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Research Proposal

Community Perceptions of Police Performance and Legitimacy in Hardap Region / Namibia

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background

Measuring police performance by hard indicators such as crime rates, reports of arrests, response rates, etc. may seem straightforward. Objective performance indicators present the police (and the government) often in a more favourable light. But understanding police performance involves more than just calculating arrests or crime and response rates. It also involves assessing how well the public believes the police protect and serve them, because the police need the public's compliance, cooperation, and empowerment to do their job effectively (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015). Positive perceptions of the police among the public can be linked to increased levels of trust, cooperation, and voluntary adherence to the law, and it has been highlighted by many scholars, that the public's trust in the police is essential for effective law enforcement (Hohl, Bradford, & Stanko, 2010; Lyons, 2002; Mason, Hillenbrand, & Money, 2014; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tankebe, 2013). Accordingly, over the last two to three decades the measurement of effectiveness and legitimacy of a police force became ever more dependent on how citizens perceive their police in terms of fairness, trustworthiness, and effectiveness (Taylor & Lawton, 2012; Cao & Wu, 2019; in respect of public admin. Van der Walle, 2018). The quality of the police-public relationship plays thus a significant role (Taylor & Lawton, 2012), and understanding the nature of police-public relations is crucial for tackling issues pertaining to community cooperation, law enforcement accountability, and crime prevention. This study aims to systematically record the community perceptions of police performance and legitimacy in Hardap region, how they are formed, whether and how they correspond to measurable (objective) performance indicators, and how the regional police may use such insights to improve service delivery, transparency, and legitimacy.

1.2 Research Problem

There is a growing recognition that citizen trust in the police—whether grounded in fact or sentiment—profoundly shapes cooperation, reporting behaviour, and societal stability (Tyler, 2006), which in turn is of great importance, because the police need the public's compliance, cooperation, and empowerment to do their job effectively (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015). In recent years, however, the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) has faced numerous allegations of harassment, abuse of power, and inadequate service delivery, as reported in various local media outlets and research studies (LAC report, 2019; Nakuta & Cloete, 2022).

Headlines from major newspapers, including *The Namibian*, *Namibian Sun*, *New Era*, *Windhoek Observer*, and *Informanté* (Amakali, 2022; Guchu, 2021; Menges, 2017; Hange, 2021), have increasingly highlighted incidents of police misconduct, ranging from excessive use of force and corruption to unprofessional behaviour towards citizens. The Ombudsman also singled out the police for blatant human rights abuses against inmates, including overcrowding of cells and starvation of detainees (Beukes, 2021). It stands to reason that such incidents have strained the police-public relationship, contributed to the erosion of public trust, and fuelled a growing perception of the police as an oppressive rather than protective force.

In Namibia, including the Hardap region, citizens' perceptions of police performance and legitimacy are characterized by a complex interplay of trust and concern. Nationally, about 64% of citizens express "somewhat" or "a lot" of trust in the police (Afrobarometer, 2022), yet significant concerns persist regarding misconduct and professionalism. A substantial majority believe the police sometimes use excessive force—73% in criminal cases and 62% during protests—and engage in illegal activities (65%) (Afrobarometer, 2022). Additionally, 55% of citizens report being unjustifiably stopped by police (Afrobarometer, 2022). Corruption perceptions further erode legitimacy, with about one-third of Namibians viewing most or all police officers as corrupt, and 20% of those who interacted with police reporting that they had to pay bribes (Afrobarometer, 2022). Although Hardap is among the regions with relatively lower reported perceptions of government corruption (Afrobarometer, 2022b), limited police resources and oversight challenges remain critical concerns (NID, 2018). The Namibian Police Complaints and Discipline Unit (NPCDU) is responsible for investigating complaints but operates within the police hierarchy, raising doubts about its independence and effectiveness (NID, 2018). Consequently, there are increasing calls for establishing an independent civilian oversight body to enhance police accountability and restore public confidence (NID, 2018). These findings highlight a crucial need for reform efforts focused on improving professionalism, reducing misconduct, addressing corruption, and ensuring effective oversight mechanisms. In the Hardap region, as elsewhere, building a more accountable and community-responsive police service is essential for strengthening police legitimacy and fostering public trust, which are foundational to a well-functioning democratic society. Addressing these gaps is key to enhancing police service delivery and

