Faith of Traditional Authorities In Post Independent Namibia: A Cause For Concern?

Andrew Niikondo, Vice-Rector, Academic Affairs & Research, Polytechnic of Namibia, Windhoek, Namibia

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the practices of traditional authorities. It examines whether traditional authorities practices prior to Namibia’s independence is compromised in the new democratic Namibia following that such practices were influenced by the apartheid regime at the time. The raison d'être for the examination emanates from an investigation on practices of traditional authorities by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and other Traditional or Tribal Leaders in 1991 and those obtained during the Afrobarometer round survey that was conducted in Namibia in 2008. The paper exposes possible challenges that may have worked in to the practices of traditional authorities prior to Namibia’s independence and proposes measures that could be applied to overcome such challenges in order to permit traditional authorities to maintain its true value.

Introduction
The practices of traditional authorities is one that ‘relies heavily upon traditions, customs, habits, and routines in order [to] regulate human behaviour, to distinguish right from wrong, and to assure sufficient stability to allow the group to survive. Whatever has come before is assumed to be the way things should be, either because they have always worked or because they were sanctified by higher powers in the past’ (Cline, 2011) [1]. The purpose of this paper is to explore the practices of traditional authorities. The paper examines whether traditional authorities practices before Namibia’s independence is compromised in the new democratic Namibia following that such practices were influenced by the apartheid regime at the time. The raison d'être for the examination emanates from an investigation on practices of traditional authorities by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and other Traditional or Tribal Leaders in 1991 and those obtained during the Afrobarometer round survey that was conducted in Namibia in 2008. A sample of 1,200 Namibians was interviewed in that survey, and this sample size was sufficient to provide an overall margin of error of approximately ±3 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent (Institute for Public Policy Research [IPPR] 2010)[2]. All questions are measured on a nominal or ordinal scale; hence, where values range from 1 to 5, 5 are regarded as the highest value in measurement.

In order to examine whether traditional authorities’ practices before Namibia’s independence is compromised in the new democratic Namibia, this paper first examines the rationale for traditional authorities’ practices. Secondly, the paper examines the various types of traditional authorities practices. The traditional authorities practices that existed prior to Namibia’s independence and how they are being practiced after independence are revealed. Thirdly, the paper examines what the investigation on practices of traditional authorities by the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and other Traditional or Tribal Leaders in 1991 and those obtained during the Afrobarometer round survey found about traditional authorities’ practices. Fourthly, the paper reveals the possible distorted traditional authorities’ practices within the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and other Traditional or Tribal Leaders in 1991 and those obtained during the Afrobarometer round survey. Finally, the paper proposes possible measures that could be implemented to avert further distortion of traditional authorities’ practices in order that such practices maintain its true value in the society.
Rationale for traditional authorities practices

The current reality

Given the rate of current development and modernisation, we may expect young people to be less likely to trust or contact traditional authorities. This hypothesis could be correct, since it suits the prevalent logic of their lifetime and modern expectations in general. In the light of this, we can expect most young people to live, behave and think in a modernist rather than traditionalist way and hence to trust the modern type of government. Building on this, Logan’s substantive work on the ‘traditionalist’ and ‘modernists’ theory contextualised in the situation of traditional leaders in modern Africa using the data collected by the Afrobarometer, is quite useful. According to Logan (2008:1) [3] “this debate between the so-called ‘traditionalists’ and ‘modernists’ has been waged for decades in Africa, intensifying in the last two decades as efforts at democratisation and decentralisation have brought competing claims to power and legitimacy to the fore, especially at the local level”. With reference to this, we can predict a clear propensity for young people to have a greater level of trust in modern government, which is after all their contemporary. The hypothesis that the post independence generation is less likely to trust traditional leaders may not mean all young people per se are inclined to trust in the modern, but it does suggest that a significant number of them might have more trust in modern democratic government than older people might have. Nonetheless, older people, who grew up under traditional rule, are also divided into two schools of thought, namely, modernists or traditionalists. It is assumed that people, regardless of whether they are young or old, who live within the environments ruled by traditional authorities, would most likely be traditionalists in nature.

