



Resurgent Perceptions of Corruption in South Africa

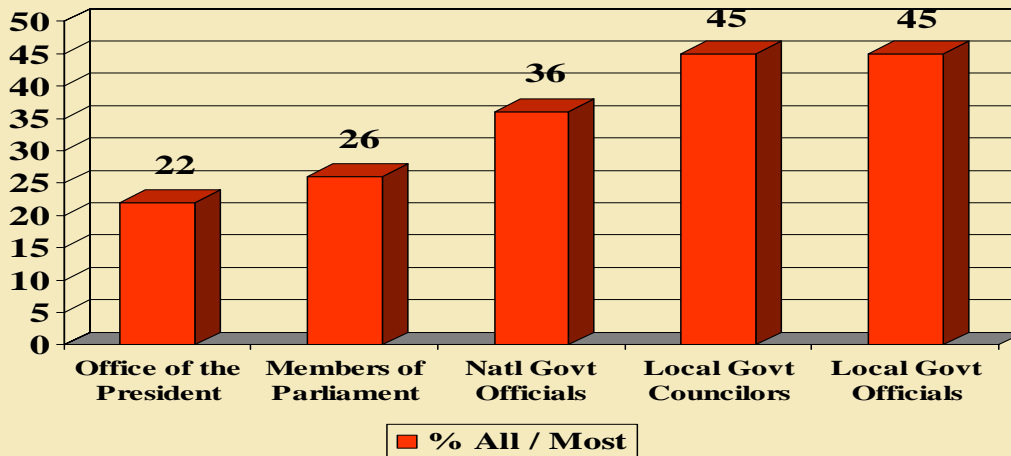
In the late 1990s and early 2000's, South Africa's elite corruption busting units such as the Heath Commission and the National Directorate of Public Prosecutions investigated and successfully prosecuted a range of top level figures in the country's ruling African National Congress. Public perceptions of corruption as measured in the 2002 and 2004 Afrobarometer surveys then fell rapidly from the very high levels measured between 1995 and 2000. However, the combined effect of the revelations from the trial of ANC confidante Schabir Shaik, the impending corruption trial of the former Deputy President Jacob Zuma, and a myriad of allegations about irregularities in tenders and hiring in local councils appear to have re-awakened South Africans' cynicism about government corruption. At the same time, it appears that South Africa's Members of Parliament seem to have dodged any increased public disenchantment over the continuing "Travelgate" scandal.

These findings were revealed by the recent Afrobarometer survey of a representative sample of 2400 South Africans conducted in January and February 2006 by Citizen Surveys.

Perceptions of Corruption

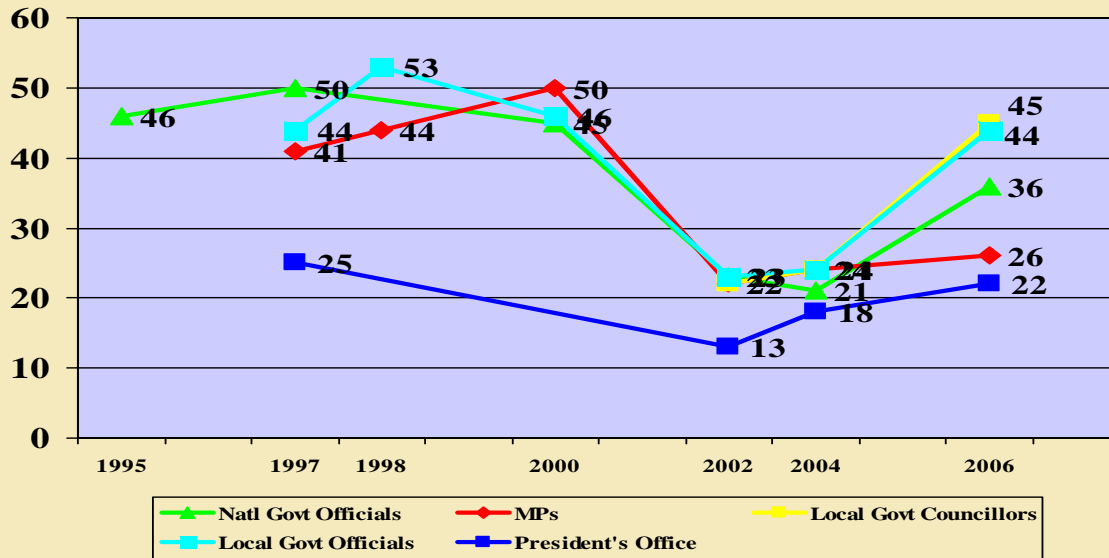
- When asked: "How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?" just under half of all South Africans say that "all" or "most" of their elected **local** councilors and **council officials** are involved in corruption (45 percent). About one third think the same about **national government officials** (36 percent), one quarter for **MPs** (26 percent). One in five now say the same thing about officials in the **President's office** (22 percent).