public satisfaction across Namibia. The absence of systematic, conceptually anchored research into the police-public relationship in the Hardap region poses a significant challenge to designing effective interventions. While media reports and general surveys provide fragmented insights, they lack the conceptual precision necessary to capture the complex dynamics of police performance and legitimacy at the regional level. Consequently, reform efforts undertaken without such evidence risk devolving into indiscriminate “watering can” interventions, inefficiently addressing symptoms rather than underlying drivers. This study is therefore framed through established scientific constructs – including trust, professionalism, responsiveness, equity, and legitimacy – so as to guide both the assessment and the formulation of evidence-based, contextually appropriate reform strategies. Key markers of the legitimacy and efficacy of law enforcement organizations such as the police are public satisfaction and trust (Muthing et al., 2021, p. 126f.). Numerous elements influence these opinions, e.g., the standard of service, police professionalism, equity, and community involvement (visible policing), and besides the responsiveness of officers to complaints (prompt incident response), the dependability of services is a key factor in determining citizens' trust in police institutions (Ngobese (2011). Over and above the question, how well police services are delivered, policing in a democracy does not only require ethical policing and community-oriented tactics (community policing), but also symbolic and representative legitimacy (Ricucci et al., 2014, p. 538f.). Representative legitimacy is the extent to which the police reflect the demographic and cultural composition of the communities they serve, whereas symbolic legitimacy is the public's perception that the police reflect societal values, norms, and identities. In the face of so many factors which according to scientific knowledge have a bearing on the public's perceptions on police performance and legitimacy, it should be within reach to incorporate tangible institutional reforms in addition to policy declarations, with the aim to mend the in places seemingly broken police-public relationship.

The population in question (Hardap) has, however, not yet been adequately researched regarding status and dynamics of their perception of performance and legitimacy of the regional police. This study aims as addressing this prior research or population gap.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study will be to examine and analyse the relationship between citizens' perceptions of police performance and objective performance indicators in the Hardap Region, Namibia. The secondary objectives are:

- a) Evaluate community perceptions of police services, including overall satisfaction and specific concerns.
- b) Identify the key drivers of positive or negative public sentiment toward the police
- c) Identify areas for improvement in police service delivery, with a focus on responsiveness, professionalism, communication, and community engagement.
- d) Assess whether, and to what extent, subjective perceptions diverge from verifiable performance data.
- e) To offer policy recommendations for improving public trust, legitimacy, and service quality through data-informed community policing strategies.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the dominant patterns in citizens' perceptions of police trustworthiness, fairness, visibility, and responsiveness?
2. How do these perceptions vary by demographic group, location, or past experience with police?
3. What objective performance metrics are available, and how do they compare with citizen perceptions?
4. What accounts for alignment or misalignment between perceptions and actual performance?
5. How do law enforcement agencies currently utilize (or fail to utilize) public perception data in strategy, training, and reform?
6. How does existing policy with a bearing on of police trustworthiness, fairness, visibility, and responsiveness gain practical relevance and what is the practical Impact?

1.5 Significance of the study

Given the growing public concern over police conduct, there is an urgent need to assess and address the community's perception of police services (Smith, 2024). Conducting a comprehensive survey will provide valuable insights into how the public views the police, what areas of service delivery are seen as problematic, and what actions might rebuild trust and enhance cooperation. This study directly supports efforts to enhance police accountability, legitimacy, and effectiveness by:

- Offering evidence-based insights to guide community policing strategies.

- Enabling more differentiated training and reform initiatives grounded in citizen experiences.
- Helping to close the gap between service delivery and citizen expectations.
- Contributing to national and local dialogues on democratic policing, transparency, and trust-building.

By showing how both perception and performance matter—and how they can be made to work in synergy—this research helps operationalize democratic ideals in the practice of law enforcement in Namibia.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There is not much legislation which is relevant to the upgrading of service delivery in Namibia. The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia states in Article 1(6): “The Constitution shall be the supreme law of Namibia.” Without any doubt, the conduct of public officials in the three spheres of government must respect and uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in Chapter 3 of the Constitution. This clearly emanates from Article 5 of the Constitution. Indirectly, this also includes democratic values and principles. Additional principles that specifically speak to public service delivery, which the researcher stresses is a subset of public service, must be sought in vain. Notwithstanding this lacuna, the Namibian people, in their own right or even reminded otherwise, have put forth a set of standards for the Namibian public service. These standards, which are relevant for the endeavour of this study into the public’s perception of police performance and legitimacy, have found expression in Namibia’s 5th National Development Plan (NDP5). While Namibia’s Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5) formally concluded in 2022, the strategic imperatives outlined under Pillar 4 — Good Governance — remain substantively valid. Despite measurable targets under this pillar not being fully achieved, the overarching commitments to fostering accountable, transparent, responsive, and participatory governance continue to underpin national development aspirations. In the absence of a finalized successor plan, the principles of Pillar 4, reinforced by constitutional guarantees and international obligations such as SDG 16, provide a normative anchor for evaluating state-society relations. This study, by assessing community perceptions of police

performance, legitimacy, and the broader police-public relationship, contributes empirical insights into the lived reality of governance ideals at the operational level of law enforcement.

2.2 Conceptualizing Police Performance and Public Perception

Several scholars emphasize that confidence in police institutions is shaped not only by crime rates or clearance statistics but more significantly by procedural justice, perceptions of fairness, and interpersonal contact (Taylor & Lawton, 2012; Cao & Wu, 2019). This distinction between objective and subjective indicators is central to current debates in criminology and public administration. Van de Walle (2018) and Garcia and Cao (2005) caution against simplistic satisfaction metrics, noting how expectation-disconfirmation models and cognitive biases (e.g., halo effect) complicate interpretation of survey data.