As Logan (2008:15) found, “Namibians, some two-thirds of whom live under traditional authorities, give these leaders a strong positive rating with a mean score of 3.9”. In contrast with this, the Report by the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to Chiefs, Headmen and other Traditional or Tribal Leaders (1991) [4] also pointed out that “generally it can be said that the public at large, except those with links to Communal areas, is not enthusiastic about the traditional authority governing system”. This suggests that the amount of trust in traditional authorities and leaders, within both the old and the young generation, is determined mainly by the environment, particularly whether it is urban or rural, and that we can thus consider this a contextual phenomenon.

This paper also suggests that there are two types of trust, which the Namibians attach to traditional authorities, to be referred to as ‘true’ and ‘expedient’ trust. The concept of ‘true trust’ is explained by Hlengwa’s (1994), as quoted by Kleuder, to the effect that people trust traditional authorities and leaders because they act as a symbol of unity, maintain peace, preserve customs and culture, allocate land to subjects, resolve disputes and faction fights, conduct mediation, attend to application for business rights, promote the identity of communities and promulgate tribal regulations (Keulder1998:3) [5]. Hangula (1995) [6], similarly, found that traditional authorities are trusted because they continue to play a very important role by providing a service to rural communities, which the national government would struggle to provide, such as the administration of justice in a dispute over traditional land.

In this regard, people genuinely trust traditional leaders, as their governors, judges, caretakers and helpers. The concept of ‘expedient trust’, in contrast, refers to that type of trust based on politico-economic ambitions. This is the type of trust that politicians and investors express during the election campaigns or when someone needs land. For example, according to Sasman (2009) [7], the Monitor Action Group (MAG) political party applied for traditional authority status after losing the elections, stating that without a traditional authority of a group, it is also hard to compete in a political marathon. Drawing an analogy between this and other African countries, we can refer to Ellis (2005), as quoted by Buur et al. (2007) [8], who states that, in Sierra Leon and Cote d’Ivoire, key national politicians draw considerably on their connections to chieftaincies to enlarge their scope of power and/or are themselves paramount chiefs. This may mean that the trust and recognition that traditional authorities receive when people want some support from them is not in fact ‘true trust’ but rather ‘expedient trust’.

At this point, then, we can start by statistically analyzing data from the Afrobarometer dataset, looking at the perceptions of respondents towards traditional authorities vis-à-vis modern government structures such as regional and local authorities, using the t-test technique to compare means in terms
of gender, rural and urban variables. Cross-tabulation descriptive techniques are also used to identify the differences in terms of percentages, particularly when comparing the degree of trust shown towards traditional leaders and local and regional councils. Lastly, the model is tested by a multiple linear regression model.

Afrobarometer data

The empirical data in this paper comes from the Afrobarometer Round 4 survey collected from Namibia in 2008. A sample of 1,200 Namibians was interviewed in that survey, and this sample size was sufficient to provide an overall margin of error of approximately ±3 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent (Institute for Public Policy Research [IPPR] 2010). All questions are measured on a nominal or ordinal scale; hence, where values range from 1 to 5, 5 is regarded as the highest value in measurement.

This paper uses the following major sources of data: (i) The Report by the Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to Chiefs, Headmen and other Traditional or Tribal Leaders (1991), and (ii) the Afrobarometer Round 4 survey. This was done for the following reasons:

• Firstly, the Commission’s report and the Afrobarometer surveys share a similar focus, namely, the relevance of traditional authorities in a democratic society.

• Secondly, the Commission’s report was carried out in 1991 (one year after independence), whereas the first round of Afrobarometer surveys to Namibia was carried out in 2001, which is exactly a decade later. This can also be used as a measure of the change in attitudes towards traditional authorities.

• Thirdly, the Commission’s results were published before the establishment of the Regional Council and before the promulgation of the Regional Councils Act (1992) and the Local Authorities Act (1992), whereas the Afrobarometer surveys were conducted after those dates.

