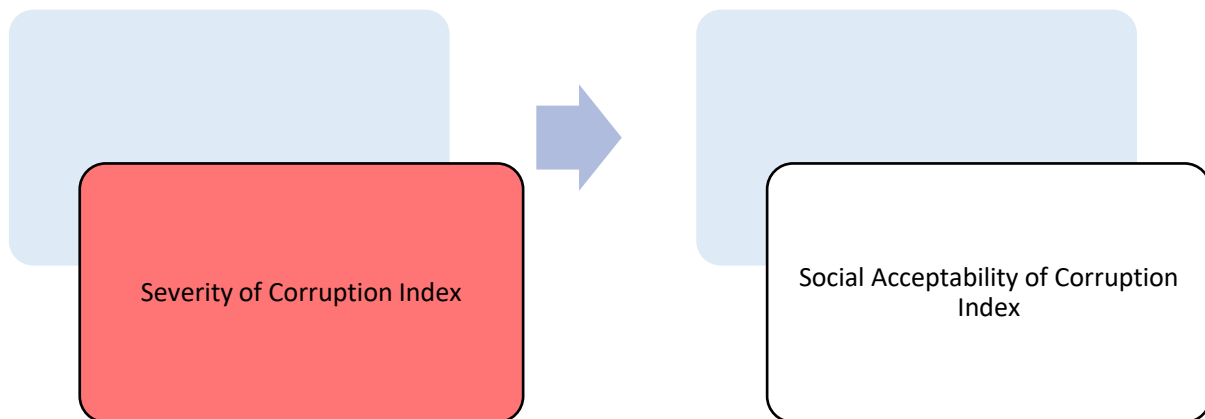
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

²⁷ Past scholarship has shown that national pride can strengthen social norms and expectations regarding the common good, leading to a collective commitment to upholding moral standards within the community. Under the right circumstances, this can lead to a sense of collective responsibility and accountability among citizens (for a more in-depth discussion, see Anderson, 2006).

To test the thesis outlined above, we utilised the 'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale. This metric assessed the degree to which an individual had an unquestioning loyalty to the nation (for an account of how this scale was produced see APPENDIX E on page 205). Our statistical testing showed that there was a relationship between the SAoC Index and the scale (for the results of the test, see APPENDIX E on page 205). If a person thought that people should support their nation even if it is in the wrong, then they were more likely to have a high score on the SAoC index. This finding implies that blind loyalty to the nation discourages people from rejecting corrupt practices and can undermine ethical standards associated with accountability. Further statistical analysis revealed that the relationship between blind nationalism and the SAoC Index was mediated by socio-economic status. The relationship between the two variables was discovered to be stronger amongst the poor. To put it another way, blind nationalism had a greater (and more positive) effect on the TtC of the economically disadvantaged.

Severity of Corruption

When people think about a problem, the perceived severity of that problem is important. Our attitudes towards the negative consequences, and risks, associated with a specific problem can have a meaningful impact on whether we tolerate that problem. This is evident from past research on fear appeals²⁸; a meta-analysis by Tannenbaum et al. (2015) found that fear appeals had a positive effect of on attitudes and behaviours. This work suggests that informing people about the severity of a problem can make them more averse to it (also see de Hoog et al., 2007). Consequently, we put forward the following hypothesis: viewing corruption as having a large impact on society will reduce TtC. But there is an alternative hypothesis. Cheeseman and Peiffer (2020) have argued that when individuals perceive corruption as pervasive and systemic, they may adopt a resigned and permissive attitude to it. Frequent portrayals of corruption's impact as large could lead some to become desensitised or indifferent to the issue (also see Liu et al. 2023).



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

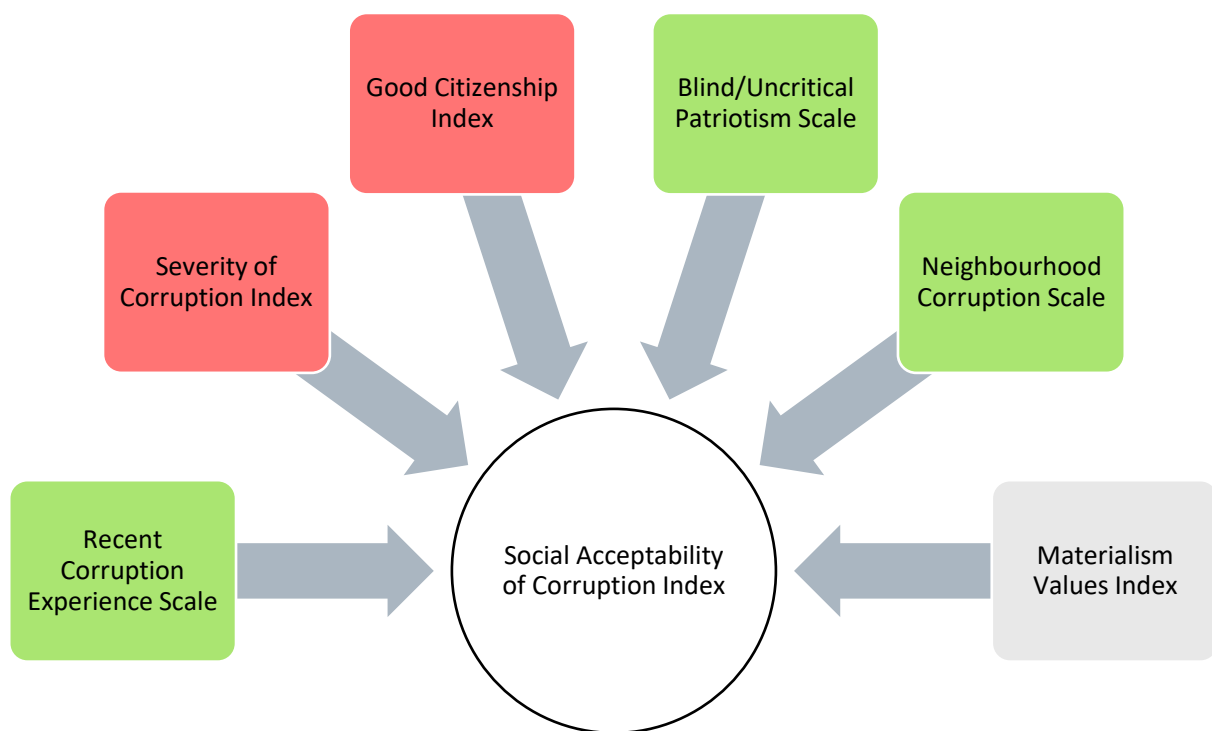
For us to evaluate the two hypotheses outlined above, we employed an index that measured the perceived impact of corruption on the lives of people in the country. This is the 'Severity of Corruption' Index; a metric that gauged the perceived societal impact of corruption (the details of how this index was generated is offered in APPENDIX E on page 202). According to our tests, this index had a statistically significant effect on the SAoC Index. The results show that when an individual understands the detrimental impacts of corruption, they are less likely to view it as acceptable (for the results of tests, see APPENDIX E on page 202). It would appear that if a person recognised corruption's impact on their lives and communities it fostered a sense of outrage and moral indignation. Supplementary

²⁸ 'Fear appeals' are messages that attempt to arouse fear by emphasising the potential danger and harm of a problem (for a more in-depth discussion, see Maddux & Rogers, 1983).

analysis discovered that socio-economic status mediated the association between the 'Severity of Corruption' Index and the SAoC Index. We learnt that the association between the two was stronger for the economically advantaged. In other words, perceived severity had a more substantial (and more negative) influence on the TtC of the more economically well-off.

Comparative Evaluation

In this final part of the analysis, we wanted to identify which of the six variables discussed so far was the best predictor of the SAoC Index. Consequently, we designed a fully specified algorithm that included all of the variables that we tested so far. This analysis allowed us to simultaneously examine the effects of the six variables on the SAoC Index while taking into account the complex interplay between them. We can isolate the unique effects of each of the six variables on the index while holding others constant. A detailed description of the results produced by this statistical algorithm can be found in APPENDIX E on page 206. Of the six variables, only the 'Materialism Values' Index was *not* found to have a meaningful relationship with the SAoC Index. The two variables that exhibited the greatest predictive power were the 'Recent Public Corruption Experience' Scale and the 'Good Citizenship' Index.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

At this stage, it is important to acknowledge an interesting finding that emerged from our analysis. A negative association was identified between socio-economic status and TtC. In other words, the more affluent the person, the less likely they were to view corrupt practices as acceptable. This negative relationship was unexpected and emerged even after a range of other variables were taken into account. It is, however, consistent with expert opinion on the social values and norms that drive corrupt behaviour. As shown in Chapter 2.2, experts said that dire economic factors drive people to accept corruption as a means of survival. In addition, it may be that the more economically advantaged have more to gain from prioritising a reputation for honesty and ethical conduct. Because those from low socio-economic backgrounds have fewer social and economic opportunities, they have less to gain from maintaining such a reputation. Additionally, wealthier individuals find the country's legal and

economic system easier to use and navigate than their poorer peers. As a result, this group may be less tolerance of corrupt behaviours designed to circumvent these systems.

8. Silent Loyalties: Unveiling and Understanding Codes of Silence

The NACS recognises the need for whistleblowers and wants members of the public to come forward with information about corruption. It aims to create an environment where citizens feel supported and protected when reporting corrupt practices. But then again, an individual may feel a stronger moral duty to their friends and family than they feel towards the law. They may think that reporting the criminal conduct of people they know personally is a *betrayal*, a type of immoral conduct. Indeed, people frequently use colloquialisms (such as 'snitching') that carry highly negative connotations to describe whistleblowing. Stigmatisation of this type can create 'codes of silence' that weaken the rule of law and reduce societal accountability for corrupt and criminal practices. Indeed, without such 'codes of silence' participation in organised crime and corruption would be challenging if not impossible.

Research by Camargo (2017) on the social norms that perpetuate corruption in Africa stressed the role of social networks. These networks, defined as a social structure made up of people who you know, are an essential aspect of any African society. Social network members (SNMs) can be a person's friends, colleagues, acquaintances and kinspersons, and can exist either online or offline. Almost everyone is part of one social network or another (Putnam, 2000). Social networks can have a 'dark side', encouraging people to privilege the needs of the network above those of the wider collective good (for a discussion of the 'dark side' of social capital, see Baycan & Öner, 2023). There is a small (but growing) body of research that looks at the relationship between social capital and crime (e.g., Rubio, 1997; Browning, 2009; Evans, 2016). This work shows how criminals utilise social capital to perpetuate criminal behaviour and evade the authorities.



Given their destructive and obstructive nature, it is surprising that 'codes of silence' norms did not emerge as a theme in the expert opinion analysis presented in Chapter 5. This omission may be due to the fact that, when pursuing their research, experts might focus on policy, institutional and legal frameworks. Cultural aspects (like 'codes of silence') may be seen as secondary or resultant issues within these frameworks. But then again, this omission may be because social norms around 'codes of silence' are just not widespread in South Africa. Our review of the existing local academic literature has shown that this is an understudied and frequently ignored research area. Perhaps the lack of attention paid to this issue is because it is not a serious problem in the country.

The goal of this chapter is to examine the social norms against reporting the criminal behaviour of SNMs. As a euphemism for these social norms, we used the phrase 'codes of silence' (CoS). Because of the little empirical evidence on CoS norms in South Africa, we are left with a number of different questions. Are CoS social norms stronger for minor infractions of the law (e.g., avoiding paying for public transport) and weaker for major ones (e.g., accepting bribes)? Are some groups (e.g., geographic or ethnolinguistic) more prone to exhibiting CoS social norms than others? And, finally,

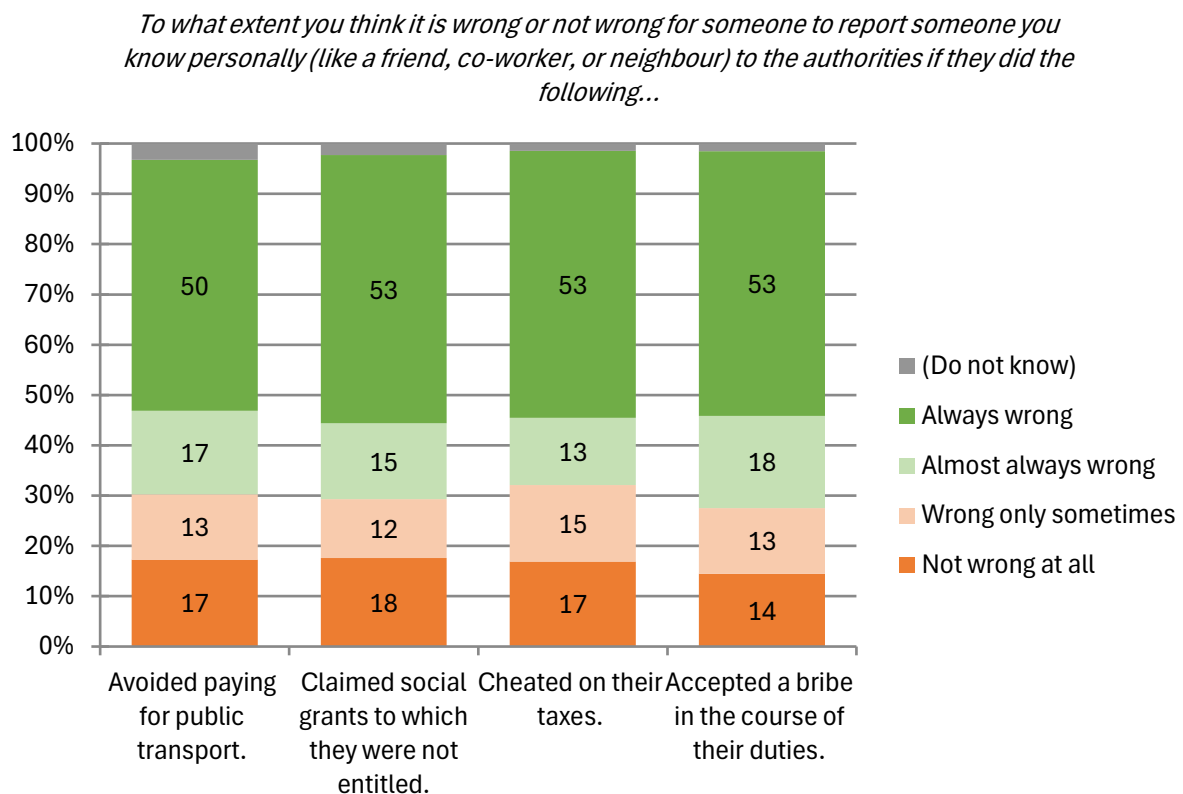
what are the main drivers of CoS social norms? This chapter tried to answer these questions, providing a comprehensive analysis of the 'CoS norms in the country.

8.1. A National Index

To gauge public attitudes towards the social norms that surround CoS we had to design unique survey questions. After careful deliberation, four questions on unlawful behaviour were included in SASAS 2023. Respondents were asked to indicate if they thought it is wrong for a person to report someone they knew personally (e.g., a friend, co-worker, or neighbour) to the authorities if they committed different kinds of crime. These crimes ranged from petty (e.g., avoiding paying for public transport) to quite serious (e.g., paying a bribe). The criminal behaviours selected for testing were based on the revised Morally Debatable Behaviours Scale that was designed by Katz et al. (1994). Public responses to the four questions are showcased in **Figure 8-1** (pg. 105), and we can see that reporting on the criminal behaviour of people you know personally was generally seen as morally wrong by the mass public.

Popular opinion did not seem to make much distinction between the different kinds of unlawful behaviour under discussion. Even when asked about quite serious crimes, most people said it was wrong to report their SNMs to the authorities. Consider, for example, that 52% of adults thought that reporting someone for accepting bribes was always wrong and 18% believed that it was almost always wrong. Indeed, only a small proportion of the public claimed that this behaviour was wrong only sometimes (13%) or not wrong at all (14%). The lack of variation in how people responded to the questions depicted in **Figure 8-1** (pg. 105) suggests that we have identified a single construct that we can term CoS social norms.

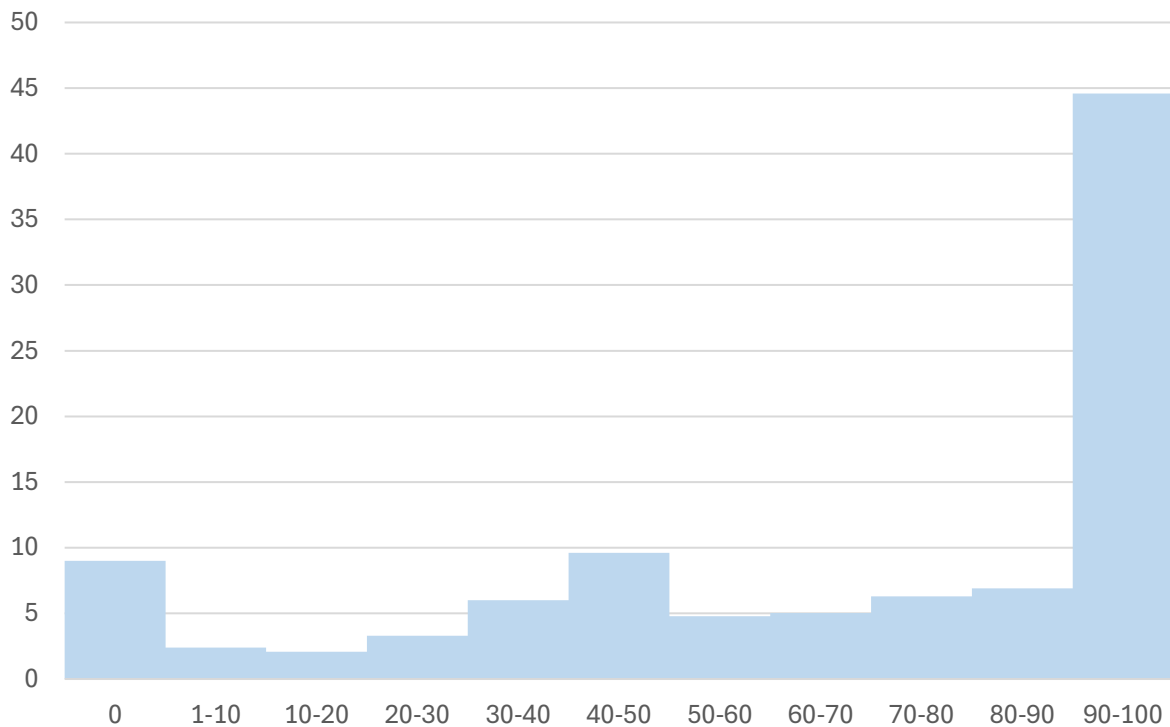
Figure 8-1 :Perceived morality of reporting the unlawful behaviour of different types of ingroup members



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

To assess the thesis that the items in **Figure 8-1** (pg. 105) are strongly interrelated with one another, a set of statistical tests were performed. These tests validated our thesis, demonstrating that the perceived morality of reporting one kind of crime was found to be correlated with the morality of reporting others (test findings are reported in APPENDIX F on page 207). In other words, if a person thought that reporting SNMs who committed one type of crime (e.g., avoiding paying for public transport) was acceptable then they were more likely to think that informing on SNMs for other types of crime (e.g., reporting someone for accepting bribes) was also permissible. We can conclude, therefore, that we have identified a single CoS norm, a social norm that views informing on others to the authorities as morally good.

Figure 8-2; Population distribution on the Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index (0-100)



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

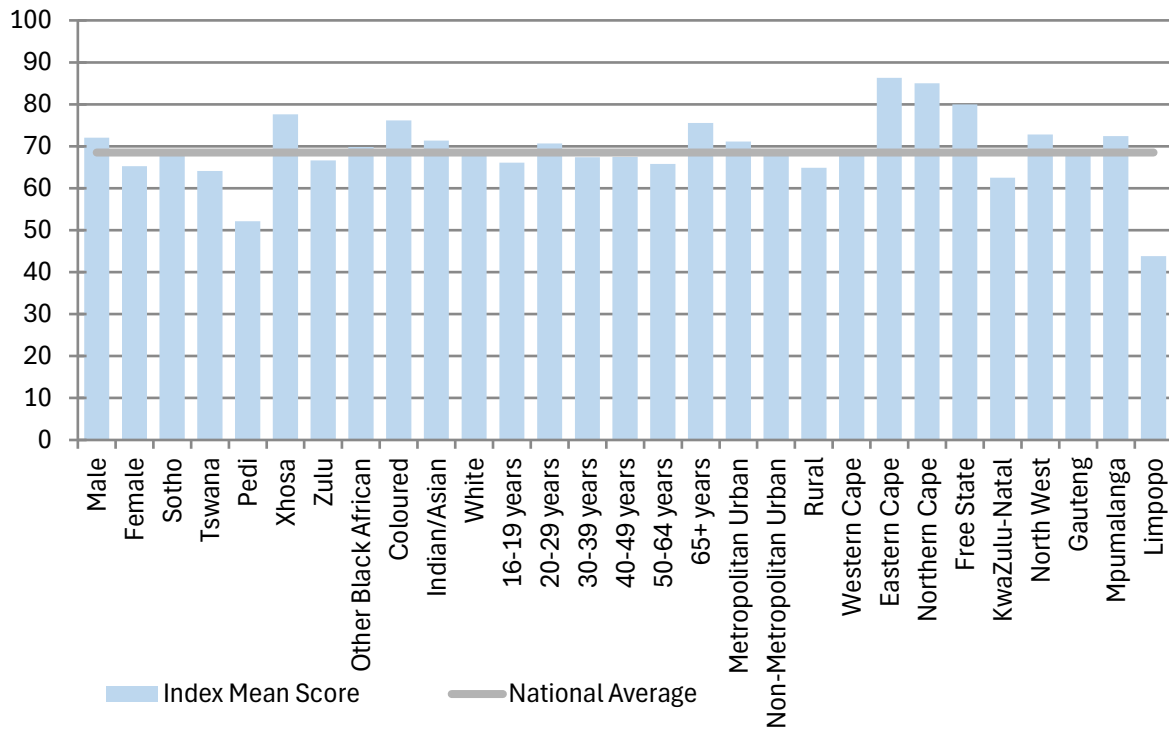
Based on the statistical testing outlined above, we constructed an index to measure the moral aversion to reporting the crimes of SNMs using the items depicted in **Figure 8-1** (pg. 105). Additional statistical tests confirmed the internal consistency of this set of items and the results suggested that the items could be reliably combined into a single metric (test outputs are documented in APPENDIX F on page 207). The index was constructed so that it was ranged from 0 to 100. The higher the value on the index, the greater the perceived moral opposition to reporting the unlawful behaviour of SNMs. For ease of interpretation, the measure was labelled the Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index. The national mean score on this metric was 69 (SE=1.094) and a histogram, presented in **Figure 8-2** (pg. 106), showed that the population distribution on the index was skewed towards the right. It is notable that a significant proportion (45%) of the mass public had a SfCoS Index score that was above 90.

8.2. Who Supports Codes of Silence

South African society is characterised by many different types of division (e.g., geographical, age, racial, linguistic and class). These divisions can run so deep that it is hard to envision any imagine social value or norm cutting across them. Nevertheless, in every nation, there are certain social norms that are cross-cutting. Reviewing the SASAS 2023 data we might wonder whether the moral reluctance to

report on the criminal behaviour of SNMs can be such a cross-cutting social norm? To answer this question, we conducted a subgroup analysis of mean SfCoS Index scores, the results of which are presented in **Figure 8-3** (pg. 107). We did not find substantial subgroup variations in the figure. Nevertheless, there were some variances between subgroups that were worth mentioning.

Figure 8-3: Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index mean scores (0-100) by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We were able to observe noteworthy levels of geographic variation in **Figure 8-3** (pg. 107). Provincial populations in the Eastern Cape (M=86; SE=1.146), Northern Cape (M=85; SE=1.697) and the Free State (M=80; SE=1.871) scored well above the national mean. In contrast, the provincial population that had the lowest SfCoS score was Limpopo (M=44; SE=2.392). When compared to rural residents (M=65; SE=1.988), support for CoS was somewhat greater for metropolitan (M=71; SE=1.854) and non-metropolitan (M=68; SE=1.684) urban dwellers. Supplementary subgroup analysis showed that those with paid work (M=70; SE=2.086) and those without (M=68; SE=1.272) had similar mean scores on the SfCoS Index. But additional analysis found moderate differences between different kinds of workers. Private sector workers (M=66; SE=2.708) were discovered to have somewhat lower index scores than their public sector counterparts (M=72; SE=3.333).

The SfCoS Index scores of the country's various population groups differed from one another. Xhosa (M=78; SE=1.571) and Coloured (M=76; SE=1.279) adults exhibited higher mean scores than other groups. In contrast, the Pedi (M=52; SE=2.54) was the population group with the lowest mean SfCoS Index score. A remarkable gender differential was observed in the figure. Male adults reported higher aggregate index scores (M=72; SE=0.875) than their female (M=65; SE=0.868) peers. Interestingly, gender differences were found to be particularly large amongst the Xhosa, Pedi, white and Zulu population groups. We did not find substantial differences between most age cohorts in the figure. But we discover that persons in the oldest cohort (i.e., 65 years and older) had a higher average index score (M=76; SE=2.683) than other age groups.

Table 8-1: Mean Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index mean scores (0-100) by religious affiliation

	Mean		[95% Conf. Interval]	
<i>Unaffiliated</i>				
Atheists	70	(2.937)	64	75
Other	72	(3.822)	64	79
<i>Christian Affiliated</i>				
Roman Catholic	68	(3.892)	61	76
Anglican	79	(3.892)	71	86
Methodist	75	(3.586)	68	82
Pentecostal/Evangelistic	70	(2.832)	65	76
African Independent Churches	63	(2.303)	58	67
Reformed Church	62	(6.619)	49	75
Non-denominational	66	(2.920)	60	71
Other	72	(4.216)	64	81
<i>Non-Christian Affiliated</i>				
Islam / Muslim	74	(5.661)	63	86
Hinduism / Hindu	56	(5.620)	45	66
Other	64	(5.281)	54	74

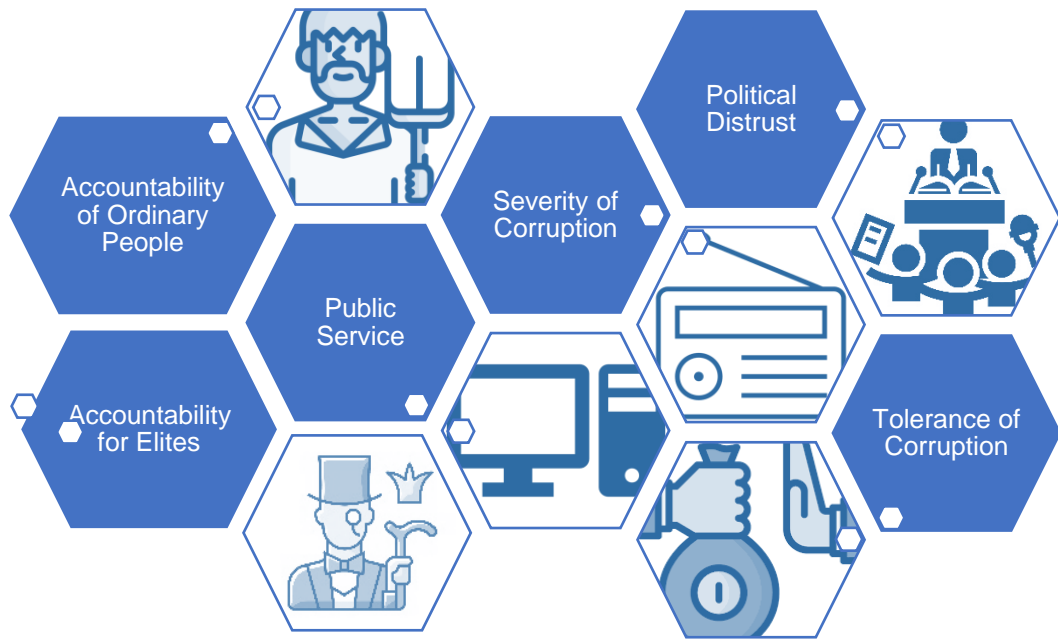
Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Additional analysis showed that average SfCoS Index scores varied according to religious affiliation. Individuals who were religiously unaffiliated (M=71; SE=2.553) had higher mean SfCoS Index scores than either Christians (M=68; SE=0.1226) or non-Christians (M=66; SE=3.627). But there is substantial variation here between the different Christian and non-Christian groups. **Table 8-1** (pg. 108) provides a more detailed comparison of mean scores across different religious affiliations. Among Christians, members of the Reformed Church (M=62; SE=2.619) and African Independent Churches (M=63; SE=2.303) had significantly lower SfCoS Index scores than others. Further analysis revealed an interesting disparity between African Independent Church members. Individuals from the largest independent church, the Zionist Christian Church, had Index scores (M=71; SE=2.810) that were remarkably different from those of other African Independent Churches (M=52; SE=3.858). Anglicans (M=79; SE=3.892) and Methodists (M=75; SE=3.586) had the highest mean index scores among Christians. Within the non-Christian group, Muslims (M=74; SE=5.561) reported the highest mean index score while Hindus (M=56; SE=5.562) reported the lowest.

8.3. Why do People Support Codes of Silence?

If a person, or a group of persons, needed to devise a communication campaign to breakdown the social norms that encouraged 'codes of silence', the subgroup analysis in the previous section would be helpful. It sheds light on the scope of these norms and pinpoints specific groups to target in a hypothetical campaign. However, it leaves a crucial question unanswered, *what* are the primary factors driving popular support for CoS norms? To address this inquiry, we delved deeper into the data using statistical algorithms. This method promises to unveil insights into the nature of these little understood societal norms. Our analysis was guided by hypothesis-driven approach; in this section we will propose six hypotheses and then test them for validity. First, we introduced a hypothesis and outline the rationale behind it. Subsequently, we assess whether our empirical evidence supports the hypothesis (the details of these empirical processes are outlined in APPENDIX F).



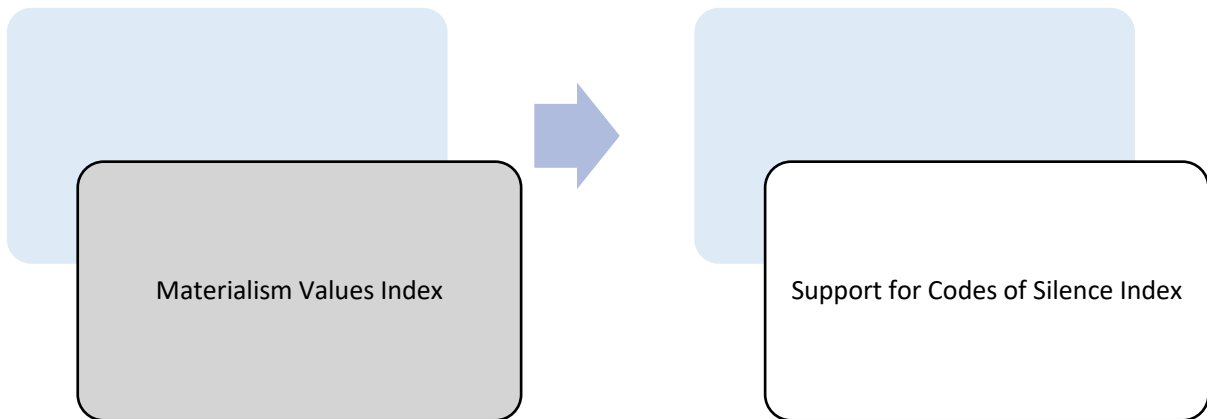
Before we begin, it could be argued that CoS social norms may be explained, almost in their entirety, by descriptive social norms about criminal behaviour. If a person viewed a particular behaviour (e.g., accepting bribes) as acceptable then they may not see the value in penalising SNMs who engage in this behaviour. But statistical testing showed that the SfCoS Index was not associated, at a meaningful level of statistical significance, with descriptive norms about criminal behaviour (test outcomes are detailed in APPENDIX F on page 208). It would appear, in other words, that viewing crime as wrong does not increase public opposition to CoS. This is consistent with Agerberg (2022a) who argued that an individual could view a corrupt act as immoral but still not attempt to redress the act.

Materialistic Values

Many experts surveyed for this study believed that the normalisation of corrupt practices in South Africa was influenced by materialistic values. It was clear from Chapter 5 that materialism was seen by experts and non-experts as a significant enabler of corrupt behaviour in South Africa. Materialistic values often prioritise personal financial gain and the accumulation of wealth over other considerations (Kasser, 2002). For this reason, they can profoundly shape social norms by promoting the pursuit of wealth over societal integrity. Because materialistic people prioritise maximising personal financial gain, they are less inclined to participate in activities that have no material benefit (also see Shrum et al., 2022). Given that defying CoS social norms often brings no financial gain, there is often no materialistic justification for breaking them. Moreover, breaking CoS norms can have financial disadvantages. Informing on SNMs could risk or undermine a person's own position within a social network and this would be detrimental to their material ambitions.

Based on the rationale provided above, we put forward the following hypothesis: materialistic values will negatively influence CoS social norms. An index that measured materialistic values (known as the 'Materialism Values' Index) was used to evaluate this thesis (an outline of how this index was constructed can be found in APPENDIX E on page 204). Although statistical testing did discover a negative correlation between the 'Materialism Values' Index and the SfCoS Index, this association did *not* achieve statistical significance (test results are provided in APPENDIX F on page 210). In essence, the findings do not provide substantial evidence to validate the hypothesis, suggesting no significant relationship between these variables. Additional statistical analysis, however, discovered that gender

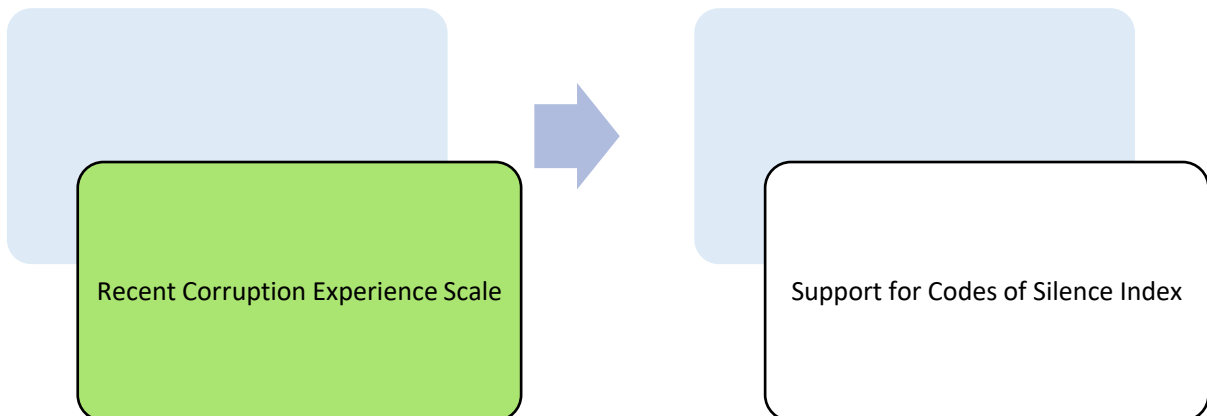
mediated the relationship between the two indexes. It would appear that materialistic values had an impact on CoS norms, but this affect was only observed for male adults.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Frequent Exposure to Corruption

Personal experiences are often use as a framework to establish and interpret good moral conduct. Individual experiences of corruption can have a significant effect on attitude formation, particularly as it relates to moral foundations associated with criminality (Scharbatke-Church & Chigas 2019). Essentially, personal experiences of corruption act as the filter through which people view and interact with those social norms related to lawbreaking (also see Jackson & Köbis, 2018). Past cross-national research by Gonzalez et al. (2019) found that personal experiences of corruption influence how people think about justice. If a person experiences public officials behaving in a corrupt manner, this could undermine their moral values that inform compliance with the law. It could also weaken respect for the authorities and erode trust in, and willingness to cooperate with, the law enforcement system (also see Seligson, 2006).



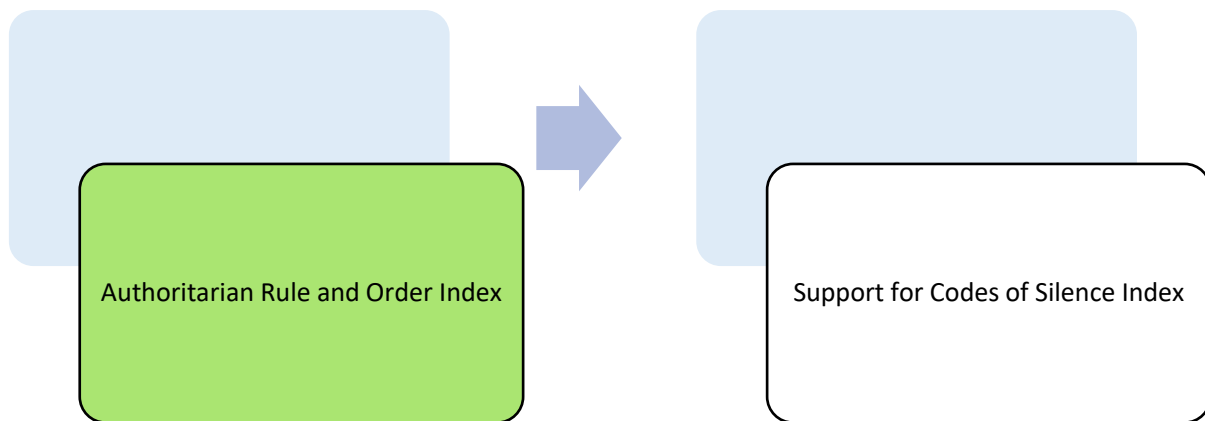
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Given the arguments made above, we theorised that recent experiences of public sector corruption will strengthen a person’s CoS norms. To evaluate this thesis, we utilised a measure of experience of public sector corruption known as the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale (a description of how this scale was put together is presented in APPENDIX E on page 203). Statistical testing showed that this measure had a moderate but meaningful association with the SfCoS Index (on page 209 of APPENDIX F we provide the findings of these tests). This validated our hypothesis, indicating that corruption experience weakens the social stigma against wrongdoing and subverts the social norms that sanction

criminality. Further statistical testing revealed that socio-economic status mediated the correlation between the 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale and the SfCoS Index. When compared to their less advantaged peers, the scale had a more robust (and positive effect) on CoS social norms of the economically advantaged.

Authoritarian Values

Authoritarian ideologies frequently prioritise law and order, advocating for strong enforcement mechanisms to uphold justice and ensure equal treatment under the law (Adorno, 1950). Consequently, some would contend that promoting authoritarian 'law and order' values may help foster social norms that comply with the rule of law. But then again authoritarian values often prioritise loyalty to established cultural groups and norms, encouraging solidarity and conformity (Osborne et al., 2023). This inclination towards preserving social hierarchies and traditional structures can lead to insular attitudes and a preference for conformity. Additionally, authoritarian ideologies often emphasise the importance of family, community and shared cultural heritage. Such an emphasis can reinforce close-knit social bonds within communities and families at the expense of ethical behaviour (also see Johnston et al., 2017). As a result, authoritarian values may prioritise social bonds over the rule of law and, therefore, encourage the adoption of CoS social norms.



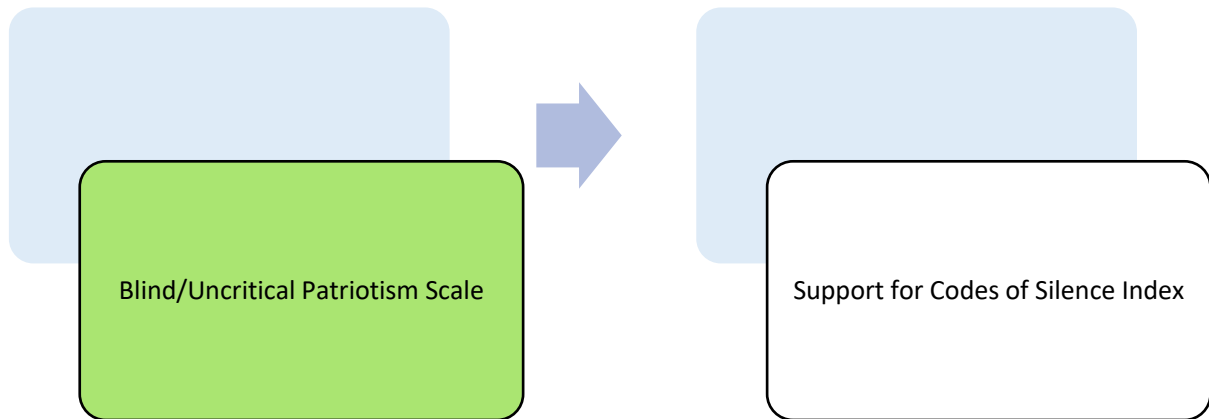
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

We created the following hypothesis based on the reasons provided above: authoritarian 'law and order' values will be *positively* associated with CoS social norms. For us to assess this hypothesis, we used the Authoritarian Rule and Order Index. The index measured how supportive an individual was of authoritarian law and order politics (for the specifics on how this index was generated see APPENDIX F on page 210). Then we conducted a statistical analysis to determine the relationship between this index and the SfCoS Index. The results of our analysis showed that CoS social norms were stronger if a person held authoritarian 'law and order' values. The more authoritarian a person, in other words, the more likely they were to have a high SfCoS Index score (the results of these tests are portrayed on page 210 of APPENDIX F) Additional statistical tests discovered that age mediated the correlation between the Authoritarian Rule and Order Index and the SfCoS Index. Authoritarianism had a more robust (and positive) relationship with the CoS social norms of younger people.

Blind Nationalism

Blind patriotism is an unquestioning and fervent loyalty to one's country, often without critical examination or consideration of its actions or policies. Such patriotism may discourage dissent and critical thinking, creating a culture that views speaking out against unlawful behaviour as disloyal or unpatriotic (Healy, 2020). Indeed, it has been argued that blind patriotism can undermine critical thinking and discourage a sense of civic responsibility (also see Schatz, 2020). Here individuals prioritise loyalty to the group over the rule of law and ethical standards. It can create a mindset that

is resistant to breaking with existing group norms, thereby perpetuating a culture of impunity and undermining efforts to promote ethical governance and social justice (Billig, 1995). In this way, blind nationalism may lead people to value ingroup loyalty over any adherence to an ethos of ethical conduct.