2.3 Drivers of Public Trust and Satisfaction

The literature identifies multiple layers shaping public trust in the police:

- **Service quality and delivery:** Akinboade et al. (2012), Ngobese (2011), and Modise et al. (2020) use the **SERVQUAL framework** to demonstrate consistent gaps between expected and perceived service quality across SAPS community service centres. Originally developed in the field of marketing and service management, SERVQUAL provides a structured model for evaluating service quality by measuring the discrepancies ("gaps") between customers' expectations prior to receiving a service and their perceptions of the actual service received. The framework focuses on five key dimensions:

- **Tangibles** — the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials;
- **Reliability** — the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
- **Responsiveness** — the willingness to help clients and provide prompt service;
- **Assurance** — the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence;
- **Empathy** — the provision of caring, individualized attention to service users.

Applied to policing, these dimensions translate into, for example, how professional and equipped police stations appear (Tangibles), whether reported crimes are diligently followed up (Reliability), how quickly officers respond to complaints (Responsiveness), whether police officers behave courteously and instil a sense of

safety (Assurance), and whether they show genuine concern for the specific needs of the community (Empathy). Research consistently shows that gaps between what citizens expect and what they perceive in these dimensions strongly influence their trust in the police and their overall satisfaction with police services. SERVQUAL thus offers a tangible framework not only for diagnosing shortcomings in police service delivery but also for systematically identifying areas where improvements could most effectively rebuild public trust and legitimacy.

- **Professionalism and internal police culture:** Mofokeng and Antoinette (2023) and Oreje (2017) show how the integrity and conduct of officers shape public perceptions more than structural metrics.
- **Demographics and context:** Studies by Garcia and Cao (2005) and Nalla and Madan (2011) highlight how race, locality, and prior experience influence satisfaction. Beckker (2002) adds internal police morale and stress to this calculus, showing its indirect effect on service quality.
- **Symbolic and representative legitimacy:** Riccucci et al. (2014) demonstrate that demographic representation (e.g., gender) in policing can enhance perceived fairness and legitimacy.

2.4 Community Policing and Mutual Trust

Community policing emerges as a critical lens through which perception and performance intersect. Nalla and Madan (2011) and Anthony (2023) reveal how trust and cooperation are reciprocally linked: police who treat citizens fairly and transparently enjoy higher levels of voluntary compliance and information sharing. Mourtgos et al. (2019) reverse this view, exploring how police trust in the public also influences performance and engagement.

2.5 Methodologies for Measuring Police Performance and Perceptions

A dominant method across studies is the adaptation of SERVQUAL instruments to assess perception gaps (Mokgehle, 2019; Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2010). These are often coupled with descriptive and inferential statistics, and increasingly, structural equation modelling (Setyadi et al., 2024) to uncover mediating variables between service quality and satisfaction. Mixed-method approaches, as seen in Anthony (2023), allow triangulation between perception data and institutional assessments.

2.6 Policy and Institutional Reform Insights

Several works propose reform models based on performance monitoring, complaints mechanisms, and accountability frameworks. Bardien (2005) and Modise et al. (2022) offer valuable insights for aligning institutional objectives with community expectations. Olowe et al. (2018) warn, however, that technical reforms alone – absent professionalism and trust – do not guarantee improved perception.

2.7 Gaps in the Literature and Contribution of the Present Study

Despite the rich body of scholarship, notable gaps persist:

- Few studies fully integrate both subjective and objective indicators into a unified performance model.
- There is limited exploration of how perception-performance gaps vary across demographic and geographic subgroups in Namibia.
- The reciprocal nature of trust between police and the public is under-explored in most African contexts.

This study tends to address these gaps, however focusing on the second point above, by combining quantitative and qualitative methods, triangulating public sentiment with institutional data, and proposing a contextualized performance-perception framework relevant to democratic policing in the Hardap Region.

2.8 Conclusion

The reviewed literature underscores the multidimensional nature of police legitimacy, the critical role of perception in shaping public cooperation, and the methodological challenges in capturing both subjective sentiment and institutional reality. These insights form the foundation for the research design and analysis strategies developed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, methodology, and data collection strategies for examining the relationship between citizens' perceptions of police performance and objective performance indicators. Building on the insights gained from the literature review in Chapter 2, the methodology integrates both subjective and objective data sources,

recognizing the significance of service quality gaps, trust dynamics, and context-specific experiences that shape police-public relationships.

In addition to the primary population drawn from selected communities in the Hardap Region, a second population – comprising enrolled students of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) – will be included. This dual-population approach allows broader contextualization and comparison of perceptions across community and student cohorts.

3.2 Research Design

A mixed-methods (convergent) explanatory design will be employed, also known as the triangulated, parallel or concurrent design. In convergent designs, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analysed concurrently (Doyle et al., 2016; Fetters, Curry & Creswell, 2013). The quantitative component will assess perceptions of police service quality using structured surveys, while the qualitative component will explore how these perceptions are formed and interpreted within specific community contexts. This approach facilitates triangulation and contextual interpretation of observed trends, following precedents such as Modise et al. (2020) and Anthony (2023).