Trust: Traditional authorities vis-à-vis government structures

In her paper on traditional leaders in modern Africa, Logan (2008) asked a very interesting question, namely, must we ‘turn back the clock’? The Commission of 1991 (1991:8) had said that “it is not possible to return to ‘full tradition’ in appointing or recognizing the leaders concerned because of the changing circumstances”. In this paper, we ask another question, viz., ‘are the traditional authorities still strong today or they are dying a natural death’? By exploring the answers to this question, we will consider the perceptions of Namibians in response to the following Afrobarometer Round 4 (2008) survey question: “How much do you trust each of the following, or have you not you heard enough about them to say? Traditional leaders, Elected Local Council and Elected Regional Councils.” This question on trust was divided into sub questions ranging from 49A to 49I but for the purpose of this paper we only selected Q49C_1 NAM, Q49D and Q49I. The Afrobarometer survey requested answers to these questions on four point scale of “not at all”, “just a little”, “somewhat” and “a lot”, with the last two regarded as the highest measures. In Figure 1, below we explain these perceptions using age as an independent variable to explain trust. This is based on the assumption that people within the age group of 18-34 have become adults after independence and were simultaneously socialized in a democratic environment; furthermore, the majority of them had access to education and once lived in urban areas. People in the age group of 35-44 also became adult not long before independence. Thus, we expect individuals in both of these age groups to be less likely to trust traditional leaders than people who are over 55 years of age, and who grew up in undemocratic, traditional or divide and rule apartheid systems.

In Figure 1 below, we merge “somewhat” and “a lot” so that we can explain the tendency of trust within the relevant age groups, and so that we can assess how these differences pertain to traditional leaders, and regional and local councils. It is found that 68% of young Namibians within the age group of 18-34 indicated that they had “somewhat/a lot” of trust in traditional leaders, compared to 64% in respect of regional councils and 60% in respect of local councils. These results tell us that traditional leaders still enjoy significant degree of trust among the youth, more so than do local and regional councils, which indicates that the traditional authorities are likely to be strong in Namibia across the various age groups. However, it is also important to note that 80% of Namibians within the age group of 55 and above indicated that they had “somewhat/a lot” of trust in traditional leaders, compared to 76% in respect of regional councils and 68% in respect of...
local councils. These results also suggest that our hypothesis was correct, namely, that older people who were socialized within an environment of traditional authorities long before Namibia’s independence tend to be more likely to trust traditional leaders than young people do.

Figure 1: Trust in local leaders

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say? Traditional leaders, elected local council and elected regional councils (% not at all; just a little, somewhat and a lot).

Although the local councils garnered some trust across the age groups, it is evident that they generally receive the least trust. Therefore, the question to be asked here is: Why do Namibians of different age groups still have such a significant degree of trust in traditional leaders after almost two decades of democracy? As discussed in the literature, there are many factors contributing to this. For example, at the local council level, the struggle between town councils and traditional leaders and their communities over land (also see Logan 2008:11) may have reduced trust in elected leaders; complementing this are increasing cases of corruption practices involving elected regional and local councils.

Also at the regional council level, incidents such unfulfilled promises, especially with regard to development projects and the question of unemployment, may also have led to a loss of trust in these leaders, encouraging them to rely more on traditional leaders. However, the findings presented here were uniquely based on the single denominator of age. It must be remembered that people in these age groups also vary in terms of other attributes, such as level of education, which may also affect their confidence in traditional leaders versus regional and local councils. This is discussed in the next section.

Education and trust: Traditional leaders versus elected local and regional councils

In this section, the assumption investigated is that educated Namibians, regardless of age, are likely to have a lower degree of trust in traditional leaders which they may regard as obsolete. In support of this assumption, the Centre for the Future State (undated) [9] argues that “in many parts of Africa and Asia in particular, many educated people have blankly hostile attitudes to notions of ‘traditional authority’, and thus to any institutions currently bearing that label”. This was echoed in the Report by the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and Other Traditional or Tribal Leaders in Namibia, (1991), which found that those who are not closely related to or connected with traditional authorities in everyday life or in their day to day activities, e.g. educated men and women, may be more likely to adopt a hostile attitude towards the traditional system.