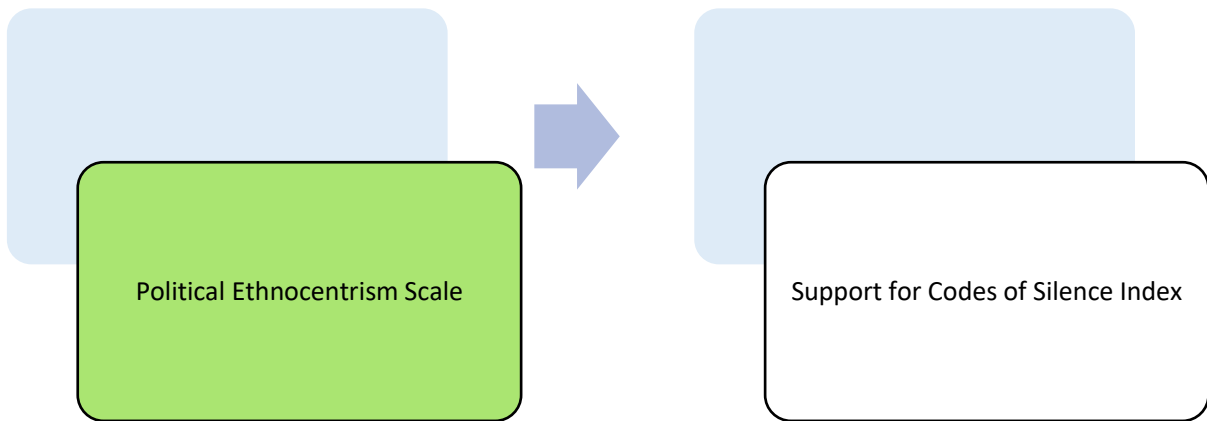
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Based on what was discussed above, we theorised that there will be a positive association between the SfCoS Index and blind patriotism. We utilised the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale to test this thesis. The scale rated the degree to which a person had blind loyalty towards the nation (the specifics on how this scale was fashioned can be obtained in APPENDIX E on page 205). We found that the scale had a robust (and positive) impact on CoS social norms (test results are depicted in APPENDIX F on page 211). If a person was blindly loyal to the nation, then they were more likely to have a high SfCoS Index score. Using supplementary statistical tests, we found that formal education mediated the relationship between the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale and the SfCoS Index. Blind patriotism had a stronger (and more positive) effect on the CoS norms amongst the better educated.

Political Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism can be used to justify unethical behaviour or law-breaking actions based on cultural exceptionalism. Individuals may rationalise their non-compliance with laws by citing cultural traditions, beliefs, or customs as superior to legal mandates (Bizumic et al., 2021). In this way ethnocentric reasoning can diminish the moral imperative to obey the law (also see Hammond & Axelrod, 2006)., Parochialism of this kind often emphasises loyalty to one's own cultural group or community over adherence to external laws or authorities. Moreover, ethnocentric individuals may prioritise loyalty over compliance with legal frameworks if they perceived laws as imposed by external forces (Berman, 1998). Such individuals may view laws imposed by external authorities as illegitimate or irrelevant to their cultural identity, leading to a reduced sense of moral duty to obey such laws.

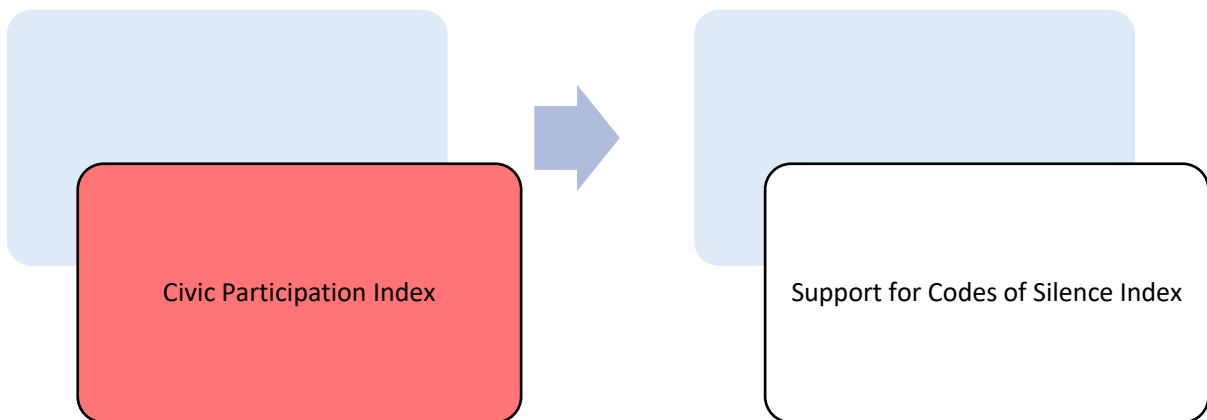
In light of the reasons given above, we hypothesised that political ethnocentrism was a driver of CoS social norms. We utilised the ‘Political Ethnocentrism’ Scale to appraise this hypothesis. The scale gauged support for the political independence of cultural groups and acted as proxy for political ethnocentrism (details on how this scale was developed can be located in APPENDIX F on page 211). Results revealed that the scale had a significant (and positive) influence the moral reluctance to report the criminal behaviour of SNMs. The more ethnocentric the individual, the more likely they were to have a high SfCoS Index score (test results are presented in APPENDIX F on page 211). Our results seem to confirm the thesis that ethnocentrism undermines a collective moral duty to uphold the law.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Civic Participation

A sense of civic duty often motivates people to contribute to the common good and uphold societal values. Civic values of this type are related to a belief in the agency of the individual and people holding these kinds of values tend to think that they can affect change and make a positive impact in their communities (Kubbe, 2018). Such values may lead people to feel a moral obligation to make a positive impact on society and improve the lives of others (also see Dalton, 2008). An important component of civic duty is social accountability, the idea that a person should hold others accountable for their actions (Dalton & Welzel, 2014). Individuals with a strong sense of civic duty should be more inclined to demand transparency, integrity and ethical conduct from others. Based on these arguments, we theorised that civic duty would be negative correlated with CoS social norms.

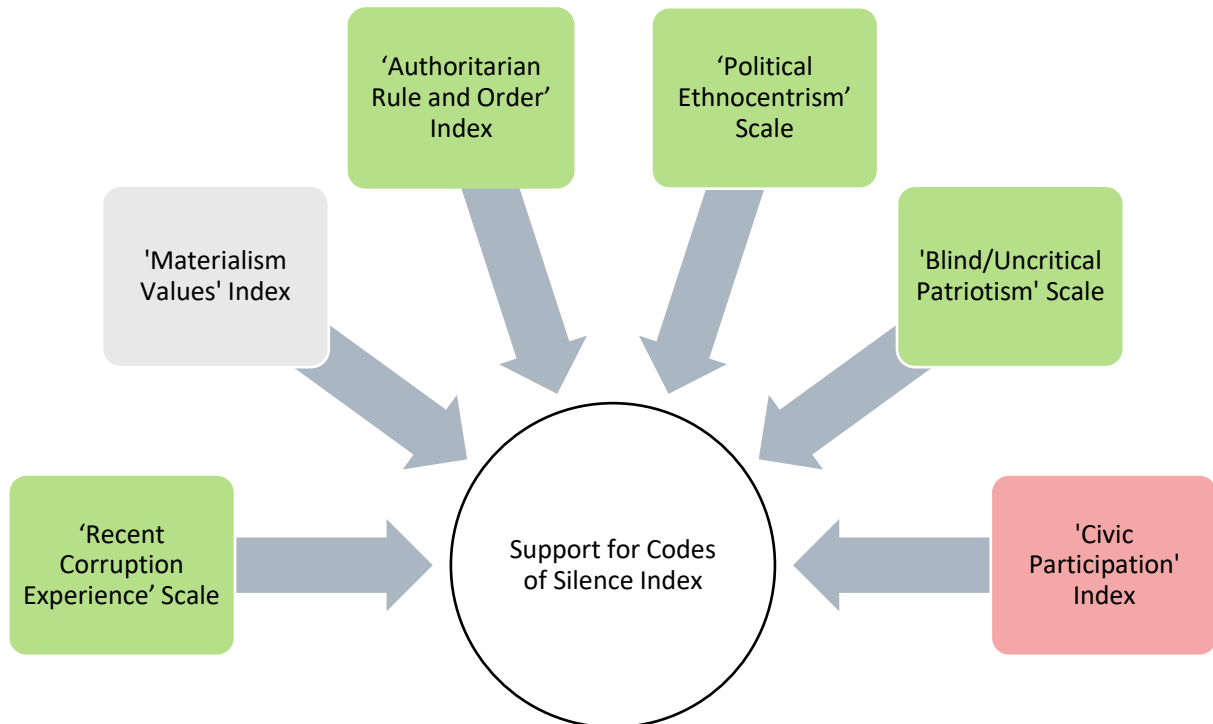


Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

To evaluate the civic duty hypothesis sketched out above, we used the 'Civic Participation' Index. This indicator measures how often an individual participated in civic activities (a description of how this index was put together is provided for readers in APPENDIX F on page 212). We believed that civic participation would act as a proxy for a sense of civic responsibility and conscientiousness. When we examined the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the 'Civic Participation' Index, we found that the two had a negative relationship (analysis outcomes are provided in APPENDIX F on page 212). In other words, participating in civic activities weakened adherence to CoS norms. This seems to confirm our hypothesis that a sense of civic duty strengthens compliance with the law and a willingness to adhere to norms of social accountability.

Comparative Evaluation

As part of our last round of testing, we wanted to understand which of the six variables discussed so far had the greatest predictive power. Accordingly, we assembled a fully specified statistical algorithm that contained all six variables. This approach permitted the simultaneous testing of each variable on CoS social norms at once. Detailed results of this investigation are presented in APPENDIX F on page 213. Only five of the six variables emerged as valid predictors of CoS norms. Among the five valid variables, the two that exhibited the greatest predictive power were the 'Political Ethnocentrism' Scale and the 'Civic Participation' Index. The 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale, in contrast, had the weakest relationship with the SfCoS Index.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

9. Not Accountable: Public Attitudes towards the Culture of Impunity for Corruption

The NACS highlights the pervasive culture of impunity for corruption that exists in South Africa. This culture is characterised by a lack of accountability and a sense of invincibility among those who engage in corrupt activities. The strategy emphasises that this culture is deeply entrenched and has been perpetuated by a combination of historical and institutional factors. In Chapter 5, when asked about the social values and norms driving corruption, a culture of impunity was frequently identified by a significant proportion of experts and non-experts. These experts talked about the perception that corruption is a normal part of doing business and how a perceived lack of accountability was seen as damaging for our society, signalling that corrupt practices are tolerated, and that justice is selective or inaccessible. Numerous experts surveyed for this study, as detailed in Chapter 2.4, identified weak law enforcement and a lack accountability as a key factor driving growing levels of corruption in the country.

The expert opinion noted above must be considered alongside past research in Nigeria by Hoffmann and Patel (2017). These authors found that when people believe they can engage in corrupt activities without facing consequences, it emboldens them to behave unethically. Such accountability perceptions were discovered to not only facilitates corruption but also create a corrosive environment where unethical behaviour is normalised and perpetuated. This has contributed to a situation where those who engage in corrupt activities feel that they are not alone and that their actions are tolerated by society (also see Persson et al. 2013). Overall, this research suggests that a culture of impunity perpetuates corruption, weakens governance structures and impedes social values of transparency, accountability and integrity.



Public attitudes towards a culture of impunity were assessed in this chapter. First, the chapter looked at perceived accountability for participating in corrupt practices (i.e., how fairly is the law applied). Here a distinction was made between perceptions of accountability for the elite and non-elite. Second, we examined the perceived effectiveness of anti-corruption reporting structures. Then, in the final chapter, we assessed fear of retaliation for speaking out against corruption. The data presented showed that perceptions of impunity vary significantly across the country's major geographic and demographic groups. But, on the whole, a majority of the adult population believed that a culture of impunity for corruption prevails in South Africa.

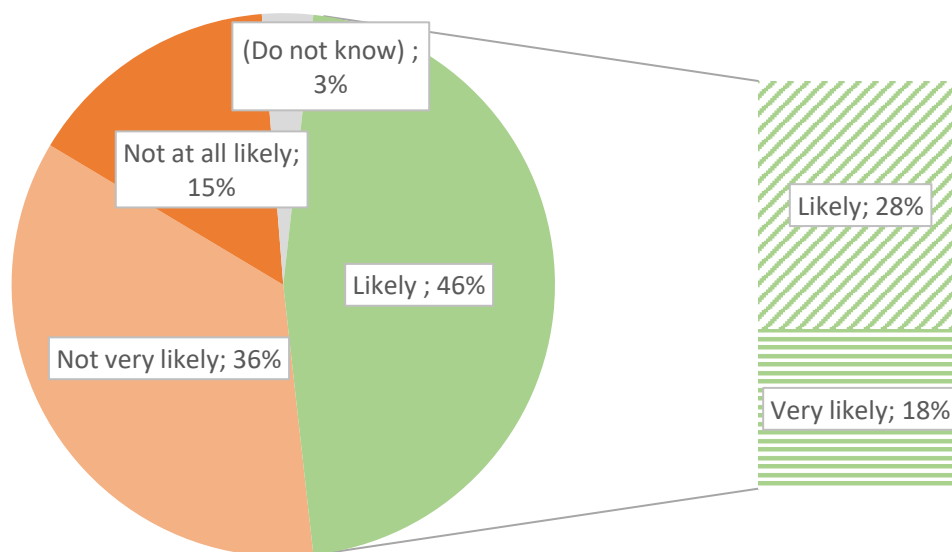
9.1. The Perceived Accountability Gap

Perceived accountability may significantly impact whether the fight against corruption succeeds or fails. When people believe that perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions through fair and effective legal processes, it fosters a sense of deterrence and promotes compliance with laws and regulations (Byrne et al. 2010). Perceived accountability, therefore, creates a deterrent effect that can

dissuade potential offenders. Conversely, when there is a perception of impunity or leniency within the legal system, it undermines faith in the rule of law and emboldens criminal elements (also see Persson et al. 2013). If individuals believe that offenders can evade punishment or receive inadequate sanctions, they may feel less inclined to abide by societal norms and laws. For these reasons, this section investigated public attitudes towards perceived accountability. Here a meaningful distinction was made between elites and non-elites. The data presented showed that there is a significant accountability gap between elites and non-elites in the country. Many people believe that the law applies differently to the rich and powerful than it does to the average person.

SASAS respondents were requested to indicate how likely a non-elite person was to be held accountable for engaging in public sector corruption. The exact wording of the question was as follows: "How likely is it that an ordinary person in South Africa will be punished by the authorities for giving or receiving a bribe, gift or favour in return for a public service?" Nearly a fifth (18%) of the general public stated that it was very likely and 28% said that it was likely (**Figure 9-1**, pg. 116). A significant minority (15%) of the public told us that ordinary people were not at all likely to be held accountable for public sector corruption and 35% believed that it was not very likely. A small proportion (3%) were unsure of how to answer the question. These findings are consistent with prior public opinion research from Afrobarometer that shows a majority of the mass public perceive a culture of impunity in South Africa²⁹.

Figure 9-1: Public responses to the question: "How likely is it that an ordinary person in South Africa will be punished by the authorities for giving or receiving a bribe, gift or favour in return for public service?"



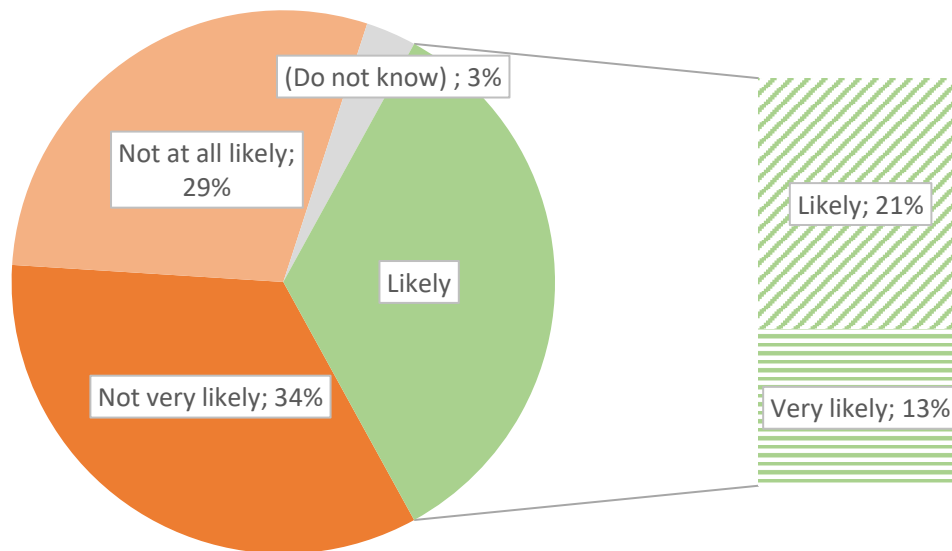
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

As a follow up to the accountability question discussed above, SASAS respondents were asked about the likelihood of the rich and powerful being punished for engaging in corruption. Looking at the results presented in **Figure 9-2** (pg. 117), approximately a third said that it was either very likely (13%) or just likely (21%). A much larger share of the general public believed that the authorities would not hold elites accountable for corruption. About two-thirds told fieldworkers that punishment was either not very likely (34%) or not at all likely (29%). The remainder (3%) were unsure of how to respond. These results match previous research by Moosa (2019) on attitudes towards lawlessness in South

²⁹ A Afrobarometer study by Patel and Govindasamy (2021) found that about half (49%) of the adult population think that ordinary people who break the law "often" or "always" go unpunished.

Africa. Using Afrobarometer data from 2018, he found that a majority of the adult population think the wealthy can use corruption to avoid taxes, avoid going to court, and register land that does not belong to them.

Figure 9-2: Public responses to the question: “How likely is it that the rich and powerful in South Africa will to be punished for engaging in corruption?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

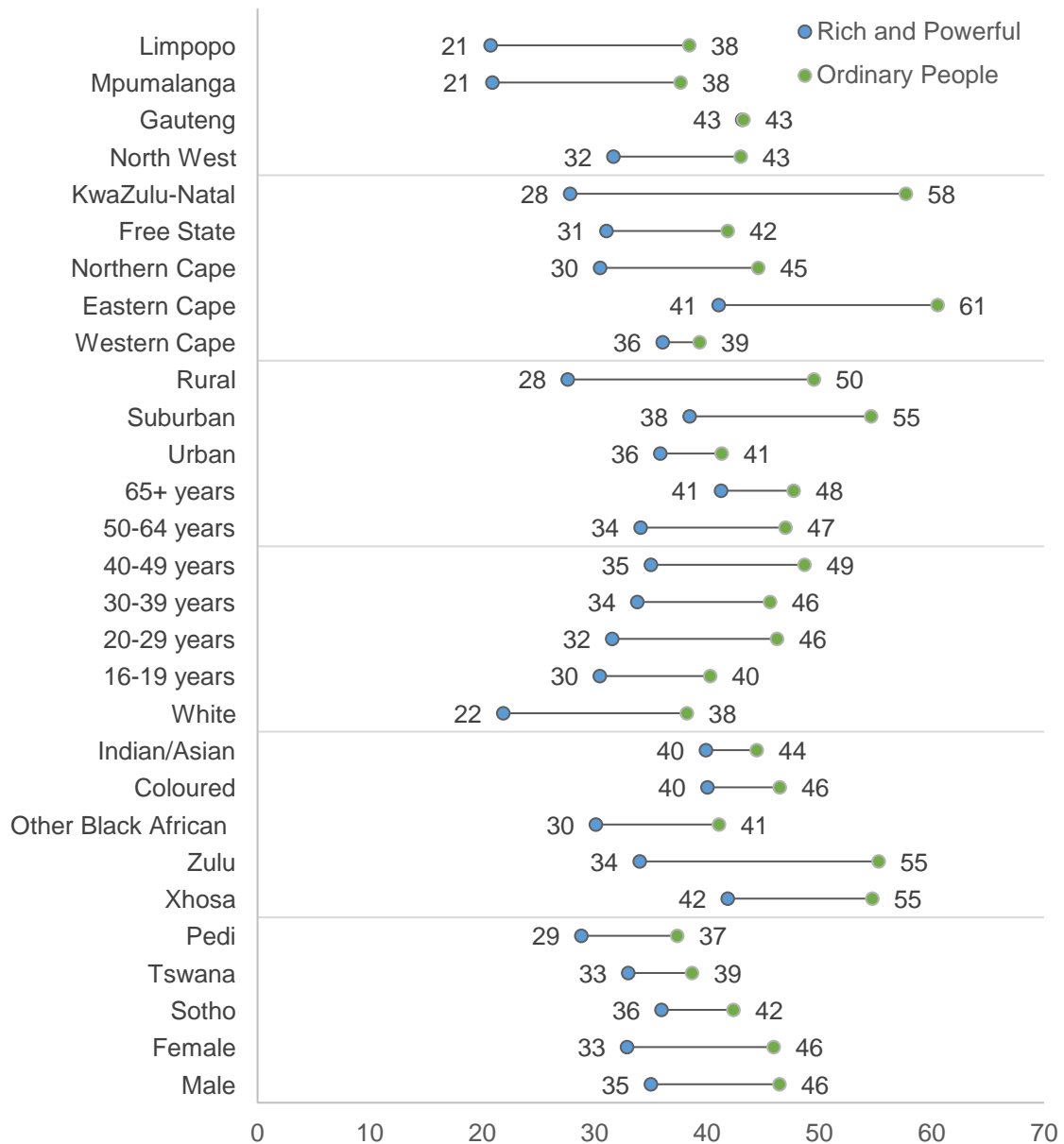
We tested and found a correlation between perceived accountability for non-elites and perceived accountability for elites (for the details of this test see page 193 in APPENDIX C). If a person thought that non-elites would be held accountable, then they tended to think that elites would be as well. But the association here was quite weak. The general public, on balance, seems to believe that ordinary people were more liable to get penalised for participating in corrupt practices than the rich and powerful. Accountability beliefs were found to differ significantly between socio-demographic subgroups. Attitudes towards accountability are presented by a select set of subgroups in **Figure 9-3** (pg. 118). The figure showed the gap in perceived likelihood that non-elites and elites will be held responsible for corruption.

Of the nine provincial populations listed in **Figure 9-3** (pg. 118), levels of perceived accountability were found to be lowest in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Accountability perceptions also differed substantially by ethnolinguistic group. Of the nine groups, the Pedi as well as the white minority had the lowest accountability perceptions. We also observed a very interesting differences between urban and rural dwellers in the figure. Suburban residents were discovered to have higher accountability beliefs than their urban and rural counterparts. There were also noteworthy age group differences that could be discerned. The youth (i.e., the 16-24 age cohort) were least likely to think that people would be held accountable for engaging in corrupt practices. Reviewing the results of the subgroup analysis, we observed that attitudes on this issue did not differ substantially by gender. We were able to detect moderate differences in accountability perceptions by socio-economic status. Individuals with high status were discovered to have somewhat lower levels of perceived accountability than their peers.

A perceived accountability gap between non-elites and elites was evident for almost every subgroup in **Figure 9-3** (pg. 118). In each case, people thought that elites were less likely to be held accountable than non-elites. The sole exception to this general finding was noted amongst Gauteng residents. Looking at the different provincial populations, we found that the accountability gap was largest for

the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Other subgroups that reported a relatively large accountability gap were rural residents, a gap of 22 percentage points. When compared to the other ethnolinguistic groups in the country, Zulu adults had the largest accountability gap. This group had a gap that was 10 percentage points above the national average. The groups with the smallest accountability gap were the Tswana as well as the Indian minority.

Figure 9-3: Percentage who thought that ordinary people as well as the rich and powerful would be punished for engaging in corruption by select subgroups



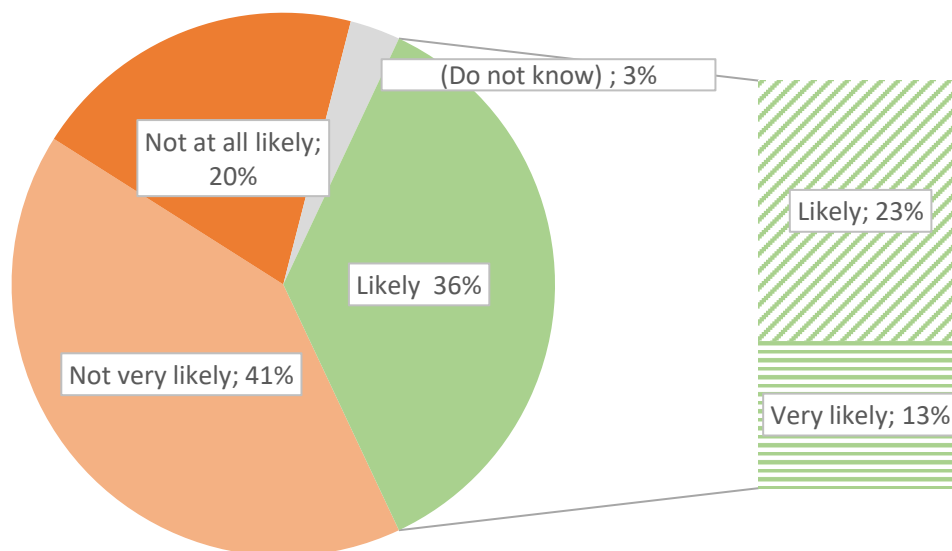
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

9.2. Perceptions of Reporting Efficiency

If a person reported a case of corruption to South African law enforcement, they should be confident that the authorities will act. But some experts have argued that this basic expectation cannot be fulfilled and that the authorities often ignore reports of corruption. This was a particular theme of Chapter 2.4 where experts blamed the growth of corruption in the country on weak law enforcement. Concerns about a culture of legal impunity for corruption was also evident amongst expert and non-

expert opinion in Chapter 5. A number of experts surveyed thought that the authorities (especially the police) did not deliver tangible results when corruption reports made to them. Some have even argued that reporting mechanisms are chronically ineffective and allow corruption to flourish unchecked. But what does the general public think about this issue? This section assessed public perceptions of anti-corruption reporting structures. We showed that attitudes on this issue are not uniform and differ substantially by geographic and socio-demographic groups.

Figure 9-4: Public responses to the question: "How likely is it that action would be taken if you went to a government office or the police to report corrupt behaviour?"

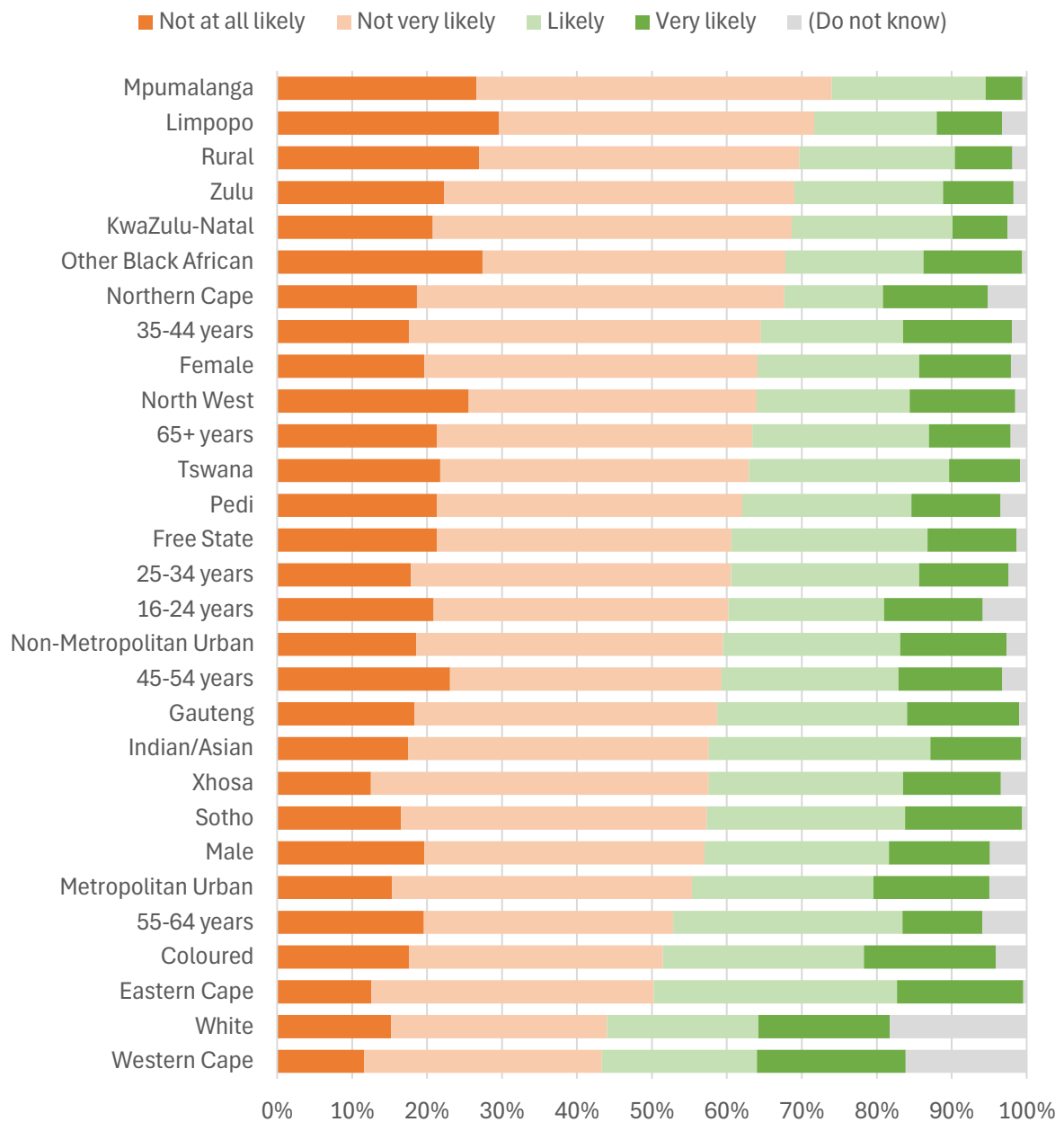


Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Survey participants were asked: "How likely is it that action would be taken if you went to a government office or the police to report corrupt behaviour?" A fifth said that it action was not at all likely while 41% told fieldworkers that it not very likely that action would be taken (**Figure 9-4**, pg. 119). Nearly a quarter (23%) believed that it was likely that the authorities would take action if they reported corrupt behaviour and 13% stated that it was very likely. A small minority (3%) were unsure and did not answer the question. The data suggests that a majority of the mass public believe that the authorities would not act if they reported a case of corruption. This finding was consistent with a Afrobarometer study by Moosa (2019) on corruption in South Africa. He found that more than half (53%) of South Africans say it is "not very likely" or "not at all likely" that someone would take action if they reported corruption.

Vanja Karth, in a qualitative interview, argued that the perception of corruption and the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms are deeply influenced by a lack of awareness. She mentions that despite efforts to show that corruption cases are being processed, "there's a lack of awareness about what is going on." She highlighted that public perception may not always align with the actual progress being made, citing instances where significant efforts, like those of the special tribunal, go unnoticed. Public attitudes towards about unresponsive law enforcement align with the finding in Chapter 9.1; data presented in that section showed that a significant proportion of the general public did not trust law enforcement to punish people for engaging in corrupt practices. Indeed, as the reader is aware, the experts surveyed were quite sceptical about reporting corruption to the police. The experts we surveyed, as discussed on page 17 in Chapter 2.4, tended to think that the police were involved in corruption.

Figure 9-5: Responses to the question: "How likely is it that action would be taken if you went to a government office or the police to report corrupt behaviour?" by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

It seems certain that public perceptions of report structures efficiency would differ considerably across the country's geographic and socio-demographic groups. To assess this assertion, we examined how the perceived efficiency question was answered by a select set of subgroups. The results of this subgroup analysis, presented in **Figure 9-5** (pg. 120), show that our assertion was correct. We discovered substantial variation in how different groups answered the question. Perceived efficiency differed notably by whether a person lived in an urban area or not. Rural dwellers were much more likely than their urban counterparts to think that no action would be taken if they reported corruption. In rural areas we found a moderate disparity between village and farm dwellers. The former were observed to be more pessimistic about the efficiency of reporting corruption than the latter. Looking closer at urban dwellers, we discovered that metropolitan residents exhibited greater faith in anti-corruption reporting structures than their non-metropolitan counterparts. Significant differences were also observed between the different provincial populations listed in the figure. Of the nine

provinces, residents of Mpumalanga and Limpopo were the most likely to state that the reporting process was ineffective. By contrast, perceived efficiency was highest in the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape.

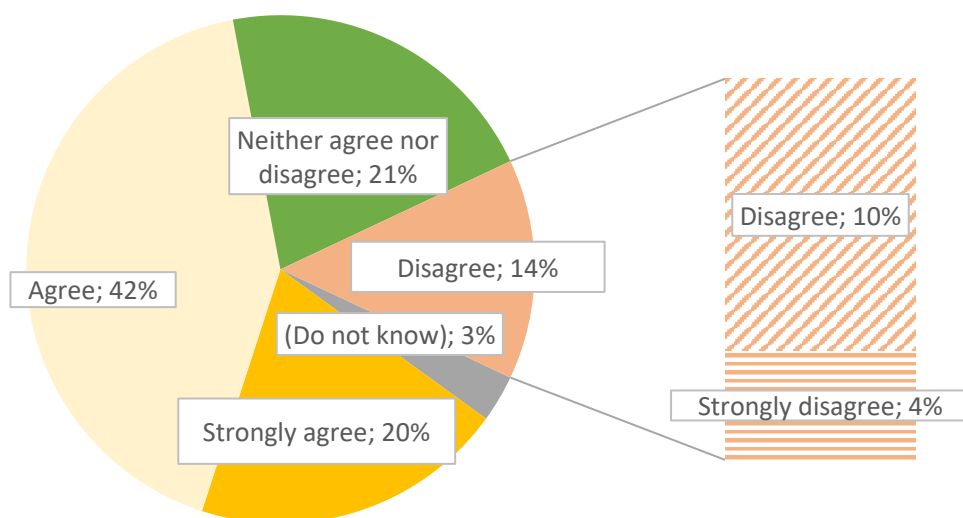
A noteworthy gender differential could be observed in **Figure 9-5** (pg. 120). Female adults were less likely than male adults to assert that the authorities would act if they reported corruption. When discussing gendered experiences of corruption in a qualitative interview, Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze highlighted that women are often more fearful of retaliation if they report corruption, especially in environments where power dynamics are skewed against them. She said that this fear is compounded by the fact that corruption often involves intimidation, bullying, and other forms of coercion, which women are more vulnerable to due to the patriarchal structures that dominate both the public and private sectors.

Assessing the different population groups in **Figure 9-5**, we found that Zulu adults were the least likely to view anti-corruption reporting structures as effective. The groups that were the most positive in their assessment of reporting structures were the white and Coloured minorities. We were unable to discern meaningful differences in perceived efficiency by age group. Supplementary analysis identified differences in how different socio-economic groups answered the question. Those at the top of the economic ladder were more likely to think that the authorities would act if they reported corruption. About half of this group (53%) thought that the authorities would take action if they made a report. This outcome can be contrasted with 33% of those at the bottom of the economic ladder.

9.3. Fear of Retaliation

Everyone in South Africa should have the freedom to report corruption without fear of reprisal. The authorities are responsible for protecting people who wish to come forward. But fear of retaliation may deter people from reporting corrupt activities, allowing unethical practices to continue unchecked. This kind of fear discourages transparency and accountability within organisations and society. An environment of fear enables corruption to flourish, as wrongdoers are emboldened by the knowledge that their actions are unlikely to be exposed. How widespread is the fear of retaliation in South Africa? In this section we probe fear of retaliation amongst the general public. We are particularly interested in how this type of fear varies across the nation's different ethnolinguistic and provincial populations.

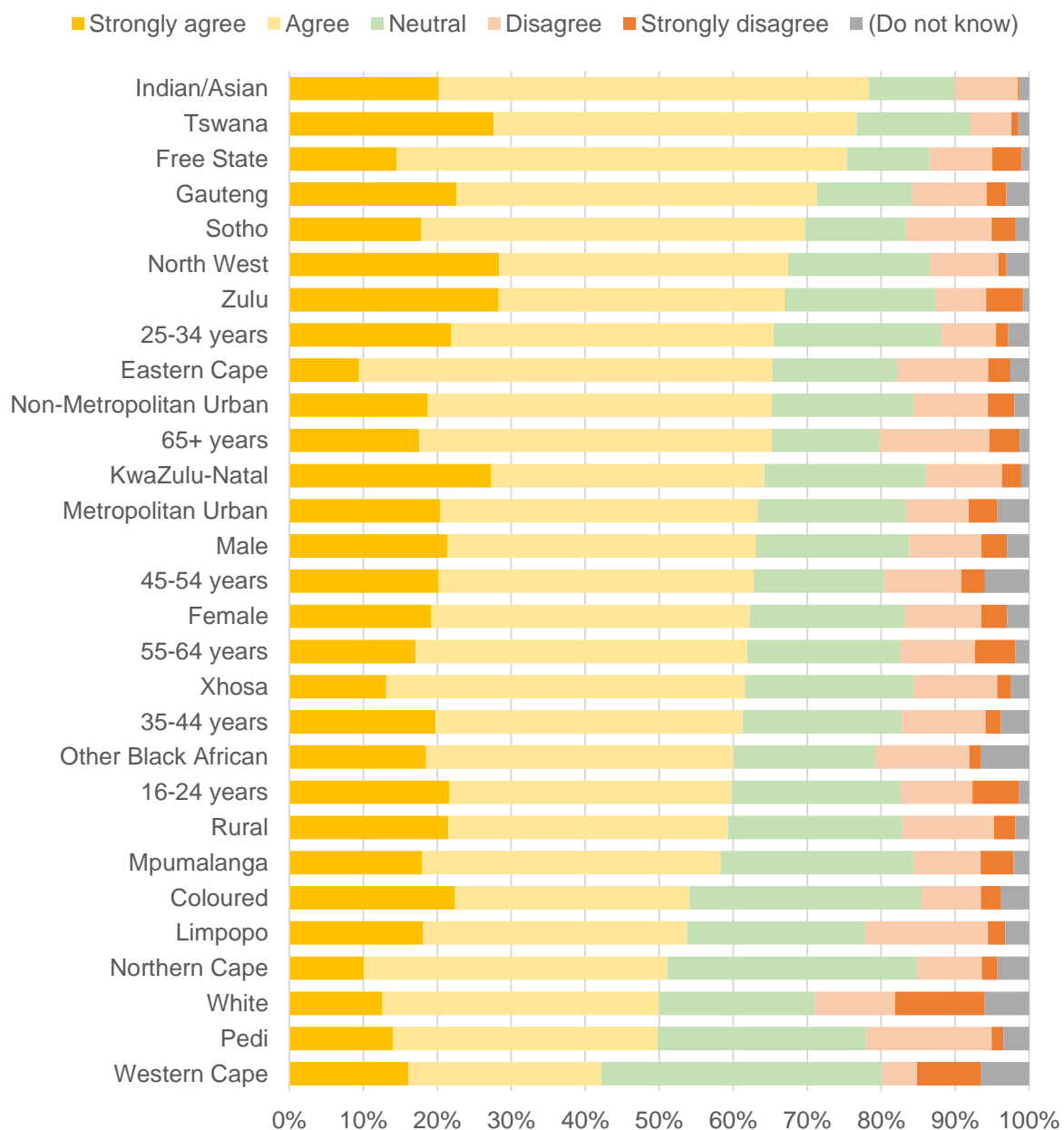
Figure 9-6: Public agreement and disagreement with statement: “In this community, people risk revenge if they speak out against corruption?”



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

SASAS respondents were requested to indicate if they agreed with the statement: “In this community, people risk revenge if they speak out against corruption” (Figure 9-3, pg. 118). Roughly three-fifths (62%) of the adult population alleged that those who reported corruption in their community risk revenge. Only a minority (14%) said that they lived in communities where people could report corruption without fear of retaliation. The remainder of the population either gave a neutral response to this question (21%) or said that they were uncertain of how to answer it (3%). Taken as a whole, our data showed that a majority of people in the country feel that they live in communities where people cannot safely report corruption. This finding is consistent with prior research on whether citizens can report corruption without fear by Patel and Govindasamy (2021). Using Afrobarometer data from 2021, these authors found that about a fifth (21%) of the adult public thought that they lived in a country where ordinary people report incidents of corruption without fear.

