

Understanding governance and corruption in PNG's public service

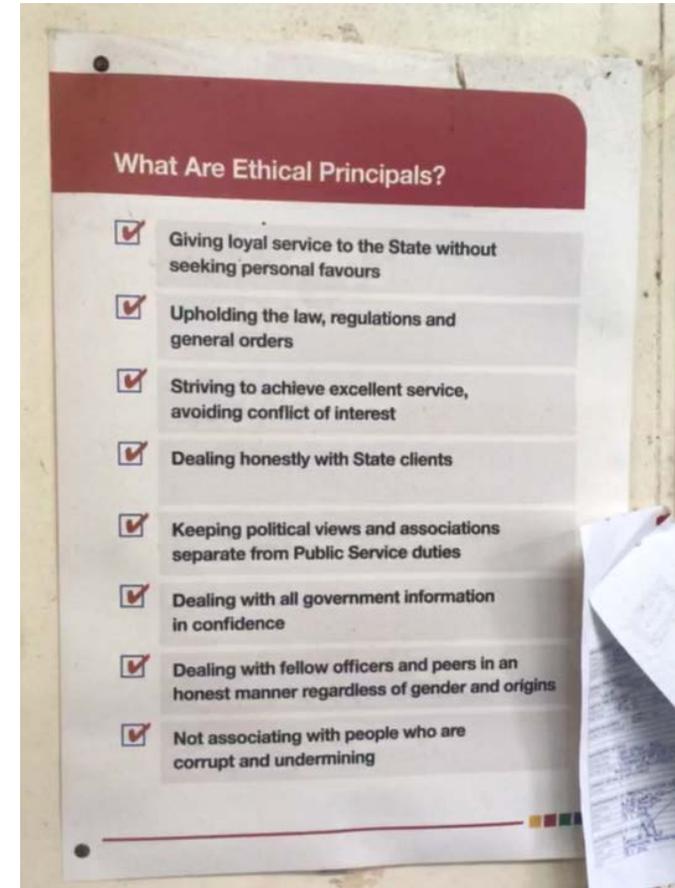
2019 PNG Update

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Introduction

- High investment into good governance and anti-corruption
 - Proposed: ICAC and whistle blower protection
- We know more about citizens perceptions of corruption (e.g. Walton, 2013, 2015, 2018; Walton and Peiffer, 2017)
- But little about perceptions of corruption and governance in public service (some exceptions, eg Pieper, 2004)



Trends and challenges for PNG's Public service

The public service: PNG's largest employer

Challenged by large scale cuts to public services

Politicians increasingly interfering in bureaucracy through:

- District Development Authority Act (2014)
- Funding of Service Improvement Programs (SIP)
- Public Services (Management) Act (2014)

Reforms have also led to private sector playing increased service delivery role

Public servants pressured for unofficial favours through the wantok system (Payani, 2000)

Methodology: public servants

- 136 administrators
- 43 percent female
- representative spread of junior, middle and senior staff
- Snowball sampling
- Qualitative and quantitative questions
- Four provinces →



Methodology: comparing to citizens views

- Citizens views taken from 2010/11 survey in 9 provinces
- Responses from Eastern Highlands, Madang, Milne Bay and New Ireland separated for this presentation
 - Weighted
- This provides a heuristic comparison
 - Changes between 2011 and 2018
 - But indications that corruption scores have not changed over that time (for what that's worth)

What is good governance?

Most associated the term to **service delivery** (reflecting Rotberg, 2014)

Good governance:

- “means equal distribution of goods and services...[and] providing leaderships so that services reach all the people” (mid-level female public servant, Eastern Highlands)

But many fear it is not being achieved:

- “Good governance is the direct opposite of what we are doing now as public servants, [we’re] not delivering as expected and have dissatisfied people” (male, junior public servant in New Ireland)

Antagonism to regulations

Many deeply frustrated with the nature of PNG's laws and rules:

“We have processes and procedures to ensure governance is right, but this demands time – too much time. For example, tenders. The process is so time consuming; after a certain amount of time, you have to go to tender process then go through selection. [After spending so much time] going through the process you only have 6 months to implement”.

(Senior male administrator, New Ireland)

Pushing against national regulations

“People just ignore it [the general orders]. Even though there are many and we know we need to follow them. We will get away from the general orders. With autonomy we wont have such stifling regulations.”

(Senior male administrator, New Ireland)

Confusion about regulations

Hierarchy of knowledge:

“Policies are brought in by the bosses or departmental heads from conferences, but the information is not disseminated to make public servants aware of it. It has become a boss’s document only.”