This finding, although not statistically tested, can give us another benchmark for measuring, by making use of the Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey (2008), whether its 1991 finding is still relevant in Namibia today. The question posed in Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey was: What is the highest level of education you have completed? Cross-tabulated with trust in traditional authorities, the outcome is depicted in Figure 2 below.
Question: What is the highest level of education you have completed? No formal schooling, informal schooling only; Some primary schooling; Primary school completed; Some secondary school/ high school; Secondary school completed/high school completed; Post-secondary qualifications; other than university e.g. a diploma or degree from polytechnic or college; Some university; University completed; Post-graduate. NB: this question was recoded to 4 categories only, as it appears in Figure 2 above.

Figure 2 reveals that our results are skewed to the right, which suggests that Namibians with no formal education show significant trust in traditional leaders at 80%, whereas those with primary education are at 74%, with post secondary education at 72% and with secondary education at 65%. We can infer from this that Namibians with low levels of education are more likely to support traditional leaders than are those with better education levels, and thus we should also conclude that the results of the Commission report (1991) are still true today. However, this conclusion looks incomplete unless we extend this test to compare traditional leaders with regional and local councils. These results are summarized in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 shows that traditional leaders do indeed enjoy a high degree of trust among Namibians at all levels of education, but it is also interesting to note that people with no formal education trust traditional leaders “somewhat or a lot” at 80%, as compared to around 74% who trust in regional councils and 63% who trust in local authorities. It can be inferred from this that there is a relationship between education and trust in traditional leaders. However, we have also observed the inverse trend of this relationship up to the secondary school level, i.e. as education levels increase, the level of trust in traditional leaders as well as in regional and local councils decreases, although the latter two trail behind the former. This makes it possible to conclude that, although education has a significant impact on the Namibians’ trust in traditional leaders, it also affects people’s trust in modern and democratically elected councils. This is also evident at the post secondary level, where people with college or university degrees, equally trust both traditional leaders and regional and local councils. Figure 3 therefore tells us that, in Namibia, regardless of education qualifications, people are still more likely to support traditional leaders than regional and local councils.

In addition, and as it appeared in the preceding arguments, traditional leadership still has a higher status and importance in Namibia than ministerial and top government positions. Therefore, it is found that, both highly educated and less educated Namibians vie equally for leadership positions in
traditional authorities, as much as they do for government positions.

An interesting example is that of Kilus Nguvuva, who is Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, as well as a Regional Councillor for Steinhausen Constituency and a member of the National Council. He is one of the sons of the late Ovambanderu Chief Munjuku II Nguvuva, but, because he was born out of wedlock, this – according to norms and traditions – disqualifies him from taking over the chieftainship. He has been embroiled in a serious dispute (over the inheritance of his late father’s chieftainship position) with his young half brother Keharanjo II, who is the late Chief’s younger son, a lawyer by profession, born from his second marriage, and regarded by another faction ethnic group as the legitimate heir to the Mbanderu chieftaincy, which dates back over 500 years (Kangueehi 2008) [10]. This case, where a minister and a lawyer are wrestling for a traditional leadership position underscores our results in Figure 3 above, viz. that trust in traditional leaders is not a function of education alone, but also driven by other factors such as demand for traditional statuses especially among those people who grew up within the environment of traditional authorities.

Trust in traditional leaders in rural and urban areas

It is assumed that people living in the urban areas in Namibia are less likely to trust traditional leaders, because these have limited influence in urban areas as compared to rural areas, and also because in urban areas people are more exposed to modern environments, such as having access to information about democracy or mixing with people from different backgrounds, unlike rural people who tend to be more limited or confined in that regard. We can also infer from the findings of the Commission (1991:11), as stated earlier in this paper, that only people with links to communal areas¹, as an alternative to rural areas are likely to be enthusiastic about the traditional system and its leaders. In Afrobarometer Round 4 Survey interviews conducted in rural and urban areas, the following results in Table 1 below were obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban or Rural</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in traditional leaders</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>.947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P = 0.05

A statistics t-test analysis technique was used to compare the differences in the level of trust of people living in urban areas and people living in rural areas. On average, it was found that rural people had more confidence in traditional leaders (M = 2.15, SD = 9) than urban people (M = 1.79, SD = 1). This difference was statistically significant, t (1143) = -5.855, p < .01), indicating that the difference of means between urban and rural populations was not due to chance.