Figure 9-7: Responses to the question: “Do you agree or disagree that in this community, people risk revenge if they speak out against corruption?” by select subgroups



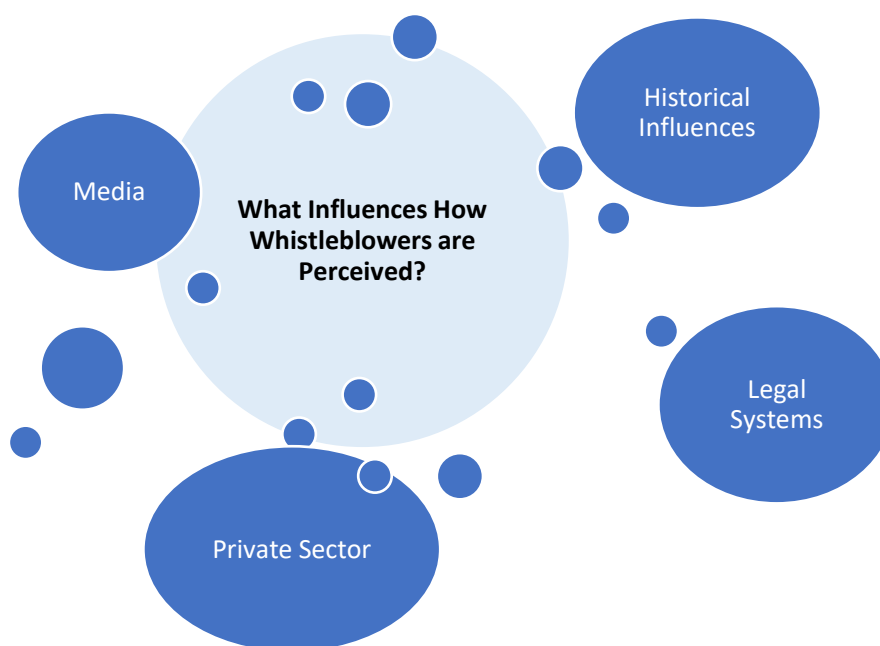
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

A subgroup analysis was conducted for the perceived likelihood of retaliation for reporting corruption. The results of this analysis, displayed in **Figure 9-7** (pg. 122), show that geographic and ethnolinguistic subgroups differed considerably on this issue. A substantial level of differentiation was not observed between urban and rural dwellers. But we were able to identify notable provincial variations in how people answered the retaliation question. When compared to other provincial populations, Free State residents were much more likely to agree with the statement. Other provinces where public agreement with the statement was high included Gauteng and the North West. Western Cape residents were the least likely of provincial populations to fear community retaliation for reporting corruption. Only about two-fifths of this group agreed with the statement, 20 percentage points below the national average. Further data analysis revealed that attitudes here did not differ substantially by socio-economic position. However, we did note that those with a high socio-economic position were somewhat more likely to agree with the statement on revenge than their poorer counterparts.

There was considerable variation in how the different ethnolinguistic groups listed in **Figure 9-7** (pg. 122) thought about community retaliation. Of the different racial groups listed, members of the Indian minority were most likely to think that they lived in communities where people risk revenge if they speak out against corruption. Looking at the various ethnolinguistic Black African groups in South Africa, we found that the Zulu and Tswana were the most likely to think that they lived in communities characterised by a fear of retaliation. The Pedi were, in contrast, the group least likely to think this way. Reviewing the subgroup analysis results in the figure, we observed that attitudes on this issue did not differ substantially by gender or age.

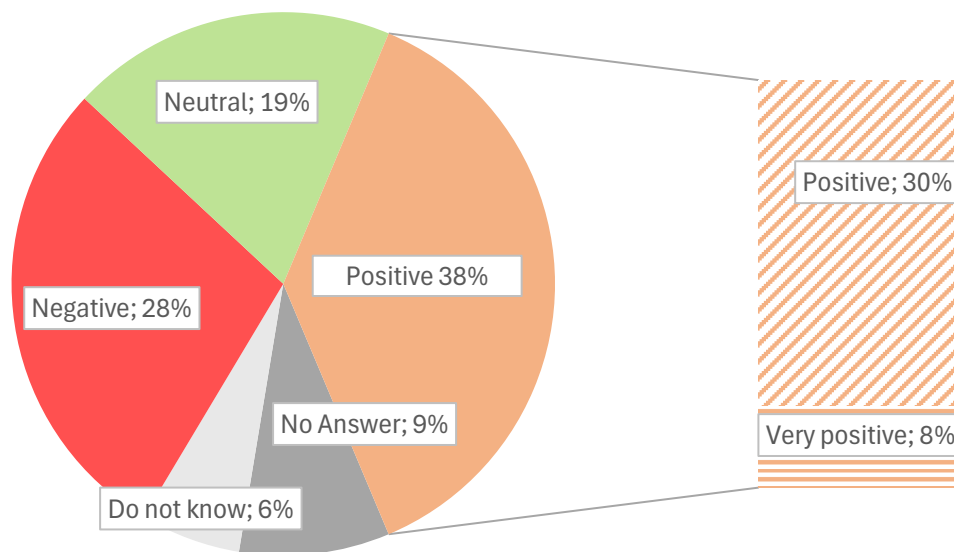
9.4. How Are Whistleblowers Perceived?

In this section we present insights from expert interviews on the role played by whistleblowers in South Africa. Interviewees were, in particular, questioned on how the general public views whistleblowers. Research participants felt that public perceptions of whistleblowers were quite complex and that historical, cultural, and institutional factors play significant roles here. The responses reveal a mix of admiration for whistleblowers as courageous figures who expose corruption, and scepticism or even hostility toward them for risking personal and family safety for uncertain outcomes. This section explores the challenges faced by whistleblowers with a particular focus on their effectiveness and protections. Note was taken of the societal and institutional barriers that discourage people from becoming whistleblowers.



As part of the expert survey, respondents were asked if the general public had a negative or positive view of whistleblowers. The results are presented in **Figure 9-8** (pg. 124) and show that the expert sample was quite divided on this question. About a third (30%) of the experts thought people had a negative view of this group. A significant proportion (42%) of the expert sample believed that the public had a negative view of whistleblowers. Reflecting on the nature of public views on this issue, Maria Frahm-Arp acknowledged that the perception of whistleblowers in South Africa is complex and stated that "certain sectors [have] a very positive view, and they see those people as brave." Vanja Karth also supported this view and noted that the public often sees whistleblowers as heroes who courageously expose corruption, despite the dangers they face.

Figure 9-8: Expert responses to the question: "Do you think that people in South Africa generally have a positive or a negative view of whistleblowers?"



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

Not all experts, as aforementioned, think that whistleblowers are viewed positively by the general public. Janine Hicks believe that a significant portion of the South African public holds a negative view of whistleblowers. She explains that some see whistleblowers as foolish for risking their lives and the safety of their families when the chances of meaningful change are slim. Amanda Gouws adds that the public's support for whistleblowers is coupled with an acute awareness of the severe consequences they face, including threats to their lives. A book by investigative reporter Mandy Wiener (2023) substantiated expert opinion on the dangers that whistleblowers face. She found that speaking out against corruption can be dangerous and documents many cases in which whistleblowers have faced serious reprisals that have included violence.

A few experts said that the term 'whistleblower' was problematic. EXPERT 9 explained how people who literally blow whistles are often seen as wanting to attract attention to themselves – as being egotistical or engaged in self-promotion in some way. In daily life, people who blow whistles are often taxi touts, or lead marches or demonstrations, or even attract attention to their regalia in order to rouse support for their favourite football team. For this reason, she felt that whistleblowers were perceived as self-serving rather than motivated by public service. Kris Dobie also emphasises that the term "whistleblower" unfairly focuses on those who suffer negative consequences, overlooking the many who report issues without facing retaliation. This suggests that the public perception of whistleblowing is skewed, with greater attention paid to the challenges and mistreatment rather than the successful resolution of issues without negative fallout for the whistleblower.

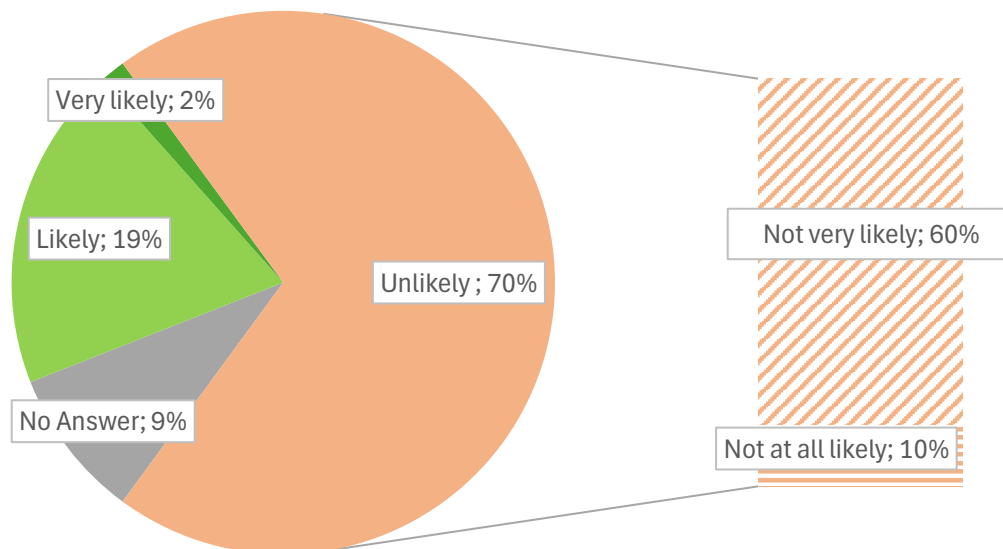
When discussing how whistleblowers are seen in the country, the media's influence on public perception should not be ignored. Thulebona Mhlanga discusses the significant role that media plays in shaping the public's perception of whistleblowing. She argued that by focusing on high-profile cases, the media perpetuates the idea that whistleblowing is only relevant in the context of large-scale corruption. This narrow portrayal discourages people from reporting smaller acts of misconduct, which are just as critical to addressing systemic corruption. Many people are unaware that whistleblowing can involve reporting everyday incidents, such as a traffic officer soliciting a bribe. This lack of awareness, influenced by media portrayal, leads to a narrow understanding of whistleblowing and deters individuals from taking action against corruption in all its forms. Christine Hobden was concerned about the way that whistleblowers were portrayed in the South African media. She noted that the media portrayal of whistleblowers as heroes can sometimes create an unrealistic standard for ethical behaviour, which may not reflect the harsh realities whistleblowers face, including social ostracization and professional ruin.

Chrissy Dube said that some in the country see whistleblowers as traitors, a notion rooted in the historical context of *impimpi* during apartheid. She said that "*impimpi* is literally somebody who tells or is a spy". Zakhona Mvelase also thought that the public's view of whistleblowers is further complicated by cultural factors. She noted that in many communities, particularly within the Zulu culture, there is a strong anti-snitching mentality. Whistleblowers are often viewed with suspicion, rather than being celebrated for their courage. She highlights how those who flaunt their wealth, even when it is known to be acquired through corruption, are often admired rather than condemned. This social acceptance of unethical behaviour further discourages people from reporting corruption. Reflecting on corruption in religious organisations, Maria Frahm-Arp pointed out that whistleblowing in these contexts can be viewed quite negatively. Whistleblowers of religious corruption may be seen as challenging deeply held beliefs and revered institutions, leading to harsh criticism and negative judgment. Moreover, the normalisation of abuse within some religious settings complicates the perception of whistleblowers and can lead to backlash against those who come forward.

Expert opinion expressed above can be compared to data from a recent public opinion survey completed by Corruption Watch (2024). The results showed that a majority of respondents were aware of the dangers that whistleblowers in South Africa faced. About two-thirds (67%) of the nationally representative sample agreed that, despite existing legal protections, whistleblowers are still being victimised and killed. A clear majority (57%) of respondents also support strengthening whistleblower protection as a vital step toward improving anti-corruption efforts. This data can be compared with an older study by Corruption Watch (2021). The study sought to understand public perceptions related to whistleblowing in South Africa. All participants in this study have a positive disposition towards the act of whistleblowing. They believed that whistleblowing is important in order to a) bring justice to a situation where there was wrongdoing or to the person who was wronged, and b) to curb corruption and crime in South Africa. Respondents believe that whistle-blowers are well-meaning persons intending to do good in society, and individuals who are deserving of financial compensation for their disclosures.

Many experts surveyed for this study expressed scepticism about the willingness of the authorities to act when corruption was reported. Many thought that it was not likely that action would be taken if a whistleblower came forward and reported corrupt behaviour (like the misuse of funds or requests for bribes) to the relevant authorities. As can be observed from **Figure 9-9** (pg. 126), a clear majority (76%) of experts surveyed thought that the authorities would not act on whistleblower reports. Data findings here aligns with the finding presented in Chapter 2.4 on page 17, where several experts indicated that weak law enforcement has been a major factor in the growth of corruption in South Africa over the past few decades. A prevailing sense of disillusionment with the system's effectiveness amongst many of the expert surveyed for this study was also observed in Chapter 5.

Figure 9-9: Expert responses to the question: “In South Africa how likely is it that action would be taken if a whistleblower came forward and reported corrupt behaviour to the relevant authorities?”



Source: Expert Survey (2024)

Some experts critiqued the inadequacies of South Africa's legal and institutional frameworks for assisting whistleblowers. Janine Hicks pointed out that the slow pace of investigations and the lack of tangible outcomes contribute to a culture of impunity, where individuals feel that reporting wrongdoing is futile. Shalati Mahatlane believed that "our government does not care about people who put their lives in danger by trying to report the wrongdoings of government officials". Zakhona Mvelase echoed these concerns and stated that the failure to resolve whistleblower cases promptly and effectively undermines public faith in the system. EXPERT 45 talked about past whistleblowers in the country, commenting that "[t]oo many whistleblowers have lost their lives, and many have been reduced to nothing after their revelations". Jane Borman highlighted the imbalance of power that whistleblowers face in legal battles, noting that they almost always lose when up against well-resourced state entities or corporations. This lack of effective protection forces whistleblowers into protracted legal battles that they are unlikely to win, further deterring others from coming forward. Ariella Scher noted that while civil society groups like Open Secrets are strong advocates for whistleblower protection, the current laws do not offer sufficient safeguards.

When asked about whistleblowers experts frequently highlighted that legal and institutional protections are insufficient, fostering a culture of revenge and reprisal. Ariella Scher and Jane Borman emphasise the significant risks that whistleblowers face, including career retaliation and social isolation. Jane Borman shared an anecdote with us about a whistleblower involved in state capture who struggled to find employment after coming forward. Despite being publicly lauded for their courage, the whistleblower was effectively blacklisted from the job market because businesses were reluctant to be associated with someone who had exposed corruption. She advocated for greater legal protections for whistleblowers. Ariella Scher was also concerned about the lack of adequate legal protections and said that protection failures exacerbate the financial challenges faced by whistleblowers. Janine Hicks is likewise quite concerned about inadequate whistleblower protection mechanisms in the country, which she described as "laughable" and "non-existent".

EXPERT 12 asserted that law enforcement agencies, including the SAPS and NPA, often view whistleblowers as criminals or individuals acting out of self-interest. In an interview, she stated that whistleblowers are often "treated with scepticism from the beginning and they're not seen as people

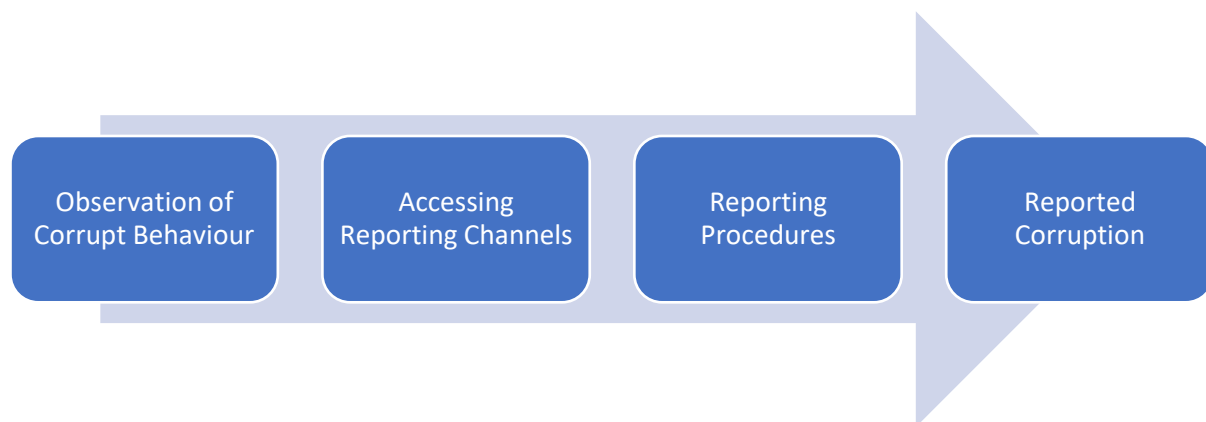
worthy of protection". The dismissive attitude of law enforcement not only puts whistleblowers at risk of retaliation but also undermines the investigative process. The expert suggested that organisational cultures in the country often actively discourage whistleblowing, with a prevailing belief that those who come forward are "implicated" in wrongdoing and seek to avoid consequences. EXPERT 12 attributed this to a "culture of obedience to authority over merit" within many organisations, where whistleblowers are not seen as worthy of protection.

Trevor White was concerned about how whistleblowers are seen in the private sector. He said that many companies fear the damage to their reputation that could result from being associated with corruption investigations. He claimed some companies have adopted a "not wanting to know" attitude toward potential corrupt activities. There is also a tendency to protect key revenue-generating individuals or departments which can also lead to a culture of impunity. He said that the private sector needs to create a more supportive environment for whistleblowers. This requires companies to move beyond mere compliance with regulations and create a corporate culture that genuinely supports transparency and accountability.

10. Silent Witness: Understanding the Reluctance to Report Corruption

Citizen involvement can strengthen the efforts of anti-corruption agencies. One of the main anti-corruption tactics prioritised by the NACS is to encourage everyday citizens to report corruption that they experience or witness to the authorities. Indeed, citizen participation is a key pillar of the strategy's vision for an ethical, transparent and accountable society. The NACS envisions that members of the public will provide support to assist law enforcement agencies and hold individuals and organisations suspected of corrupt activities accountable. By bringing corrupt practices to light, individuals contribute to holding perpetrators accountable and fostering transparency and accountability in public and private sector governance. If people habitually report corruption that they witness, this can help create a culture where corruption is not tolerated. They can help deter potential wrongdoers and promote a culture of integrity and compliance with laws and regulations.

In the last few decades many researchers started including questions on anti-corruption behaviours in large public opinion surveys. This shift towards 'what ordinary people can do' and away from 'what government has done' is part of a wider change in public opinion research to focus on proactive anti-corruption behaviour (Wysmułek, 2019). One of the first South African studies to look at anti-corruption behaviour was by Gordon et al. (2012). During the 2011 round of SASAS, for example, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: "I would report an incident of corruption". The vast majority (85%) of the adult population agreed with the statement with only a small minority (12%) disagreeing. According to Afrobarometer, the proportion who thought that ordinary people could fight corruption in 2018 was 27 percentage points lower than what was found in SASAS 2011 (Moosa, 2019). It would appear that, between 2011 and 2018, people have become more cautious and more sceptical about their ability to fight corruption in the country.

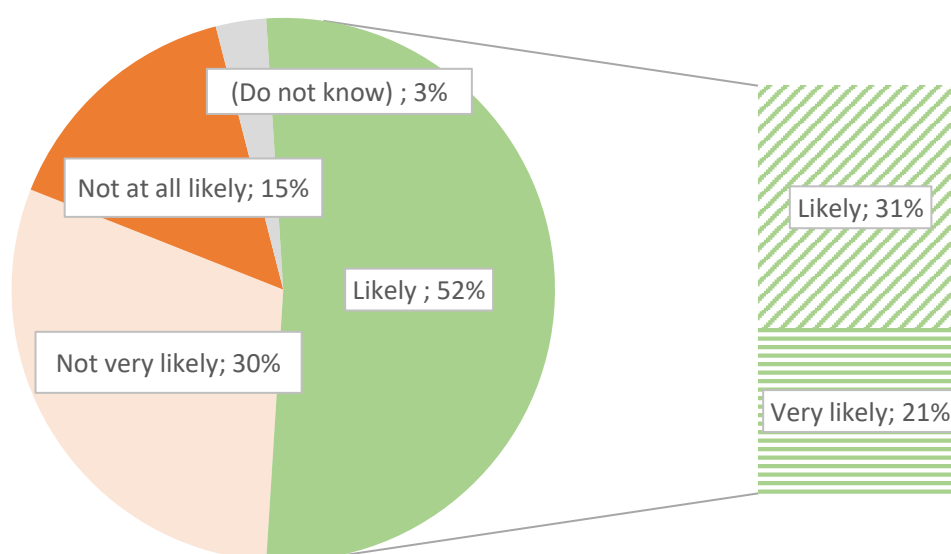


Building on past research into reporting intention in South Africa, this chapter did *not* look at participation in anti-corruption reporting. Rather we examine the social norms surrounding reporting witnessed corruption to the authorities. Here we focused on public sector corruption, the type of corruption that ordinary people are most likely to experience or witness first hand. It is hoped that the data presented in this chapter was used for the creation of communication campaigns to encourage people to report corruption. Our goal, therefore, was to identify groups that have the lowest propensity for reporting corruption. In addition, we sought to detect the main drivers of reporting intention, here the focus was on how perceptions of law enforcement shape attitudes. This will allow strategists to tailor effective messages that promote a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption.

10.1. Who Would Report Corrupt Practices?

Participants in SASAS were requested to indicate whether, if they experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour, they would report it.³⁰ There was significant polarisation in how the general public answered this question. About half said that they would not report with 30% stating that it was not likely and 15% that it was not at all likely. A similar proportion told fieldworkers that they would report corruption if they experienced or witnessed it (**Figure 10-1**, pg. 129). More than a fifth (21%) said that it was very likely that they would report and 31% stated that it was just likely. The remainder (3%) were uncertain and did not answer the question. Here, intention to report can be thought of as a proxy for the social norm to alert the authorities when witnessing corruption. We examined how the reporting intention question was answered by a diverse set of geographic and socio-demographic groups. The results of this analysis, presented in **Figure 10-2** (pg. 130), show substantial subgroup variation in the intention to report.

Figure 10-1: Public responses to the question: "If you experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour, how likely is it that you would report it?"

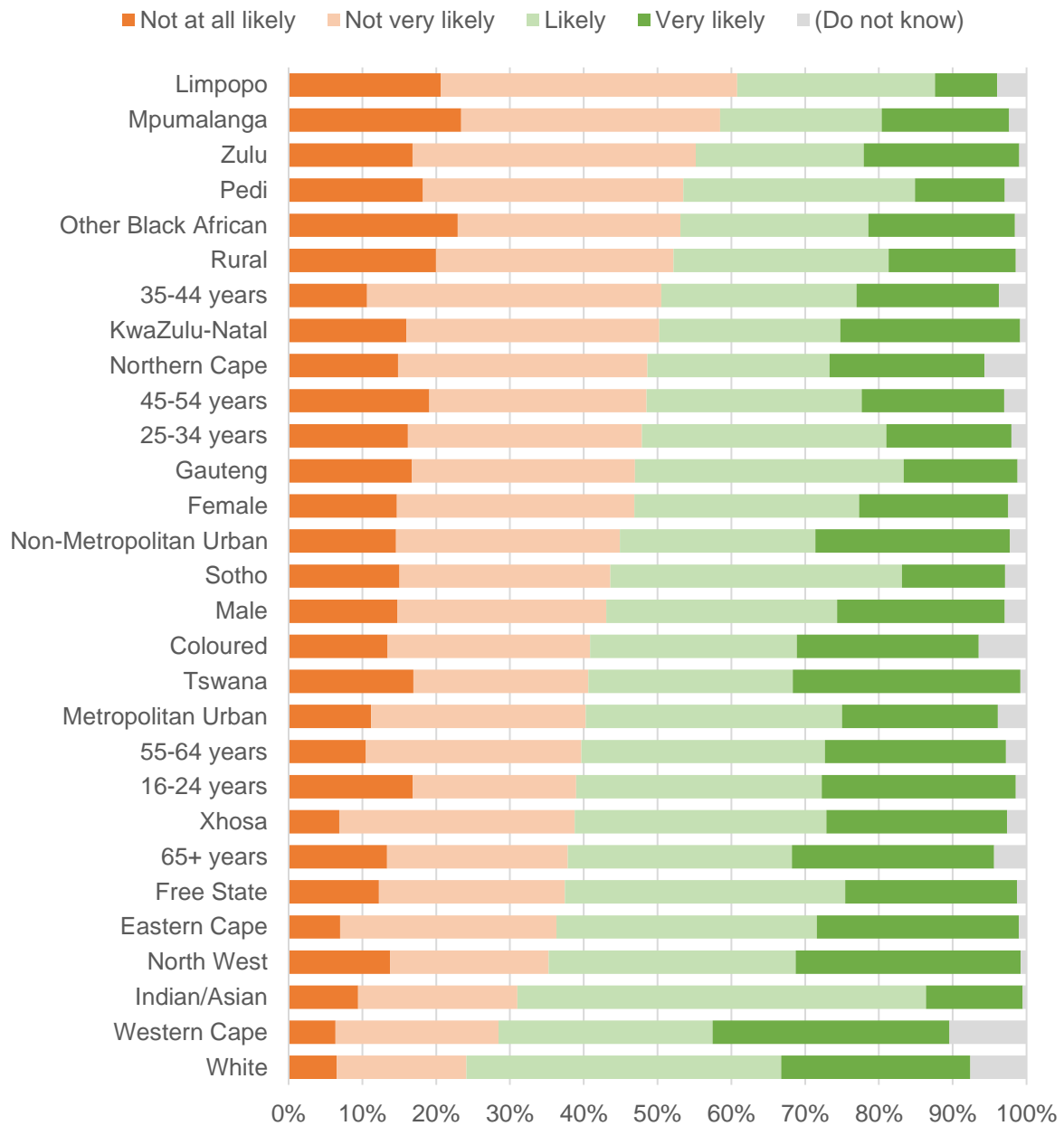


Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We discovered that attitudes on this issue did not differ substantially by gender. But we were able to identify significant population group differences in **Figure 10-2** (pg. 130). When compared to other groups, we found that members of the Zulu and Pedi were the least likely to state that they would report corrupt practices than were other groups. The group that showed the greatest propensity to report were the Indian minority - 68% of this group's adult members stated that they would be likely or very likely to report corruption. Noteworthy variations by age cohort were discovered. The middle-aged cohorts showed a lower propensity to report than their younger or older counterparts. Encouragingly, of all the age cohorts, the 16-24 cohort exhibited the highest reporting intention. Additional data analysis identified an interesting dissimilarity in how different types of labour market groups answered the reporting intention question. Self-employed persons had lower predisposition for reporting corrupt behaviour than wage employees or non-workers.

³⁰ The exact wording of this question was: "If you experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour, how likely is it that you would report it?"

Figure 10-2: Responses to the question: "If you experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour, how likely is it that you would report it?" by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

As can be observed from **Figure 10-2** (pg. 130), the propensity to report corruption differed considerably by province of residence. When compared to the other provinces, residents of Mpumalanga and Limpopo had the lowest propensity to report. North West and Western Cape residents, on the other hand, exhibited a higher inclination to report than their peers in other provinces. Some interesting geographic variations in report intention were detected. Rural dwellers showed a lower propensity to report than their urban peers. This geographic disparity is largest in the North West and smallest in the Eastern Cape. Looking closer at urban populations, we found that residents of non-metropolitan areas exhibited a lower predisposition to report than non-metropolitan residents. Supplementary data analysis revealed that attitudes here differed substantially by socio-economic position. The economically advantaged were more likely to state that they would report corruption if they witnessed or experienced it than other socio-economic groups.

10.2. Lay Attributions on Witness Silence

We need to understand why there is so much reluctance to report witnessed corruption in South Africa. This section looks at non-expert opinion on why many people in South Africa do not report the corruption that they have witnessed. As discussed in Chapter 5, lay attributions can be an important source of information for policymakers and scholars. Corresponding to the approach used in Chapter 5, lay attributions in this section are classified as either internal (i.e., psychological) or external (i.e., environmental). Understanding non-expert attitudes towards witness silence can shed light on the complex interplay of societal, institutional, and psychological barriers to reporting corruption. By uncovering these obstacles, policymakers and anti-corruption agencies can develop targeted interventions to address root causes and promote a culture of reporting.

SASAS participants were requested to provide a rationale for why many people in South Africa do not report corruption. The precise wording of this question was as follows: “[s]ome people say that many incidents of corruption are never reported. Based on your experience, what do you think is the main reason why many people do not report corruption when it occurs?” A wide variety of different options were read out and multiple options could be selected. Looking at responses to this question, we find that only a small percentage of the public were unable to provide an answer. Indeed, about two-thirds of the population provided multiple responses when queried about the main reasons for not reporting corruption and two-fifths provided more than two responses.

Reviewing all the responses provided, the most common involved environmental (i.e., external) factors. Nearly nine-tenths (86%; SE=0.010) of the general public identified factors related to the law enforcement system. Of the four different external factors listed, lack of punishment for the guilty scored highest (51%; SE=1.584), and this was followed closely by a lack of protection for those reporting corruption (49%; SE=1.578). In addition, we found that 30% (SE=1.415) of the public stated that the reporting structures themselves were corrupt. Slightly more than half (55%) of the population listed psychological (i.e., internal) factors as drivers of non-reporting. The most common internal factor selected was the normalisation of corruption, with 27% (SE=1.376) stating that no one reports because corruption is normal and everyone does it. Similar proportions of the public also selected a lack of knowledge (23%; SE=1.251), and concerns about ingroup loyalty (21%; SE=1.296).

Table 10-1: Main attributions identified for why many people do not report corruption in South Africa (multiple response) by likelihood of reporting witnessed corruption

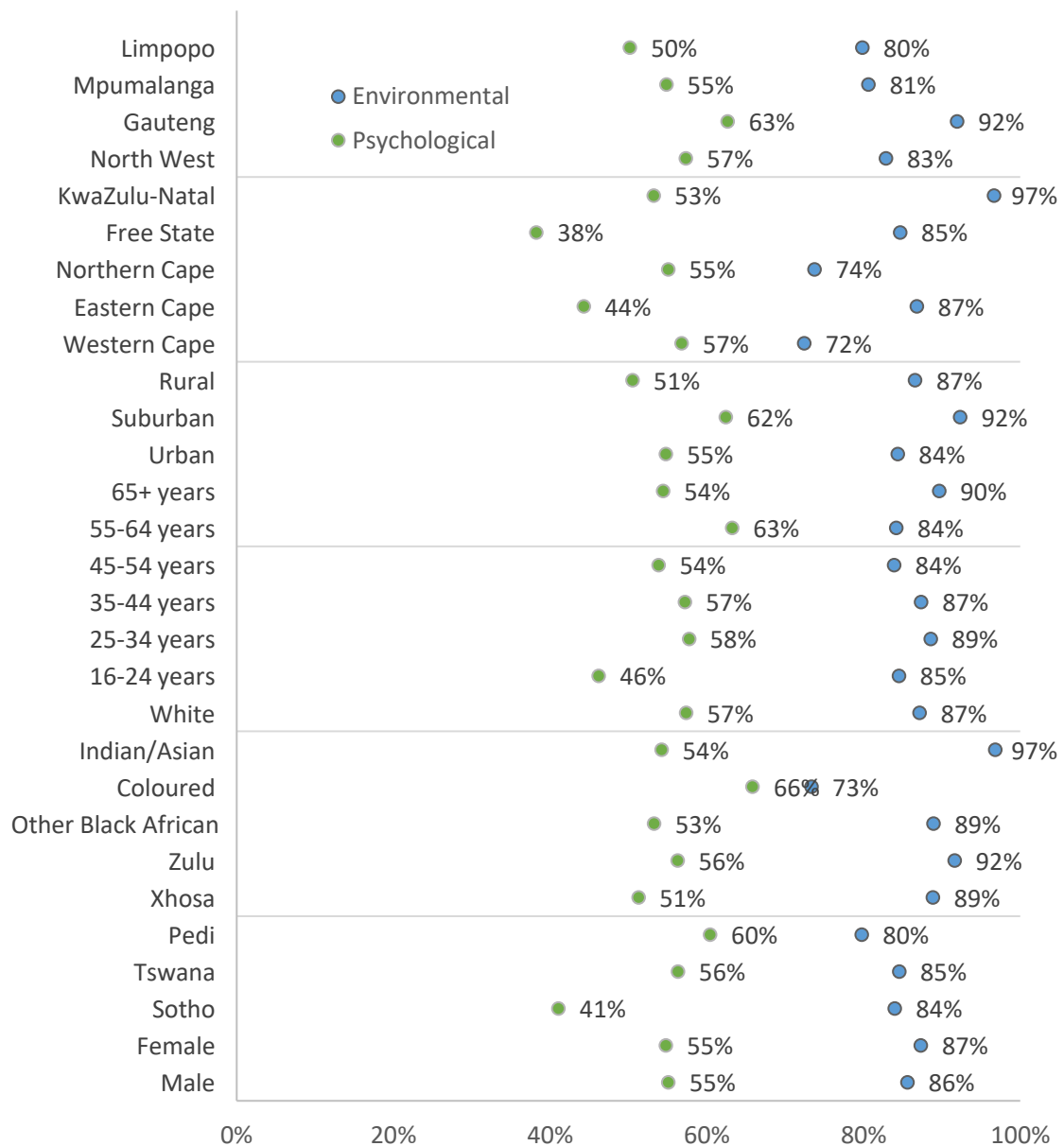
	Likely to Report	Unlikely to Report
<i>Psychological Factors</i>		
Corruption is normalised	26 (1.842)	29 (2.136)
People don't know where to report it	22 (1.735)	25 (1.895)
No one wants to betray anyone	20 (1.655)	24 (2.109)
<i>Environmental Factors</i>		
Those responsible will not be punished.	49 (2.266)	54 (2.277)
There is no protection for those who report corruption	49 (2.256)	49 (2.864)
The officials where they would report to are also corrupt	29 (2.031)	32 (2.118)
It is not worth the effort of reporting it.	28 (2.058)	29 (2.202)
<i>Other Responses</i>		
Other reason	2 (0.796)	1 (0.494)
Refused	3 (1.443)	2 (0.606)

Note: Linearised standard errors in parenthesis.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The lay attributions that people used appeared to be somewhat influenced by their intention to report corruption. As can be observed from **Table 10-1** (pg. 131), those with no report intention were more likely to select attributions related to the legal system. These included the concern that responsible parties would not be punished and that anti-corruption reporting structures were corrupt. Those with report intention, by contrast, were less likely to select legal system attributions. However, the overall relationship between lay attributions and the intention to report corruption was relatively weak. It would seem that both groups hold broadly similar beliefs about the causes of report reluctance.

Figure 10-3: Percentage who selected psychological and environmental attributions to explain why people don't report corruption by select subgroup (multiple response)



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

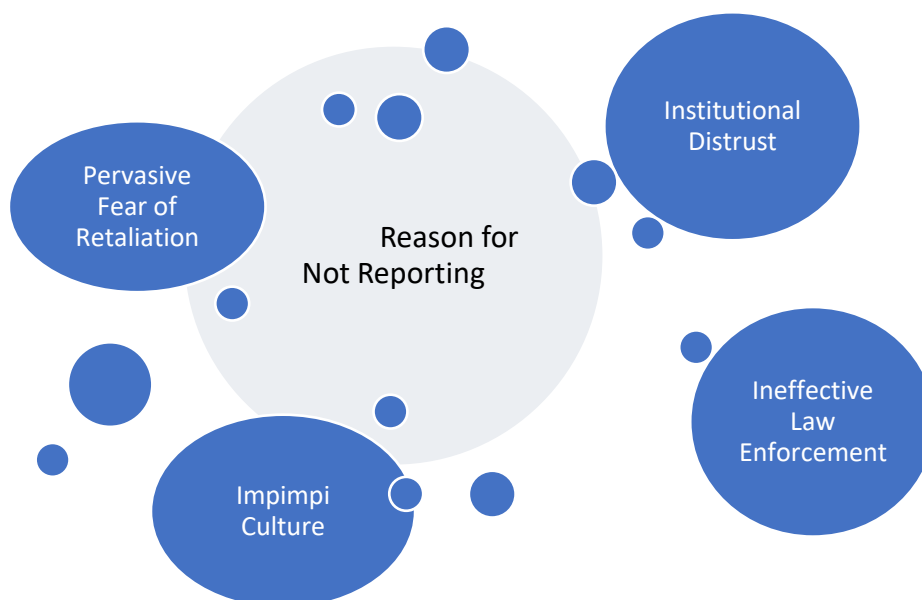
Now, let's explore how different subgroups responded to the lay attribution question discussed above. To compare this subgroup analysis with what was done in Chapter 5, we examined the percentage of various groups using two types of attributions: (i) psychological and (ii) environmental. The results are displayed in **Figure 10-3** (pg. 132); only moderate subgroup differences can be observed in the figure.

Most subgroups leaned toward environmental attributions; this contrasts with the findings presented in Chapter 5 where psychological attributions were more commonly cited. Although there was minimal variation in environmental attributions across subgroups, a few differences stand out. Among the nine provincial groups, residents of KwaZulu-Natal (97%; SE=0.728) and Gauteng (92%; SE=1.175) were most likely to favour environmental attributions. Conversely, residents of the Western Cape (72%; SE=2.490) and Northern Cape (74%; SE=2.979) were the least likely to attribute report reluctance to environmental factors. The figure also highlighted notable differences among population groups. Of the nine groups, the Zulu (92%; SE=1.306) was the most likely to select environmental explanations while the Coloured group (73%; SE=1.874) was the least.

Turning to psychological attributions, we can observe a general lack of subgroup variation in **Figure 10-3** (pg. 132). But we were able to identify some moderate regional variations. Of the nine provincial groups, residents of the Free State (38%; SE=3.118) and Eastern Cape (44%; SE=2.365) were significantly more likely to attribute report reluctance to psychological factors. The figure also reveals notable age group differences, with psychological attributions being most favoured by the 55-64 age cohort (63%; SE=2.339). The 16-24 cohort (46%; SE=2.388) were, conversely, the least likely to prefer psychological attributions. Among the various population groups, the Coloured group (66%; SE=2.009) were the most inclined to select psychological explanations. We found that Sotho adults (41%; SE=3.063) were, by contrast, the least likely to favour psychological attributions.

10.3. Exploring Expert Perspectives on Why Witnesses Stay Silent About Corruption

The previous section looked at non-expert opinion on public reluctance to report corruption. Now let us turn our attention to expert opinion on why witnesses do not report corruption to the authorities. As part of the expert survey, respondents were asked about the social values and norms that discourage people from reporting corruption³¹. A range of different responses were provided, and we were able to identify four main themes: (i) pervasive fear of retaliation; (ii) institutional distrust; (iii) ineffective law enforcement; and (iv) 'impimpi' culture. These themes, particularly those related to legal-political constraints, have some similarity to the lay attributions put forward by the general public. A more detailed overview of the main themes to arise are provided below.



³¹ The exact wording of the question was as follows: "Many incidents of corruption in South Africa are never reported to the authorities. In your opinion, what are the social values and norms, if any, that discourage people from reporting corruption when it occurs?"

Pervasive Fear of Retaliation

When surveyed on why people do not report corruption, one of the most common responses was fear of retaliation. Chrissy Dube, for example, stated that people were reluctant to take an active role in fighting corruption because of fear of retaliation and weak whistleblower protection mechanisms. Some experts indicate that this kind of fear may have grown in recent years. When discussing the reason that people do not report corruption, Kris Dobie believed that reporting corruption has become more dangerous than it was in the past. He said that: "[i]nvestigating corruption is becoming more dangerous because you now have these really professional groups involved in in corruption". Here he referred to the growing prominence of mafia-style organisations within South Africa. Indeed, a number of experts talked about fear of being killed as a detriment to reporting corruption. At other times potential whistleblowers are afraid that they will be implicated if they came forward. David Bruce asserted that "[g]enerally those who are aware are complicit, even if reluctantly" and consequently would face a high cost of reporting.

Expert opinion on fear of retaliation aligned with the finding presented in Chapter 9.3, which shows that the majority of the adult population resides in communities where reporting corruption is considered dangerous. Some experts felt that fear of retaliation is compounded by the inadequate protection mechanisms for those who come forward, making the risks of reporting significantly outweigh the perceived benefits. Individuals fear losing their jobs or damaging their reputations, which can have long-lasting impacts on their livelihoods. Christine Hobden argued that socio-economic circumstances significantly influence the stakes involved in every decision, particularly in terms of survival and opportunity. She said, in a qualitative interview, that "you know the idea that if you lose your job, there's a very real chance you'll never get another one". She emphasised that the threat of unemployability is a powerful factor influencing choices. Absolute poverty and unemployment, rather than just inequality, create intense pressures that affect decision-making. This high cost acts as a significant deterrent, especially in a context where alternative employment opportunities are scarce.

The arguments made above are consistent with findings from a survey of public employees by the Ethics Institute (2022). The survey identified 'fear of speaking up' as a top ethical culture concern amongst employees and found that fear of retaliation was the main reason that employees did not report witnessed corruption to the relevant authorities. A comparable outcome was seen in research on the private sector. An Institute of Business Ethics survey found that concerns over job security were the primary reason unethical behaviour went unreported in the South African private sector (The Ethics Institute, 2023). Talking about fear of retaliation within public and private sector organisations, Deon Rossouw noted that this fear is exacerbated by unethical organisational culture. Many organisations in South Africa, according to him, are characterised by an authoritarian, fear-based compliance environments. Fearful of being victimised, employees within these environments often feel compelled to act unethically.

Institutional Distrust

A significant theme in many of the expert answers provided was the lack of trust in authorities and the justice system. Respondents frequently mention that corruption is prevalent within the very institutions (such as the police and judiciary) tasked with addressing it. Paul Holden, in particular, cited distrust in authorities as a key factor hindering reporting. EXPERT 15 said that it was "a distrust in the systems of justice that should protect any whistleblower - the police and the courts" that discouraged people from reporting. He said that "ordinary people know that any attempt they make to fight corruption can easily be thwarted by the officials to whom the crime is reported". During a qualitative interview, Kris Dobie noted that the lack of effective leadership and governance in many organisations means that individuals often have little faith in the system. Expert concerns here are perhaps not

surprising, institutional failures was repeatedly identified as a driver of corruption by experts in Chapter 5.

During an interview with the research team, Sekoetlane Phamodi noted that attitudes towards reporting corruption are informed by the inefficacies of the state to provide for the needs of the people. He thought that these inefficacies pushed people "do it ourselves, then [there are] 'negotiations' [i.e., compromises] we have to make within our context in order to be able to get the security that we want". He used the example of community safety forums to illustrate his point. He asserted that "no one is going to report on their informal 'community safety forum' for beating up and murdering suspects of crime who have been caught in the act". This was because these are the "people who bring us safety, where the state has failed and perhaps has even participated in creating these conditions". Contextualising the issue, he noted that "these are the people who are showing us Ubuntu in the context of [in the form of] security and safety". He acknowledged that there is a legitimate question about whether what might be characterised as vigilantism really qualifies as Ubuntu. He thought that "it's a caricature of the argument, but nevertheless, ... these are the kinds of considerations that we have to be making".