(Junior male public servant, Eastern Highlands)

Some guided by their own rules and codes

“Right now as public servants, we are not given guidelines... There should be a duty statement [but] when I came in there was none, so I had to bring in my own guidelines”.

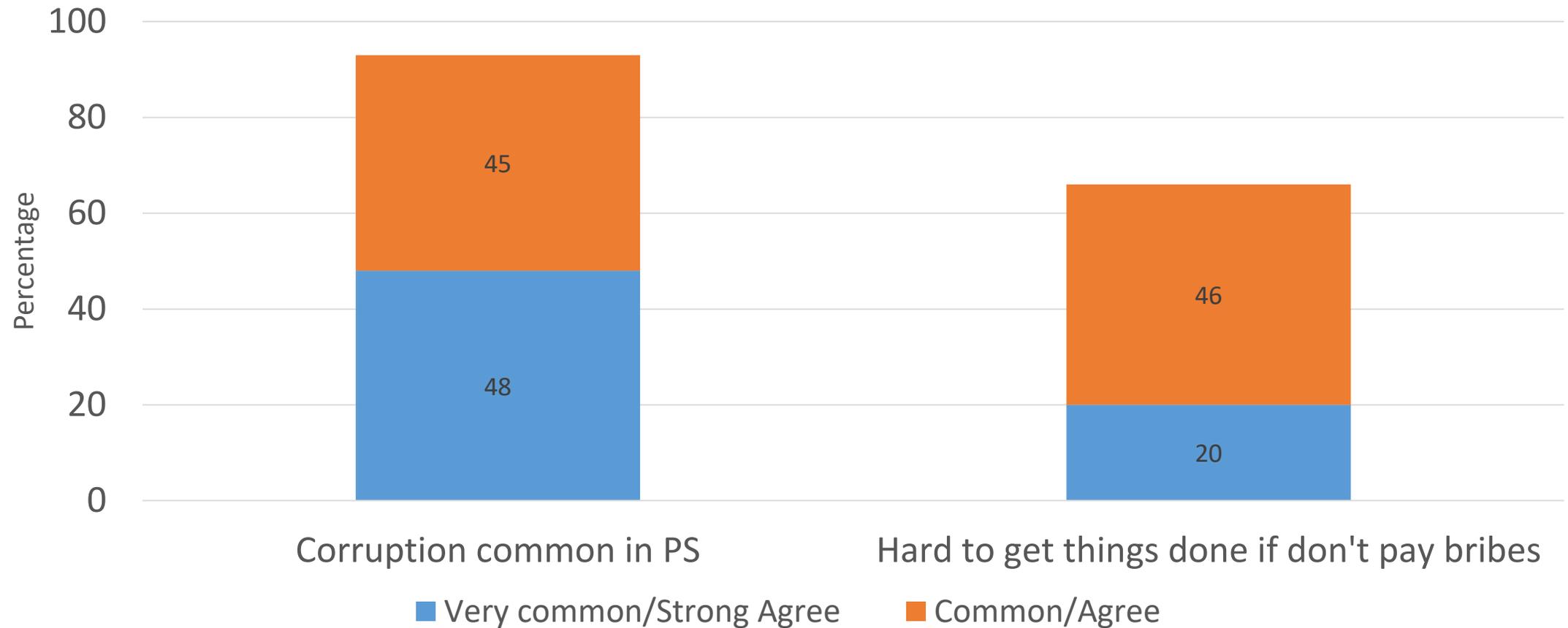
(mid-level male public servant, Madang)