3.3 Study Population and Sampling

3.3.1 Population I: Hardap Region Residents

The first study population includes adult residents (18 years and older) in urban and rural areas served by designated police stations in the Hardap Region. A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure representation across key population segments, namely:

- Urban vs. rural localities
- Demographic groups (age, gender, ethnicity)
- Types of contact with the police (none, complaint-related, routine)

Given the absence of robust prior data specifically for the Hardap Region, a conservative estimated population proportion of 50% is assumed for the purpose of calculating the sample size. This assumption is standard practice when no reliable prior proportion estimates exist, as it maximizes the required sample size and thereby minimizes the risk of underestimating variability in the population (Cochran, 1977; Lavrakas, 2008, Vol. 2). Accordingly, at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$, a minimum sample size

of approximately 383 respondents would be required for a population of approximately 110,000 adult residents.

However, to strengthen the representativeness of findings and allow for subgroup analyses (e.g., by locality, gender, and age groups), the survey will target a larger sample of approximately $n = 500$ respondents. This enlarged sample size ensures sufficient statistical power to detect differences across strata and accommodates potential non-responses. The sampling approach will involve two primary stratification layers:

- **Urban vs. Rural:** Based on demographic distributions within Hardap, approximately 60% of the sample will be drawn from urban areas (primarily Mariental and other towns) and 40% from rural areas (villages, settlements, and farms).
- **Gender and Age Groups:** Within each urban and rural stratum, respondents will be further stratified by gender (aiming for an approximately equal distribution of male and female participants) and by broad age groups (e.g., 16–25 years, 26–40 years, 41–60 years, and 60+ years), to capture potential differences in police perception across demographic lines.
- Additional soft monitoring of ethnicity and nature of police contact will be conducted during fieldwork to ensure that diverse experiences and backgrounds are reflected.
- This quantitative phase will be complemented by a qualitative component, consisting of 4–6 focus group discussions and 10–15 key informant interviews, to deepen contextual understanding of the survey findings and explore nuanced perceptions and experiences that may not be fully captured through structured questionnaires.

3.3.2 Population II: NUST Students

The second study population consists of all currently enrolled students at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

- **Eligibility:** All active students (both undergraduate and postgraduate), aged 18 years and older.
- **Rationale:** All students are assigned institutional email addresses and, in accordance with the NUST Teaching and Learning Policy, are required to engage in face-to-face, hybrid, or online learning modalities. This requirement implies reliable access to smart devices and at least intermittent internet connectivity, making an online survey modality feasible.

- **Sampling Strategy:** A census-style open invitation will be extended to the entire eligible student population via institutional email. Survey participation will be voluntary, with access managed through a secure online platform (e.g., Google Forms, Qualtrics). Although the full population will be invited, non-response is anticipated. Therefore, a target of approximately $n = 400$ completed surveys has been established to ensure statistical validity and comparability with the Hardap Region sample. This target size ensures that, even if the response rate is lower than expected, the resulting sample would allow estimates with a 95% confidence level and an approximate $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, assuming simple random response patterns (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lavrakas, 2008, Vol. 2).¹
- **Response Monitoring:** To improve representativeness, the distribution of respondents across key variables (e.g., gender, level of study, field of study) will be monitored during data collection. If response patterns indicate underrepresentation of particular subgroups, reminder emails or targeted outreach efforts may be considered, in line with ethical guidelines for survey research.

The inclusion of the NUST student population not only expands the study's reach across different socio-demographic profiles but also enables comparative analysis of perceptions between a geographically bounded regional population and a more dispersed, institutionally affiliated cohort.

3.3.3 Justification for Dual Population Design

Including NUST students offers several advantages:

- **Comparative Analysis:** Enabling comparison between regional community perceptions and perceptions from a relatively younger, more urbanized, and more digitally connected cohort.
- **Broader Insights:** Exploring whether trust, legitimacy perceptions, and service quality expectations differ substantially based on educational background and access to information.

¹In survey research, it is standard practice to define a target number of completed surveys when an entire population is invited, as response rates to online surveys are often highly variable. A higher number of responses than targeted would improve the precision of the estimates and allow for more detailed subgroup analyses. However, if the realized sample falls short, the analysis will be adapted accordingly, with appropriate discussion of limitations.

- **Generational Trends:** Investigating possible generational differences in perceptions of policing.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

3.4.1 Quantitative Instrument

A structured questionnaire adapted from the SERVQUAL framework and instruments used by Modise et al. (2020), Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2010), and Mokgehle (2019) will be utilized.

Survey sections will include:

- Expectations regarding police service delivery (e.g., respect, response time, fairness)
- Perceptions of actual experiences
- Trust in the police
- Perceived procedural fairness and legitimacy

Responses will be captured using a 7-point Likert scale, and service quality gaps will be calculated as (Perception – Expectation). The same instrument, with minor adaptations (e.g., adding an optional "no contact" pathway), will be used for both populations.