Distrust leads to a sense of futility, as people believe that their reports will either be ignored or mishandled by corrupt officials. EXPERT 49 talked about: "[t]he absence of faith in judicial and police institutions. This can only be changed by making these institutions work better". Sharon Ekambaram pointed out that the prevailing belief that those in power will block redress or justice contributes to a sense of futility. Zoe Mthimunye highlighted the challenge faced by individuals who attempt to uphold ethical standards in a system that is seen to be "rotten" at its core. The lack of consistent consequences for unethical behaviour, especially when it involves high-ranking officials, leads to a sense of futility among those who try to make a difference. This lack of accountability she argued undermines the efforts of those who strive to maintain integrity within their organisations.

Speaking about the causes of corruption in a qualitative interview, Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze and Zoe Mthimunye said that people often feel it is futile to report corruption because they don't believe action will be taken, creating a cycle of distrust and inaction. They identified a high level of public distrust in institutions, particularly in law enforcement. This lack of trust creates a "trust deficit," where employees feel that reporting corruption will only backfire on them, especially if the individuals involved are part of powerful networks within the organisation. Distrust stems from both historical factors related to apartheid and current experiences of corruption and ineffectiveness. Janine Hicks also highlighted the role of institutional trust when trying to understand the disconnection between awareness and action regarding corruption. She noted that while there is general awareness of corruption and its implications, there is a significant failure to act. This inaction is partly due to a lack of trust in the institutions that are supposed to address corruption. Expert concern about ineffective law enforcement is consistent with the finding, presented in Chapter 9.2, that a majority of the adult population views anti-corruption reporting structures as ineffective.

Ineffective Law Enforcement

A number of those experts surveyed identified the perceived ineffectiveness and inaction of the legal system to combat corruption. EXPERT 20 identified lack of protection as an issue. He stated that "even if our laws are amended to give better legal protection the problem would still persist"; he also asserted that "South Africa has a notoriously bad reputation for not implementing law". Trevor White contended that the slow pace of legal proceedings can discourage reporting and active engagement in fighting corruption. Long delays in the judicial process led to frustration and a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of legal remedies, which can reduce motivation for private sector involvement. It was unsurprising to find that experts express concerns about the capabilities of the justice system; ineffective law enforcement was frequently cited as a factor contributing to corruption in Chapter 5.

Jane Borman discussed the limitations of the legal system in addressing corruption, particularly in protecting vulnerable individuals. She asserted that while the legal system is essential, it is inherently slow and often favours those in power. The lengthy litigation process disadvantages victims of corruption and exploitation, making it difficult for them to achieve justice. Expert concerns about whistleblower protections were in line with expert opinion presented in Chapter 9.4, which indicates that most experts believe whistleblowers do not receive sufficient or meaningful protections. There was a lot of concern in that section whistleblowers that the lack of strong safeguards was discouraging people from coming forward. This aligns with non-expert opinion; as we saw in Chapter 10.2 a significant proportion of non-experts identified a lack of protection for whistleblowers as a major reason that people don't report corruption.

Trevor White acknowledged that some private sector companies lack effective mechanisms for reporting and addressing corruption internally. He said that without clear and enforced reporting requirements corrupt behaviour can go unchecked and the culture of silence is reinforced. This belief diminishes the incentive for businesses and individuals to come forward, as they doubt that their complaints will lead to meaningful action. The argument made above by Trevor White aligns with the results of a survey conducted by the Ethics Institute (2022) among public sector employees. One of the reasons cited by employees surveyed for not reporting unethical conduct was the belief that no action would be taken. But concerns about a culture of non-reporting also exists in the private sector. According to an Institute of Business Ethics survey, a perception that no corrective action would be taken was one of the main reasons that unethical behaviour was not reported in the South African private sector (The Ethics Institute, 2023).

Impimpi Culture

Several experts thought that report reluctance was linked to cultural norms that originated in the anti-apartheid struggle. The legacy of apartheid plays a significant role in shaping the perception of whistleblowers in South Africa. Trevor White and Deon Rossouw both discuss how historical and cultural factors contribute to the suspicion and stigma surrounding whistleblowers. Trevor White traces this back to the apartheid era when informers, or "impimpis," were seen as traitors who betrayed their communities by collaborating with the state. Although this stigma has lessened over time, it still affects how whistleblowers are perceived, particularly in situations where their actions are seen as betraying their community or colleagues. EXPERT 45 noted that historically whistleblowers in Black African communities have been likened to "sellouts", infamously referred to as "impimpis" during the apartheid era. Paul Hoffman has labelled this "[i]mpimpi culture".

Reflecting on attitudes towards "impimpis", Deon Rossouw claimed that this cultural hangover creates a deeply polarised perception of whistleblowers, depending on whether individuals feel threatened or benefited by the whistleblower's actions. Blowing the whistle can be classified as 'selling out' one's struggle compatriots. The negative stigma attached to being a whistleblower was highlighted as an issue in Chapter 9.4. A number of experts in that section talked about how loyalty to community can be seen as more important than compliance with the law. Nedson Popiwa said that it is easier to report on 'outsiders' than one's community or network because doing so generally entails less personal risk. EXPERT 30 said there is a fear of "[b]eing labelled as a snitch" and EXPERT 21 talked about a "snitches get stiches mentality" in some communities. These observations from our expert survey data correspond to what we observed in Chapter 8.2, which revealed that the majority of the adult population considers it morally wrong to report on the criminal behaviour of people they know personally.

10.4. Why Do People Report Corruption?

If someone wanted to create a communication campaign to increase the willingness of the general public to report corruption, the subgroup analysis in Chapter 10.1 contains valuable information. It identifies which demographic groups expressed the lowest level of report intention, guiding the targeting of specific groups in a hypothetical campaign. Nevertheless, it overlooks a pivotal question, *what* are the key determinants influencing the inclination to report witnessed corruption? Providing a satisfying response necessitates digging deeper into the SASAS 2023 dataset using more advanced statistical algorithms. Considering the hypothesis-driven approach of this report, we first suggested a hypothesis and then subject it to testing using statistical algorithms. In this section we presented each hypothesis, delineate the reasoning behind it, and then evaluate whether empirical evidence could substantiate it. Six hypotheses are examined in this way (the precise details of these tests can be found in APPENDIX G).

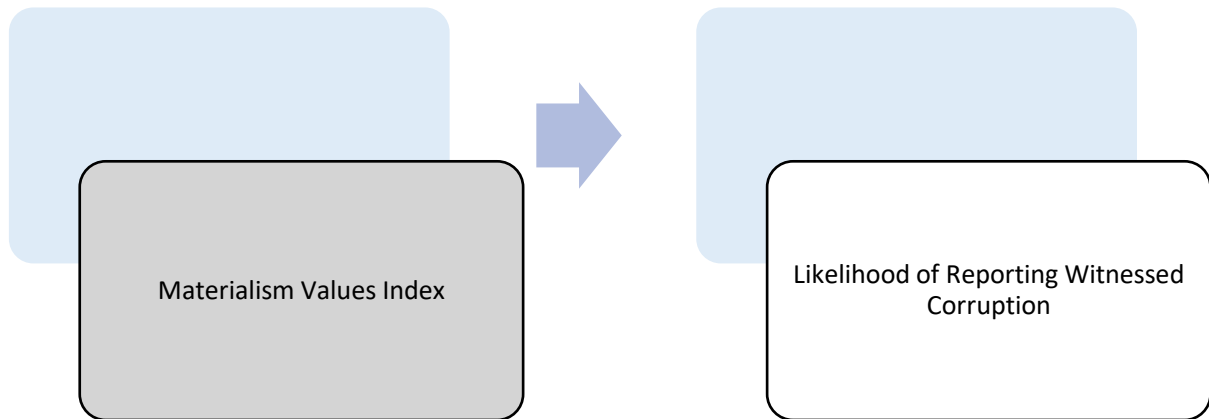


Before we begin this section, we need to consider the argument that report intention here may be driven primarily by descriptive social norms about criminal behaviour. Research by Gong and Wang (2013) in Singapore suggested that if a person thought that corrupt behaviour was acceptable then they may not see the value in reporting corruption to the authorities (also see Alvarez, 2015). But statistical testing demonstrated that report intention was not correlated with descriptive norms about criminal behaviour (test outcomes are described in APPENDIX G on page 214). It would seem that thinking that crime is wrong does not increase an individual's willingness to report crime to the authorities. This finding corresponds with public research in Ghana by Asomah et al. (2024) who found that tolerance of corruption was not associated with the propensity to report it to the relevant authorities.

Materialistic Values

One could contend that people with materialistic values may be less willing to report corruption to the authorities. When such people weigh the potential costs and benefits of taking a particular action, they are going to be less concerned with societal integrity or ethical considerations (Kasser, 2002). This is because materialistic people do *not* prioritise the common good when making decisions (also see Kasser, et al. 2004). Reporting corruption often does not offer any immediate financial benefit to

a person. Indeed, reporting corruption to the authorities brings with it potential risks (such as retaliation or ostracization) to one's material position. Given the risks associated with it and the lack of financial benefits, a materialistic individual may feel that it is not worth the effort to report any corruption that they have experienced or witnessed.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

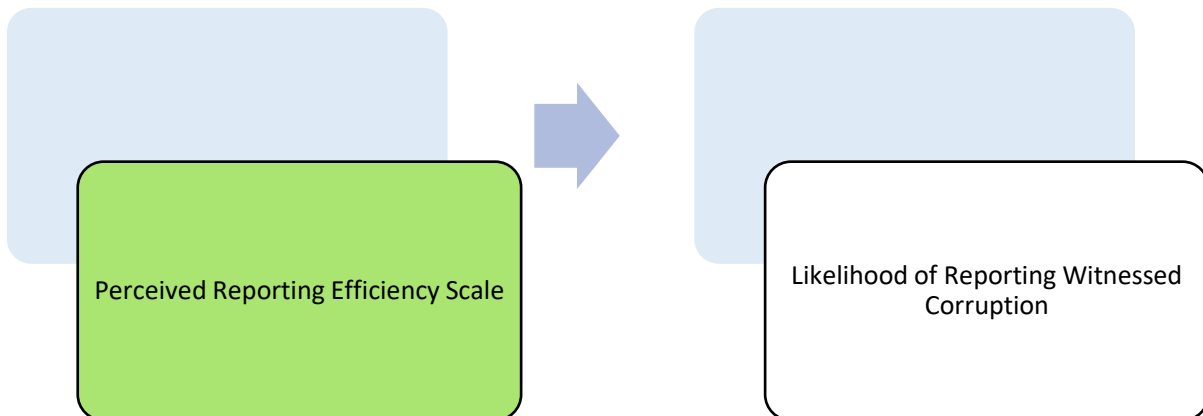
Considering existing work on materialism, it would be judicious to investigate the following hypothesis: materialism values will *negatively* influence intention to report corrupt practices in South Africa. To assess this hypothesis, we relied on the Materialism Values Index which gauged the degree of materialistic values that an individual adhered to. (for an outline of how this index was produced, see APPENDIX E on page 204). Our statistical tests showed that this measure was positively associated with intention to report witnessed corruption (relevant outcomes of our tests are presented in APPENDIX G on page 215). The Materialism Values Index was, however, *not* a statistically significant determinant in our test. We could not validate our hypothesis and, therefore, concluded that there was *no* relationship between the index and reporting intention.

Perceived Effectiveness of Reporting Structures

Perceptions of an individual's ability to use reporting structures can shape social values regarding legal compliance. Public opinion research by Boateng (2018) in Ghana suggests that confidence in police work reinforces the ethical obligation to report crime. This work contended that when people think that reporting mechanisms are responsive to their needs, they are more likely to believe in the moral obligation to report (also see Asomah et al. 2024). If reporting structures are seen as incapable of addressing their *needs*, on the other hand, this could weaken the moral duty to report corrupt practices. As Chapter 9.2 showed, the less powerful in society (e.g., young people, women and the poor) tend to feel that reporting structures do not serve them well. As delineated in Chapter 10.3 on page 134, public distrust in reporting structures is one of the reasons that experts gave for why people do not report corruption to the authorities. Viewing reporting structures as unresponsive for people like them would make an individual less likely to have confidence that their reports will be taken seriously and acted upon by authorities (also see Boateng et al., 2022 on how perceived effectiveness influences public cooperation with the police).

In light of the arguments about perceived law enforcement efficiency made above, we tested the thesis that perceived effectiveness of reporting structures was a significant determinant of intention to report corruption that an individual had witnessed or experienced. For this test, we used the 'Perceived Reporting Efficiency' Scale. This was a metric that measured the perceived likelihood that someone would be able to get results if they reported a case of corruption to the police (we describe how this scale was built on page 217 of APPENDIX G). Statistical testing proved that the 'Reporting Efficiency' Scale had a large and positive effect on intention to report corruption (the results of these

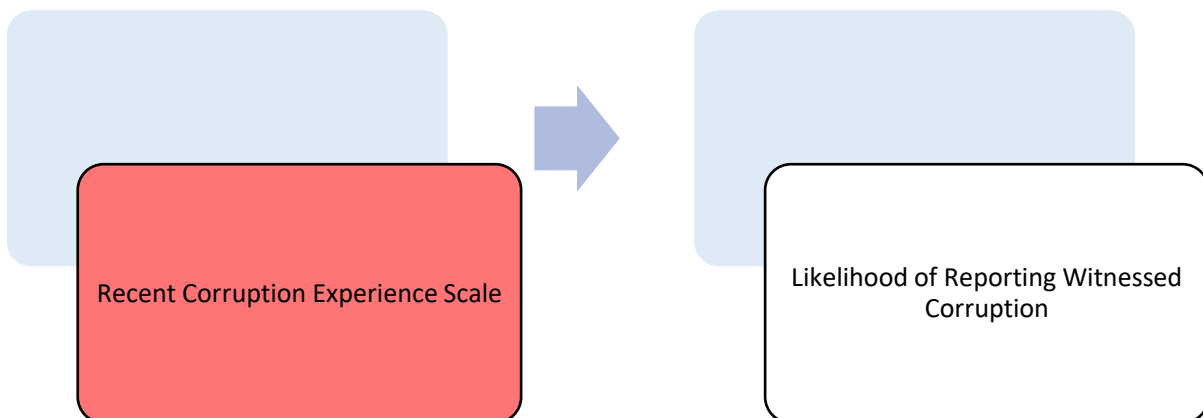
tests are provided in APPENDIX G on page 217). In other words, the more effective a person thought that reporting structures were, the more likely they were to use them.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Frequent Exposure to Corruption

It could be argued that frequent exposure to public sector corruption undermines the social norm to alert the authorities to wrongdoing. If a person witnesses public officials behaving in a corrupt manner and soliciting bribes, this could undermine their willingness to comply with the law (Tyler, 2006). In addition, it could weaken respect for the authorities, eroding trust in the system. Public opinion research by Seligson (2006) in Latin America found that corruption victimisation erodes faith in the democratic system. This could be because victimisation undermines the social values of fairness, justice and equality under the law. Moreover, exposure to bribery could damage the injunctive social norms against unlawful conduct by normalising such behaviour and weakening societal condemnation against it (also see Dimant & Tosato, 2018).

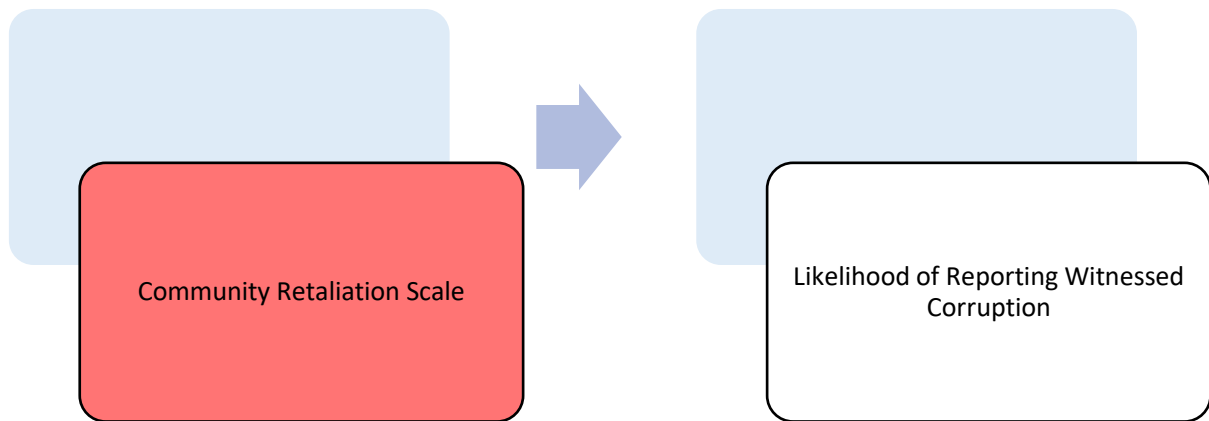


Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

In view of the arguments made above, we hypothesised that repeated experience of public sector corruption will undermine willingness to report witnessed corruption. The 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale was used to test this hypothesis. This variable measured frequency of experience of bribe solicitation in the five years prior to the survey interview (we explain how this scale was assembled on page 203 of APPENDIX E). Analytical tests found that frequent experience of public sector corruption had a negative correlation with intention to report (relevant statistical outcomes are presented in APPENDIX G on page 216). But the size of this correlation was quite small, indicating that recent corruption experience had only a modest effect on social norm to report corruption.

Fear of Retaliation

As discussed in Chapter 10.3 on page 134, experts surveyed for this study identified fear of retaliation as one of the reasons that people do not report corruption to the authorities. Research in contexts outside South Africa has shown that fear can influence whether people will cooperate with the police. A quantitative American study by Papp et al. (2019), for instance, found that fear of retaliation reduced a person's willingness to cooperate with the police. For many engaging with the criminal justice system heightened the risk of experiencing additional victimisation (also see Kidd & Chayet, 1984 on how fear of further victimisation may influence cooperation with law enforcement). Drawing on a comprehensive nationwide survey of Guatemalans, Denny et al. (2023) contended that the relative costs of cooperation influenced citizens' decisions on whether to provide information to law enforcement.

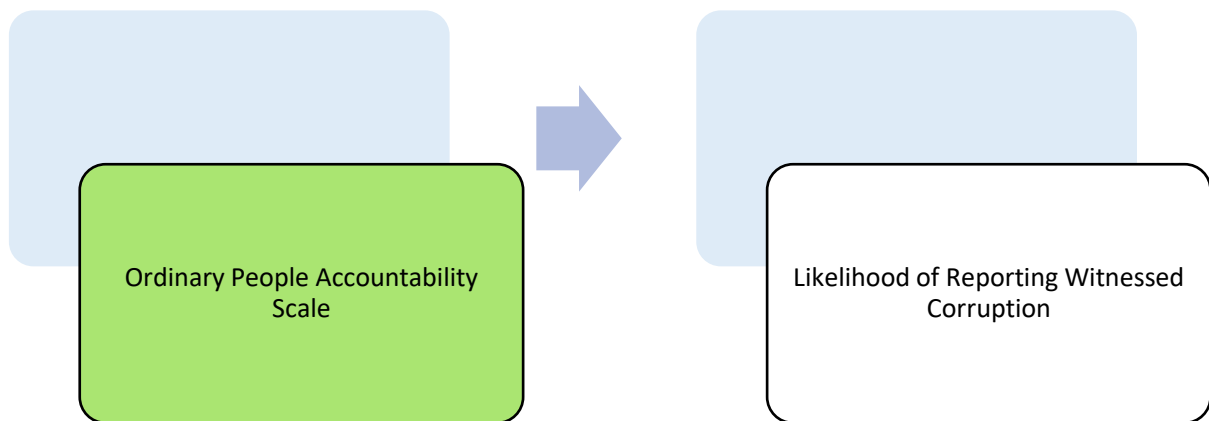


Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

In view of the research discussed above, we tested the thesis that fear of retaliation affected intention to report. To conduct this test, we utilised the 'Community Retaliation' Scale. This scale gauged the fear that those who reported corruption in a community would face reprisal (the details of how this scale was developed are exhibited in APPENDIX G on page 218). A significant (and negative) association was found between report intention and the scale (analytical outputs are depicted in APPENDIX G on page 218). The greater the fear, the more unlikely an individual would be to report corruption if they had witnessed it. This finding speaks to the social norms of reprisal within many communities in South Africa and how they act as a barrier to creating a zero-tolerance environment for corruption.

Accountability for Ordinary People

A person's perceived accountability in the legal system can be informed by their confidence in the enforcement of laws and regulations related to corruption. Public opinion research in Papua New Guinea by Walton and Peiffer (2017) showed that individuals are more likely to trust the legal system to hold people to account if they believed that authorities have the capability and willingness to enforce anti-corruption measures effectively. Certainly, expert opinion, outlined in Chapter 10.3 on page 134, identified weak law enforcement as a major determinant for why people do not report witnessed corruption. Experts surveyed for this study felt that if people trusted the legal system to hold offenders accountable, they should be more likely to use that system to report corruption. This supposition is consistent with other research on reporting behaviour (e.g., Peiffer & Alvarez, 2016; Boateng, 2018; Asomah et al. 2024). Based on these arguments, we hypothesised that individuals would be more likely to view reporting as a viable and effective course of action if they thought that the legal system held people accountable.



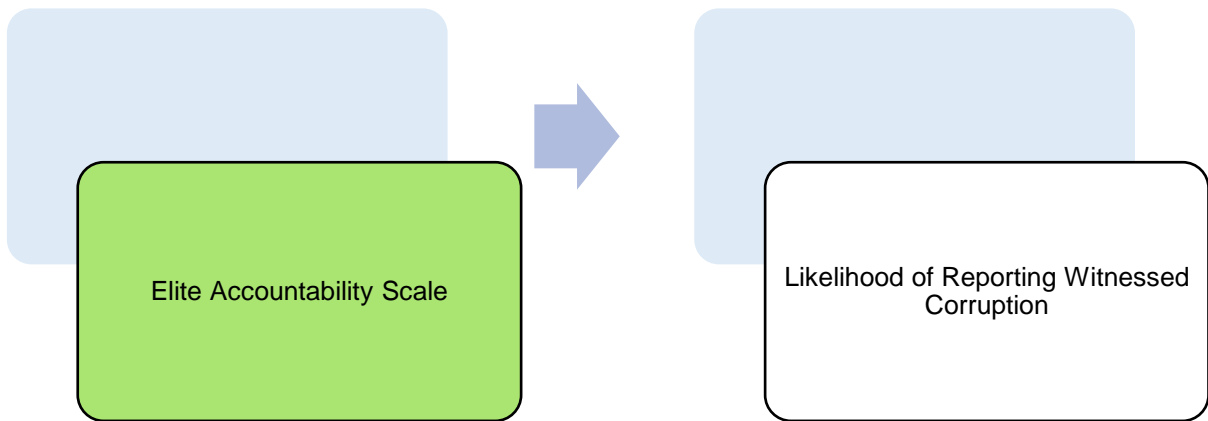
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

To test the hypothesis outlined above, we employed the Ordinary People Accountability Scale. This scale measures the degree to which the public believed that ordinary people are held liable for corruption by the legal system (we explain how this scale was built on page 216 of APPENDIX G). Our testing discovered that the scale had a positive association with a person's intention to report corruption if it was witnessed or experienced (test results are displayed in APPENDIX G on page 216). If a person viewed the legal system as willing to hold ordinary people accountable for corruption, then they would be more likely to report. A supplementary investigation discovered that the link between the Ordinary People Accountability Scale and intention to report was mediated by educational attainment. We discovered that the relationship between the two variables was stronger amongst the better educated.

Accountability for Elites

Above we saw that perceived accountability for ordinary people influenced intention to report corruption. But what about perceived accountability for elites? As we have argued, public trust is fundamental for any legal system to function effectively. Consequently, we would imagine that the perception that the legal system does not hold the rich and powerful accountable for corruption can erode trust in the system (Tyler, 2006). If individuals see a pattern of powerful figures escaping consequences for corrupt behaviour, they may lose faith in the legal system's ability to address corruption impartially. Public opinion research in Nigeria by Lewis (2021) shows that elite corruption tends to provoke more anti-corruption activism than other kinds of corrupt activity. When people see powerful persons or institutions repeatedly getting away with corruption, they may become resigned to the idea that corruption is simply a part of the system. In this way, continued impunity for elites can breed cynicism and disillusionment among the general population (also see Bradford et al., 2014 on procedural fairness and police cooperation).

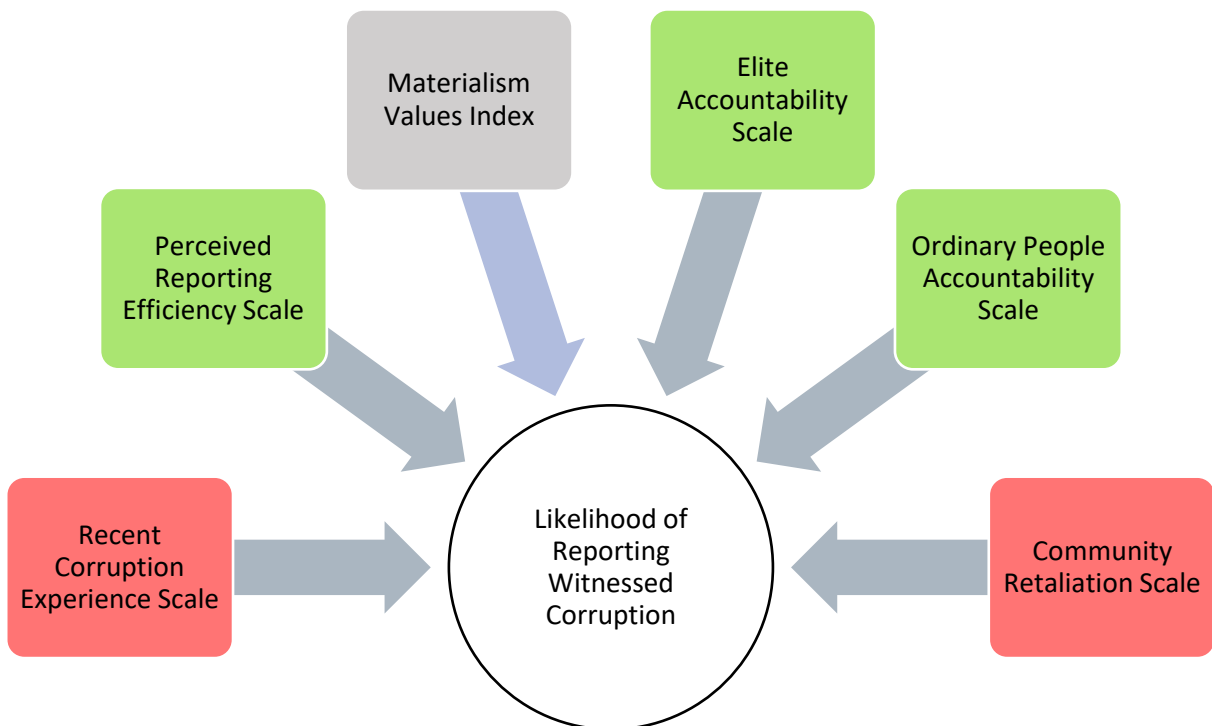
We theorised that the perceived ability of the system to hold elites accountable influenced public intention to report corruption to the authorities. We used the Elite Accountability Scale to examine this thesis. This scale measured the degree to which an individual thinks that the elite in South Africa are held accountable for corruption (on page 217 of APPENDIX G we provide an account of how this scale was produced). We learned that the scale had a positive relationship with intention to report (our findings are showed in APPENDIX G on page 217). Having faith that the system will hold elites responsible for corruption increased the willingness to report. This finding suggests that the perceived accountability gap identified in the previous chapter is undermining ongoing efforts to create a zero-tolerance environment for corruption in the country.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Comparative Evaluation

It is important to determine which of the six variables discussed so far had the strongest predictive power. To compare the different variables, we built a fully specified statistical algorithm that included all six. This permitted us to explore the effects of these variables on report intention at the same time. Using this method, we were able to pinpoint the distinctive effect of each while holding the others constant (a detailed account of these findings can be found in APPENDIX G on page 218). Out of the six variables assessed in this section, only the Materialism Values Index was discovered *not* to have a significant relationship with report intention. The variable that had the greatest predictive power was, by a considerable margin, the Perceived Reporting Efficiency Scale. We also learnt that the Ordinary People Accountability Scale had quite a robust effect on attitudes here.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

It is crucial, at this point, to recognise a noteworthy finding that emerged from our analysis. We discovered a positive correlation between socio-economic status and intention to report. Simply put, the economically advantaged were more inclined to report corrupt practices than their peers. This unexpected relationship persisted even after taking other variables (such the Perceived Ability to Report Scale) into account. It's possible that wealthier people have greater incentives to prioritise a reputation for honesty and ethical conduct. This is because they have more to gain from maintaining such a reputation, given their access to social and economic opportunities. Consequently, the economically advantaged may display a greater intention to report corrupt practices to the authorities than their peers.

11. Unmasking Public Discontent with Government's Anti-Corruption Campaign

A majority of experts surveyed for our research, as detailed in Chapter 2.4, did not believe that the government's anti-corruption initiatives were yielding significant results. But does the general public share their negativity? Public approval of government policies can be important for their success. Policies that are perceived as responsive to public concerns and preferences are more likely to be viewed as legitimate and credible. Policies that enjoy broad public support also help foster a sense of collective purpose and unity, reducing social tensions and divisions. The need for public support is particularly important for the NACS which emphasises the need for collaboration across all sectors of society. The strategy envisions citizens voluntarily participating in multi-stakeholder initiatives and working together to achieve a zero-tolerance environment for corruption.

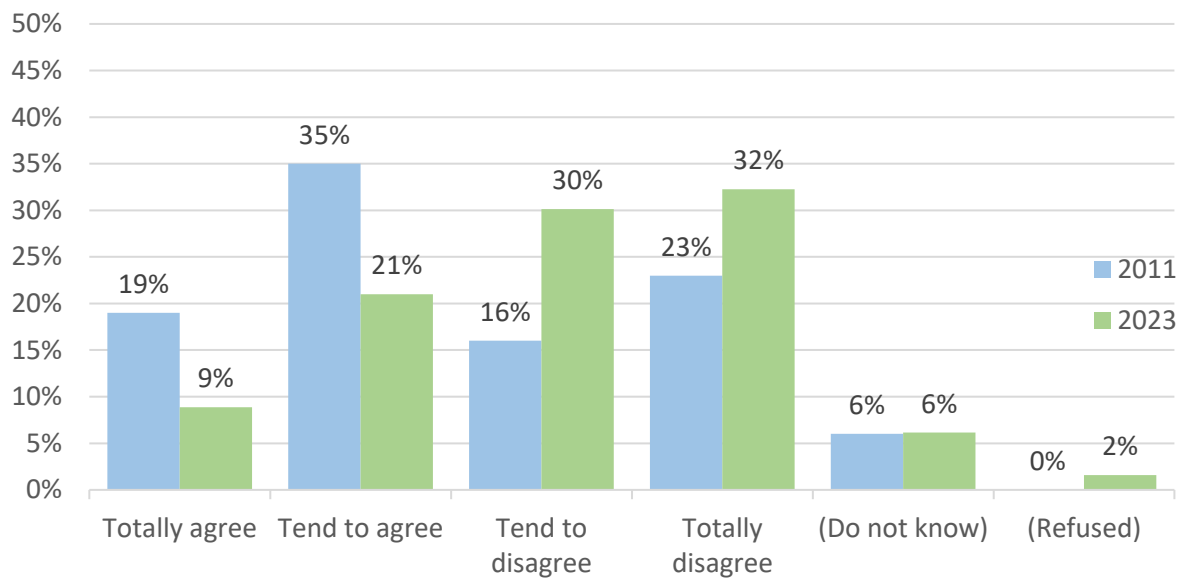
In a paper for the World Bank, Byrne et al. (2010) contended that anti-corruption agencies need to be proactive in communicating their work to the public. The authors advised agencies to focus on promoting freedom of expression, access to information and professionalism in the media. Effective communication strategies involve identifying key stakeholders, selecting appropriate communication channels, crafting clear and consistent messages, implementing a multi-faceted approach, and continuously monitoring and evaluating impact. Building coalitions with civil society, the media and other reform champions is crucial to sustaining anti-corruption efforts. Overall, Byrne and her colleagues emphasised the importance of strategic communication and stakeholder engagement for anti-corruption agencies to achieve lasting impact. This good advice but we need to move beyond generalities if we are to win public support for the government anti-corruption policies in South Africa.

Recognising the high level of negativity from the experts surveyed this chapter took an in-depth look at public attitudes towards the government's fight against corruption. We showed that a majority of the general public is quite negative about existing anti-corruption efforts. The data presented in this chapter will be helpful for those who want to understand why the public is so negative on this issue. First, we identified those groups that have the most negative evaluations of government efforts. Then, moving beyond this subgroup analysis, we tried to uncover the main drivers of these negative evaluations. This will allow readers to understand why most people think the government's current efforts are ineffective. It is hoped that the data contained in this chapter will help interested parties to design strategies to improve popular support for government's ongoing anti-corruption efforts.

11.1. Who is Satisfied with Anti-Corruption Efforts?

To gauge public approval of South African state-led anti-corruption programmes, the following question was included in the SASAS 2023 questionnaire: "How much do you agree or disagree that the South African government efforts to combat corruption are effective?" A minority agreed with the statement with 9% of the adult public stated that they totally agreed and 21% that they tended to agree (**Figure 11-1**, pg. 145). About a third (30%) of the population tended to disagree with the statement and 32% said that they totally disagreed. The remainder either refused to answer (2%) or told fieldworkers that they did not know how to respond (6%). Survey participants were asked the same question on state-led efforts to combat corruption in SASAS 2011. Compared to what was observed in SASAS 2023, the general public was more positive about government anti-corruption efforts in 2011. The majority (54%) of the adult population agreed with the statement during that survey round and only a minority (39%) disagreed.

Figure 11-1: General evaluations of government efforts to combat corruption in South Africa, 2011 and 2023



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

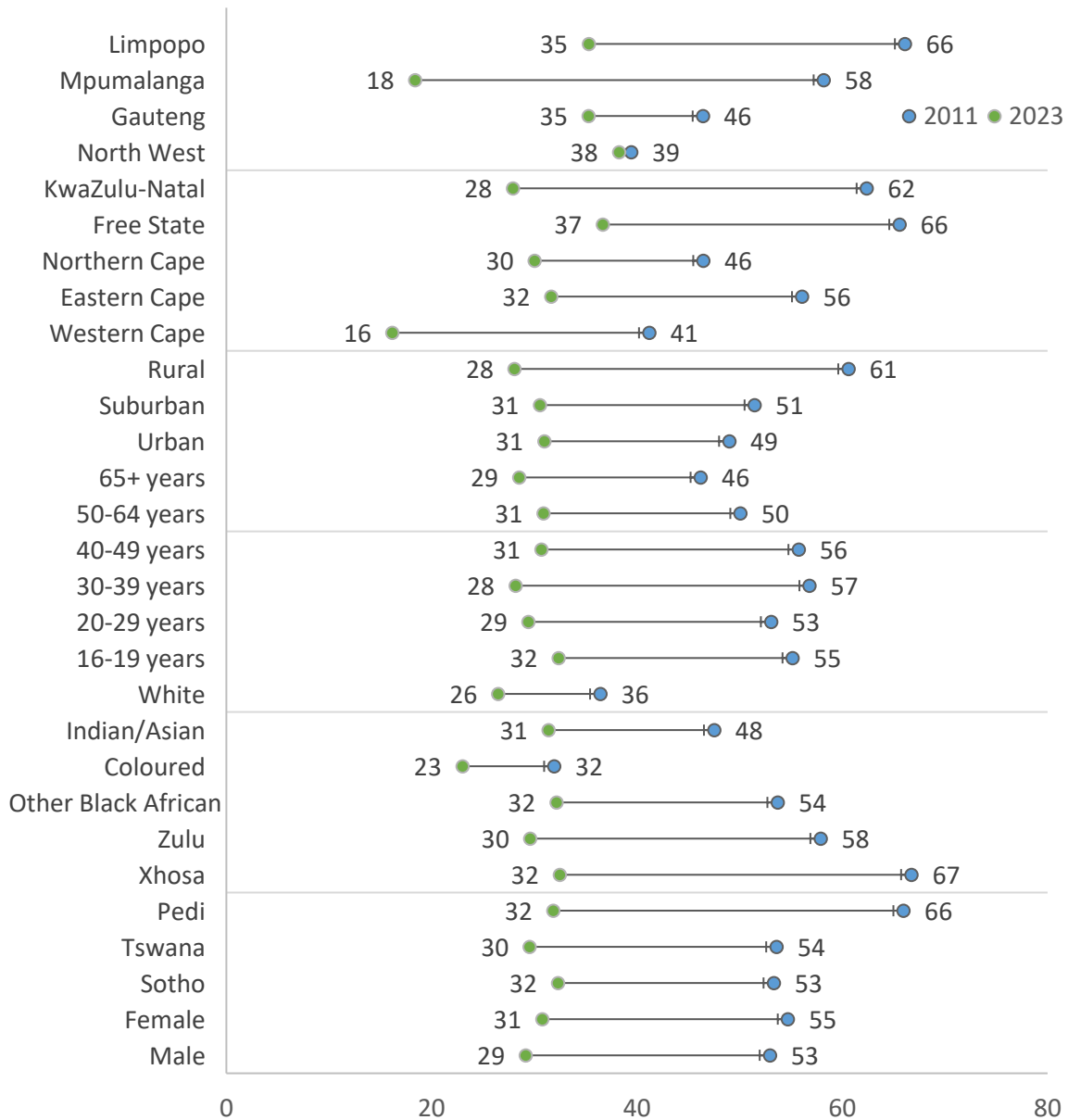
The findings presented in **Figure 11-1** (pg. 145) must be considered within the context of past public opinion research on this topic. Prior work by Patel and Govindasamy (2021) found that a large segment of the public was not satisfied with government efforts to fight corruption. Using Afrobarometer data from 2021, the authors showed that 76% of the adult population thought that the government was doing a "fairly bad" or "very bad" job addressing this problem. Public cynicism on this issue was also evident in an Afrobarometer study by Felton et al. (2023) on service delivery perceptions. Only a minority (34%) of the general public were found to believe the government was committed to fighting corruption. In addition, the public's opinions on the perceived effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts in this context can be compared with findings from a recent Corruption Watch public opinion survey (2024)³². Public opinion on this issue is less negative about current efforts than expert opinion. We discovered 91% of the experts surveyed for this study disagreed that government were effective. Only a small percentage of this group (7%) agreed that current efforts were effective while 4% were uncertain of how to respond.

It's reasonable to expect that public perceptions of state-led anti-corruption efforts would vary considerably depending on the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals. To examine this assumption, we assessed the level of agreement and disagreement with the statement by a select set of subgroups. The results show much less variation in how different groups answered the question in SASAS 2023 than we may have imagined. All the subgroups listed in **Figure 11-2** (pg. 146) were negative in their assessment of the anti-corruption efforts of the government in SASAS 2023. Subgroup variation was much higher in SASAS 2011, suggesting that the general population became less polarised on this issue during the last decade. But we were able to detect large variations in how different provincial populations responded to the question. Agreement levels in SASAS 2023 were discovered to be lowest in the Western Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. We could only detect a small difference in public evaluations of anti-corruption efforts between urban and rural dwellers.

³² The study by Corruption Watch (2024) showed a strong consensus among respondents, with 81% believing that the government's attempts to tackle corruption in basic service delivery are insufficient. This agreement highlights a widespread perception of inefficiency and inadequacy in the government's anti-corruption initiatives.

But further analysis did show that in rural areas farm residents were much less likely to agree with the statement than their village peers.

Figure 11-2: Percentage who agreed with the statement “South African government efforts to combat corruption are effective” for the 2011 and 2023 round of SASAS by select subgroups



Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

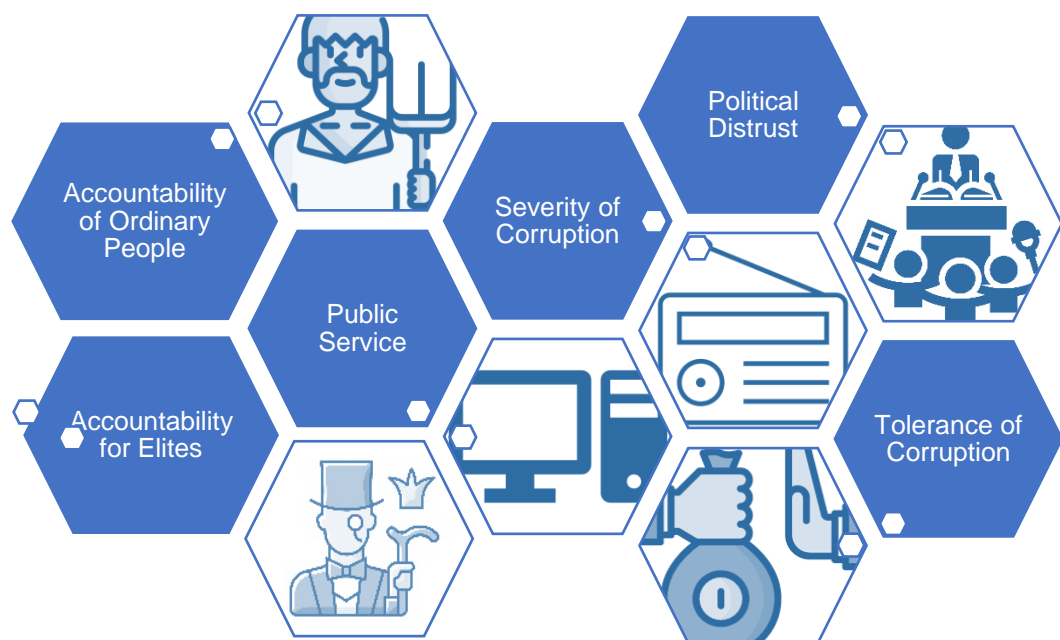
We could discern a noticeable age effect in how the general population in SASAS 2023 answered the question depicted in **Figure 11-2** (pg. 146). Younger people were discovered to be more likely to agree with the statement than their older peers. Agreement levels were lowest amongst the 35-44 age cohort as well as those 65 years and older. Noteworthy subgroup disparities were found when we looked at population group. Out of the nine population groups listed in the figure, members of the white minority had the lowest level of agreement with the statement. Other groups that had low levels of agreement were the Tswana and the Zulu. There was not a significant gender differential that could be identified in the figure. We thought that the answers to this question may differ significantly by socio-economic status. But additional analysis showed that attitudinal differences between socio-

economic status groups were quite modest. Nevertheless, those on the top of the socio-economic ladder were less likely to approve of the government efforts than other groups.