In addition, it is also important to compare the percentages of Namibians’ trust in traditional leaders, and in local and regional councils. Referring to the literature, it was found that traditional leaders have no influence in local urban areas, but it is also important to acknowledge that people in urban areas may to a certain extent rely on traditional leaders when they have certain needs, such as obtaining land for subsistence agriculture or business purposes. The Afrobarometer 2008 survey data is thus used to substantiate this, collapsing the categories of “somewhat” and “a lot” to establish the degree of trust expressed towards traditional leaders in urban and rural areas as compared to elected local and regional councils (see Figure 4).

Table 1: Urban/Rural

¹ Communal areas and rural areas usually refer to the same thing.
Figure 4: Trust in traditional leaders, local and regional councils: Urban/rural populations

From Figure 4 above, it can be seen that 77% of Namibians in rural areas and 63% of Namibians in urban areas describe their trust in traditional leaders as “somewhat or a lot”, compared to 62% rural and 59% urban Namibians in respect of elected local councils, and 71% rural and 61% urban Namibians in respect of regional councils. In other words, both rural and urban Namibians are more likely to trust traditional leaders than elected local and regional councils. It is not clear at this stage whether migrants from rural areas to urban areas who live in informal settlements feel as though they are citizens of the city, even though they are recorded as urbanites in the Afrobarometer surveys. Although they come to urban areas to find employment, their hearts remain in the rural areas and with traditional leaders and so does their trust and loyalty. Therefore, the finding of the Commission (1991), that the traditional authorities were mainly supported by people who live in communal or rural areas could still be correct and valid today. Aside from this, the degree of trust in local and regional councils is likely to fluctuate according to several factors, such as the incidence of resource mismanagement, misappropriation and even corruption among local and regional councils in Namibia.

Trust of traditional leaders and the role of gender

It is a universal perception, both in the body of literature and in the practical lives of Namibians that in Namibia, women, especially those who are living under the rule of traditional leaders, experience gender based subjugations. It can thus be hypothesised that they are not likely to trust these leaders and their customs. As argued by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare Report (2004: 41) [13] with regard to gender based subjugation, the large number of rural women in Namibia is severely disadvantaged in terms of access to land, labour, agricultural services and assets, natural resources and employment (also see LeBeau et al. 2004:V) [13]. Furthermore, the National Gender Policy explains that:

Although the Namibian Constitution enshrines gender equality, the face of poverty is increasingly more on female. The society’s attitude through traditional and cultural behaviours still results in the beliefs that women must play secondary roles (Nandi-Ndaitwah in the Department of Women’s Affairs 1997) [14].

Combining these arguments, we can arrive at this question: Comparatively speaking, are there any statistical differences between women and men in Namibia with regard to their trust of traditional leaders? By making use of the data obtained by the Afrobarometer 2008 survey in Namibia, we used a t-test statistical analysis technique to test statistically if there are any differences in the confidence in traditional leaders based on gender, as summarized in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust in traditional leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P = 0.05

On average, women have a slightly higher confidence in traditional leaders (M = 2.05, SD = 9) than men had in these leaders (M = 2.00, SD = 1). This difference was not statistically significant, t (1143) P>.05), indicating that the higher average trust of women was more than what would have been expected due to chance. Thus, gender is not a statistically significant variable.
Primary responsibility: Allocating land

In its findings, the Commission (1991:12) argues that “whilst the traditional leaders would like to have more powers, members of communities feel that such powers should be limited to settling disputes of land at local level…” Further, as Hangula (1995:12) notes, the control and allocation of land in almost all communal areas in Namibia is the prerogative of the traditional leaders or their delegates. Therefore, “there is no open communal land unoccupied by a traditional authority in Namibia” (Jerry Ekandjo, Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, as quoted by Kakujaha 2010: no page). Both at independence and perhaps to some extent still now, the traditional leaders tend to believe that the land in communal areas belongs to them, and thus they feel disempowered if the local councils develop such land.