Corruption considered the **most** significant threat

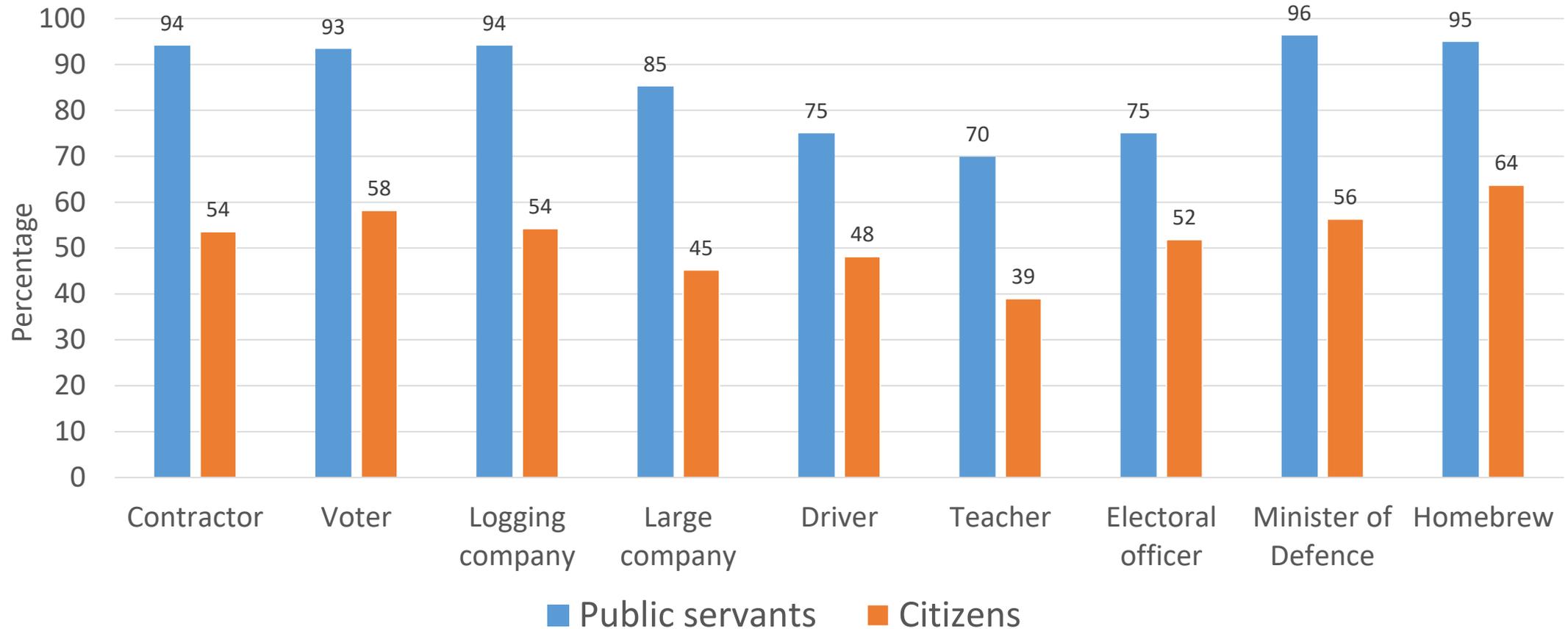
“The biggest and the most feared threat is corruption. It has crippled everyone in the system...It comes in different forms and happens at all levels...It is a brick wall that stops water from flowing down the stream”.

(Female public servant, New Ireland)

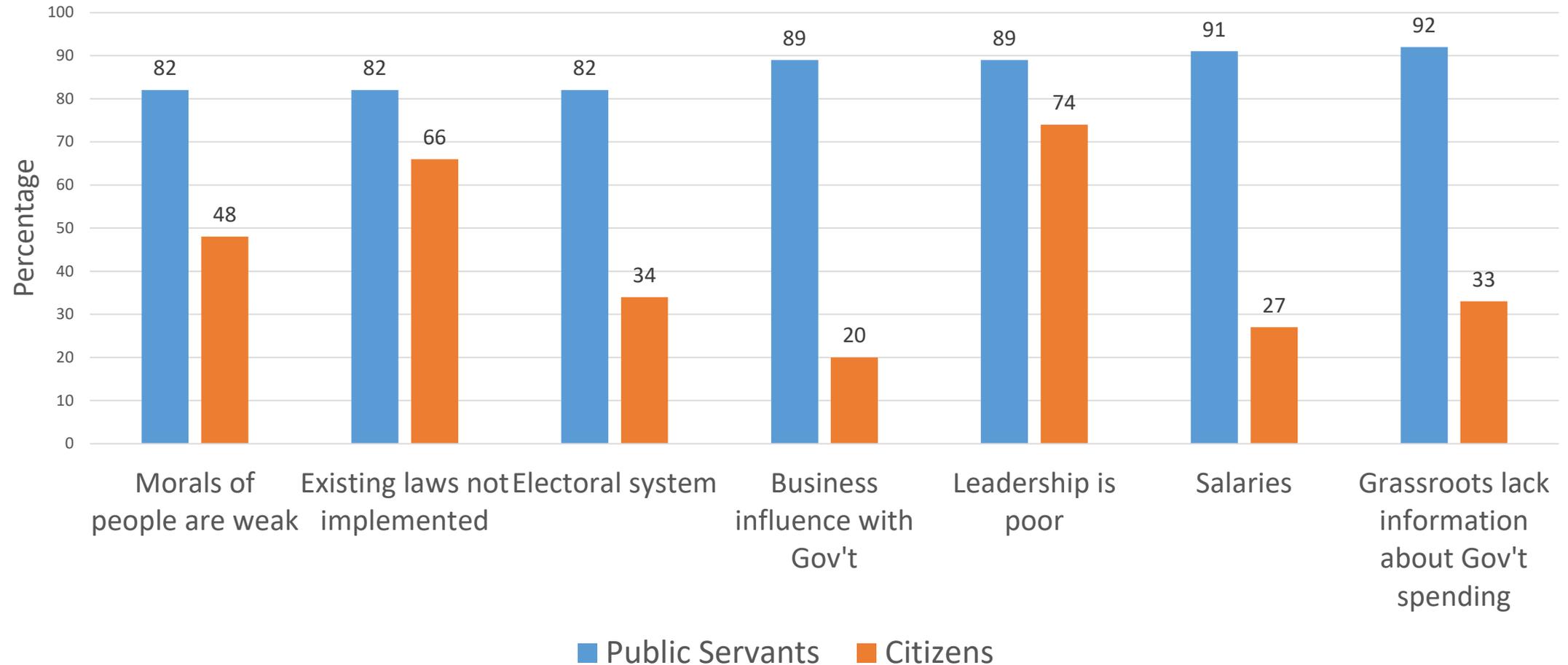
Corruption and bribery perceived to be common