As mentioned above, public approval of state-led anti-corruption efforts declined between SASAS 2021 and SASAS 2011. Of all the subgroups listed in **Figure 11-2** (pg. 146), only the Coloured minority did not experience a noteworthy decline in agreement during this period. Of those that did suffer a negative change, the provincial populations of Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal experienced the largest degree of change. Other groups that went through a significant decrease in agreement were the Xhosa and the Pedi. In addition, we found that rural areas underwent a greater deterioration in government evaluations than either non-metropolitan or metropolitan urban residents. We observed, interestingly, that older age cohorts underwent less change than their younger counterparts.

11.2. Why Do People Approve of Anti-Corruption Efforts?

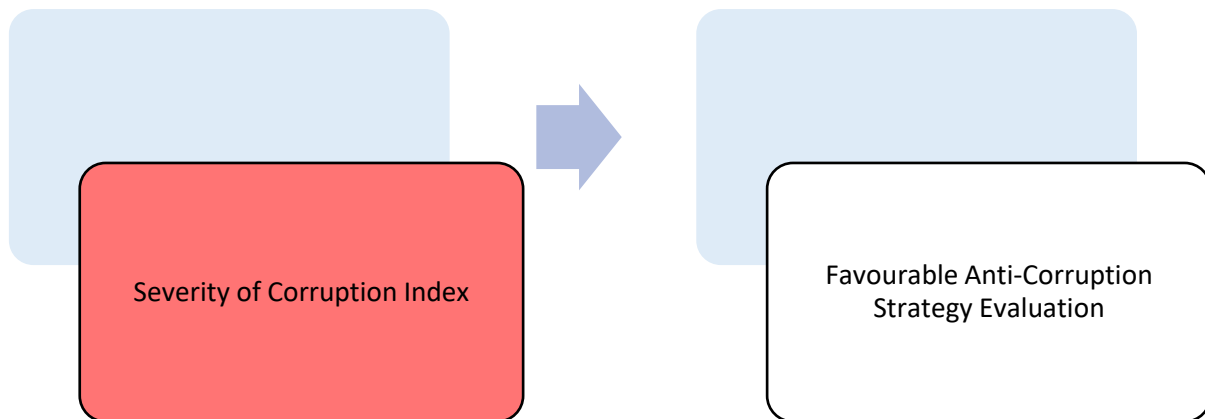
If we wanted to understand why the public is, on average, so negative about government's anti-corruption efforts, the subgroup analysis provided in the previous section provides valuable insights. But then again, this subgroup analysis has not addressed a key question, what is driving the general public to give the government such a negative assessment? We employed advanced statistical algorithms to answer this important question, probing for answers within the SASAS 2023 dataset. The results of our multivariate analysis are outlined and discussed in this section. In view of the report's hypothesis-driven approach, this section is structured as follows: (i) we put forward a hypothesis, explaining its basis; and (ii) we tested that hypothesis using statistical algorithms (for those who are interested in the details, the specifics of these tests can be found in APPENDIX H). This method helped us identify the main drivers of popular discontent with government's anti-corruption efforts.



Severity of Corruption

Perceptions of the scale of crime can affect the credibility of the government authorities responsible for confronting it. Cross-national American public opinion research by Singer et al. (2019) found that those who perceived crime as more serious are less likely to view the justice system as effective. Consequently, it could be argued that viewing corruption as having a large impact on society can negatively influence public confidence in the effectiveness of government interventions. People may

even become resigned to the idea that corruption is an insurmountable and unsolvable challenge (Cheeseman & Peiffer, 2020). This can erode confidence in the ability of authorities to combat the problem, leading to scepticism or cynicism about the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures (also see Peiffer, 2020). Based on this argument, we put forward the following hypothesis: public perceptions about the harm caused by corruption will *negatively* affect public evaluations of anti-corruption efforts.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

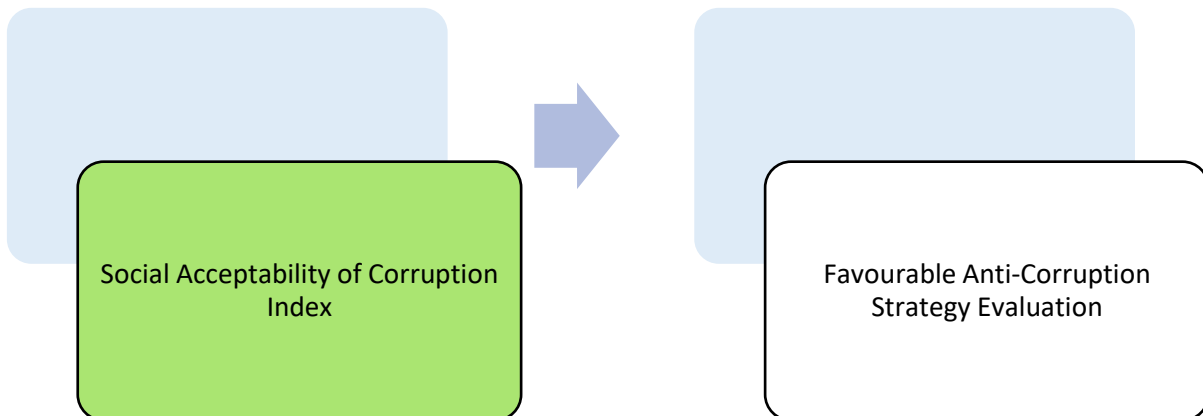
To evaluate the hypothesis outlined above, we used the 'Severity of Corruption' Index. This measure gauged the perceived impact of corruption on society (for the specifics on how this index was built, see APPENDIX E on page 202). Analytical testing demonstrated that the index helped predict public evaluations of government efforts (for the findings of this analysis, see APPENDIX H on page 222). Our results show that viewing the impact of corruption as large reduces favourable appraisals of anti-corruption efforts. Further analysis revealed that socio-economic status served as a mediator of the relationship between perceived severity and government evaluations. It was discovered that the association between the two was more pronounced amongst the economically advantaged. This finding implies that the affluent are more likely to use their knowledge of the severity of corruption to make judgments about the government's efforts than the less affluent counterparts.

Tolerance of Corruption

Tolerance of corruption may play a significant role in predicting public assessments of government's anti-corruption efforts. It could be argued that these kinds of efforts resonate with social values related to integrity, accountability and fairness. Consequently, individuals who are intolerant of corruption may view government efforts to uphold ethical standards and combat corruption favourably. But then again, the opposite may be true. When Guo and Tu (2017) gathered survey data from Chinese civil servants, they found that tolerance for corruption decreased confidence in the effectiveness of anti-corruption campaigns. There is also research by Liu et al. (2023) in Taiwan that suggests the tolerance for corruption can influence public opinion on how widespread corruption is in a society. These authors discovered that the higher the tolerance for corruption, the lower the level of perceived corruption. Using this prior research work, we theorised that persons who are tolerant of corruption may perceive ongoing government efforts as successful.

In order for us to examine the thesis outlined above, we employ the Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index. The measure gauges the degree to which corrupt practices are viewed as acceptable institutions (for an account of how this index was produced, see APPENDIX E on page 201). Test results revealed that the SAoC Index affected popular evaluations of anti-corruption efforts in the country (results of these tests can be found in APPENDIX H on page 221). We learnt that being tolerant of corruption had a *positive* association with public evaluations of government's efforts to combat

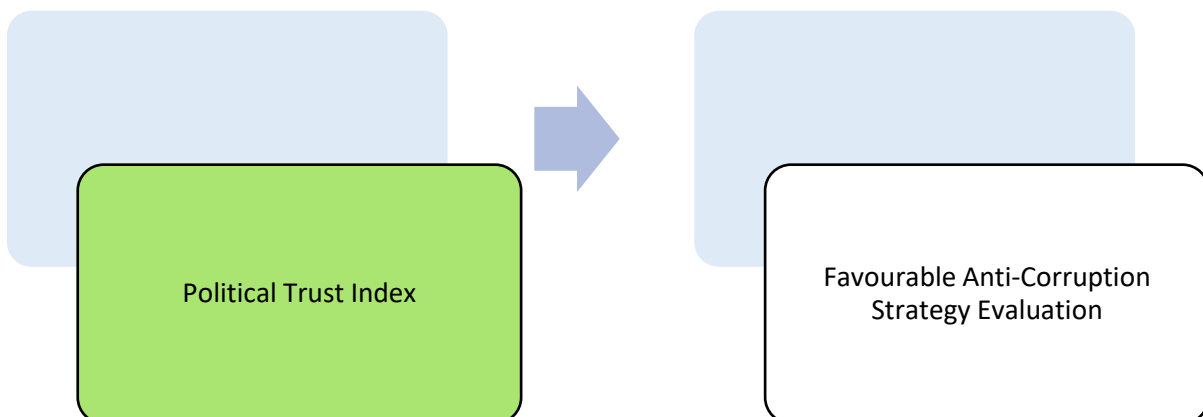
corruption. This finding confirms our thesis and seems to imply that tolerant individuals have low expectations and, as such, are more likely to think that existing government efforts are successful.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Political Distrust

Experts surveyed for this study, as outlined in Chapter 5, highlighted declining trust in the political system as a key problem in South Africa. These concerns correspond with public opinion research by Roberts et al. (2022) that shows that public confidence in the country's political institutions has fallen significantly in the last decade. Declining political trust can affect the credibility of authorities responsible for combating corruption. If the public perceives elected institutions (e.g., national government) as ineffective or dishonest, they may distrust their motivations and question the sincerity of their policy initiatives (for a discussion of the consequences of political distrust, see Citrin & Stoker, 2018). Using data from the United Kingdom, Wroe et al. (2013) argued that when people lose faith in political institutions' ability to address problems, they may be less inclined to support anti-corruption initiatives or view the authorities as capable of conducting them. This sense of distrust can undermine support for anti-corruption efforts, as individuals may doubt whether these efforts will make a difference.



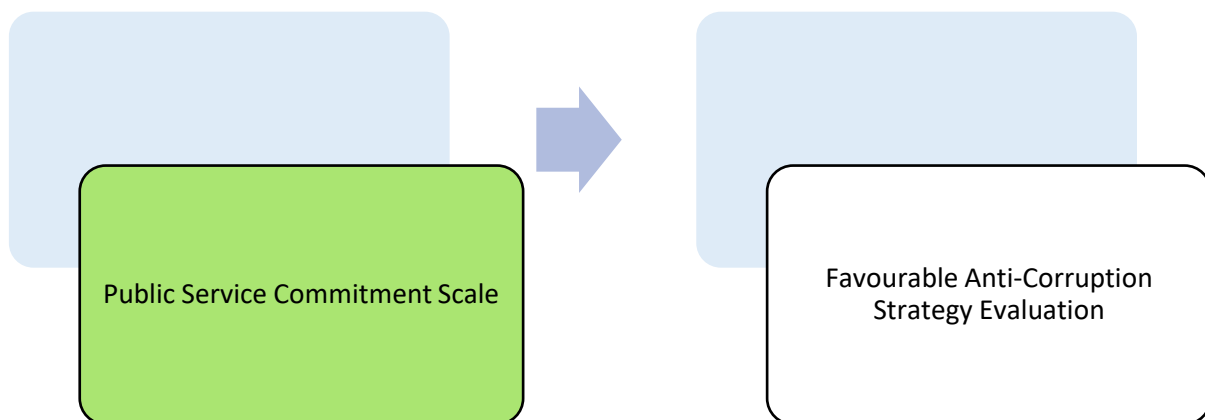
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Based on the arguments made above, we tested the hypothesis that political trust undermines public evaluations of government's anti-corruption efforts. To perform this test, we utilised the Political Trust Index; the metric gauges how confident people were in political institutions (we explain how this scale was fashioned on page 223 of APPENDIX H). A significant (and positive) association was found between government evaluations and the index (analytical outputs are depicted in APPENDIX H on

page 223). It would appear that individuals evaluate anti-corruption measures based on the perceived trustworthiness and integrity of the political institutions responsible for implementing them. But then we must take into account the probability that there may be a negative feedback loop here. The perceived ineffectiveness of anti-corruption efforts may also be reducing trust in the political system (for a discussion of how corruption influences attitudes towards government, see Anderson & Tverdova, 2003).

Public Service

Our expert sample, as discussed in Chapter 2.4, identified the decline of the post-apartheid public service as a major problem. Many experts criticised the service for promoting loyalty to the ruling party over any commitment to serving the people of South Africa. When individuals think that public servants are committed to the needs of the population, they are more likely to have a favourable view of the state's initiatives. Indeed, building and maintaining a dedicated and ethical public service is essential for fostering a culture of integrity and accountability within a democracy (see Ariely 2013 on the relationship between citizen evaluation of public administration and attitudes towards democracy). A person's attitudes towards this vital institution may be an important driver of how they evaluate government's anti-corruption efforts. Research in China by Li and Meng (2020) found that when people have a favourable opinion of the public service, they are more likely to have a positive evaluation of anti-corruption programmes.



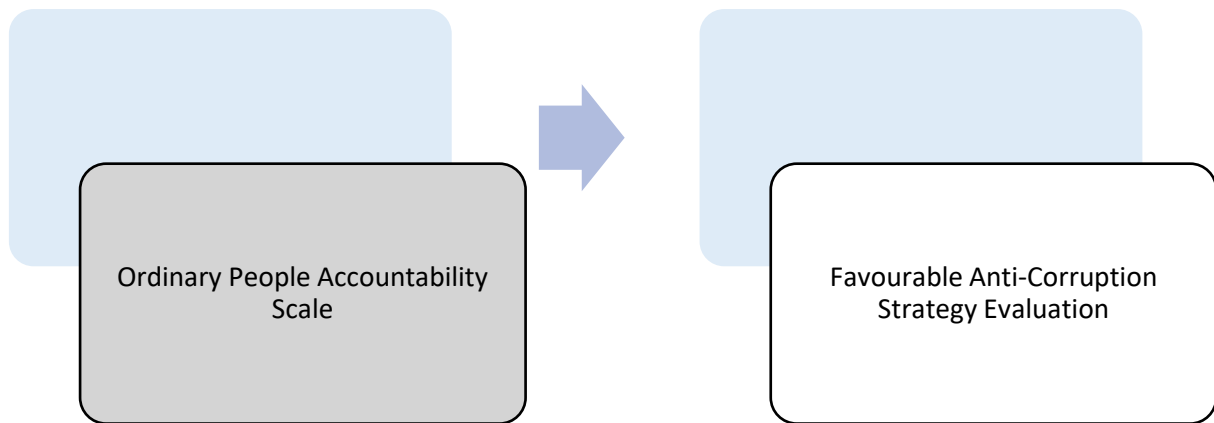
Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Taking into account the research presented above, we theorise that if an individual thinks that the public service is committed to serving the general public then they will have a positive appraisal of government's anti-corruption efforts. We utilised the Public Service Commitment Scale to provide an adequate test of this thesis. The scale measures whether a person thinks that the public service is committed to serving the people (on page 221 of APPENDIX H we provide an outline of how this scale was put together). Statistical testing showed that this measure had a large effect on evaluations of government efforts (on page 221 of APPENDIX H we provide the outcomes of these tests). The findings show that positive assessments of the public service influences how a person evaluates anti-corruption efforts. Additional analysis discovered that educational attainment acted as a mediator of the relationship between public service attitudes and government evaluations. The association between these two variables was especially strong among individuals with higher levels of formal education.

Accountability of Ordinary People

Strong legal accountability mechanisms can act as a deterrent against corrupt behaviour. Confidence in the ability of the state to enforce the law can provide a source of public legitimacy for the state (Tyler, 2006). When the legal system is perceived as fair, impartial and capable of enforcing laws, it

reinforces the perception that the government is serious about upholding the rule of law (also see Bradford et al., 2014). Public perceptions of legal accountability reflect the extent to which individuals trust that government institutions are capable of holding wrongdoers accountable for corrupt actions (Peiffer & Alvarez, 2016). This suggests that if a person views the legal system as effective in prosecuting and punishing ordinary people for corruption, they should have *more* confidence in the government's anti-corruption efforts.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

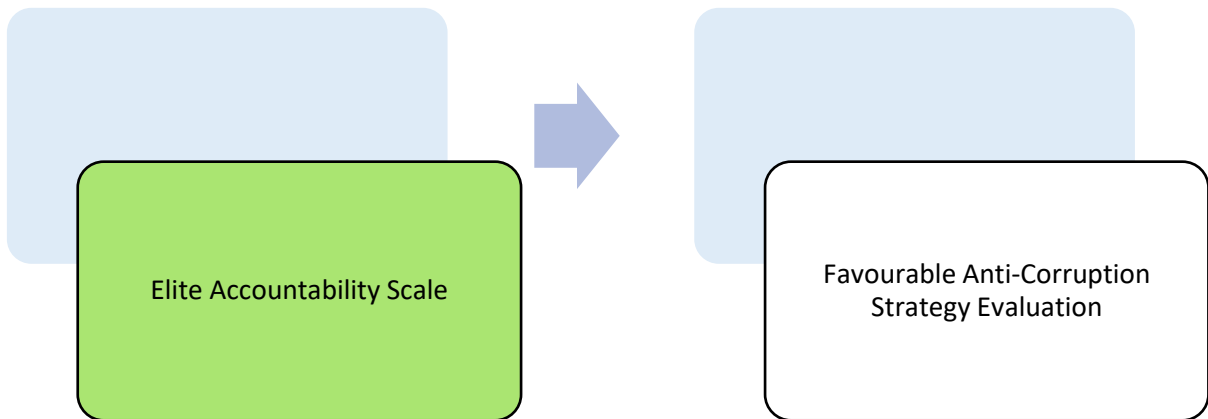
Given the rationale outlined above, we hypothesised that people use their appraisals of the legal system's ability to hold ordinary people to account to inform their evaluations of government's anti-corruption efforts. We utilised the Ordinary People Accountability Scale to evaluate this hypothesis. This scale assesses the extent to which the general population perceives that ordinary individuals are held accountable for corruption through the legal system (for the details of how this scale was assembled, see APPENDIX G on page 216). Our testing was unable to validate our hypothesis (analytical findings are portrayed in APPENDIX H on page 222). Perceived accountability was, in other words, not a good predictor of how people judge state-led anti-corruption efforts in South Africa.

Accountability for Elites

Our analysis has showed that perceived accountability for ordinary people did not affect how people evaluated state-led anti-corruption efforts. Could perceived accountability for elites have a different effect? As outlined in Chapter 2.4, the experts surveyed for our study criticised the failure of the legal system fails to hold the powerful accountable for corruption. Several contended that this failure undermine public support for anti-corruption efforts (also see expert opinion on the culture of impunity in Chapter 5). Research by the HSRC for the Zondo Commission showed that perceptions of unfair treatment for the rich and powerful influenced public evaluations of anti-corruption efforts (Roberts & Mchunu, 2023). When people witness powerful individuals or institutions repeatedly evading accountability for corruption, they may grow resentful that the system primarily serves the interests of the wealthy and influential and not those of ordinary folks (also see Grimes 2006 on procedural fairness and institutional legitimacy).

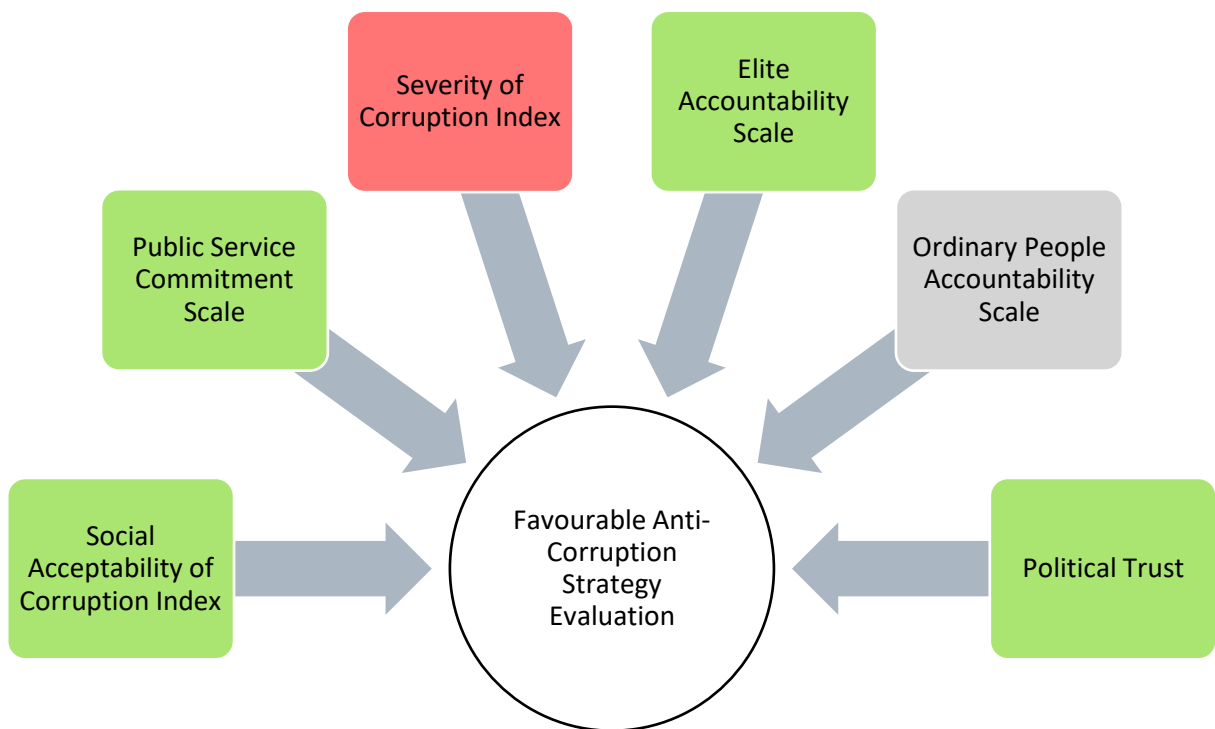
Based on the reasons provided above, we put forward the hypothesis that perceptions of elite accountability will *positively* affect public evaluations of government's anti-corruption efforts. We utilised the Elite Accountability Scale to assess this hypothesis. This scale was designed to measure the extent to which an individual perceives that the elite in South Africa are held accountable for corruption (the construction of this scale is described on page 217 of APPENDIX G). We found a positive (and statistically significant) relationship between the scale and public evaluations of government efforts (detailed findings are presented in APPENDIX H on page 223). Trusting the system

to hold elites accountable for corruption was discovered to enhance the likelihood that individuals will hold a positive view of the state's anti-corruption efforts.



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

Comparative Evaluation



Note: 1. Positive correlations are in green; 2. Negative correlations are in red; and 3. Insignificant correlation are in grey.

We need to compare the predictive power of the six variables discussed so far in this section. We structured a fully specified statistical algorithm that contained all six variables. This multivariate algorithm permitted simultaneous assessment of all six variables, allowing us to study their complex interplay. Incorporating all of them allowed us to isolate the distinct effects of each while maintaining others as constants. This approach yielded a more precise evaluation of the variables' impact on public appraisals of government efforts (results of this analysis are presented in APPENDIX H on page 224). Of the six variables, the one with the strongest predictive power was the Elite Accountability Scale. This was followed by the SAoC Index and the Public Service Commitment Scale. The Ordinary People

Accountability Scale was not a good predictor of public attitudes towards government anti-corruption efforts.

11.3. From Ethics to Action: Implementing a Zero-Tolerance Approach to Corruption

Chapter 11.1 revealed that a significant majority of the general public views anti-corruption efforts in South Africa as inadequate. The previous chapter identified those factors that could improve public evaluations of the country's anti-corruption strategy. This section builds on this prior work and aims to explore expert opinion on how to establish an environment that promotes zero tolerance for corruption. Our evaluation of this data was strengthened by incorporating insights obtained from qualitative semi-structured interviews with key experts. Researchers identified a variety of critical factors that are essential for this transformation, ranging from strengthening civil society to implementing comprehensive legal and institutional reforms. By examining these themes, this section seeks to provide a robust understanding of the strategies experts advocate for addressing the corruption in South Africa.

Expert survey respondents were asked "How much do you agree or disagree that the South African government should create a culture of zero-tolerance for corrupt practices in the country?" A tenth of the sample agreed with the statement and 89% said that they totally agreed. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked: "There are many different opinions about how to encourage a culture of zero-tolerance for corrupt practices in South Africa. What do you think is the *most effective* way to create such a culture?" A wide array of different answers to this question were provided by respondents, and these were grouped into six themes.

Before we discuss these six themes, it is worth considering a critique that Vanja Karth has of past anti-corruption interventions. She emphasised that effective anti-corruption measures should focus on tangible actions and outcomes rather than just creating new policies. She said that "there are plenty of policies out there [...] what we need is practical interventions". In discussing the gap between policy development and implementation, she criticised the superficial nature of many anti-corruption policies. She stated that "policies are an easy way for politicians and companies to say we've done what you asked us to do [...] but actual implementation requires real hard work." She argued that while policies may be well-articulated and publicly presented, their implementation often falls short due to a lack of commitment and resources.

Education and Awareness

Several experts highlighted the need for public education campaigns to demonstrate the link between corruption and the social and economic problems facing South Africa. EXPERT 1 favoured "[w]holesale value changes in education across all social institutions". EXPERT 6 wants to "[s]tart educating children at primary schools to high schools about ethics and the damaging effects of corruption". He indicated that educating the population about the detrimental effects of corruption on society, democratic institutions and the moral fabric was essential. Lawson Naidoo proposed a public education campaign that demonstrates the link between paying petty bribes, such as to traffic officers, and large-scale corruption. This, he believed, would make people aware of how they empower a culture of corruption that ultimately damages them. Ralph Mathekga wanted ordinary people to get "involved in anti-corruption activities" and favoured "public awareness regarding ethical leadership and its importance in democracy".

Patrick Giddy proposed learning about ethics through "imaginative exercises" such as novels, movies, sitcoms and advertisements in which "characters move from ignorance to awareness". Marianne Camerer emphasised that public education needs to be made personal, so that people become more aware of the impact of corruption on them and their family, friends and neighbours, and more aware of the way in which their choices and actions either enable or disrupt corruption. She added that it is

not immediately evident to everyone what constitutes an act of corruption; people need practical, relatable examples that resonate with their daily life. She gave the example of the Life Esidimeni tragedy as a practical case study of how individual's choices have consequences. Anti-corruption messaging should be linked to survivalist needs so that everyone could become aware of the grave consequences of corruption for our ability to meet basic needs.

Chrissy Dube identified the need for anti-corruption education and suggested incorporating corruption awareness into school curricula to change the mindset of future generations. EXPERT 50 also advocated incorporating "ethical awareness in school syllabus and in corporate induction programmes". Collette Schulz-Herzenberg supported "[p]ublic education about the importance of public sector ethics". Integrating ethical awareness into school syllabi and corporate induction programmes was also recommended. Marianne Camerer suggested that public education and awareness should be led by a new independent dedicated anti-corruption agency whose mandate includes prevention. Education and awareness are essential tools for preventing corruption. Investigative journalists and the media in general should report on successful investigations and prosecutions resulting from tip-offs and whistleblower reports. Sope Williams concurs with the need for greater education about ethics, but she raised a concern about how the South African education system currently teaches history. Both public and private schools she felt largely fail to teach the country's true history. The curriculum is silent on many of the critical issues that shape the nation's past and present, including the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. This lack of education on these issues means that young people are not encouraged to think critically about their history or their place in society, which in turn hampers efforts to effect change.

EXPERT 15 favoured raising public awareness through a series of "public conversations around corruption as a historical event rather than something that is only happening now". She thought that these conversations should aim to reveal how corruption has existed throughout the centuries, and how it is systematic rather than about individuals. When discussing education as a solution to corruption in a qualitative interview, Zakhona Mvelase called for greater education on the issue of gendered corruption. She believed that "once people are educated, they get empowered". She said that education can empower women by helping them recognize corruption when it occurs and providing them with the tools to resist or report it. A better understanding of sexual corruption as a serious crime could lead to more robust social and legal responses. This would involve shifting societal norms to more strongly condemn the sexual exploitation of women in all forms.

Strengthening Anti-Corruption Agencies

A number of expert respondents supported bolstering existing anti-corruption agencies. Ensuring the independence of law enforcement from political interference was frequently mentioned by a few experts who emphasised the need for leadership. Some experts advocated for speeding up legal processes to ensure timely prosecutions. EXPERT 16, for example, was critical of how long it takes to prosecute corruption cases. She stated that "current process in the country of the long period of time taken is not working towards the culture of zero tolerance, but rather that one can get away with these activities". Garth Japhet wanted an "effective, independent criminal justice system with fast tracks corruption cases and reported consequences". Marianne Camerer agreed that providing the public with information is vital, including information about action taken in response to tip-offs, and the outcome of investigations and prosecutions. There must be a self-reinforcing 'feedback loop' between whistleblowers, witnesses and complainants, on the one hand, and accountability institutions on the other. A new dedicated anti-corruption agency should be responsible for leading and coordinating that effort to ensure that successes are publicised.

Trevor White emphasised the need to reform the SAPS to retain experienced investigators, as the loss of experienced personnel has hampered effective corruption investigations. This would be done in

concert with efforts to improve the institutional integrity of the judiciary to ensure that corruption cases are properly investigated and prosecuted. In addition, he also recommended enforcing mandatory reporting of corruption within the private sector. Zaakirah Vadi agreed and called for transparency in policy and practice in both the private and public sector. Greater willingness by the private sector to conduct business transparently would be an effective contribution to cleaning up public procurement. Janine Hicks likewise supported strengthening the investigative capabilities of law enforcement to fight corruption. She recommended investing in resources and training for investigative bodies to improve their effectiveness in handling corruption cases. She also wanted to restore faith in the system by publicising successfully prosecuted cases³³.

A few experts favoured the creation of a new state-sponsored organisation to fight corruption. Lawson Naidoo, for example, favoured the establishment of a dedicated, truly independent anti-corruption agency that is adequately resourced. An independent anti-corruption unit with broad powers, supported by a robust legal framework, was also recommended by EXPERT 37. He wanted “[a]n anti-corruption unit that has broad powers” and that “can operate at the highest level of government, and whose work is seen to be done by the public”. But Natasja Holtzhausen disagreed with this approach and alleged that: “South Africa does not need more agencies”. She felt that we should rather focus on strengthening existing and improving agencies and relevant legislation.

A number of experts favoured strengthening anti-corruption efforts within the public sector. Ryan Brunette, for example, said that “[t]he single most effective means for combatting corruption in South Africa would be by reinforcing checks and balances within the public administration by creating independent processes of appointment”. Ursula van Beek would like to see a new independent anti-corruption agency taking responsibility for rigorous and regular lifestyle audits of public officials. Kris Dobie believed that the professionalisation of the public service was key to reducing corruption in South Africa. In a qualitative interview, he stated that “if we do want less corruption then we probably do need to depoliticise the administration and make a more politically neutral administrative class.” David Bruce concurred and advocated for a public service that emphasises not only more efficient, but fairer promotion, discipline and human resource practices. Another expert observed that nothing has a more powerful impact on organisational culture than the choice of who gets promoted. If integrity is seen to be rewarded by the organisation’s leadership, an ethical culture will be encouraged to flourish. Leveraging technology to combat corruption in the public sector was another important recommendation. Reza Omar suggested using blockchain to track every monetary transaction from the National Treasury through state institutions, including all contracts and payments to public officials.

Sternier Punishment

Strong penalties and prosecution of corrupt individuals, regardless of their position, were repeatedly suggested as solutions to corruption by experts surveyed. This finding is unsurprising; a failure to enforce anti-corruption laws and policies was identified, as discussed in Chapter 2.4, as a major driver of corruption by the experts surveyed. David Lewis contended that we need to “[d]emonstrate zero tolerance of the involvement of powerful politicians, public servants, law enforcement officers and businesspeople in corruption”. EXPERT 26 favoured “[s]trict, transparent punishment for all who transgress, no matter how “petty” the transgression”. Paul Holden also supported more robust enforcement and argued that the “most effective means of achieving zero tolerance is criminal and civil enforcement”. He believed that such enforcement would send powerful “signals about how

³³ The recommendations put forward here correspond with a recent Open Secrets Investigation report (2022) on what is required to strengthen law enforcement agencies against corruption. The report, in particular, recommended appointing competent investigators in these agencies and advocated for greater transparency. The report also endorsed prosecuting incompetent and corrupt agency personnel.

wrongdoing leads to meaningful consequences, including loss of employment and deprivation of liberty".

A number of experts favoured high-profile prosecutions and thought that demonstrating zero tolerance for corruption at the highest echelons of government and business can set a precedent. Itumeleng Mongale, in particular, wanted to "[p]rosecute the elite". EXPERT 4 supported a similar approach and demanded the: "[e]nd impunity for corruption" by prosecuting and jailing offenders at the highest level. He suggested that this included "high-ranking politicians, government and business leaders". A critical aspect of combating corruption, according to Kris Dobie, is ensuring that there are personal consequences for those who engage in corrupt practices. He argued that it is not enough for organisations to face penalties; individuals who perpetrate corruption must also be held accountable. He asserted that that without personal accountability, the culture of impunity will continue to thrive.

Discussing solutions to corruption, Deon Rossouw critiques an overemphasis on strict rules and a compliance-centred approach. During a qualitative interview, he noted that this approach often relies on extrinsic motivation, where employees only follow ethical guidelines when they are being watched. This leads to a temporary fix rather than instilling long-term ethical behaviour. He contended that an emphasis on rules and technicalities overlooks the importance of cultivating ethical agents within organisations. What is required to create a zero-tolerance environment for corruption is strong ethical cultures within organisations that are supported by ethical leadership. Fostering intrinsic values and a sense of purpose within organisations is more effective than relying on fear-based tactics.

Whistleblower Protection

A significant emphasis by some experts was placed on exposing corrupt activities and maintaining transparency within the public sector. EXPERT 38, for example, wanted to "[n]ame and shame those found guilty" while Tsietsi Kekana also emphasised the importance of exposing corrupt activities. Natasja Holtzhausen, in particular, favoured normalising whistleblowing. But to achieve this, experts felt, it was necessary to protect whistleblowers. Chrissy Dube also emphasised the need to strengthen these mechanisms and reduce the risks for individuals reporting corruption. EXPERT 29 similarly wanted "maximum protection" for whistleblowers and John Clarke called for "[p]rotecting, supporting and incentivising whistleblowers." EXPERT 5 likewise suggested providing incentives for those who expose corruption. He thought that creating a secure environment where whistleblowers can report corruption without fear of retribution and ensuring their protection and support can encourage more individuals to come forward. EXPERT 45 supported using technology to protect whistleblowers. He asserted that "[w]e need to leverage technologies such as blockchain" in protecting whistleblower's identities.

One of the primary challenges in addressing corruption, as highlighted by Kris Dobie, is the widespread fear of reporting misconduct. He underscored the need for robust leadership and improved governance to create an environment where individuals feel safe to report corruption. He argued that until organisations are led by individuals who are committed to taking action against corruption, the situation is unlikely to improve. Marianne Camerer strongly supported the importance of an "affirming organisational culture" that encourages whistleblowers (or what Thuli Madonsela has called 'graft blockers') to feel confident that "enabling and supportive conditions" have been established by "principled and caring leadership". A good way to protect and compensate whistleblowers is to ensure that they do not lose their jobs because they've done the right thing – retaining one's job after blowing the whistle on corruption or other wrongdoing sends an important signal that upholds dignity. Stefanie Fick agreed and urged that whistleblowers should be offered jobs rather than being ostracised. Sam Sole, Jay Kruuse and Gareth Newham supported 'compensating' whistleblowers for the real psychological, physical and financial costs they often have to bear, but cautioned against the consequences of using language like 'incentivising' or 'rewarding' them financially.

Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze emphasised the importance of creating a system that guarantees the anonymity of whistleblowers. While there are anonymous hotlines managed by private entities (like Deloitte), the effectiveness of these mechanisms in bringing about change remains uncertain. It is crucial to strengthen systems that can protect those who come forward with information. She also advocated for changing the narrative around whistleblowing, promoting it as an act of bravery and courage, and celebrating individuals who take the risk to expose unethical practices. This shift in perspective is necessary to foster a culture where individuals feel supported and recognized for their integrity. Zaakirah Vadi agreed, suggesting that the media have a responsibility to depict whistleblowers as heroes whenever justified. The media should be more thoughtful about giving coverage to reflexive counter-allegations that they are merely disgruntled, incompetent employees.

Like other experts, Janine Hicks championed stronger whistleblower protections. In a qualitative interview, she proposed implementing robust measures to protect the identities and safety of whistleblowers, including confidentiality and relocation options. Ariella Scher also recommended enhancing legislative protections for whistleblowers to address issues such as job loss and prolonged legal battles. She suggested that better protection could mitigate the personal and financial risks associated with whistleblowing. The arguments made here are consistent with expert concerns, outlined in Chapter 9.4, that whistleblowers face significant challenges. The recommendations made by experts interviewed for this study corresponded with the work of Wiener (2023) who argued that whistleblowers needed stronger protections and support.

Active Citizenship

Strengthening civil society and building strong community structures were identified as powerful anti-corruption tools by some in the expert sample. Zaakirah Vadi and Stefanie Fick emphasised the importance of collaborative networks across civil society. These networks can encourage and support the public to act with integrity and courage to confront corruption. Civil society can help provide public education and awareness of rights and responsibilities, as well as information about where to find safe channels for reporting corruption and where to obtain advice and support. In these ways, civil society is a vital agent to encourage civic responsibility and to support an active citizenry. Zaakirah Vadi and Stefanie Fick also identified the importance of civil society's role in contributing to bridging the divide between other groupings in society. Many divisions exist, including those based on cultural, religious or political allegiances, but it is vital to establish an overarching loyalty to the Constitution and its vision for a transformed society in which everyone is treated with dignity and is valued equally. Marianne Camerer vigorously agreed, saying that the everyone should have a layman's copy of the Constitution. Patrick Giddy also expressed agreement with the Constitution as the foundation for active citizenship, pointing to the "poetic vision" of a transformed society in the 'Vision Statement' in the National Development Plan.

A factor that might encourage reporting corruption is if one didn't feel quite so alone and vulnerable when doing so, suggested Nedson Pophiwa. Thus, engaging in collective action, confidence in confidentiality when reporting and better support for those speaking up might encourage those considering whether or not to report corruption. Some experts wanted interventions to help civil society fight corruption. Sharon Ekambaram advocated for investing in advice offices and community organisations independent of political parties. EXPERT 23 proposed regular check-ins with communities and sectors on the fight against corruption, promoting public integrity and providing incentives for sustainability. Other experts talked about the role of the media. EXPERT 51 said that "[t]he focus of anti-corruption efforts should be on using public power and state resources to empower ordinary South Africans to hold their public officials accountable". For her this means supporting free media and active civil society. Like Caroline James, EXPERT 49 favoured protecting and

developing "independent media that will attack corruption" and also advocated for building "civil society organisations and protest movements focussing on corruption".

But what are some of the actions that South African citizens could take to help combat corruption? Experts were asked what citizen actions would be the *most* effective in the fight against corruption. Reviewing the answers provided, it is apparent that most favoured actions that would result in structural change to the existing system. Three-quarters (76%) of expert respondents said that supporting legal reform for greater transparency (especially proactive disclosure of public procurement information) was the most effective way that ordinary people could fight corruption. Another effective citizen action identified by experts was voting for a political party that demonstrates a commitment to fight corruption. A clear majority (61%) of the expert sample supported this type of citizen action. Survey participants also wanted people to support civil society efforts. Two-fifths of participants favoured citizens participating in protest marches or demonstrations against corruption and a similar proportion thought that citizens should engage in anti-corruption activism online. About a third (33%) of experts believed that people should volunteer their time to anti-corruption civil society groups while a higher percentage (43%) said that citizens should donate money or help raise funds for such groups.

Experts wanted citizens to report corruption and help create greater transparency within society. Many experts surveyed believed if someone was a victim of corruption, they should contact civil society to get justice. A large majority (79%) of this group said that victims of corrupt practices should report their problem to a non-governmental organisation that dealt with corruption issues. A significant proportion (62%) of experts also favoured approaching independent anti-corruption agencies (e.g., National Anti-Corruption Hotline) to get justice for victims of corruption. When asked about who citizens should report to, experts were somewhat sceptical of the justice system. Only about half (49%) said that ordinary people should report corruption to law enforcement if they wanted justice. This position is, perhaps, unsurprising. As discussed in previous chapters, many experts are sceptical of South African law enforcement and blame the weakness of the justice system for the growth of corruption in the country over the last few decades.

Decolonisation

Experts interviewed for this study were asked about decolonisation and its relevance to addressing corruption in South Africa. The discussion of decolonisation was intertwined with the historical context of the country's colonial and apartheid past. Many experts interviewed, as discussed in Chapter 2.2, thought colonialism and apartheid had a profound impact on contemporary corruption. Though the experts interviewed recognise its complexity, some saw decolonisation as a potential strategy for addressing corruption. Here decolonisation was presented as a multifaceted and complex process that required dismantling the remnants of colonial and apartheid-era systems and fundamentally restructuring society. This included addressing the deep-seated economic effects of these past systems. Let us look at expert opinion on this issue in more detail below.

