

The impact of Namibia's party and political system on accountability

Lack of and/or limited public accountability is influenced by party discipline and the single transferable voting system for electing Members of Parliament (MPs) for the National Assembly.

Voters vote for a party, not for individual representatives. The party decides who will be on the party list, not the voters.

This is known as the bound list system where voters are bound by the preferences of a few members of the party (Gildenhuys & Knipe).

In case of the ruling party only 100 of the most senior members of the party decides who will be on the party list for the general election of MPs. Individual MPs are not allowed to raise issues in parliament in which they disagree from the ruling party.

When President Hage Geingob met with his deputy ministers, he said "if you want to raise an opinion in parliament, you go into caucus.

If you are a minister, you discuss it in Cabinet" (*The Namibian*). Such a style of party governance is influenced by strong party discipline in which the party decides who will be on the party's list and the priority of those on the list for representing the party in the National Assembly.



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LITTLE VOTER INFLUENCE

Voters have very limited influence in deciding who will be on the party list for general elections in Namibia.

The whole of Namibia is one constituency where all elected representatives, represent all voters and no one in particular.

Such a system of representation is not conducive for individual representatives' accountability towards the public, also not conducive for transparency, independent opinions of elected representatives and free debate, as can be deduced from the mentioned words of Geingob.

It is time that our party and political representative systems are revisited for improved individual accountability that could reduce corruption.

References

Gildenhuys, J.S.H. & Knipe, A. 2000. *The Organisation of Government: An Introduction*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Kaure, A.T. 2016. "Is Geingob's Empire Likely to Fall?" *The Namibian*, 26 April, Windhoek.

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