

The anti-whistleblowing context

Corruption in the United States of America (USA) is different from corruption in Namibia.

Corruption is context based. In a context of secrecy, corruption is more likely to occur compared to a context of openness. Certain contexts may prevent and/or block whistleblowing.

Firstly, secrecy and limited transparency. Parliament can for example not discuss the Ministry of Defence's budget and national security initiatives are funded without public scrutiny.

Public consultation is also very limited prior to the formalisation of the national budget and afterwards in tracking public spending. For example, parents do not have ease of access to the appropriation and actual expenditure of public schools in rural areas.

Another example is when the head of state do not make reports of Presidential Commissions of Inquiry accessible to the public and culprits are not penalised.

Secondly, large responsibilities and limited accountability play a role.

Cabinet members are members of Parliament and in effect mostly accountable to the President that appoints them, but they are supposed to be accountable to the voters whom elect them to Parliament (Diescho, 2015).

Thirdly, in the context of wide discretion and authoritative managers that depend on political backing, power is most likely to be abused. As the Honourable President Hage Geingob said as Prime Minister, "power is sweet" (Geingob, 2007).

Fourthly, the abuse of power when



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e.g. ridiculous board fees paid to some board members of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

MONOPOLIES

Fifthly, monopoly power and limited competition.

Most SOEs in Namibia are for example the only providers of specific services or products. Such monopolies pass inefficiencies on to customers that have no choice but to pay for inefficient services.

In addition, some politicians abuse monopoly power and interfere in public sector operations for personal gain and some of their business is in competition with public sector service providers.

The contexts as outlined are too risky for whistleblowers to blow the whistle. Without financial incentives and state protection to consider risking their positions in a country where poor people cannot afford to risk their income and have to take care of their families, people cannot blow the whistle.

References

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Geingob, H. 2007. ASSADPAM Conference. Windhoek: Safari Hotel.

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