Some experts talked about the need to decolonise culture to address corruption. As noted in Chapter 2.2, Gugu McLaren Ushewokunze believed that a pervasive culture of entitlement, rooted in historical grievances, that is used to rationalise unethical behaviour within the government in South Africa. She felt that this culture was deeply embedded in the country's historical context of apartheid and colonialism. She argued that we must identify and fight the pervasive culture of entitlement. Zoe Mthimunye noted that this process requires a cultural shift that rejects the justifications for corrupt behaviour rooted in historical injustices. But she contended that this will also require addressing legitimate grievances and creating a more inclusive economy.

For a number of experts decolonisation should involve dismantling economic structures that continue to exclude small businesses and marginalized groups. Christine Hobden, during her interview with the research team, also focused on the need to reform the economic conditions created by colonialism and apartheid. She asserted, in particular, that we need to reverse the stark and pervasive disparities in wealth and economic opportunity that continue to characterise the country. Nedson Popphiwa, in a qualitative interview, suggested that the country's primary objective must necessarily be to address the current socio-economic structural realities that are the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Therefore, poverty reduction and increased state capacity and integrity are part of a holistic strategy to discourage corruption "indirectly". In effect, reducing corruption is a by-product of addressing the extreme need arising from persistent poverty.

When speaking about decolonisation, Janine Hicks and Amanda Gouws focused on the social and psychological impacts of colonialism and apartheid. They contended that the transition from apartheid to democracy, while a significant shift in governance, has not fully aligned societal values with constitutional ideals. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, Amanda Gouws was particularly concerned about the psychological impact of the apartheid system. She pointed to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which suggested providing psychological counselling to those affected by apartheid to help them deal with the dehumanisation they experienced. Psychological upliftment will also be assisted by breaking the perpetuating economic cycles of poverty and exclusion in South Africa. This will require reforming a governance system that is plagued by mismanagement and addressing entrenched inequality and social division.

12. Summarised Findings

The NACS outlines six strategic goals that range from promoting active citizenry to enhancing governance, oversight, transparency and accountability in all sectors. The strategy calls for a united front against corruption that transcends political, socio-economic and ideological divides. The goal of this report is to provide relevant data that could assist with the implementation of the NACS. The HSRC believes that the findings presented in this report can assist with the realisation of the NACS's vision. This chapter presents an overview of the main results of the research presented in this report. Where appropriate, brief recommendations that can assist with the fulfilment of the NACS's vision was provided.

Context of Corruption

Let us begin our discussion by looking at expert attitudes towards corruption in South Africa. In Chapter 2.1 we examined expert survey data on how corruption should be defined. No single definition comprehensively captures its many dimensions, and there was no broad consensus on a definitive definition. Although many pointed to the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain, definitions also made reference to bad governance, misappropriation of public goods and unethical behaviour by public officials and politicians. Chapter 2.2 examined expert opinion on the historical roots of corruption with a focus on the legacy of apartheid and corruption. Although there were some differing opinions, experts generally agreed that this legacy had greatly contributed to the current levels of corruption in South Africa. A number of experts linked corruption to the poverty and inequality created by the apartheid system, suggesting that inequality and limited access to resources and opportunities drive individuals towards corrupt behaviours.

In Chapter 2.3 experts were asked about whether corruption had grown over the last few decades. Despite some dissenting opinions, on the whole, the experts surveyed for this study indicated that the level of corruption had gotten worse over time. We found that 87% of the expert sample stated that corruption in South Africa has worsened since 1995 and 67% that corruption has increased since 2015. We examined expert survey data on explanations for *why* corruption has become more systematic and organised over the past few decades in Chapter 2.4. Responses highlighted several interrelated factors and focused on political corruption and institutional weaknesses. Respondents were particularly concerned about the lack of accountability, poor law enforcement and the absence of political will to fight corruption. Many pointed to the decline of the public service, where resistance to merit-based recruitment and unethical leadership have entrenched corrupt practices. The dominant-party system (particularly the ruling party's cadre deployment policy) was seen as promoting loyalty over integrity and competence, which opened the way for corruption and undermined accountability.

Experience of Corruption

In Chapter 3 we examined how the adult population in South Africa experiences corruption using public opinion data. Overall, the data presented in that chapter showed that most people in the country have experienced, and feel affected by, corruption. We discovered that the majority (52%) of the adult population had been solicited for a bribe by a public official in the five years prior to the SASAS 2023 interview. Certain groups reported more recent exposure to this kind of corruption than others. High exposure groups included urban metropolitan residents, male adults and racial minorities. Recent exposure to public sector corruption appears to have increased between SASAS 2006 and SASAS 2023. The groups that suffered the largest increase in bribe solicitation included men, workers and metropolitan urban residents. The observed increase may be due to the growth of corrupt practices amongst public officials during this period. But it could also be attributed to a decline in the social taboo against reporting experiences of bribe solicitation.

We learned in Chapter 3.2 that a clear majority of the public said that they lived in communities and neighbourhoods characterised by corruption. In addition, a minority asserted that they lived in places where corruption was common. Nearly two-fifths (39%) of the general population reported that most or all of their neighbours were engaged in corrupt activities, while 20% stated that they lived in a community where people frequently had to pay bribes to obtain essential services. Humans are inherently social creatures, and we often look to our peers to understand what is considered acceptable or desirable within our communities. When we see our fellow community members engaging in certain corrupt practices, it can influence our own beliefs and behaviours through processes like social comparison and social conformity. Witnessing our fellow community members engage in corrupt activities, we may even feel compelled, or at least less opposed, to adopt similar practices.

We found, in Chapter 3.3, some evidence to suggest that many people in South Africa were affected by sexual extortion from public officials. A greater part (58%) of the public reported indirect experience of sexual extortion by public officials in the five years before the 2023 SASAS interview. This kind of indirect experience was discovered to be highest in the Free State and Limpopo as well as amongst members of the white and Indian minorities. Residing in a community where individuals must resort to corruption to access basic services was found to be linked with indirect exposure to sexual extortion. Our analysis further revealed that those who frequently encounter demands for bribes from public officials were also more likely to have recently heard about public sector sextortion affecting people in their personal circles.

In Chapter 3.4 we show that a substantial proportion (64%) of the general population felt that corruption had a large impact on their personal life. When compared to other groups, the perceived personal impact of corruption was discovered to be comparatively high amongst residents in KwaZulu-Natal. It was also found to be high amongst older people, urban dwellers as well as members of the Zulu and Indian population groups. These findings reflect, in part, what was observed elsewhere in Chapter 3; a significant proportion of the general population live in communities where corrupt practices are common. But it also reflects general concerns about the impact of corruption on the economy and politics. As we saw in Chapter 4, the majority of the general public is concerned about corruption at the elite level and the impact that it has had on the economy.

It could be argued that the level of self-reported corruption experience described in Chapter 3 is lower than what we may have expected. This could be due to social desirability bias which has led to an under-reporting of corrupt practices. Although we should not discount the possibility of response bias, it is important to consider that corruption experience is also informed by certain barriers to participation. A significant share of the poor and economically inactive in South Africa simply do not have the financial resources to frequently participate in corrupt practices. In addition, many people (especially those in rural areas) have limited interactions with government officials of any kind. This would reduce their exposure to corruption in the public sector. Indeed, our analysis showed that employed people and those with greater economic resources reported the highest levels of bribe solicitation from public officials.

Perceived Level of Corruption

Public perceptions about the level of corruption in South Africa are outlined in Chapter 4. Reviewing the results, it was clear that the bulk of the population thought that corruption was a major problem. Our findings are consistent with prior public opinion research which has looked closely at the perceived level of corruption in the country. Chapter 4.1 evaluated public perceptions of corruption among elite figures, concentrating on leaders in business and politics. The vast majority of the public believed that politicians are, for the most part, deeply involved in corruption. Business leaders were

viewed, by comparison, as less corrupt. This perception gap was found to be largest for the youth, the Indian and Tswana groups as well as residents of Mpumalanga.

Chapter 4.2 explored popular perceptions of corruption within the South African public sector and identified those groups that were most concerned about this issue. Survey data from SASAS 2004 and SASAS 2023 indicate a notable rise in the belief that corruption is pervasive among public officials. This trend aligns with other public opinion research that shows a significant decline in institutional trust in the country. Subgroup analysis revealed variations in the perceived level of corruption in the public service. The groups most likely to think that the service was corrupt were residents of certain provinces (e.g., Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal), rural areas and members of Black African linguistic minorities. On the whole, these findings underscore the deepening scepticism towards the public service and the urgent need for targeted interventions to address corruption perceptions and restore public trust.

The extent of perceived corruption among religious leaders was investigated in Chapter 4.3. The data indicated that the general public viewed religious leaders as less corrupt than leaders in politics or business. Our analysis revealed significant variations in religious corruption perceptions based on religious affiliation. Atheists, when compared to other affiliation groups, were the most likely to view religious leaders as corrupt. Looking at different Christian affiliates, we found that Anglicans and Methodists exhibited relatively high corruption perceptions while Reformed Church members had the lowest. Among non-Christian affiliations, Muslims perceived higher levels of corruption compared to Hindus. Perceptions also differed by geographic and socio-demographic groupings. Mpumalanga residents, suburban and rural farm dwellers, as well as the Xhosa and white population groups, all reported comparatively high religious corruption perceptions.

In Chapter 4.4 we found a widespread belief that corruption has had a significant economic impact on the country and this belief was associated with perceptions of political corruption. There were regional and demographic variations in these sociotropic concerns. The groups most likely to believe that corruption had a large economic impact were Indian and Zulu adults as well as residents of KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State. Educational attainment was found to influence attitudes here, with better educated individuals more likely to perceive a large economic impact. Moreover, there was a strong linkage between sociotropic concerns about corruption's economic impact and perceptions of its effects on SOEs. Individuals who perceived a large economic impact also thought that corruption had a large impact on SOEs. Sociotropic attitudes are further connected to the egotropic evaluations discussed in Chapter 3.4. Those who thought that corruption had a significant societal impact were found to be more inclined to believe that it had a substantial effect on their personal lives. This highlights how intertwined perceptions of corruption's societal and personal impacts are.

Explaining Elite Corruption

Chapter 5 explored the reasons that the general public as well as experts utilise to explain elite corruption in South Africa. Chapter 5.1 examined attributions for corruption amongst the mass public. Roughly three-quarters (74%) of the public used psychological factors (e.g., greed and dishonesty) to explain elite corruption. Psychological factors were discovered to be popular across different socio-demographic subgroups. But appeared to be most common amongst KwaZulu-Natal residents, members of the Zulu and Tswana groups as well as those in the 55-64 age cohort. Attributions related to law enforcement enjoyed less support amongst the adult population was relatively low; only 61% of the public used law enforcement attributions. This kind of attribution was used most by the Indian and white groups, suburban dwellers and residents of KwaZulu-Natal. A noteworthy minority (30%) of the adult population preferred system justification attributions and contended that elite corruption was necessary given the nature of post-apartheid society. This kind of attribution was most popular amongst residents of Gauteng as well as suburban dwellers.

As part of Chapter 5, experts were assessed on which social values and norms were driving elite corruption. Chapter 5.2 looked at expert opinion on the social values and norms that fostered corrupt behaviours amongst the rich and powerful. Experts identified a sense of entitlement, materialism and opportunism as motivators of behaviour here. Greed, selfishness and deceitfulness were also identified. Corrupt practices were rationalised as necessary for success, and elites were thought to show a lack of empathy and concern for the broader population. Experts also talked about a culture of impunity where corruption is seen as a consequence-free means for elites to maintain power and influence. Expert opinion had a lot of similarities with public opinion on what was driving elite corruption. However, system justification explanations were found to be much less popular amongst experts than non-experts.

Chapter 5.3 investigated expert opinion about the social values and norms that prompt small business-owners to engage in corrupt practices. Even though this group is one of the main *petite* elites within local economies in the country, it is frequently overlooked in past discussions of elite corruption. Expert opinion tended to favour system justification explanations when asked about small business owners. Experts identified survival pressures, institutional dishonesty, desperation to clear bureaucratic hurdles and the need to access public services as drivers of corruption for small business owners. A number of experts included weak law enforcement as a driver of corruption amongst this type of *petite* elite. Psychological factors (e.g., greed and selfishness) were less popular than what was seen when experts were asked about the rich and powerful.

Explaining Non-Elite Corruption

In Chapter 5 we investigated popular perceptions on why ordinary people engage in corruption. Public attitudes towards this issue are presented in Chapter 5.4 and show that a majority were able to provide reasons, with only a small percentage unsure or denying that non-elite corruption exists. The most popular explanation was greed and a desire for quick wealth (50%) followed by seeking better treatment (35%). Psychological attributions were popular with most groups surveyed; 82% of the general public used psychological factors to explain non-elite corruption. Only a minority (27%) thought that poor law enforcement was a main driver of non-elite corruption. The following groups were the most likely to favour enforcement attributions: the Indian and Pedi groups as well as residents of Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal. System justification attributions (such as viewing corruption as necessary for accessing essential services) were mentioned by 30% of the mass public. System justification attributions were more common amongst the economically advantaged, members of the Indian and white minorities as well as residents of suburban areas.

Chapter 5.5 analysed expert opinion on the social values and norms encouraging urban corruption. Many of the themes that emerged were analogous with what was observed in Chapter 5.2 as well as Chapter 5.3. Greed and materialism were frequently mentioned, with experts noting a pursuit of personal enrichment at the expense of integrity as main drivers. An erosion of community solidarity in urban areas was thought to further compounded the issue. Desperation and survival instincts, driven by poverty and limited economic opportunities, were also a recurrent theme. In addition, access to services and efficiency concerns were cited with some arguing that bribery was the main solution for many who needed to navigate dysfunctional government systems. Moreover, a sense of lawlessness and impunity was thought to foster corrupt practices, aggravated by distrust of the authorities.

Expert opinion on the social values and norms that encourage rural corruption was investigated in Chapter 5.6. Respondents highlighted a range of factors with some (e.g., weak law enforcement) being quite similar to what was identified to explain urban corruption. Institutional weaknesses, including in the traditional authority system and provincial governments, were also cited. Indeed, traditional

authority governance was seen as very corrupt by 55% of the expert sample. In addition, poverty and survival pressures were identified as driving factors, alongside reliance on patronage networks for survival. Others saw corrupt practices as the only way to access unreliable essential public services. Some respondents noted the normalisation of corruption intimate rural communities, while others emphasised feelings of alienation and isolation.

When discussing the social values and norms that contribute to corruption, the experts surveyed for this study made many valuable contributions. But they seemed to have overlooked several factors that should be considered. While nepotism and favouritism were mentioned, the more subtle 'codes of silence' within social networks were less frequently highlighted. In addition, even though the experts surveyed offered criticism of South African democratic institutions, social values and norms related to good citizenship, constitutionalism and civic mindedness were largely ignored by most experts. Moreover, the possible role played by blind nationalism in undermining the creation of a zero-tolerance environment for corruption was not highlighted. The reasons that these social values and norms were not mentioned could be due to the fact that the expert surveyed for this study tended to focus on more easily observable institutional causes of corruption (such as weak institutions, poor law enforcement and economic factors) rather than abstract and less tangible cultural and social influences.

Public Sector Sextortion

As aforementioned, we investigated indirect experience of sextortion by the general public in Chapter 3.3. Our research showed a high level of indirect experience amongst the public. In Chapter 6 we explored public concerns about how often sextortion occurs in the South African public sector. A large proportion (59%) of the mass public said that public officials extort sexual favours from people at least occasionally. We wanted to understand why the public thought that sextortion was so common in the public sector. Attitudes towards sextortion prevalence were found to vary significantly by different socio-demographic groups in Chapter 6.1. Although most groups in South Africa thought that sextortion was prevalent amongst public officials, such concerns were especially pronounced amongst certain groups. These included the youth, rural dwellers, the Tswana as well as residents of Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. Remarkably, we observed that male adults were somewhat more likely to think that sextortion was common than their female peers.

Even though the data provided above was informative, we need to look deeper if we are to understand why the mass public thought that sextortion was so prevalent in the South African public sector. In Chapter 6.2 we tested a range of different drivers of perceived prevalence. Surprisingly, we found that prevalence perceptions were *not* driven by the news media. Instead, the most important driver of perceptions was indirect experience of sextortion in the public sector. If a person frequently hears about sextortion impacting people they know, they are more likely to think that sextortion was common in the public sector. Another important predictor was the degree of perceived public sector corruption at the community level. If people live in a community where public sector corruption was pervasive, then they tend to think that sextortion was prevalent in the public sector. These findings can be explained by the fact that people are predisposed to use their personal experiences to make judgements about conditions at the national level.

In Chapter 6.2 we discovered that prevalence perceptions were connected to public awareness of sexism. The more aware an individual was of the sexist nature of South African society, the more likely they were to believe that sextortion was widespread in the public sector. This relationship was found to be especially strong if a person identified as female and this could be explained by the fact that gender consciousness *can* influence how people use information to make judgements. When evaluating the level of sextortion amongst public officials, people were also affected by their perceptions of political corruption. If a person believed that politicians routinely abuse their power for

corrupt purposes, they were more likely to believe that sextortion was common in the public sector. Finally, we discovered that being civic minded increased the propensity to think that sextortion was common. Viewing civic social values as important seems to make a person more alert to unethical behaviour in government and public institutions. We found that if a person was economically advantaged, the relationship between these two variables was stronger.

Expert opinion on the prevalence and underlying social values and norms driving sextortion in South Africa was presented in Chapter 6.3. A majority of expert surveyed expressed concern about the entrenched patriarchal values and power imbalances within society. They identified patriarchal norms and power dynamics as catalysts for the crime of sextortion, arguing that the patriarchal system fostered a sense of entitlement among perpetrators who exploit victims' vulnerability. Moreover, institutional disrespect for women and a weak rule of law were highlighted as factors enabling sextortion, where perpetrators act with impunity due to victims' fear of reporting and lack of support. Economic dependence further exacerbates the issue, with vulnerable individuals compelled to exchange sexual favours for basic needs. Cultural factors (including the normalisation of sextortion within certain institutions) were also emphasised by some experts.

Tolerance of Corruption

In Chapter 7 we presented data on the extent of Tolerance towards Corruption (TtC) in South Africa. Although the majority of the adult public rejected corrupt behaviour as unjustifiable, a significant minority reported that this kind of conduct was permissible. A cross-national analysis, using data from the World Value Survey, completed in Chapter 7.1 found that the level of TtC in the country were much higher than what is observed in most other nations. The issue, however, is not about corrupt behaviour *per se*. Further analysis in Chapter 7.2 showed that a noteworthy segment of the general public viewed dishonest-illegal behaviour in general as acceptable. In other words, the mass public is much more tolerant of unlawful behaviour than we may have expected. These results show the urgent need for interventions to promote social values and norms that encourage compliance with the law amongst the general public.

In Chapter 7.2 we developed an indicator ranging from 0 to 100 to assess tolerance to corruption, called the Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index. A higher score on this index reflects a greater acceptance of corrupt practices. The SAoC Index recorded a score of 27, and only 25% of the general population received a score of 0. We were able to identify some groups that had greater SAoC Index scores than others. Chapter 7.3 showed that TtC is highest amongst the following groups: men, the poor, working people (especially public sector employees) and certain religious groups (e.g., Anglicans, Muslims, Zionist Christians and those who were religious but unaffiliated). The Xhosa, Indian and Pedi population groups as well as people living in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo were also identified as having above average SAoC Index scores.

What can the data presented in Chapter 7 tell us about the best approach to reducing TtC in South Africa? Based on the statistical testing completed in Chapter 7.4, it is evident that certain types of messaging would be more effective than others. The data showed us that perceptions about the perceived severity of corruption was negatively associated with TtC. In other words, alerting people to how corruption adversely affects daily life in the country will reduce SAoC Index scores. This kind of messaging will have a particularly powerful effect on the attitudes of the economically advantaged. But, perhaps paradoxically, giving a person the impression that everybody in their neighbourhood is involved in corruption will increase SAoC Index scores. Consequently, messaging should be tailored to highlight the harmful nature of corruption without normalising it. In addition, it is important to reduce bribe seeking behaviour amongst public officials. Our findings suggest that this practice undermines societal principles of fairness and justice, weakening moral opposition to corrupt behaviour.

We found no evidence that materialistic values will promote public tolerance of corruption in South Africa. The data suggests that we do not need to target materialism in any communication campaign that seeks to reduce TtC. One of the main findings to emerge from the analysis in Chapter 7.4 concerned patriotism. Our data showed that a patriotism that is unwilling to question, or be critical of, the state will be detrimental to the creation of a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption. The positive relationship between blind patriotism and the SAoC Index was stronger for the economically disadvantaged. Our research findings seem to suggest that promoting civic values (e.g., responsibility, altruism and critical thinking) will decrease TtC. We should promote a civic patriotism, a nationalism that combines love of country with a thoughtful appreciation of its flaws. Civic patriotism encourages individuals to scrutinise their government and its practices while still upholding a genuine sense of loyalty and pride.

Codes of Silence

People sometimes create 'codes of silence' (CoS) to protect their personal network. In other words, they adopt a moral aversion to report the criminal behaviour of fellow network members to the authorities. The drivers of these CoS social norms are discussed in Chapter 8. To assess the popularity of CoS norms, we created the Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index in Chapter 8.1. This index ranges from 0 to 100, with higher scores representing stronger support for CoS norms. The average SfCoS Index score was 69, and nearly half (45%) of adult public had an index score of 90 and above. The high level of CoS norms observed here present a challenge to the NACS goal of promoting societal transparency and accountability. We need people to report the criminal activities of others, not doing so undermines ongoing efforts by law enforcement to expose wrongdoing and hold perpetrators accountable. It weakens criminal investigations and legal proceedings, undercutting the prosecution of corrupt individuals. For this reason, we need a communication campaign to combat CoS norms and encourage people to call out the unethical behaviour of those in their social networks.

Our subgroup data analysis, presented in Chapter 8.2, revealed that CoS social norms cut across geographic, age, ethnolinguistic and class boundaries in South Africa. Any communication strategy designed to reduce CoS norms should, therefore, have a wide remit and target a range of different groups. But we were able to identify some groups that demonstrated stronger adherence to CoS social norms than others. Men, in particular, were found to have stronger norms than women. Other groups that had robust CoS norms included members of the Xhosa and Coloured population groups as well as residents of the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and the Free State. Special communication campaigns should be planned to specifically focus on these groups. But which messages will be most effective at reducing CoS social norms in South Africa?

The research on CoS social norms is still quite new and not much is known about these types of norms. But the data analysis presented in Chapter 8.3 gives us an insight into how we can reduce CoS norms in the country. Encouraging a sense of civic duty and public participation in civic activities should have a positive effect. The more active an individual was in civic politics, the lower their SfCoS Index scores. In addition, a blind patriotism that is averse to critiquing the nation will strengthen CoS social norms. The positive association between blind patriotism and the SfCoS Index was found to be stronger for the better educated. Our data showed that ethnocentrism also plays a detrimental role here. Discouraging blind patriotism and ethnocentrism will play a constructive role in combatting CoS social norms. Civic patriotism is a set of values that is willing to question, or be critical of, the nation and cultivates a discerning national allegiance. Promoting this kind of patriotism (instead of blind patriotism) should have a beneficial influence here.

Our investigation yielded no indication that materialistic values encourage CoS social norms in South Africa. This implies that we do not need to focus on materialism when designing communication campaigns aimed at addressing CoS norms. Encouraging authoritarian social values will also not be

helpful in reducing CoS social norms and encouraging a zero-tolerance culture for corruption. In fact, our analysis showed that such values actually increased the likelihood of having a high SfCoS Index score. We also discovered that this relationship was especially strong for young people. It is possible that a liberalism more in line with the civic patriotism described above would be a better counter to CoS norms. Finally, we found that recent experiences of public sector corruption undermine the legitimacy of the law enforcement system and encourage CoS social norms. The relationship between bribe solicitation and SfCoS Index was stronger if the person was economically advantaged. The data shows, therefore, that it is important to reduce bribe seeking behaviour amongst public officials.

Culture of Impunity

Chapter 9 investigated public attitudes towards a culture of impunity for engaging in corrupt practices in South Africa. A large proportion of the public appeared to believe that there was general impunity for participating in corruption. More than half (51%) of the population felt that non-elites would not be held accountable for engaging in public sector corruption. In addition to this distressing discovery, we learnt that only a minority (34%) of the adult population thought that elites would be held accountable for engaging in corrupt practices. If someone believed that non-elites would be held accountable, they were also likely to think that elites would face accountability. However, the connection between these beliefs was fairly weak. Levels of perceived accountability for corruption were found to be lowest amongst the youth, residents of Limpopo and Mpumalanga as well as among the Pedi and white population groups.

We discovered in Chapter 9.2 that a clear majority (61%) of the adult population thought that anti-corruption reporting structures were ineffective. The groups that were the most negative on this issue were rural dwellers, the Zulu and female adults. Residents of Mpumalanga and Limpopo were also found to be particularly cynical about the effectiveness of reporting structures. These findings draw our attention to a persisting legitimacy challenge in the police-public relationship. It represents a clear failure of the justice system to convince the public of its effectiveness and is a major obstacle to the creation of a zero-tolerance environment for corruption. Targeted strategies are required to improve the image of law enforcement and convince people that reporting corrupt practices to the authorities is an efficacious endeavour.

In Chapter 9.3 we found evidence that a greater part of the general public feared retaliation from their community if they reported corruption. Most of the adult population (63%) said that they lived in a community where you risked reprisals if you spoke out against corruption. Our data demonstrated that community-level fear of retaliation was highest in Gauteng and the North West as well as amongst adult members of the Indian, Zulu and Tswana groups. These findings suggest that law enforcement have failed to provide a safe environment to report corruption in many communities. It is clear that more work is needed to safeguard those who wish to speak out against corrupt practices. Law enforcement interventions to create safe places for reporting corruption should use our data to better target their efforts.

We explored expert insights on the role of whistleblowers in South Africa in Chapter 9.4, focusing on public perceptions and the challenges whistleblowers face. Experts were divided on the how the general public saw whistleblowers. Some experts thought that people admired whistleblowers for their courage while others thought that they were viewed with scepticism due to the personal risks involved. Cultural factors (such as an anti-snitching mentality) and media portrayals focusing on high-profile cases played a role in their assessment of how whistleblowers are perceived in society. Many experts emphasised the inadequacies in legal protections and institutional support, they contended that whistleblowers often face career retaliation, social isolation, and even threats to their safety for speaking out. Despite existing legal frameworks, experts believed that the authorities rarely take

action on whistleblower reports, which discourages people from coming forward. This culture of impunity was thought to undermine the legitimacy of whistleblowers within society.

Reporting Corruption

To create a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption, we need people to report corrupt behaviour when they witness it. Public opinion research presented in Chapter 10 showed that the general public is quite polarised on whether they would report corruption if they experienced or witnessed it. Only about half (53%) of the adult population said that they would alert the authorities if they experienced or witnessed corrupt practices. Chapter 10.1 showed that report intention varied significantly by geographic, age, ethnolinguistic and class boundaries. Report intention was found to be lowest amongst the poor, the middle aged as well as the Zulu and the Pedi population groups. Adults living in Mpumalanga and Limpopo also demonstrated relatively low report intentions. Customised communication interventions should be designed to target these specific groups. However, which messages will be most effective in increasing the willingness to report corruption in South Africa remains a critical question.

Public opinion data on the probable rationale for the general reluctance to report corruption was presented in Chapter 10.4. Environmental factors were relatively popular amongst the general public; 86% of the public used environmental attributions to explain report reluctance. Law enforcement was one of the most prominent responses given by the mass public. Report reluctance was attributed to a lack of faith in the authorities and perception that the institutions (such as the police and judiciary) tasked with addressing corruption are dishonest and ineffective. Nearly half (49%) of the general public said that people do not report because there is no protection for those who speak out against corruption. Psychological factors were, by comparison, much less popular. This finding can be contrasted with non-expert opinion on the causes of corruption.

Expert opinion on report reluctance was examined in Chapter 10.3. Environmental factors predominant in the responses were put forward by the expert sample when this group was asked about report reluctance. Fear of retaliation was, in particular, highlighted as a particularly pervasive deterrent amongst the experts surveyed as was distrust of law enforcement agencies. Experts also identified weak law enforcement and poor protections for whistleblowers as key drivers of report reluctance. This finding corresponds with expert concern about a culture of impunity for corruption in South Africa. Interestingly, some experts emphasised the historical legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle as a driver of report reluctance. They talked about the historical stigma attached to whistleblowing and how loyalty to community came before compliance with the law.

The data analysis presented in Chapter 10.4 gives us an insight into how we can increase report intention in the country. The main finding is that perceived effectiveness of the anti-corruption reporting structures was the most important determinant of willingness to report. The more effective an individual thinks the legal system is, the more willing they are to report corrupt practices. Communication campaigns must, consequently, highlight system effectiveness if they want to encourage people to report corruption when they see or experience it. Our data analysis showed that perceptions of elite accountability were less important for report intention than evaluations of how the system holds non-elites accountable. The relationship between perceived accountability for ordinary people and report intention was found to be particularly strong for the better educated. Messaging should, therefore, focus on how the system holds non-elites accountable for corrupt practices.

In Chapter 10.4 fear of community retaliation was found to reduce the willingness of individuals to report corruption to the authorities. Communication campaigns need to emphasise the anonymity of existing reporting structures. By emphasising secrecy for those who report, people might show a

greater willingness to come forward. Moreover, this finding showcased the need to improve police protections for those reporting corruption. Although a less powerful predictor, we learnt that recent public sector corruption experience undermines compliance with the law. Reducing bribe solicitation amongst public officials will make people more willing to report corrupt practices. No evidence was found to suggest that materialistic values were influencing report intention. This finding indicated that targeting materialism in any communication campaign aimed at boosting public willingness to report corrupt practices will not be helpful.

Perceptions of Anti-Corruption Efforts

We examined public evaluations of government's anti-corruption programmes in Chapter 11. We found that the general public was quite negative about these efforts; a large majority (62%) said that these efforts were not effective in SASAS 2023. This figure represents a significant decline from what we saw in SASAS 2011; only 39% of the adult population thought state-led efforts were ineffective during that period. We wanted to understand why people were so negative about the government's efforts and looked at how attitudes varied by different socio-demographic groups in Chapter 11.1. Favourable government evaluations were low for most groups, and we did not see considerable variation in how different groups rated the government. But we did find that evaluations were lowest for members of the Coloured and white minorities as well as those living in Western Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal.

If we wanted to increase popular support for the government's anti-corruption efforts, we need to understand the drivers of this support. As part of our data analysis in Chapter 11.2, a range of different drivers were identified. The most important was the extent to which an individual thought that the rich and powerful were held accountable for corruption by the justice system. This finding suggests that publicly targeting corrupt members of the elite for prosecution will improve popular support for ongoing anti-corruption efforts. Communication campaigns should disseminate information about these prosecutions and demonstrate to the people that the elite are being held accountable for corruption. The degree to which people think corruption impacts society is also undermining support for government's efforts. Demonstrating the efficiency of state-led initiatives in lessening the impact of corruption should improve public evaluations. This type of messaging will be particularly positive effect with economically advantaged South Africans.

Chapter 11.2 showed that political trust and positive evaluations of the public service were associated with favourable assessments of government's anti-corruption efforts. The relationship between public service evaluations and assessments of anti-corruption efforts was found to be weaker amongst the less educated. Restoring public trust in elected institutions and the public service should have a positive effect. But we should consider the possibility that a negative feedback loop may exist here. Political distrust *may* decrease public support for anti-corruption programmes. Then again, unsuccessful anti-corruption efforts can *also* undermine public confidence in political institutions. Breaking this cycle requires building trust, demonstrating tangible results, and fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. In addition, our data seems to suggest that low expectations can have a positive effect on popular evaluations of government efforts to combat corruption. But low expectations should be considered a problem, they can lead to complacency and a lack of ambition. When the public are satisfied with minimal progress or mediocre outcomes, it hinders efforts to set and achieve ambitious goals for societal improvement.

Solutions to Corruption

In Chapter 11.3 we looked at possible anti-corruption solutions that were proposed by the experts surveyed for this study. Overall, the consensus among experts is that systemic changes, backed by robust legal frameworks and community engagement, are imperative for fostering a culture of zero-tolerance for corruption in South Africa. Most experts advocated for exposure and transparency,

emphasising the importance of naming and shaming of perpetrators. Publicising high-profile prosecutions will demonstrate zero-tolerance for corrupt practices and set a precedent for elite accountability. Such prosecutions will also help build popular support for the NCAS and strengthened public willingness to report corrupt practices that they witness. In addition, experts favoured implementing strict and transparent law enforcement, ending the culture of impunity for corruption. Legal and institutional reforms emerged as crucial for experts, including expediting legal processes to ensure that corruption cases are handled promptly and efficiently. This will require enhancing the capacity of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute corruption. Prosecutions of petty corruption should also be publicised; improving mass perceptions of accountability for low-level corruption will encourage the public willingness to report corrupt practices.

Strengthening protections, including anonymity and safeguards against reprisal, for whistleblowers were deemed vital by experts. Fear of retaliation was one of the primary reasons that people do not report corruption that they witness. This will require strengthening existing legal protections for whistleblowers as well as improving law enforcements efforts to protect them. It will also necessitate strengthening those civil society groups that have been established to help whistleblowers. But the authorities also need to act on the information provided by whistleblowers. The *main* reason that people do not report corrupt practices that they witness is that they perceive the authorities as unwilling to act on reports of corruption. We need to restore public faith in law enforcement by community commutation campaigns as well as publicising successfully prosecuted corruption cases.

Education and awareness campaigns were highlighted by experts, with some stressing the need to educate citizens about the damaging effects of corruption. Our data shows that raising awareness of the detrimental impact of corruption will reduce societal tolerance for corruption. A number of experts wanted to introduce ethical awareness programmes in schools and corporate environments to build a culture of integrity from a young age. In addition, our research demonstrates the need to promote civic patriotism through civic education programmes. Promoting civic patriotism will not only decrease TtC but help reduce the moral aversion to reporting on the criminal activities of personal network members. Civic education programmes should also discourage blind patriotism which our research has shown to be detrimental impact to the fight against corruption.

Ending, or at least reducing, bribe solicitation by low-level public officials will have a positive effect on how the general public thinks about corruption. Bribe solicitation by public officials increases TtC, reduces the moral aversion to report the criminal activities of people you know personally and decreases willingness to report witnessed corruption. According to the experts interviewed for this study, one of the main ways that we can reduce bribe solicitation by public officials is by depoliticising the public administration and the establishment of a politically neutral processes of public service appointments. Implementing proactive disclosure of information to allow public scrutiny is also important. Efforts to remove the public service should include steps to recognise and address the problem of sexual extortion amongst public officials. This will require addressing existing cultures of patriarchy within the public service.

13. References

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14. Appendices

APPENDIX A. RESEARCH DATA

Data from the 2023 round of the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) were used for this report. This appendix will present information on the details of the survey, including questionnaire design and sampling framework. The first part of the appendix explains the sample design of the survey, the second describes the data collection protocols, the third explains fieldwork preparation, and the fourth section outlines the data capturing and weighting processes. To bolster our understanding of the public opinion data gathered for this study, a survey with relevant experts was fielded alongside SASAS 2023. The methodological design and sample of this supplementary survey was outlined in the final part of this appendix.

Questionnaire Design

Questionnaire design is a critical stage of the research process, and the research team worked with GIZ to formulate questions to be included in the public opinion survey. But the team also looked at scholarship which had used public opinion survey data to test theories and advance ideas on micro-level correlates of perceived and experienced corruption. A number of different countries (especially in Europe and Latin America) have utilised public opinion surveys to research corruption. Indeed, there are many high-quality international survey tools that cover the topic of corruption. The review of Heath et al. (2016), supported by the reviews of Dimant and Tosato (2018) as well as Wysmulek (2019), demonstrate that a wide array of theories has been tested using public opinion survey data. Micro-level survey data also allows, as Charron (2016) has argued, for methodological tests of the quality of survey measures on corruption (also see Heath et al. 2016). These are very valuable research tools that provide us with a unique insight into this complex form of human behaviour.

Questionnaire design built on what do we already know about public attitudes towards corruption in South Africa. Mass attitudes towards corruption have been captured in a variety of public opinion surveys that are designed to track social and political attitudes in the country. A review of past survey research on corruption in South Africa show that dedicated questions on this topic were first fielded in nationally representative surveys during the late 1990s and became a stable part of several survey series in the 2000s. Dedicated modules on corruption emerged in the late 2000s with several relatively in-depth modules fielded in the early 2010s. This trend was in line with the overall increase in public opinion research into corruption in Europe.

Reviewing the kinds of topics that are covered in public opinion research on corruption in South Africa, perception and experience emerge as particularly common. A significant amount of attention has been paid to whether the public believe a specific sector of the government is corrupt. There are a lot of limitations to the existing public opinion polls and many unanswered research questions. The existing body of research, for instance, tends to ignore sextortion. But the largest knowledge concerns the social norms and values that inform corrupt practices have been understudied in South Africa. This gap in our knowledge undermines our comprehension of the social norms and value that motivating people to engage corrupt and anti-corrupt practices. The questionnaire was designed to look at these kinds of social norms and value and identify their *connection* with corruption.

Before a consultative process, the following module was designed and placed with the SASAS 2023.

SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES MODEL

Now I would like to ask some questions about what people like and what people sometimes like doing or not doing.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	(Do not know)
1. I admire people who own expensive homes, cars and clothes.	1	2	3	4	5	8
2. Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.	1	2	3	4	5	8
3. I like a lot of luxury in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	8
4. I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.	1	2	3	4	5	8
5. It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like.	1	2	3	4	5	8

Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card. Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'Never Justifiable' and 10 means 'Always Justifiable'. [SHOWCARD X]

	Never Justifiable											Always Justifiable	(Don't know)
6. Avoid paying for public transport.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	
7. Claiming social grants to which you are not entitled.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	
8. Cheating on taxes if you have a chance.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	
9. Stealing goods from a shop.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	
10. Violence against other people.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	

And using the same scale, please tell me whether you think the following actions can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between. [SHOWCARD X]

	Never Justifiable											Always Justifiable	(Don't know)
11. Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	
12. Having sex with someone to get a job.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	
13. Public official giving a job to a family member instead of someone more qualified.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	88	

I would now like to ask you some questions of a sensitive nature. Please be as honest as possible.

To what extent you think it is wrong or not wrong for someone to report someone you know personally (like a friend, co-worker, or neighbour) to the authorities if they did the following things?... [SHOWCARD 8]

	Not wrong at all	Wrong only sometimes	Almost always wrong	Always wrong	(Do not know)

14.	Avoiding paying for public transport.	1	2	3	4	8
15.	Claimed social grants to which they were not entitled.	1	2	3	4	8
16.	Cheated on their taxes.	1	2	3	4	8
17.	Accepted a bribe in the course of their duties.	1	2	3	4	8

Now I'd like you to tell me about your views on corruption.

Do you think that corruption has had a small or large impact on the following...?

		Very small	Small	Neither small nor large	Large	Very large	(Do not know)
18.	You and your family life.	1	2	3	4	5	8
19.	The South African economy in general.	1	2	3	4	5	8
20.	State-Owned Enterprises (e.g., ESKOM, TRANSNET, SAA)	1	2	3	4	5	8

Among the following groups of people, how many do you believe are involved in corruption? Tell me for each group if you believe it is none of them, few of them, most of them or all of them. [SHOWCARD X]

		None of them	Few of them	Most of them	All of them	(Do not know)
21.	Politicians	1	2	3	4	8
22.	Business leaders	1	2	3	4	8
23.	People in your neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	8
24.	Religious leaders	1	2	3	4	8

We want to know about your experience with public officials and civil servants in your community.

25. How often do you think people in your community have to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favour to these people in order to get the services you need? Does it happen...

Never	1
Seldom	2
Occasionally	3
Quite often	4
Very often	5
(Do not know)	8

26. In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?

Never	1
Seldom	2
Occasionally	3
Quite often	4
Very often	5
(Do not know)	8

- 27.** Sometimes public officials will ask for sexual favours in exchange for a government service, a job, or to avoid a fine. This could include sexual intercourse, inappropriate touching, or posing for sexual photos. How often do you think this happens to people in South Africa?

Never	1
Seldom	2
Occasionally	3
Quite often	4
Very often	5
(Do not know)	8

- 28.** How often have you heard about an official making requests of a sexual nature from someone you know in exchange for a government service or benefit in the last 5 years?

Never	1
Seldom	2
Occasionally	3
Quite often	4
Very often	5
(Do not know)	8

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about men and women in South Africa? [SHOWCARD 1]

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree	(Do not know)
29. Men often don't give women enough respect.	1	2	3	4	5	8
30. Women are often unfairly treated by men in South Africa.	1	2	3	4	5	8
31. Men often try to gain power by getting control over women.	1	2	3	4	5	8

- 32.** In your opinion, what are the MAIN reasons why ORDINARY PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA might engage in corruption?

INTERVIEWER: MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED. CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

a	It is the only way to get access to essential services	01
b	People want better treatment	02
c	People are greedy and want to get rich quick	03
d	People want to avoid harassment from government officials (such as police)	04
e	People are by nature dishonest	05
f	The courts and police do not punish people for corruption	06
g	Many people accept corruption as a part of daily life	07
h	Poor socio-economic conditions (such as poverty) lead to corruption	08
i	Other reason (specify)	09
j	(There is no corruption in South African society)	10
k	(Do not know)	88

- 33.** How likely is it that an ordinary person in South Africa will be punished by the authorities for giving or receiving a bribe, gift or favour in return for public service?

Not at all likely	1
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Not very likely	2
Likely	3
Very likely	4
(Do not know)	8

- 34.** In your opinion, what are the MAIN reasons why THE RICH AND POWERFUL PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA might engage in corruption?

INTERVIEWER: MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED. CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

a	Politicians do not do enough to fight corruption	01
b	It is the only way to get things done in this country.	02
c	They think corruption is normal and everyone is doing it	03
d	They are by nature dishonest	04
e	The courts and police do not punish people for corruption	05
f	They are greedy and want to get rich quick	06
g	Anti-corruption policies are not enforced	07
h	They want to avoid harassment from government officials (such as police)	08
i	Other reason (specify)	09
j	(There is no corruption in South African society)	10
k	(Do not know)	88

- 35.** How likely is it that the rich and powerful in South Africa will to be punished for engaging in corruption?