3.4.2 Objective Performance Indicators

Administrative data from participating police precincts will be collected on:

- Average response times
- Case clearance rates
- Number and type of complaints lodged and resolved
- Staffing ratios and patrol availability

These indicators provide an objective backdrop against which subjective perceptions can be compared.

3.4.3 Qualitative Instruments

Focus group discussions and interviews will explore key themes:

- Perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy
- Experiences with professionalism and responsiveness
- Narratives of trust, fairness, and effectiveness

Discussion guides will be informed by established thematic frameworks (e.g., Anthony, 2023; Nalla & Madan, 2011; Mourtgos et al., 2019).

3.5 Data Analysis Plan

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics (measures of central tendencies [means], measures of dispersion [standard deviations]) for all survey items
- Gap score analysis (P – E) for each service dimension
- **Inferential analysis**
 - **t-tests/ANOVA** to compare satisfaction and trust across demographic groups
 - **Multiple regression** to identify predictors of overall satisfaction
 - **Correlation** analysis with objective performance indicators

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be used to code transcripts from focus groups and interviews. Atlas.ti, NVivo or similar software will be used to identify:

- Patterns in community expectations
- Narratives of trust, legitimacy, and fairness
- Explanatory links between experience and perception

3.5.3 Integration of Findings

Results from both data streams (quantitative and qualitative) will be triangulated to:

- Identify convergences/divergences between populations
- Contextualize statistical patterns with qualitative insights
- Refine community- and student-informed definitions of policing effectiveness

3.6 Validity

Ensuring the validity of findings is critical in assessing both the internal soundness and the external applicability of this research. In the quantitative component, content validity will be reinforced through the adaptation of validated survey items from established instruments such as SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), Afrobarometer, and previous perception studies (e.g., Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2010; Modise et al., 2020). Prior to full deployment, the survey instrument will be subjected to expert review for relevance, clarity, and cultural appropriateness, and a small-scale pilot test will be conducted among a sample of participants not included in the final study. For the qualitative component, construct validity will be enhanced through thematic saturation and triangulation across different data sources (focus groups, interviews, and survey narratives). Interview guides are informed by

theoretically grounded constructs of procedural justice, legitimacy, and trust, ensuring alignment with the conceptual framework. Triangulated validity will be further supported through convergence of findings across the two populations (Hardap community and NUST students), helping to assess the degree of generalizability and context-specific divergence.

3.7 Reliability

Reliability pertains to the consistency and replicability of the instruments and results. For the quantitative survey, internal consistency reliability will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 deemed acceptable for multi-item constructs such as "trust," "professionalism," and "fairness" (DeVellis, 2016). Item-total correlations will be reviewed to determine the cohesiveness of individual items within subscales. The online and field survey processes will follow standardized administration procedures, ensuring measurement equivalence across respondents and settings. In the qualitative strand, reliability will be supported through inter-coder agreement and the use of software such as NVivo or Atlas.ti to systematically manage coding consistency. Audit trails and researcher reflexivity will be maintained to ensure transparency and reproducibility in the interpretation of results. Consistent documentation across focus groups and interviews (via field notes and transcripts) will further reinforce methodological rigor and trustworthiness.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent (electronic for NUST students, written for Hardap residents)
- Data confidentiality and participant anonymity
- Institutional ethical clearance from Faculty Research Ethics Committee (F-REC)

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations

- Self-selection bias among NUST students responding voluntarily
- Internet access disparities in Hardap Region could affect response rates
- Findings will be delimited to the selected region and university and may not fully generalize nationally

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter specified a dual-population mixed-methods strategy to comprehensively examine police-public relationships across different demographic and institutional settings.

Integrating the perspectives of community members and university students strengthens the analytical depth and offers more generalizable insights for policy development.

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Informed Consent Form for the GENERAL POPULATION (Hardap Region)

This informed consent form is for members of the GENERAL POPULATION (age 18+) in the Hardap Region, who we are inviting to participate in research in a research study, titled "Community perceptions of Police Performance & Legitimacy in Hardap Region".

Principal Investigator: Dr Stefan Schulz
Co-investigators: Dr Ute Sinkala
Dr Kennedy Mabuku
Organisation: Namibia University of Science and Technology
Project Title: Community perceptions of Police Performance & Legitimacy in Hardap Region (Namibia)

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

Briefly state who you are and that you are inviting them to participate in research which you are doing. Inform them that they may talk to anyone they feel comfortable talking with about the research and that they can take time to reflect on whether they want to participate or not. Assure the participant that if they do not understand some of the words or concepts, that you will take time to explain them as you go along and that they can ask questions at anytime.

I am **Dr Stefan Schulz**, Deputy Director, working for the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). Together with my research team, I am doing research on the relationship between the communities and the police in Hardap Region. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. Before you decide whether or not you will participate in the research., you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me or of another researcher.