This is complicated by the legal requirement that a traditional leader must have communal land in order to be recognized as a traditional leader by government; moreover, when traditional leaders lose control over their land, particularly in the north of Namibia, they are also likely to lose members of their group. As stated earlier, this may lead to a duplication of authorities, which can be a very confusing and complicated situation. For instance, in Figure 5 below, villager A is influenced by three authorities at the same time and in the same physical area: the individual will thus be voting in town council elections because he/she falls within town land, as well as voting in regional government elections because he/she falls within the regional constituency, and lastly liable to pay the first fruit of the harvest to the traditional authorities, because he/she is on traditional land.

Figure 5: Duplication of authorities

Due to such vague boundaries between town land (the unproclaimed land of the town council), proclaimed town land on the one hand and traditional lands on the other, the problem of land allocation can become a serious problem, which can influence the level of trust in the various authorities involved. It was in this context that the following question in the Afrobarometer 2008 survey in Namibia was thus posed to the respondents: *Who do you think actually has the primary responsibility for managing each of the following tasks? Is it the national government, the local government (your municipality or elected local authority council), traditional leaders, or members of your community: Allocating land?* The data is summarized in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Traditional leaders</th>
<th>Primary responsibility: allocating land %</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>Local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just a little</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be concluded from the data in Table 3 that, although 39% of Namibians prefer the allocation of land to be the primary responsibility of local government, whereas 37% prefer it to be the...
responsibility of central government, they also trusted the traditional authorities ‘a lot’. In other words, at most 42% of the total percentage of respondents on the question with regard to which authority should have the primary responsibility for the allocation of land described their trust in traditional leaders as “a lot” and 30% as “somewhat”.

If we take this at another level of interpretation, we can also argue that 70% of respondents to this question have a significant level of trust in traditional authorities. Furthermore, 53% of Namibians who prefer the traditional leaders to allocate land to them also describe their trust in traditional leaders as “a lot”. In this regard, we can conclude that the findings of the Commission (1991), especially with regard to the fact that various communities feel the functions of traditional authorities should be limited to settling land disputes at local level and to dealing with some minor judiciary functions, also at local level, no longer hold today. This may be due to problems that appeared after decentralisation in terms of the redefinition of land distribution and allocations, particularly in areas that were previously regarded as the domain of traditional leaders.

Thus far, this paper has explained the level of trust placed in traditional authorities by looking at the assumption that the younger generation is less likely to trust traditional authorities, given the changes after independence and the influence of democracy, open access to education, the mixing of many people in urban areas and the political slogan of ‘one Namibia one nation’. However, it appears that, in the face of strong modernisation, traditional authorities still enjoy a significant level of trust. In testing the impact of modernization on the post independence generation in Namibia, we run the regression model as it is presented in the next section.

Testing the model

The multiple regression model with all seven predictors produced $R^2 = .100$, $F = (18.371) = P < .001$. As can be seen in Table 4, these variables, namely: “satisfaction with democracy”, “traditional leaders listen”, and “primary responsibility for allocation for land”, had a statistically significant and positive effect of trust. This indicates that they had a positive effect on their trust for those Namibians who felt that the primary responsibility of allocating land belonged to traditional leaders. In addition, urban and education variables have a statistically significant negative relationship with the level of trust in traditional leaders. This indicates that Namibians who live in urban areas tend to have less trust in traditional leaders than do those in rural areas and, furthermore, Namibians with higher education levels tend to have a lower degree of trust in traditional leaders (a suppressor effect).