Not at all likely	1
Not very likely	2
Likely	3
Very likely	4
(Do not know)	8

- 36.** How much do you agree or disagree that South African Government efforts to combat corruption are effective?

Totally agree	1
Tend to agree	2
Tend to disagree	3
Totally disagree	4
(Do not know)	8
(Refused)	9

Now some questions about what you would do if you experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour (like the misuse of funds or requests for bribes).

- 37.** If you experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour, how likely is it that you would report it?

Not at all likely	1
Not very likely	2
Likely	3
Very likely	4
(Do not know)	8

- 38.** How likely is it that action would be taken if you went to a government office or the police to report corrupt behaviour?

Not at all likely	1
Not very likely	2
Likely	3
Very likely	4
(Do not know)	8

- 39.** Some people say that many incidents of corruption are never reported. Based on your experience, what do you think are the main reasons why many people do not report corruption when it occurs?

INTERVIEWER: MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED. CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

a	Those responsible will not be punished	1
b	People don't know where to report it	2
c	No one bothers because corruption is normal, and everyone does it	3
d	It is not worth the effort of reporting it	4
e	There is no protection for those who report corruption	5
f	No one wants to betray anyone.	6
g	The officials where they would report to are also corrupt	7
h	Other (please specify)	8
k	(Refuse)	9

- 40.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "In this community, people risk revenge if they speak out against corruption?"

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
(Do not know)	8

The Sample Design

In accordance with SASAS research infrastructure's standard approach, the survey was designed to yield a representative sample of 3,500 adults aged 16 and older living in South Africa. The sample was spread across the country's nine provinces and was restricted to people living in private residences. SASAS has three sampling stages. Small area layers (SALs) were the primary sampling units and in the first stage, five hundred SALs were drawn. Estimates of the population numbers for various categories of the census variables were obtained per SAL. Data for this stage were drawn from the 2011 census and updated using mid-year population estimates. Three explicit stratification variables were used to draw the SALs, namely province, geographic type and majority population group. When drawing the sample, special institutions (such as hospitals, military camps, old age homes, schools and university hostels), recreational areas, industrial areas and vacant SALs were excluded.

Dwelling units (also known as visiting points) in each SAL were taken as the secondary sampling unit (SSU). A dwelling unit is defined as "separate (non-vacant) residential stands, addresses, structures, flats, homesteads, etc." In the second stage, seven SSUs were selected per SAL. SSUs were drawn with equal probability in each of the selected SALs. SSUs were selected using a random starting point and counting an interval between households. The interval was calculated using the total number of households in the SAL. Finally, in the third sampling stage, a person was drawn with equal probability from all persons 16 years and older living at the SSU. This person (i.e., the respondent) needed to be 16 years or older and had to be a resident of the SSU for at least 15 out of the past 30 days. The fieldwork period started in August and ended in October of 2023.

Data Collection Protocol

The HSRC subscribes to a strict internal Code of Ethics. The study design and research tools were submitted for approval by the HSRC's Research Ethics Committee (REC). Each interview conducted by the HSRC is fielded only if the HSRC ethics committee has approved it. Before an interview is conducted, the following protocols are observed:

Adult respondents and Informed Consent (older than 18 years): All respondents aged 18 years and older were asked for informed consent. A digital consent form explains the purpose of the study; emphasises that participation is voluntary; explains the likely duration of the interview. The form also explains how confidentiality will be preserved; offers an earnest appraisal of the risks/discomforts and benefits associated with participation in the study. Respondents are provided with details of the HSRC's toll-free ethics hotline and survey coordinator contacts.

Minors and Written Informed Consent (Persons under the age of 18 years): In instances where the selected research participant is a minor aged 16-17 years, the informed consent process followed adhered to the HSRC's Guidelines on Research with orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). A dual consent process is required, both from the minors and their parent/guardian.

Ensuring confidentiality of information: All personal information on the respondent was removed when the data is captured and analysed. Codes to identify respondents were used instead. Personal information is stored electronically with password-protection at the HSRC. The SASAS team is compliant with all relevant legislation that protects the data of respondents.

Fieldwork Procedures and Training

The following general protocol guidelines for data gathering were implemented:

- Fieldworkers and supervisors were required to notify the relevant local authorities that they would be working in the specific area. The purpose was twofold: (a) to increase safety protocols for fieldworkers; and (b) to reassure respondents that the survey was official. Official letters describing the project, and its duration and relevant ethical issues were distributed to the authorities. This was done not only as a form of research and ethical protocol but also to ensure the safety of the fieldwork teams.
- Supervisors were advised to inform the *Inkosi* or *Induna* in a traditional authority area, whilst in urban formal or urban informal areas they had to report to the local police station. In some areas, the local councillor was also met and informed of the study prior to commencing work in the area.
- When approaching a farm, fieldworkers were advised to enter with caution and that they should report to the local Agri South Africa (Agri SA) offices before doing so. Fieldwork supervisors were issued with 'Farm letters' which contained information on the purpose of the study and contact details in case they received queries.
- Consent forms needed to be completed upon successfully finishing each interview. While verbal consent was to be secured from the respondent before the interview, a written consent form had to be signed afterwards.
- Fieldworkers were issued with name tags and letters of introduction to be used in the field. The introduction letter was translated from English into six other official languages.
- Fieldworkers had to present their identity cards when introducing themselves.

A network of locally based fieldwork supervisors in all parts of the country assisted in data collection. Competent fieldworkers with a thorough understanding of the local areas were employed as part of this project. Two-day training sessions were held in various provinces. The main training session took place in Pretoria and covered the Northern provinces (namely, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and

North-West). Other training sessions were held in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape. The training session included lessons on selection and sampling of households; fieldwork operating procedures; research protocols and ethical considerations. The questionnaire was discussed in detail. As far as possible, the training was designed to be participatory, practical, and interactive, and gave fieldworkers the opportunity to seek clarification. A training manual was also developed as part of the training toolkit. All relevant remarks and instructions discussed during the training session were included in the training manual.

Figure 14-1: An Example of a Small Area Layer Map used to Assist the Fieldwork Teams to Navigate to the Correct Areas



Once the training sessions were completed, a navigational toolkit was provided to fieldwork teams. These toolkits were developed to assist the field teams in finding the selected SALs. The kits assisted the supervisors and fieldworkers to locate the exact SAL where the interviews were to take place. The navigational kits included:

- Route descriptions, to assist the teams to navigate their way into the selected areas.
- Maps that, using aerial photographs as a base, identified the exact geographic location of the area to be sampled.
- More detailed maps that identified the exact area, pinpointing street names and places of interest such as schools, clinics, hospitals, etc. These maps also included latitude-longitude, GPS coordinates indicating the centroid of the SAL. An example of a map is depicted in Figure 14-1.

HSRC researchers conducted random visits to selected areas and worked with the fieldworkers for a certain period to ensure that they adhered to ethical research practices and that they understood the intent of the questions in the questionnaire. HSRC researchers also ensured that the correct selection protocols were followed to identify households and respondents in the household. The researchers also checked on procedures followed in administering the research instrument. Field backchecks were also conducted in all nine provinces. Telephonic backchecks were done on at least 10 % of the total sample.

Data Capturing and Weighting

In each SASAS round, data-capturing was conducted by an external service provider. The final dataset was converted into SAS and SPSS and a data manager embarked on a data-cleaning exercise. Data was checked and edited for logical consistency, for permitted ranges, for reliability on derived variables and for filter instructions. After data cleaning, the analytical team received the realisation rates of the survey. SASAS normally has a high realisation rate. SASAS 2023 was no different, with a realisation rate of 89% (or 3,112 out of 3,500) achieved in this round (Table 14-1). Our high realisation rate is partly achieved due to the fact that communities were well-informed about the survey.

Table 14-1: Sample Realisation for South African Social Attitudes Survey

Province	Number of SALs	Ideal Sample (N)	Realised Sample (N)	Realisation Rate (%)
Western Cape	65	455	323	71%
Eastern Cape	65	455	442	97%
Northern Cape	37	259	219	85%
Free State	38	266	244	92%
KwaZulu-Natal	93	651	611	94%
North West	37	259	212	82%
Gauteng	83	581	538	93%
Mpumalanga	38	266	256	96%
Limpopo	44	308	267	87%
Total	500	3500	3112	89%

In order to ensure representativity of smaller groups (e.g., Northern Cape residents or Indian/Asian people), weights needed to be applied. The data was weighted to take account of the fact that not all units covered in the survey had the same probability of selection. The weighting reflected the relative selection probabilities of the individual at the three main stages of selection. The marginal totals for the benchmarking of variables were obtained from mid-year population estimates as published by Statistics South Africa.

Expert Survey

To gauge expert perspectives and policy-relevant insights into the social values and norms that encourage and discourage corrupt behaviours in South Africa, an expert opinion survey was designed. The survey was devised as a complement to the public opinion survey described in the previous sections. The objective of this survey is to invite a range of different kinds of experts to complete a questionnaire designed according to project objectives and key research questions. The selection of experts for inclusion in the study was purposive, with experts identified from a wide range of academic disciplines, professional institutions, civil society organisations as well as government departments and agencies. The questionnaire was administered via the SurveyMonkey platform, with a weblink emailed to individual experts.

A hundred and seventy experts were identified as part of the sample selection process. Individuals approached were all well-established and acknowledged experts in their fields. They have often been previously published in accredited publications, have engaged in public debates concerning related matters and/or occupy senior positions in their organisations. Responses from sixty-seven persons were received, with the remainder failing to respond or refusing to participate. The team received responses from a wide range of different organisations including universities, research institutes and non-governmental organisations. Survey participants identified themselves as experts in a range of different areas. Governance and public administration (70%) were the most common, followed by political science (40%), law (37%) and social policy (25%). Of those who participated, sixty-one fully completed the questionnaire while six were coded as partial completed. Some participants requested

anonymity and were allocated a random numeric designation. Others gave us their permission to print their name and affiliations in this report.

Table 14-2: List of Experts who were interviewed or surveyed as part of the research project

Name	Position	Institution
Amanda Gouws	Associate Professor of Political Science	University of Stellenbosch
Ariella Scher	Head of Legal Unit	Open Secrets South Africa
Caroline James	Advocacy Coordinator	AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism
Chrissy Dube	Head of Governance Insights and Analytics	Good Governance Africa
Christine Hobden	Senior Lecturer in Ethics and Public Governance.	University of Witswatersrand
Collette Schulz-Herzenberg	Associate Professor of Political Science	Stellenbosch University
David Bruce	Independent Research Professional	Institute for Security Studies
David Lewis	Executive Director	Corruption Watch
Deon Rossouw	Executive Director	The Ethics Institute
Gareth Newham	Head of Justice and Violence Prevention	Institute for Security Studies
Garth Japhet	Executive Director	Heartlines
Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze	Head of Economic Inclusion	National Business Initiative
Hennie van Vuuren	Director	Open Secrets South Africa
Itumeleng Mongale	Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Jane Borman	Attorney	Open Secrets South Africa
Janine Hicks	Senior Lecturer at the School of Law	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Jay Kruuse	Director	Public Service Accountability Monitor
John Clarke	Independent Researcher	
Karam Singh	Executive Director	Corruption Watch
Kavisha Pillay	Executive Director	Campaign on Digital Ethics
Kris Dobie	Manager: Organisational Ethics	The Ethics Institute
Lawson Naidoo	Executive Director	Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution
Maria Frahm-Arp	Professor in Christian Studies in Africa	University of Johannesburg
Marianne Camerer	Senior Lecturer	Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance
Moirra Campbell	Head of Communications	Corruption Watch
Natasja Holtzhausen	Professor of Public Administration and Management	University of Pretoria
Nedson Pophiwa	Associate Professor in Development Studies	University of Johannesburg
Paul Hoffman	Director	Accountability Now
Paul Holden	Director of Investigations	Shadow World Investigations
Patrick Giddy	Lecturer in Philosophy	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Ralph Mathekga	Senior Expert	Geopolitical Intelligence Services

Reza Omar	Strategic Research Director	Citizen Surveys
Ryan Brunette	Research Associate	Public Affairs Research Institute
Sadia Khan	Country Director	Accountability Lab South Africa
Sam Sole	Investigative Journalist	AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism
Sean Tait	Executive Director	African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
Sekoetlane Phamodi	Programme Director	The African Climate Foundation
Shalati Mahatlane	Reports Officer	Corruption Watch
Sharon Ekambaram	Head of the Refugee and Migrant Rights Programme	Lawyers for Human Rights
Stefanie Fick	Executive Director	Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse
Thulebona Mhlanga	Economic Policy Manager	Business Unity South Africa
Trevor White	Senior Forensic Auditor	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Tsietsi Kekana	Researcher	Corruption Watch
Ursula van Beek	Director: Transformation Research Unit	Stellenbosch University
Vanja Karth	Director of the Democratic Governance & Rights Unit	University of Cape Town
Zaakirah Vadi	Executive Director	Defend Our Democracy
Zakhona Mvelase	Founder	African Women Against Corruption Network
Zoe Mthimunye	Programme Manager: Social Transformation	National Business Initiative

APPENDIX B. SUBGROUP CATEGORIES

Subgroup analysis allows us to uncover variations in outcomes between different groups within a dataset. This can reveal critical insights that might be masked when looking at the overall population. For our subgroup analysis, we created a series of background variables; these are described below.

Age. Measured in terms of completed years. Age cohorts were as follows 16-24 years; 25-34 years; 35-44 years; 45-54 years; 55-64 years and 65 years and older.

Gender. Self-reported gender identification; main categories include male and female. An “Other” category was included in the survey; however, it was only selected by a handful of respondents and persons who identified as other were treated as missing.

Race Group. Self-reported racial identification; main categories include Black African, Coloured, Indian/Asian and white. An “Other” category was included in the survey; however, it was only selected by a trivial number of respondents and persons who identified as other were treated as missing.

Population Group. There are four race groups in South Africa. Using language spoken at home as a proxy for linguistic identity, we subdivided the Black African majority into six distinct groups: (i) Sotho; (ii) Tswana; (iii) Pedi; (iv) Xhosa; (v) Zulu; and (vi) Other.

Religious Affiliation. Self-reported religious identification. First, respondents are asked “Do you consider yourself as belonging to any religion?” For those who answered yes, then respondents are requested to specify denomination. All respondents are required to indicate “Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?” Based on their answers to these questions, the following categories were created³⁴ unaffiliated; Christian affiliated; and non-Christian affiliated. Within the first category, there are two subcategories: (i) atheists and (ii) other³⁵. The second category included eleven subcategories: These included (i) Roman Catholic; (ii) Anglican; (iii) Methodist; (iv) Pentecostal/Evangelistic; (v) African Independent Churches; (vi) Reformed Church; (vii) non-denominational Christians; (viii) other Christians; (ix) Islam / Muslim; (x) Hinduism / Hindu; and (xi) other.

Geotype. Urban areas in South Africa are divided between metropolitan and non-metropolitan. The former are large urban regions that function as significant economic and administrative hubs. In addition, where appropriate, we looked at the difference between people living on rural farm and those who resided in rural villages³⁶.

Work Status. Individuals were categorised in terms of whether they were working in the labour market or not. Based on the survey question: “Are you currently working for pay, did you work for pay in the past, or have you never been in paid work?”.

Formal Years of Education. Measured in terms of completed years of completed education. Based on the survey question: “What is the highest level of education that you have ever completed?”.

³⁴ Our data analysis showed that showed that 67% of the general public were Christian affiliates and 6% were part of a non-Christian affiliation. The remainder (27%) were unaffiliated to any religious denomination.

³⁵ We found that about a tenth (14%) of the adult population that identified as atheist and rejected, on the whole, the idea of God. In addition to this group, 13% of the public said that there were unaffiliated to a religious group but still identified as religious to some extent.

³⁶ For those who are unaware of the geographic dynamics of rural South Africa, 5% of the adult population lives on farms and 27% reside in rural villages.

Economic Status Index. To gauge this kind of status, we used 20 questions on asset ownership to construct a composite index that measured socioeconomic status. The assets under review here ranged from a car to a microwave and also took into consideration access to basic services (such as electricity, flushed toilets and piped water)³⁷.

Providence of residence. South Africa is divided into nine provinces, each with its own government and legislature.

³⁷ Standardised testing revealed that these three items successfully amalgamated in terms of both validity and reliability, culminating in a unified scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.889$).

APPENDIX C. PAIRWISE CORRELATION TESTING

The appendix presents a breakdown of the pairwise correlation (or covariance) matrix analysis performed in Chapters 3, 4 and 9.

Experience of Bribe Solicitation and Perceptions of Community-level Public Sector Corruption

To ascertain whether there was a correlation between experience of bribe solicitation and perceptions of community level public sector corruption in Chapter 3.2, we utilised a pairwise correlation test. This required treating 'don't know' responses to these two variables as missing. Test results showed a strong (and positive) correlation ($r(2934) = 0.435$, $p < 0.001$). It would appear that experience of bribe solicitation explained 19% of variation in community corruption perceptions. In other words, frequent exposure to public sector bribery leads to the perception that fellow community members are paying bribes to public officials for essential services.

Perceived Corruption of Business Leaders and Perceived Corruption of Politicians

To determine if there was a correlation between perceived corruption of business leaders and perceived corruption of politicians in Chapter 4.1, we conducted a pairwise correlation test. 'Don't know' responses to these two variables were treated as missing. The test results revealed a robust positive correlation ($r(3033) = 0.401$, $p < 0.001$). It seems that the experience of bribe solicitation accounted for 16% of the variance in community corruption perceptions. If a person believed politicians were corrupt, in other words, they were more likely to perceive business leaders as corrupt.

Indirect Sextortion Experience and Perceptions of Community-level Public Sector Corruption

As a robustness check, the association between the indirect sextortion experience and perceptions of community-level public sector corruption variables discussed in Chapter 3.3 was checked using a pairwise correlation test. In order for us to perform the test, the 'don't know' responses to these two variables were missing. Test outcomes showed a moderate (and positive) correlation ($r(2900) = 0.294$, $p < 0.001$). In other words, individuals who reported living in a community where engaging in corruption is necessary to obtain essential services were more likely to have indirectly experienced sextortion.

Indirect Sextortion Experience and Recent Experiences of Public Sector Corruption

To ensure the reliability of our findings, we conducted a pairwise correlation test to examine the relationship between indirect sextortion experiences and recent public sector corruption experiences, as discussed in Chapter 3.3. For the test, 'don't know' responses for these variables were excluded. The results revealed a moderate and positive correlation ($r(2963) = 0.246$, $p < 0.001$). This outcome indicated that individuals who reported experiences of public sector corruption were more likely to have also indirectly encountered sextortion.

Perceived Corruption of Politicians and Perceived Impact of Corruption on the Economy

In an effort to investigate whether there was a relationship between perceived corruption of politicians and the perceived impact of corruption on the economy in Chapter 4.4, we employed a pairwise correlation test. This involved coding 'don't know' responses to these two variables as missing. Our results confirmed a moderate positive correlation ($r(3009) = 0.333$, $p < 0.001$). Experience of bribe solicitation, it would seem, explained 11% of variation in community corruption perceptions. If an individual believed that most politicians were engaged in corruption, in other words, they were likely to perceive the economic impact of corruption as significant.

Perceived Impact of Corruption on the Economy and Perceived Impact of Corruption on SEOs

We used a pairwise correlation test to establish whether there was a meaningful relationship between these perceptions that corruption impacted the national economy and perceptions that corruption impacted SEOs in Chapter 4.4. To conduct this test, we had to recode the 'don't know' responses of these variables as missing. Test outcomes showed a powerful (and positive) association ($r(3064)$

=0.569, $p < 0.001$) between the two. Perceived impact of corruption on the economy explained 32% of variation in perceived impact on SOEs. If a person believed the economic impact was substantial, in other words, they were significantly more likely to perceive the impact on SOEs as considerable as well.

Perceived Impact of Corruption on Private Life and Perceived Impact of Corruption on the Economy and SOEs

Chapter 4.4 looked at the relationship perceptions that corruption had an impact on private life and two other variables: (i) perceptions that corruption impacted the general economy and (ii) perceptions that corruption impacted SOEs. We used pairwise correlation testing to identify if there were strong links between these three variables. The test necessitated classifying all 'don't know' responses to these three variables as missing. Our test illustrated that perceived personal impact explained 20% of the variation in perceptions of the general economic impact ($r(3042) = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$). There was a weaker association between perceived personal impact and perceived impact on SOEs ($r(3042) = 0.349$, $p < 0.001$).

Perceived Elite Accountability and Perceived Accountability for Non-Elites

We used a pairwise correlation test to find out whether there was a link between perceptions of elite accountability and accountability for non-elites in Chapter 9.1. To perform this test, we coded 'don't know' answers to these two variables as missing. Test outcomes revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r(2977) = 0.325$, $p < 0.001$) between the two. If a person believed that ordinary individuals were held accountable for corruption, they also tended to think that elites were likely to be held accountable.

APPENDIX D. PERCEIVED DEGREE OF PUBLIC SEXTORTION

A statistical analysis of the drivers of the perceived degree of public sector sextortion is provided in this appendix.

Dependent Variable Description

SASAS respondents were read the following definition: “Sometimes public officials will ask for sexual favours in exchange for a government service, a job, or to avoid a fine. This could include sexual intercourse, inappropriate touching, or posing for sexual photos.” Then respondents were presented with the following question: “How often do you think this happens to people in South Africa?” Responses were captured on a scale that ranged from 1‘Never’ to 5‘Very often’. ‘Don’t know’ responses were treated as missing. This measure was labelled the perceived degree of public sector sexual extortion (PDoPSSE) Scale.

Multivariate Base Model

We conducted a multivariate analysis to identify potential determinants of the PDoPSSE Scale, aiming to assess the impact of selected variables and determine their relative significance. Given the nature of the index, we adopted an ordered logistics regression approach. As a first step, a base model was produced that contained all the standard background variables designated for this study (for details on these variables, see APPENDIX B). Positive coefficients in the model indicated a greater propensity to think that this kind of sextortion occurs often in South Africa. Upon reviewing the model results, depicted in **Table 14-3**, it was apparent that socio-demographic characteristics were not good predictors of the PDoPSSE Scale.

Table 14-3: Ordered logistic regression for the PDoPSSE Scale base model

	Coeff.	
Gender (ref. male)	-0.113	(0.116)
Age	0.002	(0.004)
Race (ref. Black African)		
Coloured	0.201	(0.190)
Indian	0.100	(0.233)
White	0.187	(0.245)
Geotype (ref. metropolitan urban)		
Non-Metropolitan Urban	0.262	(0.193)
Rural	0.0165	(0.208)
Work Status (ref. not working)	0.041	(0.141)
Years of Formal Schooling	0.024	(0.022)
Economic Status Index	-0.041	(0.038)
Number of obs.	2935	
Wald chi ²	128(18)	
Pseudo R ²	0.026	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Model controls for province of residence; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

A range of distinct multivariate models were produced to evaluate the various hypotheses put forward in Chapter 6.2. To perform these tests a number of independent variables had to be constructed. In each of the preceding sections, the construction of these independent variables was described. Then the association between the relevant independent variables and the PDoPSSE Scale was assessed using an ordered logistic regression model without background variables. Subsequently, background

variables were introduced into the model. Six different independent variables are tested in this way. To conclude our investigation, a fully specified model was created. This model encompassed all the background variables from the base model, along with the six independent variables.

‘Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimisation’ Scale

When individuals repeatedly heard that people that they know personally had been victims of sextortion, we hypothesised that they would utilise this information to produce an assessment of how prevalent sexual extortion by public officials is at a national level. To assess this thesis, outlined on page 77, we employed the following survey question: "How often have you heard about an official making requests of a sexual nature from someone you know in exchange for a government service or benefit in the last 5 years?" Responses ranged from 1 ('Never') to 5 ('Very often'). 'Don't know' responses were coded as missing. This variable was termed the ‘Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimisation’ Scale. A one unit increase on this scale was positively correlated with the PDoPSSE Scale. The size of the association was quite substantial in both models.

Table 14-4: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the PDoPSSE Scale and Recent Indirect Experience of Sextortion Scale

	Model I	Model II
‘Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimisation’ Scale	0.529 (0.047) ** *) *	0.530 (0.047) ** *) *
Number of obs.	2994	2935
Background variables	No	Yes
Wald chi ²	130(1)	292(19)
Pseudo R ²	0.039	0.063

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Awareness of Sexism’ Index

We examined the hypothesis, sketched out on page 79, that awareness of sexism played a crucial role in shaping the perceived level of sexual extortion in the public sector. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with three different statements. These were: (i) Men often don't give women enough respect.; (ii) Women are often unfairly treated by men in South Africa; and (iii) Men often try to gain power by getting control over women. Responses were captured on a categorical scale that ranged from 1 ('Strongly agree') to 5 ('Strongly disagree')'. The responses to these three items were combined into a single measure referred to as the ‘Awareness of Sexism’ Index³⁸. Any responses labelled as 'don't know' for these items were treated as missing data. This index was scaled from 0 to 10, with higher scores reflecting the greater level of awareness of sexism in the country.

Table 14-5: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the PDoPSSE Scale and the ‘Awareness of Sexism’ Index

	Model I	Model II
‘Awareness of Sexism’ Index	0.048 (0.028)	0.074 (0.028) **
Number of obs.	2990	2931

³⁸ Standardised testing revealed that these three items merged effectively in terms of validity and reliability, forming a single scale (Cronbach's α =0.789).

Background variables	No	Yes
Wald chi ²	3(1)	146 (19)
Pseudo R ²	0.001	0.029

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The findings of our multivariate analysis are presented in **Table 14-20** and suggest that the index had a moderate (and positive) association with the dependent variable in the second but not the first model. If the second model was modified to interact gender with the 'Awareness of Sexism' Index than a statistically significant ($p < 0.050$) positive coefficient ($r = 0.013$; $SE = 0.006$) is produced. If a person identified as a female, in other words, then the relationship between the 'Awareness of Sexism' Index and the PDoPSSE Scale was stronger.

'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale

We hypothesised that, outlined on page 81, residing in a community with a lot of public sector corruption would heighten individuals' the PDoPSSE Scale score. To assess the perceived level of public sector corruption in a person's community, we used a single item from the survey. First, respondents were told: "We want to know about your experience with public officials and civil servants in your community." Then they were asked: "How often do you think people in your community have to pay a bribe, give a gift or do a favour to these people in order to get the services you need?" Responses ranged from 1 ('Never') to 5 ('Very often'). 'Don't know' responses were placed at the mid-point. This variable was termed the 'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale. The multivariate analysis, presented in **Table 14-6**, showed that the scale was a statistically significant correlate of the dependent variable in the first and second models.

Table 14-6: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the PDoPSSE Scale and the 'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale

	Model I		Model II	
'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale	0.592	(0.055) ***	0.576	(0.052) ***
Number of obs.	2994		2935	
Background variables	No		Yes	
Wald chi ²	177(1)		282(19)	
Pseudo R ²	0.043		0.065	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Politician Corruption' Scale

We proposed the hypothesis, outlined on page 80, that the perceived level of sexual extortion by public officials will be influenced by the perceived level of corruption among politicians. To create a variable to gauge perceived involvement of politicians in corruption, we utilised responses to the following question: "Among politicians, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?" 'Don't know' responses for this question were placed at the mid-point. This variable was labelled the 'Politician Corruption' Scale. As indicated in **Table 14-7**, it is evident that perceived level of political corruption did increase an individual's the PDoPSSE Scale score. The magnitude of the association was analogous in both models.

Table 14-7: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the PDoPSSE Scale and the 'Politician Corruption' Scale

	Model I			Model II		
'Political Corruption' Scale	0.247	(0.048)	***	0.218	(0.048)	***
Number of obs.	2994			2935		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	26(1)			159(19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.007			0.031		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Good Citizenship' Index

As outlined on page 77, we theorised that a sense of civic responsibility would be positively linked to the perceived extent of sexual extortion within the public sector. To test this hypothesis, respondents were read a list of four qualities associated with constitutional citizenship. These included: (i) never to try to evade taxes; (ii) always to obey laws and regulations; (iii) to keep watch on the actions of government; and (iv) to help people in South Africa who are worse off than yourself. They were then asked to rate each of these qualities on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all important for what it means to be a good South African citizen and 7 is very important. Responses to these four items were amalgamated into a unified measure termed the 'Good Citizenship' Index³⁹. Answers marked as 'don't know' for these items were treated as missing data. The resulting index ranged from 0 to 10, with higher values indicating a greater degree of recognition that the four qualities were important for being a good South African citizen.

Table 14-8: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the PDoPSSE Scale and the "Good Citizenship" Index

	Model I			Model II		
'Good Citizenship' Index	0.081	(0.025)	**	0.060	(0.029)	*
Number of obs.	2948			2890		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	11 (1)			133(19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.003			0.028		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

As shown in **Table 14-8**, the 'Good Citizenship' Index had a positive (and statistically significant) association with the PDoPSSE Scale in both models. A one-unit increase on this index corresponded to a higher likelihood of thinking that sexual extortion was common in the South African public sector. If the second model was modified to interact the 'Good Citizenship' Index with the Economic Status Index, then a statistically significant (p<0.050) negative coefficient (r=-0.031; SE=0.010) was produced.

³⁹ Standardised testing revealed that these three items merged effectively in terms of validity and reliability, forming a single scale (Cronbach's α =0.832).

The poorer the individual, in other words, the weaker the association between the 'Good Citizenship' Index and the dependent variable.

News Media Usage Scale

We formulated the following hypothesis on page 78: regular consumption of news will cause individuals to perceive sexual extortion as widespread in the South African public sector. To test this media consumption thesis, we employed the following survey question: "How often do you use the media, including television, newspapers, radio and the internet, to get political news or information?" Responses ranged from 1 ('Several times a day') to 7 ('Never'). 'Don't know' responses were treated as missing data. The scale was reversed so that a higher value signified a higher level of consumption. This variable was termed the 'News Media Usage' Scale. A one unit increase on this scale did have a positive association with the dependent variable. But this correlation was *not* statistically significant in either the first or second model.

Table 14-9: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the PDoPSSE Scale and the 'News Media Usage' Scale

	Model I		Model II	
'News Media Usage' Scale	0.012	(0.027)	0.021	(0.027)
Number of obs.	2979		2923	
Background variables	No		Yes	
Wald chi ²	0(1)		131(19)	
Pseudo R ²	0.000		0.026	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Fully Specified Model

Coefficients and standard errors for the fully specified model are presented in **Table 14-10**. Among the six variables of interest, five were identified as statistically significant predictors. The 'News Media Usage' Scale did not have a statistically significant association with the dependent variable. The variable demonstrating the strongest association with the dependent variable was the 'Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimization' Scale ($r= 0.489$; $SE=0.053$). Other variables with a robust relationship with the dependent included the 'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale ($r= 0.486$; $SE=0.055$) and the 'Awareness of Sexism' Index ($r= 0.011$; $SE=0.003$).

Table 14-10: Ordered logistic regression for the fully specified the PDoPSSE Scale model

	Coeff.		
'Recent Sextortion Vicarious Victimization' Scale	0.489	(0.053)	***
'Awareness of Sexism' Index	0.107	(0.032)	**
'Politician Corruption' Scale	0.134	(0.054)	*
'Community Corruption Prevalence' Scale	0.486	(0.055)	***
'Good Citizenship' Index	0.010	(0.003)	***
'News Media Usage' Scale	-0.026	(0.028)	
Number of obs.	2886		
Wald chi ²	421 (24)		
Pseudo R ²	0.102		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of level of perceived sexual extortion in the South African public sector; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls

for all standard background variables; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

APPENDIX E. SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF CORRUPTION

A statistical analysis of the drivers of the Social Acceptability of Corruption (SAoC) Index is provided in this appendix.

Index Items Description

Respondents were read a list of eight different actions that ranged from minor (e.g., avoid paying for public transport) to major (e.g., violence against other people) crimes. The legend for each of these actions is presented in **Legend Box 1**. They were then asked to tell fieldworkers whether they thought these actions can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between. Survey participants were instructed to use a scale from that ranged from 0'Never Justifiable' to 10'Always Justifiable'. 'Don't know' responses to these eight items were considered as missing data.

Legend Box 1: Eight Descriptive Social Norm items

B1	Avoid paying for public transport.
B2	Claiming social grants to which you are not entitled.
B3	Cheating on taxes if you have a chance.
B4	Stealing goods from a shop.
B5	Violence against other people.
B6	Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties.
B7	Having sex with someone to get a job.
B8	Public official giving a job to a family member instead of someone more qualified.

Pairwise Correlation Matrix for the Eight Descriptive Social Norm items

A pairwise correlation (or covariance) matrix analysis was performed to explore the relationships between the eight items outlined above. The results are presented in **Table 14-11**; all values shown in the table were above 0.300 and this implies a robust degree of intercorrelation between the different items. Especially strong associations were observed for the corruption items (i.e., B6, B7 and B8). From a comparative perspective, B1 had the weakest associations with the other items listed in the table whereas B9 exhibited the strongest.

Table 14-11: Pairwise correlation for the eight descriptive social norm items

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7
B2	0.644						
B3	0.557	0.670					
B4	0.541	0.643	0.691				
B5	0.545	0.604	0.642	0.732			
B6	0.488	0.592	0.647	0.736	0.705		
B7	0.426	0.517	0.559	0.650	0.639	0.691	
B8	0.408	0.501	0.542	0.634	0.620	0.699	0.690

Note: 1. Bonferroni-adjusted significance level used.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Cronbach's Alpha Statistic for Moreno's Corruption Index

A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to evaluate the quality and reliability for the 'Corruption Permissiveness' Index utilised in Moreno (2002) and discussed in Chapter 7.2. The results of this test are shown in **Table 14-13**, where the high Cronbach's alpha value ($\alpha=0.876$) indicated strong internal consistency among items B1, B2, B3 and B6. This suggests that these items consistently measured the same social value, and we can safely reproduce the corruption index used by Moreno (2002).

Table 14-12: Interitem correlations (covariances) and Cronbach's alpha for the AoCB Index items

Item	Obs.	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
B1	3087	+	0.824	0.673	607	0.865
B2	3094	+	0.884	0.780	551	0.822
B3	3088		0.877	0.773	565	0.826
B6	3093	+	0.836	0.708	615	0.850
Test scale					585	0.876

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Cronbach's Alpha Statistic for the SAoC Index

We wanted to combine the corruption items listed in **Legend Box 1** (i.e., B6, B7 and B8) into a single index. A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to evaluate whether these items loaded well together. The results of this test are shown in **Table 14-13**, where the high Cronbach's alpha value ($\alpha=0.884$) indicated strong internal consistency among items B6-B8. We can conclude that these items consistently measure the same social value and can be combined into a single index.

Table 14-13: Interitem correlations (covariances) and Cronbach's alpha for the SAoC Index items

Item	Obs.	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
B6	3093	+	0.903	0.779	619	0.833
B7	3090	+	0.904	0.779	609	0.833
B8	3092	+	0.899	0.769	622	0.842
Test scale					617	0.884

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Multivariate Base Model

We conducted a multivariate analysis to identify potential determinants of the SAoC Index, aiming to assess the impact of selected variables and determine their relative significance. Given the nature of the index, we adopted an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) linear regression approach. As a first step, a base model was constructed that contained all the standard background variables designated for this study (for details on these variables, see APPENDIX B). For clarity in interpretation, we utilised beta coefficients to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The model outcomes are depicted in **Table 14-14**, where positive coefficients indicate a positive SAoC Index score. The Economic Status Index emerged as an interesting (and statistically significant) correlate in the base model. Even when taking other variables into account, a one-unit increase in the status index ($r = -1.411$; $SE = 0.540$; $\beta = -0.120$) was associated with having a low SAoC Index score.

Table 14-14: Linear (OLS) regression for the SAoC Index base model

	Coeff.		β
Gender (ref. male)	-3.709	(1.533) *	-0.071
Age	0.060	(0.061)	0.037
Race (ref. Black African)			
Coloured	1.805	(3.064)	0.020
Indian	13.473	(4.991) **	0.085
White	5.240	(5.746)	0.056
Geotype (ref. metropolitan urban)			
Non-Metropolitan Urban	3.638	(2.440) *	0.062

Rural	0.690	(2.426)		0.012
Work Status (ref. not working)	5.348	(1.980)	**	0.086
Years of Formal Schooling	-0.106	(0.299)		-0.014
Economic Status Index	-1.411	(0.540)	**	-0.120
Number of obs.	3038			
R-squared	0.101			
Root MSE	24.70			

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls for province of residence; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

A set of multivariate models were developed to assess the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 7.4. To conduct these analyses, six special independent variables were constructed. Each of the subsequent sections detailed the construction of these independent variables. Initially, the association between the independent variable and the SAoC Index was assessed using an OLS linear regression model without background variables. Subsequently, the model was improved by integrating these background variables. To conclude our examination, a fully specified model was produced. This model encompassed all the background variables from the base model, along with the six special independent variables. All models presented in this appendix used beta coefficients.

'Good Citizenship' Index

Based on our hypothesis outlined on page 97, we proposed that embracing civic values would be inversely correlated with TtC. To evaluate this hypothesis, we utilised the 'Good Citizenship' Index. An outline of how this index was put together is provided on page 77 of APPENDIX D. The multivariate analysis, presented in **Table 14-15**, revealed that holding civic norms about good citizenship mitigated the social acceptance of corruption,

Table 14-15: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SAoC Index and 'Good Citizenship' Index

	Model I			Model II				
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β		
'Good Citizenship' Index	2.144	(0.634)	**	0.107	2.215	(0.606)	***	-0.111
Background variables	No			Yes				
Number of obs.	2999			2990				
R-squared	0.040			0.140				
Root MSE	25.49			24.06				

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Severity of Corruption' Index

To assess the two hypotheses delineated on page 101, we utilised an index gauging the perceived impact of corruption on people's lives in the country. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they thought that corruption has had a small or large impact on the following: (i) you and your family life; (ii) the South African economy in general; and (iii) State-Owned Enterprises (e.g., ESKOM, TRANSNET, SAA). Responses were captured on a categorical scale that ranged from 1'Very small' to 5'Very large'. Answers to these three items were combined into a single measure referred to as the

'Severity of Corruption' Index⁴⁰. Any responses labelled as 'don't know' for these items were treated as missing data. This index was scaled from 0 to 10, with higher scores reflecting a stronger belief in the profoundly negative impact of corruption.

Table 14-16: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SAoC Index and 'Severity of Corruption' Index

	Model I			Model II				
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β		
'Severity of Corruption' Index	-1.950	(0.365)	***	-0.158	-1.472	(0.364)	***	-0.119
Background variables	No			Yes				
Number of obs.	3038			2977				
R-squared	0.025			0.114				
Root MSE	25.65			24.43				

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The analysis showed that perceiving corruption's impact as high decreased the probability that an individual would view corruption as acceptable. Upon comparing the two models in **Table 14-16**, it was noted that the 'Severity of Corruption' Index exhibited a slightly stronger correlation with the SAoC Index in Model I. Model II in **Table 14-16** was modified to interact the 'Severity of Corruption' Index with the Economic Status Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=0.509$; $SE=0.124$; $\beta=0.387$) was positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The wealthier the individual, in other words, the stronger the association between the 'Severity of Corruption' Index and the dependent variable.

'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale

On page 99 we propose the thesis that recent firsthand encounters with public sector corruption will heighten TtC in South Africa. To construct a variable to measure corruption exposure, we used answers to the following question: "In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?" Responses were captured on a 1'Never' to 5'Very often' scale. 'Don't know' answers to this item were treated as missing. This variable was labelled the 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale. The model outcomes revealed that frequent exposure to public sector corruption in the recent past heightened societal acceptance of corruption. As evident from **Table 14-17**, the size of the association between the 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale and the dependent variable was similar in both models.

Table 14-17: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SAoC Index and the 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale

	Model I			Model II				
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β		
'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale	4.185	(0.627)	***	0.195	3.869	(0.611)	***	0.180
Background variables	No			Yes				
Number of obs.	3039			2978				

⁴⁰ Standardised testing indicated that these three items effectively merged in terms of both validity and reliability, resulting in a single scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.719$).

R-squared	0.038	0.134
Root MSE	25.56	24.18

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Neighbourhood Corruption’ Scale

The thesis outlined on page 98 posited that perceiving one's neighbours as corrupt would elevate an individual's TtC. To create a variable to gauge perceived involvement of a person's neighbours in corruption, we utilised responses to the following question: “Among the people in your neighbourhood, how many do you believe are involved in corruption?” 'Don't know' responses for this question were placed at the mid-point. This variable was labelled the ‘Neighbourhood Corruption’ Scale. As indicated in **Table 14-18**, it is evident that perceived level of neighbourhood corruption did increase a person's TtC.

Table 14-18: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SAoC Index and the ‘Neighbourhood Corruption’ Scale

	Model I			Model II		
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β
‘Neighbourhood Corruption’ Scale	2.519	(0.645 **)	0.11	2.063	(0.588 **)	0.09
Background variables	No			Yes		
Number of obs.	3100			2958		
R-squared	0.014			0.112		
Root MSE	25.93			32.57		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Materialism Values Index

We examined the hypothesis, as detailed on page 98, that materialistic values increased TtC in South Africa. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with five different statements. These were: (i) I admire people who own expensive homes, cars and clothes; (ii) Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure; (iii) I like a lot of luxury in my life; (iv) I’d be happier if I could afford to buy more things; and (v) It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can’t afford to buy all the things I’d like. Responses were captured on a categorical scale that ranged from 1 (‘Strongly agree’) to 5 (‘Strongly disagree’). These questions were adapted from the Materialism Values Scale (MVS) developed by Richins (2004). The responses to these items were combined into a single measure referred to as the ‘Materialism Values’ Index⁴¹. Any responses labelled as 'don't know' for these items were treated as missing data. This index was scaled from 0 to 10, with higher scores reflecting the greater level of materialism.