Perceptions of Government Corruption



- When viewed over time, we see that between 1995 and 2000, around one half of South Africans felt that “all” or “most” officials in national or local government were involved in corruption. But these negative views dived precipitously in 2002 and remained at far lower levels in 2004 following highly visible prosecutions of top ANC officials such as Winnie Mandela-Madikizela and Tony Yengeni.
- However, perceptions of corruption have increased sharply in 2006. While the recent reading for **MPs** is statistically unchanged since 2004 (suggesting that Parliament’s “Travelgate” scandal has not yet achieved much traction in the public consciousness), every other government institution is viewed more cynically now than two years ago.
- Following the trial of ANC confidante and financier Schabir Shaik, in which it was found that he had a “generally corrupt” revelation with former Deputy President Jacob Zuma, 22 percent feel that “all” or “most” **officials in the Presidency** are corrupt, up four percentage points from the 18 percent measured in 2004 and nine points from the 13 percent recorded in 2000. The 36 percent measured in January and February for **national government officials** is up 15 points from 21 percent in 2004.
- And a myriad of allegations about irregularities in tenders and hiring in local councils across the country appear to have re-awakened South Africans’ cynicism about their local government. Forty five percent now say all or most **local councilors** and **local government officials** are corrupt, both 21-point increases over 2004.

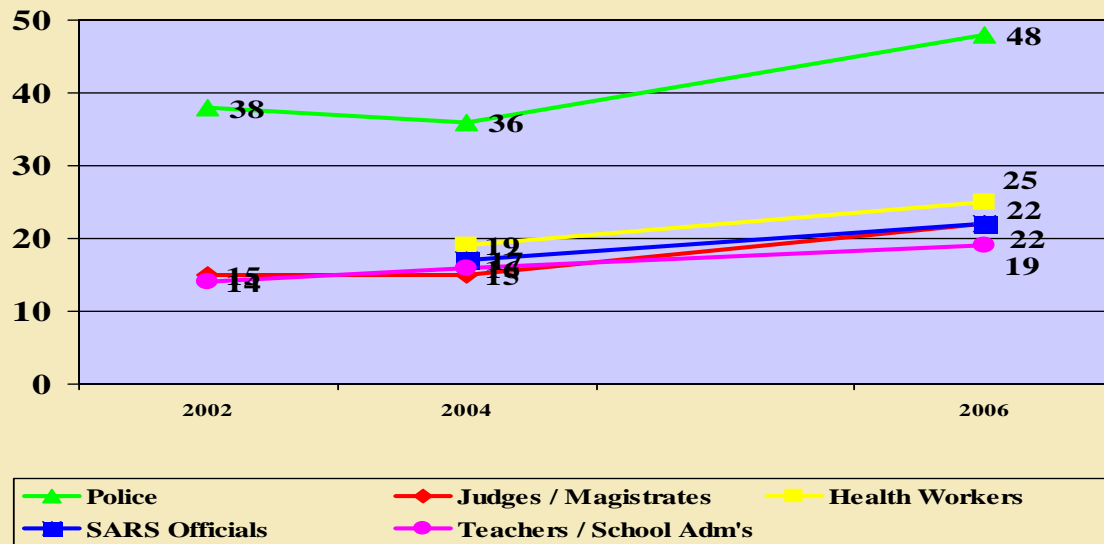
Perceptions of Government Corruption Over Time (% “All of them” / “Most of them”)



However, the highest levels of cynicism about corruption recorded in the survey were directed at the **South African Police Service**. One half (48 percent) of all South Africans think that most police are corrupt. This result should also be read alongside other Afrobarometer findings that South Africans see the police as the most difficult government agency to work with, and that one in ten people experienced some form of victimization in the past year at the hands of the police (see Afrobarometer Briefing Paper, “*Is South Africa’s Public Service “User Friendly”?*”).

- And between one quarter and one fifth of respondents saw corruption amongst **health workers** (25 percent), (**SARS tax officials** (23 percent), **judges and magistrates** (22 percent), and **teachers and school administrators** (19 percent) almost all of which constitute statistically significant increases since 2004.

Perceptions of State Corruption Over Time (% “All of them” / “Most of them”)



The Survey

Face to face interviews were conducted in the eleven official languages with a nationally representative, area probability sample of 2400 respondents across all nine provinces in January and February 2006. In the first stage of sampling, 600 Census Enumerator Areas (EAs) were randomly selected from a frame of all EAs, stratified by province and race, with the probability of selection proportionate to population size based on the most recent Statistics SA midyear 2005 population estimates. This ensures that every eligible adult has an equal and know chance of being selected. The realized sample was weighted by age, gender, race and province to ensure it matched current population estimates. In the second stage of sampling, four households were randomly selected within each EA. In the third and final stage, one South African citizen over the age of 18 was randomly from a list of all household members to be interviewed. The final sample size of 2,400 supports estimates to the national population of all adults that is accurate to within a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points at a confidence level of 95 percent.

Fieldwork for this survey was conducted by Citizen Surveys. For more information about Citizen Surveys, see www.citizensurvey.com or email them at info@citizensurvey.com.

Afrobarometer

The Afrobarometer is produced collaboratively by social scientists from 18 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and Michigan State University. For more information, see: www.afrobarometer.org.

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