Table 4: Explaining trust in traditional leaders in Namibia: Afrobarometer Survey Round 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B Unstandardized</th>
<th>B Standardized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.515</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional leaders – allocation for land</td>
<td>0.151*</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>-0.153*</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.067***</td>
<td>-0.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with democracy</td>
<td>0.176***</td>
<td>0.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional leader listens</td>
<td>0.164***</td>
<td>0.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R square full model</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***P<.001. **P<.01. *P<.05

From these results, we can conclude that lower levels of education and living in rural areas are related to higher levels of trust in traditional leaders, that only few Namibians with better education or living in urban areas are associated with higher trust in traditional leaders, and that gender and age did not have a statistically significant effect on trust in traditional leaders. In this regard, we reject our null hypothesis that rural/urban location and education do not have an effect on the level of trust in traditional leaders.

Moreover, the Report by the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and Other Traditional or Tribal Leaders (1991), which found that traditional leaders were more trusted by people who live close to them and that those with higher education are less likely to trust them, still holds. As said earlier, however, there is no relationship between gender, age and trust in traditional leaders. Thus, by looking at standardized β, the results inform us that “traditional leader listens” (β=.181) “satisfaction with democracy” β = .173, and “education” β = .108, are the most important factors in predicting the levels of trust in traditional leaders.
in Namibia. Finally, the adjusted R² gives us some idea of how well our model generalizes the population. The adjusted R² (.100) indicates that this model explains approximately 10% of the variance in trust in traditional leaders.

Conclusion
After evaluating the existing literature on traditional authorities in Namibia, and after analyzing the perceptions of Namibians on their level of trust in traditional leaders, using the Afrobarometer Round Four Survey data collected in Namibia in 2008, this paper concludes that traditional authorities and their leaders are likely to enjoy much greater trust than do other government levels of authority and that they are not easy to replace with modern government. This difficulty was also identified by the Report by Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and Other Traditional or Tribal Leaders conducted in 1991, which found that “although the traditional system is bound to be transformed and reformed at every stage with socio-economic development of those concerned, at this point to abolish it will be psychologically detrimental to those believe in it” (1991:68).

Another important evidence to change Namibia from traditional to modern society noted in this paper was also echoed by Keulder (1998) by explaining that the current debates on the role of traditional leaders in the governance of post-independence Namibia reflect on:

The attempts of the modern state to (i) enhance its autonomy vis-à-vis society by marginalising traditional leaders in the political process, and (ii) effectively replace traditional leaders with organs of the state and so establish itself as the primary (and ultimately the only) source of social control in (rural) Namibia (Keulder 1997:53).

With reference to these evidences, this paper investigated the hypothesis that those people who became adults or who were born after independence, who received better education, who lived in urban areas, and who included women that suffered gender discrimination under traditional authorities, are not likely to trust these authorities. Hence, in summary, the final conclusions are that:

- The trust of Namibians in traditional authorities does not have a direct relationship with age and gender. We expected that young people, especially in the age group of 18-34 or 35-45, and women, especially from rural areas, would be less likely to trust in traditional leaders, but the results in this paper indicate the opposite.
- When a comparison was made between the levels of trust in traditional leaders versus regional and local councils, it emerged that many more Namibians trusted traditional leaders.
- The problem of land disputes between local councils and traditional leaders and their communities was also identified in this paper as one factor that greatly influences the levels of trust towards those authorities. Land allocation is commonly regarded as the primary responsibility of traditional leaders. These leaders also carry the custody of administering communal land, which has so far not been treated as a commodity, and thus most people especially the poor and those evicted from urban areas have easy access to it through traditional leaders. This too leads to them placing greater trust in these leaders.
- Another interesting finding is that, in Namibia, traditional leadership has a particularly high status. In fact, it can even be equated with high positions in government. Therefore, both highly educated and less educated people as well as high ranking officials including ministers may in fact contest for traditional status, hence the majority of people trust that traditional leaders could be equally major role players in society. Therefore, the finding of the Report by the Commission of Inquiry into Matters relating to Chiefs, Headmen and Other Traditional or Tribal Leaders, viz. that the traditional authorities should be allowed to die a natural death in Namibia, so to speak, is not true today.

References