Purpose of the research

In recent years, the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) has faced numerous allegations of police harassment, abuse of power, and inadequate service delivery. Headlines from major local newspapers, including The Namibian, Namibian Sun, New Era, Windhoek Observer and Informante have increasingly highlighted instances of police misconduct, ranging from excessive use of force and corruption to unprofessional behavior towards citizens. Such incidents may have led to an erosion of public trust and a growing perception of the police as oppressors rather than protectors in the eyes of the community. It is the research interest of the survey to evaluate the community's perceptions of police services, including overall satisfaction and specific concerns. By gathering feedback from

individuals directly involved with the police, such as victims of crime and community members, the survey can provide valuable insights into how the community perceives the police and their effectiveness in maintaining law and order.

Type of Research Intervention

At first this research will involve your participation in a survey. You will be requested to fill out a set of questions in a questionnaire and takes about 30 minutes.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are an adult member of this community. It is especially your experience as a responsible citizen that can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of the relationship between the police and the public in Hardap Region.

Example of question to elucidate understanding: *Do you know why we are asking you to take part in this study? Do you know what the study is about?*

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate all the services you receive from the Namibian Government will continue and nothing will change.

- ***Examples of question to elucidate understanding:*** *If you decide not to take part in this research study, do you know what your options are? Do you know that you do not have to take part in this research study, if you do not wish to? Do you have any questions?*

Procedures

We are asking you to help us learn more about the standing of the police in your community; what do the people think about their police, their performance and legitimacy. We are inviting you to take part in this research project.

- a) **Survey:** If you accept, you will be asked to fill out a survey which will be provided and collected by two different of our student research assistants. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions included in the survey, you may skip them and move on to the next question. The information recorded is confidential, your name is not being included on the forms, only a number will identify you, and no one else except the lead researcher, Dr Stefan Schulz, with access to the information will have access to your survey.
- b) **Focus Group Discussions:** If you accept, you will take part in a discussion with 7-8 other persons with similar experiences. This discussion will be guided by Dr Ute Sinkala, Dr Kennedy Mabuku or myself. The group discussion will start with me, or the focus group guide or moderator (use the local word for group discussion leader), making sure that you are comfortable. We can also answer questions about the research that you might have. Then we will ask you questions about the work of the police in your community and give you time to share your knowledge. The questions will be about the police in your community, how people experience and see the police in general, that is their responsiveness, professionalism and overall service quality. We will also talk about community policing and visibility of the police in every-day life. The discussion will take place in [TBC], and no one else but the people who take part in the discussion and guide or myself will be present during this discussion. The entire discussion will be voice -recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape. The recording will be kept in a secured file on a password protected folder of the lead researcher's (Dr Stefan Schulz) computer. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the members of the research team (listed above) will have access to the tapes. The tapes will be destroyed after the information has been analysed and interpreted.
- c) **Interview:** If you accept, you will participate in an interview with Dr Ute Sinkala, Dr Kennedy Mabuku

or myself. During the interview, I or another interviewer will sit down with you in a comfortable place. If it is better for you, the interview can take place in your home or a friend's home. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except the will access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape.

Duration

The research takes place over 2 months (July, August 2025) months in total. During that time, we will visit Hardap Region various times. In case you are partaking in (a) the survey, completing the questionnaire will take about 30-40 minutes; (b) an interview will last for about one hour each; and (c) the group discussion will be held once and will take about one and a half hour.

Question your interlocutors to elucidate understanding:

If you decide to take part in the study, do you know how much time will the interview take?

Where will it take place?

Do you know that we will be sending you transport to pick you up from your home?

Do you know how much time will the discussion with other people take?

If you agree to take part, do you know if you can stop participating?

Do you know that you may not respond to the questions that you do not wish to respond to? Etc.

Do you have any more questions?

Risks

Depending on your personal experience, the questions asked (survey), or the topics of the discussion (focus group discussion, interview) may be on sensitive and personal issues e.g. personal encounter with unprofessional police etc. You may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you don't wish to do so, and that is also fine. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about how to improve the overall performance of the local police in respect of criteria such as responsiveness, professionalism, and overall service quality.

Reimbursements

You will **not be provided** any incentive to take part in the research. However, we will **give you NAD10** as a token appreciation for your time.

Question your interlocutors to elucidate understanding:

Can you tell me if you have understood correctly the benefits that you will have if you take part in the study?

Do you know if the study will pay for your travel costs and time lost, and do you know how much you will be re-imbursed?

Do you have any other questions?

Confidentiality

The research being done in the community may draw attention and if you participate you may be asked questions by other people in the community. We will **not** be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a **number** on it instead of your name. Only the researchers will know what your number is, and we will lock that information up with a lock and key (see already above). It will not be shared with or given to anyone outside of the research team.

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that we get from this research will be made available to you and your community before it is made widely published. Each participant will receive an access code to the report which contains the summary of the results on the internet. There may also be small meetings in the community, and these will be announced as the case may be. Finally, the findings will be shared more broadly, for example publications and conferences, so that other interested people may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

This is a reconfirmation that participation is voluntary and includes the right to withdraw. Tailor this section to ensure that it fits for the group for whom you are seeking consent. The example used here is for a community social worker. Participants should have an opportunity to review their remarks in individual interviews and erase part or all of the recording or note.