⁴¹ Standardised testing revealed that these three items merged effectively in terms of validity and reliability, forming a single scale (Cronbach's α =0.766).

Table 14-19: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SAoC Index and the 'Materialism Values' Index

	Model I			Model II			
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β	
'Materialism Values' Index	-0.106	(0.052)	*	-0.075	-0.088	(0.052)	-0.063
Background variables	No			Yes			
Number of obs.	3100			3038			
R-squared	0.006			0.104			
Root MSE	26.04			24.65			

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

From **Table 14-19** we can see that the index had a negative correlation with the dependent variable in the first model. But once the background variables were included in the second, the index is no longer a statistically significant correlate of the SAoC Index. Model II in the table was changed to interact the 'Materialism Values' Index with the Economic Status Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=0.054$; $SE=0.023$; $\beta=0.265$) was positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.050$). If a person was economically advantaged, in other words, there was a statistically significant (and negative) association between the 'Materialism Values' Index and the dependent variable.

'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale

We postulated on page 100 that there would be a positive correlation between the SAoC Index and blind patriotism. To establish a metric for assessing uncritical loyalty to the nation, we used the following survey question: "Do you agree or disagree that people should support their country even if the country is in the wrong?" Responses were logged on a scale from 1 ('Strongly agree') to 5 ('Strongly disagree'). 'Don't know' responses for this question were positioned at the midpoint. The scale was inverted so that a higher score indicated a stronger belief in unwavering loyalty to the nation. This variable was labelled the 'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale.

Table 14-20: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SAoC Index and the 'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale

	Model I			Model II				
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β		
'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale	2.895	(0.831)	**	0.109	3.349	(0.639)	***	0.126
Background variables	No			Yes				
Number of obs.	3100			3028				
R-squared	0.011			0.113				
Root MSE	25.96			25.54				

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

The findings presented in **Table 14-20** suggest that uncritical patriotism intensified a person's tolerance of corrupt behaviour. As shown in the table, the 'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale demonstrated a robust correlation in both models. Model II in **Table 14-20** was adjusted to interact the 'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale with the Economic Status Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=-0.629$; $SE=0.263$; $\beta=-0.203$) was negative and statistically

significant ($p < 0.050$). The poorer the individual, in other words, the stronger the association between the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale and the SAoC Index.

Fully Specified Model

Coefficients and standard errors for the fully specified multivariate model are presented in **Table 14-21**. Among the six variables of interest, five were identified as statistically significant drivers of the SAoC Index. The ‘Materialism Values’ Index was a negative correlate in the table but not at a statistically significant level. The variable demonstrating the strongest association with the dependent variable was the ‘Good Citizenship’ Index ($r = -1.688$; $SE = 0.333$; $\beta = -0.147$) and this was followed by the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale ($r = 2.776$; $SE = 0.605$; $\beta = 0.129$). Despite the inclusion of the six variables, the Economic Status Index still emerged as a statistically significant (and negative) correlate. When compared to the six independent variables under review here, this index had a relatively large correlation ($r = -1.365$; $SE = 0.553$; $\beta = -0.118$) with the dependent variable.

Table 14-21: Linear (OLS) regression for the fully specified the SAoC Index model

	Coeff.			β
‘Good Citizenship’ Index	-1.688	(0.333)	***	-0.147
‘Severity of Corruption’ Index	-1.264	(0.371)	***	0.104
‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale	2.776	(0.605)	***	0.129
‘Neighbourhood Corruption’ Scale	1.194	(0.553)	*	0.057
‘Materialism Values’ Index	-0.061	(0.051)		-0.044
‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale	1.694	(0.605)	**	0.085
Number of obs.	2881			
R-squared	0.183			
Root MSE	23.38			

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SAoC Index; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls for all the background variables; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

APPENDIX F. SUPPORT FOR CODES OF SILENCE

The statistical analysis of the drivers of the Support for Codes of Silence (SfCoS) Index is provided in this appendix.

Index Items Description

Respondents were asked to evaluate whether they thought it is wrong for a person to report someone they knew personally to the authorities if they committed different kinds of crime⁴². The legend for each of these crimes is depicted in **Legend Box 2**. Responses on each item were ranged from 1 'Not wrong at all' to 4 'Always wrong'. 'Don't know' answers to these four items were treated as missing.

Legend Box 2: Four items of the SfCoS Index

C1	Avoided paying for public transport.
C2	Claimed social grants to which they were not entitled.
C3	Cheated on their taxes.
C4	Accepted a bribe in the course of their duties.

Pairwise Correlation Matrix of the SfCoS Index

A pairwise correlation (or covariance) matrix test was conducted to examine the relationship between the four items described above. Test outputs are depicted in **Table 14-22**, all values displayed in the table were at the 0.1% level of statistical significance. It is apparent that the four items are robustly associated with one another. This suggests that how a person answered one of the questions here strongly predicted how they would answer the others.

Table 14-22: Pairwise correlation for the perceived morality of reporting the unlawful behaviour items

	C1	C2	C3
C2	0.714		
C3	0.709	0.771	
C4	0.686	0.736	0.767

Note: 1. Bonferroni-adjusted significance level used.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Cronbach's Alpha Statistic for the SfCoS Index

We wanted to combine the items depicted in **Legend Box 2** into a single index. A Cronbach's alpha test was performed to assess the quality and reliability of such a combination. The outcomes of this test are presented in **Table 14-23**, the high Cronbach's alpha value ($\alpha=0.919$) indicated strong internal consistency among items C1-C4. This outcome suggests that these items are consistently measuring the same social value and can be combined into a single index.

Table 14-23: Interitem correlations (covariances) and Cronbach's alpha for the SfCoS Index items

Item	Obs.	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
C1	3046	+	0.867	0.757	1.008	0.913
C2	3064	+	0.909	0.831	0.943	0.888
C3	3060	+	0.909	0.832	0.947	0.888
C4	3067	+	0.902	0.822	0.971	0.891

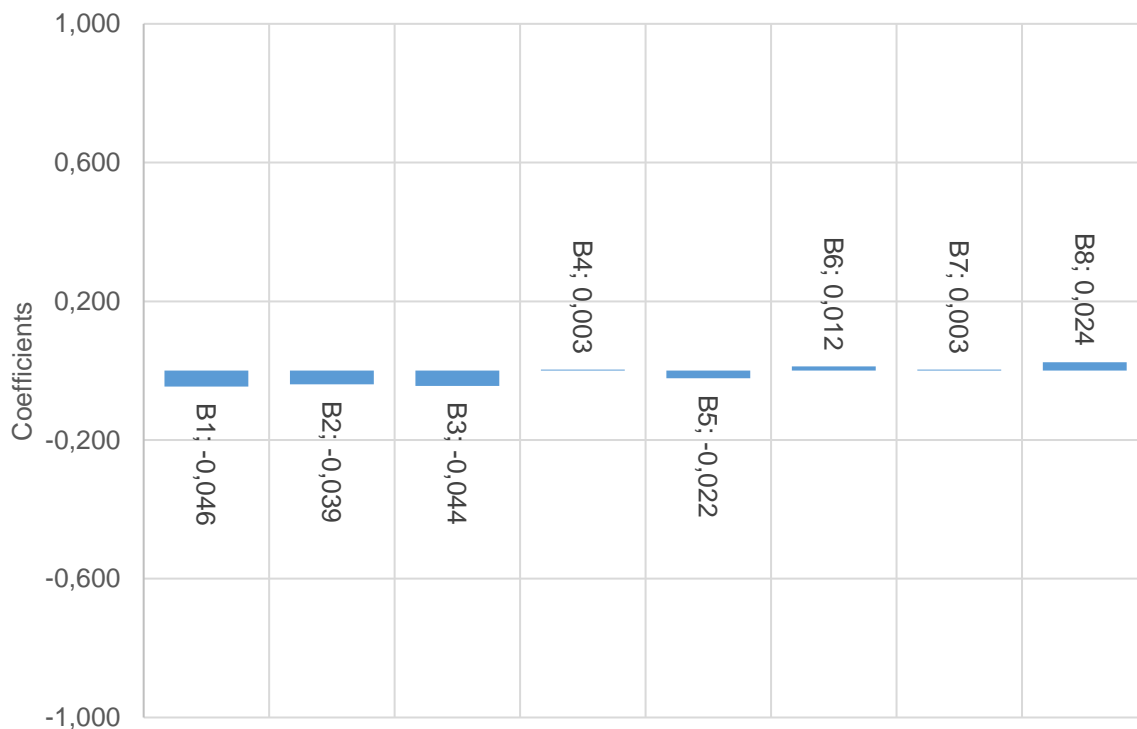
⁴² The exact wording of the stem here is as follows: "To what extent you think it is wrong or not wrong for someone to report someone you know personally (like a friend, co-worker, or neighbour) to the authorities if they did the following things?" Respondents were then a list of four illegal behaviours.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Pairwise Correlation Matrix of the SfCoS Index and a Range of Descriptive Norms

A pairwise correlation (or covariance) matrix test was conducted to examine the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the eight dishonest-illegal behaviours descriptive norm items outlined on page 200 of APPENDIX E. The legend for each of these descriptive social norms is depicted in **Legend Box 1** in APPENDIX E on page 200. All coefficients displayed in **Figure 14-2** are small and none of the associations portrayed are above 0.300. In other words, there was not a strong association between the SfCoS Index and descriptive social norms about dishonest-illegal conduct.

Figure 14-2: Pairwise correlations for the SfCoS Index items and the Descriptive Norms items



Note: 1. Bonferroni-adjusted significance level used.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Multivariate Base Model

A multivariate analysis was used to identify possible determinants of the SfCoS Index. The goal of this analysis was to quantify the impact of selected variables and assess their relative importance. Given the character of the index, an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) linear regression approach was adopted. First, a base model was constructed that included all the standard background variables that were designed for this study. For ease of interpretation, beta coefficients are used to quantify the magnitude and direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Model outcomes from the base model are portrayed in **Table 14-24**, positive coefficients indicated a positive SfCoS Index score. Reviewing the results of the model, it is interesting to note the gender effect. Even taking other variables into account, identifying as male ($r= 6.538$; $SE=2.165$; $\beta=0.095$) increased the likelihood of having a high SfCoS Index score.

Table 14-24: Linear (OLS) regression for the SfCoS Index base model

	Coeff.	β
Gender (ref. male)	6.538 (2.165) **	0.095

Age	-0.046	(0.079)	-0.022
Race (ref. Black African)			
Coloured	-4.347	(4.188)	-0.036
Indian	-0.240	(4.896)	-0.001
White	4.860	(6.289)	0.039
Geotype (ref. metropolitan urban)			
Non-Metropolitan Urban	7.032	(2.963)	* 0.091
Rural	2.924	(3.359)	0.039
Work Status (ref. not working)	0.419	(2.491)	0.005
Years of Formal Schooling	0.166	(0.377)	0.016
Economic Status Index	-0.926	(0.840)	-0.059
Number of obs.	3027		
R-squared	0.108		
Root MSE	32.71		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls for province of residence; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

A series of discrete multivariate models were generated to assess the diverse hypotheses proposed in Chapter 8.3. To execute these tests a range of independent variables had to be created. In each of the forthcoming sections, the composition of these independent variables was portrayed. The relationship between the pertinent independent variable and the SfCoS Index was first tested in an OLS linear regression model without any background variables. Then the model was adjusted to include all the background variables that were incorporated in the base model. Six specially selected independent variables were investigated in this manner. As a final assessment of the six special variable, a fully specified model was constructed. This model included all the background variables contained in the base model as well as the six selected independent variables. All models produced in this appendix employ beta coefficients.

‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale

On page 110, we hypothesised that recent encounters with public sector corruption would reinforce an individual's CoS norms. To test this hypothesis, we used the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale. A description of this scale is provided in APPENDIX E on page 203. As is apparent from **Table 14-25**, frequent exposure to public sector corruption in the recent past increased the probability of having a high SfCoS Index score. Model II in **Table 14-25** was modified to interact the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale with the Economic Status Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=0.945$; $SE=0.439$; $\beta=0.213$) was positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.050$). The more economically advantaged the individual, in other words, the stronger the association between the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale and the SfCoS Index.

Table 14-25: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale

	Model I			Model II		
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.t		β
‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale	2.246	(0.783)	* 0.079	1.608	(0.774)	* 0.056
Background variables	No			Yes		
Number of obs.	3027			2966		
R-squared	0.006			0.118		
Root MSE	34.43			32.61		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index

We formulated, on page 210, the hypothesis that authoritarian "law and order" values would exhibit a positive correlation with CoS social norms. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with four different statements. These were: (i) What our country needs most is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity; (ii) God's laws about sex, abortion and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late; (iii) Our society needs tougher government and stricter laws; and (iv) Crime and recent protests show we have to crack down harder on troublemakers, if we are going to preserve law and order. Responses were captured on a categorical scale that ranged from 1 ('Strongly agree') to 5 ('Strongly disagree'). The responses to these four items were combined into a single measure referred to as the 'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index⁴³. Any responses labelled as 'don't know' for these items were treated as missing data. This index was scaled from 0 to 10, with higher scores reflecting the greater level of support for authoritarianism.

Table 14-26: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the 'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index

	Model I		Model II	
	Coeff.	β	Coeff.	β
'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index	1.171 (0.586) *	0.056	1.548 (0.057) **	0.073
Background variables	No		Yes	
Number of obs.	3073		3022	
R-squared	0.003		0.113	
Root MSE	34.37		32.63	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Looking at **Table 14-26** we can see that the index had a negative correlation with the dependent variable in both models. The second model in the table was modified to interact age with the 'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r = -0.086$; $SE = 0.037$; $\beta = -0.354$) was negative and statistically significant ($p < 0.050$). The younger the individual, in other words, the stronger the association between the 'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index and the dependent variable.

Materialism Values Index

On page 109 we put forward the hypothesis that materialistic values will have a negative impact on CoS social norms. To appraise the validity of this hypothesis, we utilised the 'Materialism Values' Index. An outline of how this index was assembled can be found on page 204 in APPENDIX E. As shown in **Table 14-27**, the index had a negative association with the SfCoS Index in both models. But the 'Materialism Values' Index was not a statistically significant correlate of the dependent variable in

⁴³ Standardised testing revealed that these four items merged effectively in terms of validity and reliability, forming a single scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.684$). These items were derived from the Very Short Authoritarianism Scale, for a discussion of this scale see Bizumic and Duckitt (2018).

either model. Model II in the table was altered to interact gender and the ‘Materialism Values’ Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=-0.228$; $SE=0.101$; $\beta=-0.247$) was negative and statistically significant ($p<0.050$). If an individual identified as male, in other words, the ‘Materialism Values’ Index had a statistically significant and negative correlation with the SfCoS Index.

Table 14-27: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the ‘Materialism Values’ Index

	Model I		Model II	
	Coeff.	β	Coeff.	β
‘Materialism Values’ Index	-0.095 (0.056)	-0.051	-0.028 (0.055)	-0.015
Background variables	No		Yes	
Number of obs.	3010		2958	
R-squared	0.006		0.112	
Root MSE	34.43		32.57	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale

We developed the hypothesis, on page 111, that there was a positive relationship between the SfCoS Index and blind patriotism. To test this hypothesis, we used the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale; a description of this scale is provided in APPENDIX E on page 205. The results shown in **Table 14-28** indicate that uncritical patriotism heightened the likelihood that a person would have a high SfCoS Index score. Comparing the two models, the uncritical patriotism scale exhibited a somewhat stronger correlation with the SfCoS Index in Model II. The second model in the table was modified to interact years of formal education with the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=0.507$; $SE=0.183$; $\beta=0.269$) was positive and statistically significant ($p<0.010$). The more educated the individual, the stronger the association between the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale and the dependent variable.

Table 14-28: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the ‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale

	Model I			Model II		
	Coeff.	β		Coeff.	β	
‘Blind/Uncritical Patriotism’ Scale	2.895 (0.831)	**	0.109	3.349 (0.639)	***	0.126
Background variables	No			Yes		
Number of obs.	3089			3027		
R-squared	0.012			0.124		
Root MSE	34.25			32.43		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Political Ethnocentrism’ Scale

On page 112 we sketched out the hypothesis that political ethnocentrism was a factor influencing CoS social norms. To generate produce a variable for evaluating ethnocentrism, we employed the following survey question: "Do you agree or disagree that it would be best if every cultural group had

its own country where it could make its own decisions?" Responses were rated on a scale from 1 ('Strongly agree') to 5 ('Strongly disagree'). 'Don't know' responses for this question were placed at the midpoint. The scale was inverted so that a higher score indicated a stronger endorsement of parochialism. This variable was labelled the 'Political Ethnocentrism' Scale. The results of the multivariate analysis in **Table 14-29** indicated that this scale had a positive relationship with the SfCoS Index, confirming our hypothesis.

Table 14-29: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SfCoS Index and 'Political Ethnocentrism' Scale

	Model I			Model II		
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β
'Political Ethnocentrism' Scale	5.149	(0.873) ***	0.186	4.597	(0.863) ***	0.165
Background variables	No			Yes		
Number of obs.	3089			3027		
R-squared	0.035			0.135		
Root MSE	34.86			32.22		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Civic Participation' Index

On page 113 we hypothesised that civic mindedness would be negatively correlated with CoS social norms. To generate a variable for measuring civic duty, we looked at three items. Respondents were read a list of three types of civic participation: (i) signed a petition; (ii) attended a peaceful demonstration or protest march; and (iii) contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or a civil servant to express their views. Then respondents were required to indicate whether they had: "done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past, whether you have not done it but might do it, or you have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it". Responses to these three items were combined into a single measure⁴⁴ that was labelled the 'Civic Participation' Index. 'Don't know' responses for these items were coded as missing. The new index was ranged from 0 to 10, the higher value indicated the greater level of civic participation. The findings from the multivariate analysis, shown in **Table 14-30**, indicate that civic participation reduced the likelihood of a high SfCoS Index score.

Table 14-30: Linear (OLS) regression tests for the relationship between the SfCoS Index and the 'Civic Participation' Index

	Model I			Model II		
	Coeff.		β	Coeff.		β
'Civic Participation' Index	-1.322	(0.403) **	-0.099	-1.793	(0.388) ***	-0.134
Background variables	No			Yes		
Number of obs.	2999			3027		
R-squared	0.010			0.135		
Root MSE	34.41			32.22		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and

⁴⁴ Standardised testing learned that these three items merged in a validity and reliability manner into a single scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.735$).

economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Fully Specified Model

Coefficients and standard errors for the fully specified multivariate model are portrayed in **Table 14-31**. Of the six variables of interest, five had a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable. The 'Materialism Values' Index was not a statistically significant correlate of the dependent variable in this final model. The independent variable that exhibited the strongest association with the dependent variable was the 'Civic Participation' Index ($r = -1.711$; $SE = 0.373$; $\beta = -0.127$) and this was followed by the 'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index ($r = 0.259$; $SE = 0.060$; $\beta = 0.121$).

Table 14-31: Linear (OLS) regression for the fully specified the SfCoS Index model

	Coeff.			β
'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale	2.094	(0.724)	**	0.072
'Authoritarian Rule and Order' Index	0.259	(0.060)	***	0.121
'Political Ethnocentrism' Scale	3.298	(0.851)	***	0.117
'Blind/Uncritical Patriotism' Scale	2.690	(0.763)	***	0.101
'Materialism Values' Index	-0.079	(0.055)		-0.041
'Civic Participation' Index	-1.711	(0.373)	***	-0.127
Number of obs.	2883			
R-squared	0.173			
Root MSE	31.76			

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate positive score on the SfCoS Index; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls for all the background variables; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

APPENDIX G. LIKELIHOOD FOR REPORTING WITNESSED CORRUPTION

A statistical analysis of the drivers of public willingness to report witnessed or experienced corruption is provided in this appendix.

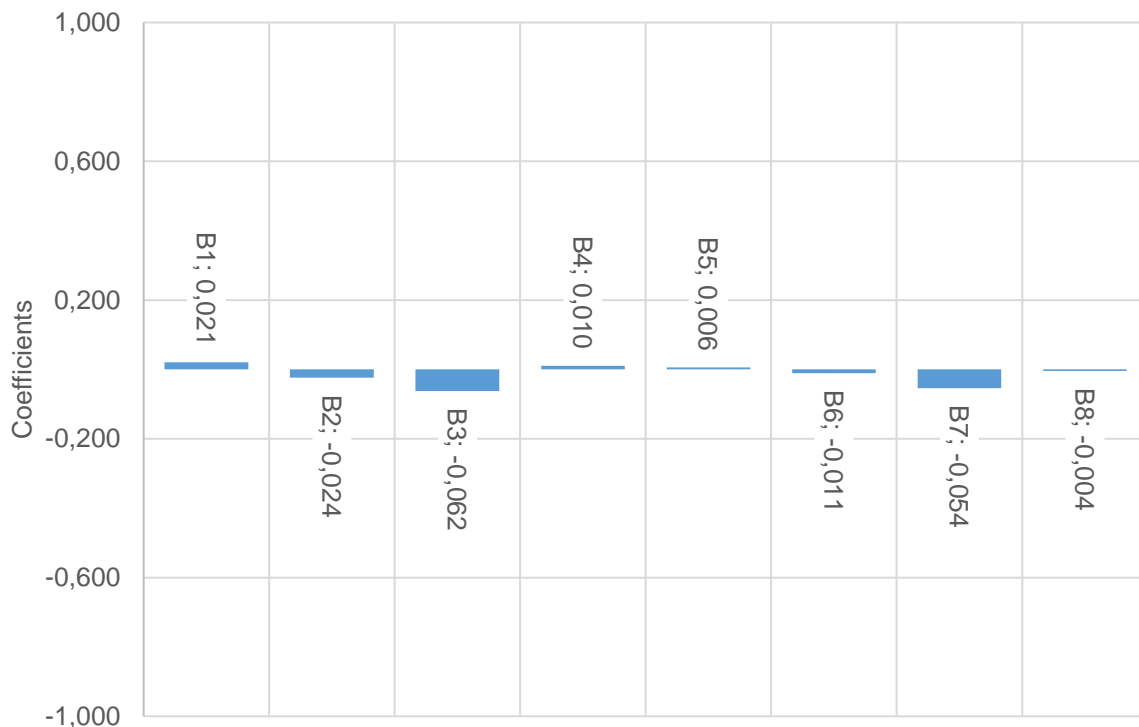
Dependent Variable Description

SASAS respondents were presented with the following question: “If you experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour, how likely is it that you would report it?” Responses were captured on a scale that ranged from 1 ‘Not at all likely’ to 4 ‘Very likely’. A small number of respondents (N=83) answered ‘don’t know’ to this question. For ease of analysis a dichotomous variable was derived from this measure, with 1 coded as likely to report and all other values coded as 0. This measure was labelled the willingness to report witnessed corruption (WRWC) Scale.

Pairwise Correlation Matrix of the WRWC Scale and a Range of Descriptive Norms

A pairwise correlation (or covariance) matrix test was conducted to examine the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the eight dishonest-illegal behaviours descriptive norm items outlined on page 200 of APPENDIX E. The legend for each of these descriptive social norms is depicted in **Legend Box 1** in APPENDIX E on page 200. All coefficients displayed in **Figure 14-2** are small and none greater than 0.300. In other words, there was not a strong association between intention to report and descriptive social norms about dishonest-illegal conduct.

Figure 14-3: Pairwise correlations for the WRWC Scale and the Descriptive Norms items



Note: 1. Bonferroni-adjusted significance level used.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Multivariate Base Model

We conducted a multivariate analysis to test the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 10.4. This investigation will help identify the potential determinants of the WRWC Scale, aiming to assess the impact of selected variables and determine their relative significance. Given the nature of the scale, we adopted a logistics regression approach. As a first step a base model was created that contained all the standard background variables designated for this study (for details on these variables, see

APPENDIX B). Positive coefficients in the model indicated a greater propensity to reported experienced or witnessed corruption. The model outcomes are depicted in **Table 14-32**, and, upon reviewing the model results, a substantial economic status effect becomes apparent. A one-unit increase in the status index ($r= 0.131$; $SE=0.044$) was associated with the WRWC Scale. We also found that employment was negatively correlated with the dependent variable, reducing the log odds of report intention by 0.459 ($SE=0.203$).

Table 14-32: Logistic regression for the WRWC Scale base model

	Coeff.		
Gender (ref. male)	-0.093	(0.125)	*
Age	-0.001	(0.004)	
Race (ref. Black African)			
Coloured	-0.323	(0.209)	
Indian	0.339	(0.313)	
White	0.283	(0.323)	
Geotype (ref. metropolitan urban)			
Non-Metropolitan Urban	-0.011	(0.184)	
Rural	0.087	(0.203)	
Work Status (ref. not working)	-0.459	(0.156)	**
Years of Formal Schooling	-0.012	(0.022)	
Economic Status Index	0.131	(0.044)	**
Number of obs.	3049		
Wald χ^2	82	(18)	
Pseudo R^2	0.045		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Model controls for province of residence; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

A number of multivariate models were produced to evaluate the different hypotheses put forward in Chapter 10.4. To perform these tests a number of independent variables had to be constructed. In each of the preceding sections, the construction of these independent variables was described. Then the association between the relevant independent variables and the WRWC Scale was assessed using a logistic regression model without background variables. Subsequently, background variables were introduced into the model. Six different independent variables are tested in this way. To conclude our examination, a fully specified model was produced. This model encompassed all the background variables from the base model, along with the six independent variables.

'Materialism Values' Index

We presented the hypothesis on page 137 that materialistic values influenced the intention to report corrupt practices in South Africa. To evaluate this hypothesis, we made use of the 'Materialism Values' Index. A description of how this index was created is provided on page 204 in APPENDIX E. We found that a one unit increase on this scale had a negative correlation with the dependent variable in both models. But this correlation was not statistically significant in either model.

Table 14-33: Logistic regression for the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the 'Materialism Values' Index

	Model I		Model II	
'Materialism Values' Index	-0.006	(0.003)	-0.003	(0.003)
Background variables	3106		3047	
Number of obs.	No		Yes	

Wald chi ²	3 (1)	83 (19)
Pseudo R ²	0.002	0.047

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale

We theorised that repeated exposure to public sector corruption undermines an individual's compliance with the law on page 139. To test this hypothesis, we employed the 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale. A description of this scale is provided in APPENDIX E on page 203. The multivariate analysis showed that the scale was not a statistically significant correlate of the dependent variable in the first model. Upon introducing the background controls in the second model, however, we found that the scale exhibited a statistically significant (and negative) correlation with the WRWC Scale.

Table 14-34: Logistic regression for the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the 'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale

	Model I		Model II	
'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale	-0.061	(0.053)	-0.125	(0.054) *
Number of obs.	3044		2986	
Background variables	No		Yes	
Wald chi ²	1 (1)		87 (19)	
Pseudo R ²	0.001		0.047	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Ordinary People Accountability Scale

On page 140 we proposed the hypothesis that an individual would be more inclined to report corruption if they believed that ordinary people were held accountable by the justice system. To test this thesis, we needed a measure that gauged perceptions that ordinary folk would be held accountable for corruption. We, therefore, used the following survey question: "How likely is it that an ordinary person in South Africa will be punished by the authorities for giving or receiving a bribe, gift or favour in return for public service?" Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 ('Not at all likely') to 4 ('Very likely'). 'Don't know' answers to this question were coded as missing. This variable was labelled the 'Ordinary People Accountability' Scale.

Table 14-35: Logistic regression for the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the Ordinary People Accountability' Scale

	Model I		Model II	
'Ordinary People Accountability' Scale	0.382	(0.070) ***	0.431	(0.071) ***
Number of obs.	3011		2959	
Background variables	No		Yes	
Wald chi ²	30 (1)		118 (19)	
Pseudo R ²	0.024		0.074	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal

schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

We found that a one-unit increase on the 'Ordinary People Accountability' Scale corresponded to an increase in report intention. The strength of this association was higher in the second model than the first. The second model in **Table 14-35** was amended to interact the 'Ordinary People Accountability' Scale with formal years of education. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient (r=0.042; SE=0.019) was positive and statistically significant (p<0.050). The more educated the individual, the stronger the association between 'Ordinary People Accountability' Scale and the dependent variable.

Elite Accountability Scale

We postulated that the perceived capability of the system to hold elites accountable influenced the public's intention to report corruption to the authorities on page 141. To create a measure that gauged perceptions that elites would be held accountable for corruption, we looked to the following survey question: "How likely is it that the rich and powerful in South Africa will be punished for engaging in corruption?" Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 ('Not at all likely') to 4 ('Very likely'). 'Don't know' answers to this question were coded as missing. This variable was labelled the 'Elite Accountability' Scale. A one unit increase on this scale was associated with greater likelihood of reporting corruption to the authorities. The magnitude of the association was analogous in both models.

Table 14-36: Logistic regression for the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the 'Elite Accountability' Scale

	Model I			Model II		
'Elite Accountability' Scale	0.405	(0.074)	***	0.425	(0.074)	***
Number of obs.	3034			2981		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	30 (1)			116 (19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.029			0.074		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Perceived Reporting Efficiency

We proposed, on page 138, the thesis that the perceived effectiveness of reporting structures was a significant determinant of the intention to report experienced or witnessed corruption. To create a variable to gauge perceived efficiency of reporting structures, we utilised responses to the following question: "How likely is it that action would be taken if you went to a government office or the police to report corrupt behaviour? Responses were recorded on a scale ranging from 1'Not at all likely' to 5'Very likely'. 'Don't know' responses for this question were considered missing data. This variable was labelled the 'Perceived Reporting Efficiency' Scale. The findings of our multivariate analysis are presented in **Table 14-37** and suggest that the scale had a strong (and positive) association with the dependent variable. From what we can tell, the 'Perceived Reporting Efficiency' Scale explained a considerable degree of variance in the dependent variable.

Table 14-37: Logistic regression for the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the ‘Perceived Reporting Efficiency’ Scale

	Model I			Model II		
‘Perceived Reporting Efficiency’ Scale	0.942	(0.074)	***	0.955	(0.090)	***
Number of obs.	3024			2972		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	30(1)			176 (19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.115			0.148		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Community Retaliation’ Scale

We presented the supposition that fear of retaliation influenced report intention on page 140. To create a measure that gauged fear of retaliation for reporting corruption, we used the following survey question: "Do you agree or disagree that in this community, people risk revenge if they speak out against corruption?" Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 ('Strongly agree') to 5 ('Strongly disagree'). 'Don't know' answers to this question were placed at the midpoint. So that a higher score indicated a stronger belief in community retaliation, the scale was reversed. This variable was labelled the ‘Community Retaliation’ Scale. The findings, displayed in **Table 14-38**, suggest that fear of retribution reduced a person's willingness to report experienced or witnessed corrupt behaviour. As shown in the table, the scale demonstrated a robust association with the dependent variable in both models.

Table 14-38: Logistic regression for the relationship between the WRWC Scale and the ‘Community Retaliation’ Scale

	Model I			Model II		
‘Community Retaliation’ Scale	-0.204	(0.063)	**	-0.207	(0.063)	**
Number of obs.	3108			3049		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	10(1)			87 (19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.008			0.052		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Fully Specified Model

Coefficients and standard errors for the fully specified model are presented in **Table 14-39**. Among the six variables of interest, five were identified as statistically significant predictors. The ‘Materialism Values’ Index did not emerge as a statistically significant correlate in this final model. The variable demonstrating the strongest association with the dependent variable, by a considerable margin, was the ‘Perceived Reporting Efficiency’ Scale (r= 0.901; SE=0.098). Other notable predictors of the dependent variable were the ‘Recent Corruption Experience’ Scale (r= -0.215; SE=0.076) and the ‘Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale (r= 0.274; SE=0.088).

Table 14-39: Logistic regression for the fully specified the WRWC Scale model

	Coeff.
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'Materialism Values' Index	0.003	(0.004)	
'Recent Corruption Experience' Scale	-0.201	(0.068)	**
Ordinary People Accountability' Scale	0.274	(0.088)	**
'Elite Accountability' Scale	0.192	(0.091)	*
'Perceived Reporting Efficiency' Scale	0.901	(0.098)	***
'Community Retaliation' Scale	-0.215	(0.076)	**
Number of obs.	2834		
Wald chi ²	212	(24)	
Pseudo R ²	0.183		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of reporting corruption; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls for all standard background variables; and 4.

Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

APPENDIX H. APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

A statistical analysis for the determinants of public approval of government efforts to combat corruption is provided in this appendix.

Dependent Variable Description

SASAS respondents were presented with the following question: “How much do you agree or disagree that South African Government efforts to combat corruption are effective?” Responses were captured on a scale that ranged from 1 ‘Totally agree’ to 4 ‘Totally disagree’. For ease of analysis, the scale was reversed so that the higher number indicated approval of government efforts to combat corruption. All ‘don’t know’ responses were placed at the mid-point. This variable was labelled the approval of government efforts to combat corruption (AGECC) Scale.

Multivariate Base Model

We conducted a multivariate analysis to test the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 11.2. This investigation will help identify potential determinants of AGECC, aiming to assess the impact of specified variables on attitudes and determine their relative significance. Given the nature of the AGECC scale, we adopted a logistics regression approach. As a first step a base model was generated that contained all the standard background variables designated for this study (for details on these variables, see APPENDIX B). The model outcomes are depicted in **Table 14-40**, where positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective. Notably, upon reviewing the model results, it was apparent that socio-demographic characteristics were not good predictors of the dependent variable.

Table 14-40: Ordered logistic regression for the AGECC Scale base model

	Coeff.	
Gender (ref. male)	0.007	(0.124)
Age	-0.001	(0.005)
Race (ref. Black African)		
Coloured	0.017	(0.204)
Indian	-0.209	(0.328)
White	-0.450	(0.341)
Geotype (ref. metropolitan urban)		
Non-Metropolitan Urban	-0.003	(0.187)
Rural	-0.201	(0.203)
Work Status (ref. not working)	0.146	(0.176)
Years of Formal Schooling	0.022	(0.030)
Economic Status Index	-0.012	(0.039)
Number of obs.	2872	
Wald chi ²	47	(18)
Pseudo R ²	0.002	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Model controls for province of residence; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

A range of different multivariate models were produced to evaluate the diverse hypotheses put forward in Chapter 11.2. To perform these tests a number of independent variables had to be constructed. In each of the preceding sections, the construction of these independent variables was described. Then the association between the relevant independent variables and the AGECC scale was assessed using an ordered logistic regression model without background variables. Subsequently, background variables were introduced into the model. Six specially selected independent variables

were tested in this way. To conclude our examination, a fully specified model was produced. This model encompassed all the background variables from the base model, along with the six selected independent variables.

Social Acceptability of Corruption Index

We theorised, on page 148, that individuals' tolerance of corruption may influence their evaluations of government efforts to fight corruption. To establish the validity of this hypothesis, we tested the 'Social Acceptability of Corruption' (SAoC) Index. An outline of how this scale was built can be found in APPENDIX E on page 201. As indicated in **Table 14-41**, a one unit increase on this scale was correlated with a greater likelihood of giving the government's anti-corruption strategy a favourable rating in both models.

Table 14-41: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the AGECC Scale and Social Acceptability of Corruption' Index

	Model I			Model II		
Social Acceptability of Corruption	0.011	(0.003)	*	0.010	(0.003)	**
Number of obs.	2916			2866		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	16 (1)			68 (19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.008			0.022		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * p<0.05, **p<0.01, *** p<0.001.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Public Service Commitment' Scale

On page 150 we advanced the hypothesis that individuals who perceive the public service as dedicated to serving the general public will have a favourable assessment of the government's anti-corruption efforts. To test this hypothesis, we used answers to the following question: "Thinking of the public service in South Africa, how committed is it to serve the people?" Responses were captured on a categorical scale that ranged from 1 ('very committed') to 5 ('not at all committed'). 'Can't choose' answers to this question were treated as missing. The findings of our multivariate analysis are presented in **Table 14-42** and suggest that the scale had a strong (and positive) association with the dependent variable in both models. The second model in the table was adjusted to interact the 'Public Service Commitment' Scale with years of formal education. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient (r=0.013; SE=0.007) was positive and statistically significant (p<0.050). The more educated the individual, in other words, the stronger the relationship between the 'Public Service Commitment' Scale and the dependent variable.

Table 14-42: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the AGECC Scale and the 'Public Service Commitment' Scale

	Model I			Model II		
'Public Service Commitment' Scale	0.362	(0.066)	***	0.403	(0.068)	***
Number of obs.	2898			2848		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald chi ²	30(1)			100 (19)		
Pseudo R ²	0.012			0.034		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group,

geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Severity of Corruption’ Index

On page 147 we proposed the hypothesis that public perceptions of the harm caused by corruption can impact evaluations of anti-corruption efforts. To assess this hypothesis, we utilised the ‘Severity of Corruption’ Index. An outline of how this index was constructed is presented in APPENDIX E on page 202. The multivariate analysis, portrayed in **Table 14-43**, showed that the index was a statistically significant correlate of the dependent variable in both models. The coefficient in both models was negative, a one unit increase on the index decreased the log odds of giving the government’s anti-corruption efforts a positive ranking. The second model in the table was adjusted to interact the ‘Severity of Corruption’ Index with the Economic Status Index. The p-value associated of the resultant interaction coefficient ($r=0.021$; $SE=0.010$) was positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.050$). The more affluent the individual, in other words, the stronger the association between the ‘Severity of Corruption’ Index and the AGECC Scale.

Table 14-43: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the AGECC Scale and the ‘Severity of Corruption’ Index

	Model I		Model II	
‘Severity of Corruption’ Index	-0.179	(0.028) ***	-0.166	(0.029) ***
Number of obs.	2878		2829	
Background variables	No		Yes	
Wald χ^2	41 (1)		87(19)	
Pseudo R^2	0.016		0.031	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

‘Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale

The hypothesis that the perceived accountability of ordinary citizens will positively influence public evaluations of the government’s anti-corruption efforts was put forward on page 222. To judge the validity of this hypothesis, we used the ‘Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale. An outline of how this scale was assembled is presented in APPENDIX G on page 216. As shown in **Table 14-44**, a one-unit increase on this scale corresponded to a more positive assessment of the government’s anti-corruption strategy in both models. But the strength of this association was weak, and the correlation was *not* statistically significant in the first or the second model.

Table 14-44: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the AGECC Scale and the ‘Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale

	Model I		Model II	
Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale	-0.014	(0.068)	0.001	(0.058)
Number of obs.	2884		2818	
Background variables	No		Yes	
Wald χ^2	0 (1)		58(19)	
Pseudo R^2	0.000		0.019	

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group,

geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

'Elite Accountability' Scale

The hypothesis that perceptions of elite accountability impact public evaluations of the government's anti-corruption efforts was presented on page 223. To gauge the validity of this hypothesis, we employed the 'Elite Accountability' Scale. Details on how this scale was built can be found on page 217 in APPENDIX G. A one unit increase on this scale was associated with public approval of the government's anti-corruption strategy in both models. Unlike what was seen in **Table 14-44** above, the association here was a positive and comparatively quite large.

Table 14-45: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the AGECC Scale and the 'Elite Accountability' Scale

	Model I			Model II		
'Elite Accountability' Scale	0.346	(0.081)	***	0.339	(0.087)	***
Number of obs.	2892			2843		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald χ^2	18 (1)			69 (19)		
Pseudo R^2	0.013			0.028		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Political Trust Index

We presented the hypothesis that political trust positively affected public evaluations of government anti-corruption efforts on page 149. To investigate political trust in the country, we utilised four survey items. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they trusted or distrusted the following institutions in South Africa: (i) national government; (ii) parliament; (iii) local government; and (iv) political parties. Responses were captured on a categorical scale that ranged from 1 ('strongly trust') to 5 ('strongly distrust'). The responses to these four items were combined into a single measure referred to as the 'Political Trust' Index⁴⁵. Any responses labelled as 'Don't know' for these items were treated as missing. The index was scaled from 0 to 10, with higher scores reflecting a higher level of trust in the political system. Multivariate outcomes showed that political trust had a positive association with public approval of the government's anti-corruption strategy. Upon comparing the two models in **Table 14-46**, the index had a somewhat stronger correlation with the dependent variable in the second model.

Table 14-46: Ordered logistic regression for the relationship between the AGECC Scale and the 'Political Trust' Index

	Model I			Model II		
Political Trust Index	0.116	(0.026)	***	0.123	(0.029)	***
Number of obs.	2922			2872		
Background variables	No			Yes		
Wald χ^2	19(1)			86 (19)		
Pseudo R^2	0.009			0.025		

⁴⁵ Standardised testing indicated that these three items effectively merged in terms of both validity and reliability, resulting in a single scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.719$).

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Background variables include age, gender, race group, geotype, work status, years of formal schooling and economic status index; 3. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.
Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023

Fully Specified Model

Coefficients and standard errors for the fully specified model are presented in **Table 14-47**. All but one of the six variables of interest were identified as statistically significant predictors. The ‘Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale was not a statistically significant correlate in this final model. The variable demonstrating the strongest association with the dependent variable was the ‘Elite Accountability’ Scale ($r = 0.245$; $SE = 0.096$) and this was followed by ‘Severity of Corruption’ Index ($r = 0.007$; $SE = 0.003$).

Table 14-47: Ordered logistic regression for the fully specified the AGECC Scale model

	Coeff.		
Social Acceptability of Corruption Index	0.007	(0.003)	*
‘Public Service Commitment’ Scale	0.290	(0.071)	***
‘Severity of Corruption’ Index	-0.128	(0.032)	**
‘Ordinary People Accountability’ Scale	-0.099	(0.074)	
‘Elite Accountability’ Scale	0.245	(0.096)	**
‘Political Trust’ Index	0.075	(0.032)	**
Number of obs.	2739		
Wald χ^2	186 (24)		
Pseudo R^2	0.061		

Notes: 1. Positive coefficients indicate a greater likelihood of agreeing that government efforts to fight corruption are effective; 2. Robust standard errors in parenthesis; 3. Model controls for all standard background variables; and 4. Significance is denoted as follows: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2023