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect your life (e.g., job or job-related evaluations) in any way. You may stop participating in the study [survey/discussion/interview] at any time that you wish without any negative consequence. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the survey/interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following:

Dr Stefan Schulz; Polyheights 307, Namibia University of Science and Technology, 13, Jackson Kaujeua Street, Windhoek, 061 207-2318 , sschulz@nust.na

Dr Ute Sinkala; Polyheights 307, Namibia University of Science and Technology, 13, Jackson Kaujeua Street, Windhoek, 061 207-2318 , usinkala@nust.na

Dr Kennedy Mabuku; Polyheights 307, Namibia University of Science and Technology, 13, Jackson Kaujeua Street, Windhoek, 061 207-2318 , kmabuku@nust.na

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (F-REC) of the Faculty of Commerce, Human Science and Education, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find about more about the REC, contact 061/207-2392; enquiriessos@nust.na.

Example of question to elucidate understanding:

Do you know that you do not have to take part in this study if you do not wish to?

You can say No if you wish to?

Do you know that you can ask me questions later, if you wish to?

Do you know that I have given the contact details of the person who can give you more information about the study?

You can ask me any more questions about any part of the research study, if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____
Day/month/year

***If illiterate*¹**

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness _____

Thumb print of participant



Signature of witness _____

Date _____
Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

- 1. Questionnaire auto-complete []
- 2. FCG held []
- 3. In-depth Interview held []
- 4. []

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent _____

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent _____

Date _____
Day/month/year

¹ A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

Informed Consent Form for STUDENTS (April 2025)

Principal Investigator:

Dr Stefan Schulz

Co-investigators:

Dr Ute Sinkala

Dr Kennedy Mabuku

Organisation:

Namibia University of Science and Technology

Project Title:

Community Perceptions of Police Performance & Legitimacy in Namibia

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am Dr Stefan Schulz, Deputy Director at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). Together with my research team, I am conducting research on the relationship between communities and the police in Namibia. You are invited to participate in this research as a student currently enrolled at a tertiary institution in Namibia. Before you decide whether to participate, you may discuss it with anyone you feel comfortable with. If anything is unclear, you are encouraged to ask questions at any time.

Purpose of the Research

The Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) has faced concerns regarding misconduct and professionalism in recent years. This survey aims to gather students' perceptions of police service quality, trustworthiness, responsiveness, and legitimacy, offering valuable insights into how young citizens experience and view policing in Namibia.

Type of Research Intervention

Participation involves completing an online questionnaire that should take about 30 minutes. You may skip any question you are uncomfortable answering.

Participant Selection

You are invited because you are a student enrolled at a tertiary institution in Namibia. Your views are valuable as students represent an important part of the future citizenry.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. Additionally, if you wish, after completing the survey, you may express your interest in participating in a follow-up online focus group discussion or individual interview. Indicating interest is entirely voluntary and does not affect your participation in the survey.

Procedures

You will complete an anonymous questionnaire online. Your responses will be anonymized, and no identifying information will be collected.

After completing the survey, you will have the option to contact the lead researcher, Dr Stefan Schulz, if you are willing to participate in a follow-up focus group discussion or individual interview conducted online. Contacting the researcher is voluntary and separate from the survey participation. Participation in a focus group or interview will involve further exploration of students' perceptions of police performance and legitimacy. All such discussions will be conducted in a confidential manner, with audio recording if consent is given, and will be securely stored and anonymized.

Duration

Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes. Participation in an optional focus group or interview would require an additional 60 to 90 minutes.

Risks

The risks involved in this study are minimal. Some questions may prompt reflection on your experiences with law enforcement, but you may skip any question or discontinue participation at any time.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you personally. However, your responses will contribute to understanding how policing practices impact young people and may inform service improvements.

Reimbursements

No payment, token, or financial reimbursement is offered for participation in this student survey.

Confidentiality

All data collected will be kept confidential. Responses will be anonymized and securely stored. No individual participant will be identifiable in any reports or publications.

Sharing the Results

Findings will be made available online. Participants will receive access to a summary report. Results may also be presented in academic publications or conferences without identifying any participant.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

Who to Contact

If you have questions or concerns about the study:

Dr Stefan Schulz (sschulz@nust.na; Tel: 061 207-2318)

Dr Ute Sinkala (usinkala@nust.na; Tel: 061 207-2310)

Dr Kennedy Mabuku (kmabuku@nust.na; Tel: 061 +264 81417310)

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (F-REC) at NUST. For ethics queries: 061 207-2392; enquiriessos@nust.na.

Part II: Certificate of Consent

I have read (or have had read to me) the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

[] I consent to participate in the study.

Print Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Survey: Community Perceptions of Police Performance and Legitimacy

Please answer all questions honestly. Your responses are confidential.

Use the scale below for your responses:

1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Slightly Disagree | 4 = Neutral | 5 = Slightly Agree | 6 = Agree | 7 = Strongly Agree

Section A: Expectations Regarding Police Service Delivery

Please indicate how important you think each aspect is for good police service.

1. E1. Police officers should treat all citizens with respect and courtesy.
2. E2. Police officers should respond quickly when called.
3. E3. Police should be fair and impartial when handling cases.
4. E4. Police facilities (stations, vehicles) should be clean and professional-looking.
5. E5. Police officers should provide clear and accurate information when asked.
6. E6. Police should be willing to listen carefully to citizens' complaints and concerns.
7. E7. Police should consistently follow up on reported cases until resolved.
8. E8. Police officers should show concern for the safety and well-being of all citizens.
9. E9. Police visibility in the community should be high (patrols, presence at events).
10. E10. Police actions should be explained to affected individuals.

Section B: Perceptions of Actual Police Performance

Please indicate how you personally experience the police on these aspects.

11. P1. Police officers treat citizens with respect and courtesy.
12. P2. Police officers respond quickly when called.
13. P3. Police are fair and impartial in their handling of cases.
14. P4. Police facilities are clean and professional-looking.
15. P5. Police officers provide clear and accurate information when asked.
16. P6. Police officers listen carefully to citizens' complaints and concerns.
17. P7. Police consistently follow up on reported cases until they are resolved.
18. P8. Police officers show concern for the safety and well-being of citizens.
19. P9. Police presence is visible in the community (patrols, events).
20. P10. Police explain their actions to affected individuals.

Section C: Trust in the Police

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

- 21. T1. I trust the police to act in the best interest of the public.
- 22. T2. I trust the police to protect my rights.
- 23. T3. I trust the police to be honest and transparent in their work.
- 24. T4. I feel confident that the police will assist me if needed.

Section D: Perceived Procedural Fairness and Legitimacy

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

- 25. L1. Police officers treat people equally regardless of their background.
- 26. L2. Police decisions are made based on fair and objective criteria.
- 27. L3. Police explain their decisions and actions when dealing with the public.
- 28. L4. The way police officers treat people reflects well on the justice system.
- 29. L5. I believe that the police have the right to make decisions that affect my community.
- 30. L6. I feel obligated to obey the law because it is the right thing to do, not because of fear of punishment.

Qualitative Instruments: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guides

Study: Community Perceptions of Police Performance and Legitimacy

Confidential – For Research Purposes Only

1. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Title:

Exploring Community Perceptions of Police Professionalism, Procedural Justice, and Trustworthiness

Introduction:

Welcome and thank you for participating in this discussion. We are conducting this focus group to better understand community members' experiences and views about police service delivery. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers — we are interested in your honest views. Your responses will remain confidential. Feel free to express yourself openly and respectfully.

Thematic Areas and Guiding Questions:

Theme 1: Perceptions of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy

- When interacting with the police, do you feel that you are treated fairly?
- How transparent do you think police officers are when making decisions or explaining their actions?
- Do you believe that police officers treat people equally, regardless of their background?
- What makes you feel that police actions are legitimate or illegitimate?

Theme 2: Experiences with Professionalism and Responsiveness

- How would you describe the professionalism of the police you have interacted with?
- Can you share experiences where the police were responsive — or unresponsive — to your concerns?
- How important is it for you that the police are courteous and knowledgeable? Have you seen examples of this (or the lack thereof)?

Theme 3: Narratives of Trust, Fairness, and Effectiveness

- How much do you trust the police to protect your rights and interests?
- Can you share a time when you felt treated fairly or unfairly by the police?
- In your opinion, how effective are the police at maintaining safety and justice in your community?
- What would the police have to do to earn greater trust from you and others?

Closing Questions:

- If you could change one thing about how the police interact with the community, what would it be?
- Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't discussed yet?

2. In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide

Title:

Understanding Individual Experiences with Police Service Delivery and Legitimacy

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. We would like to learn about your personal experiences and perspectives on police professionalism, procedural fairness, trust, and legitimacy. Your responses are confidential. Please take your time and answer as fully as you wish.

Thematic Areas and Guiding Questions:

Theme 1: Perceptions of Procedural Justice and Legitimacy

- Tell me about a time when you interacted with the police.
- How did you feel about the fairness of the way you were treated?
- Did the officers explain their actions and decisions to you clearly?
- What factors influence whether you see the police as legitimate?

Theme 2: Experiences with Professionalism and Responsiveness

- In your experience, are police officers generally professional?
- Have you ever needed help from the police? How quickly and effectively did they respond?
- How important is the attitude and communication style of the police to your overall satisfaction?

Theme 3: Narratives of Trust, Fairness, and Effectiveness

- Do you generally trust the police? Why or why not?
- Can you share a positive or negative story that shaped your views on police fairness?
- How would you rate the police in terms of being effective in serving the community's needs?

Closing Prompts:

- What changes would you recommend to improve police-public relationships?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with the police?