Public servants more likely to see scenarios as totally corrupt



Causes of corruption: Public servants concerned about business



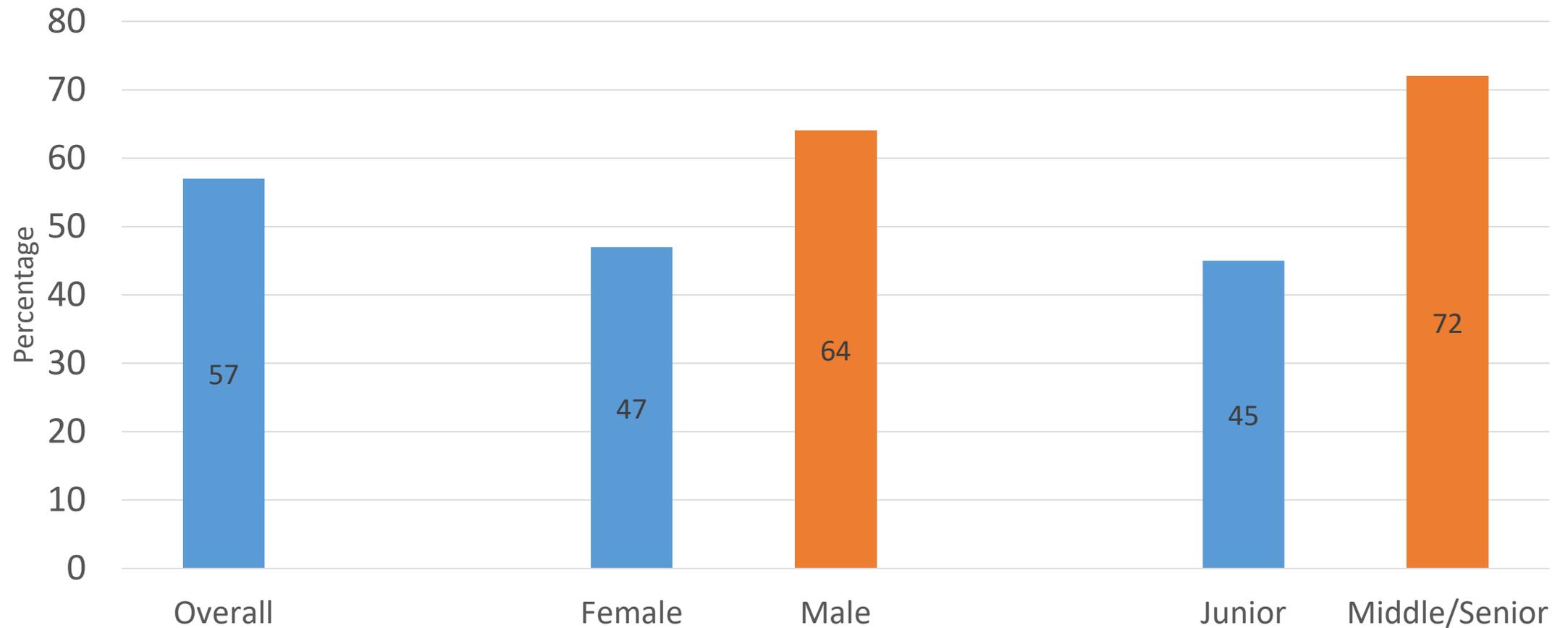
Concerns about private sector influence

“...for every investor that comes in, [people in] the government are asking for ten percent” (senior male administrator, New Ireland)

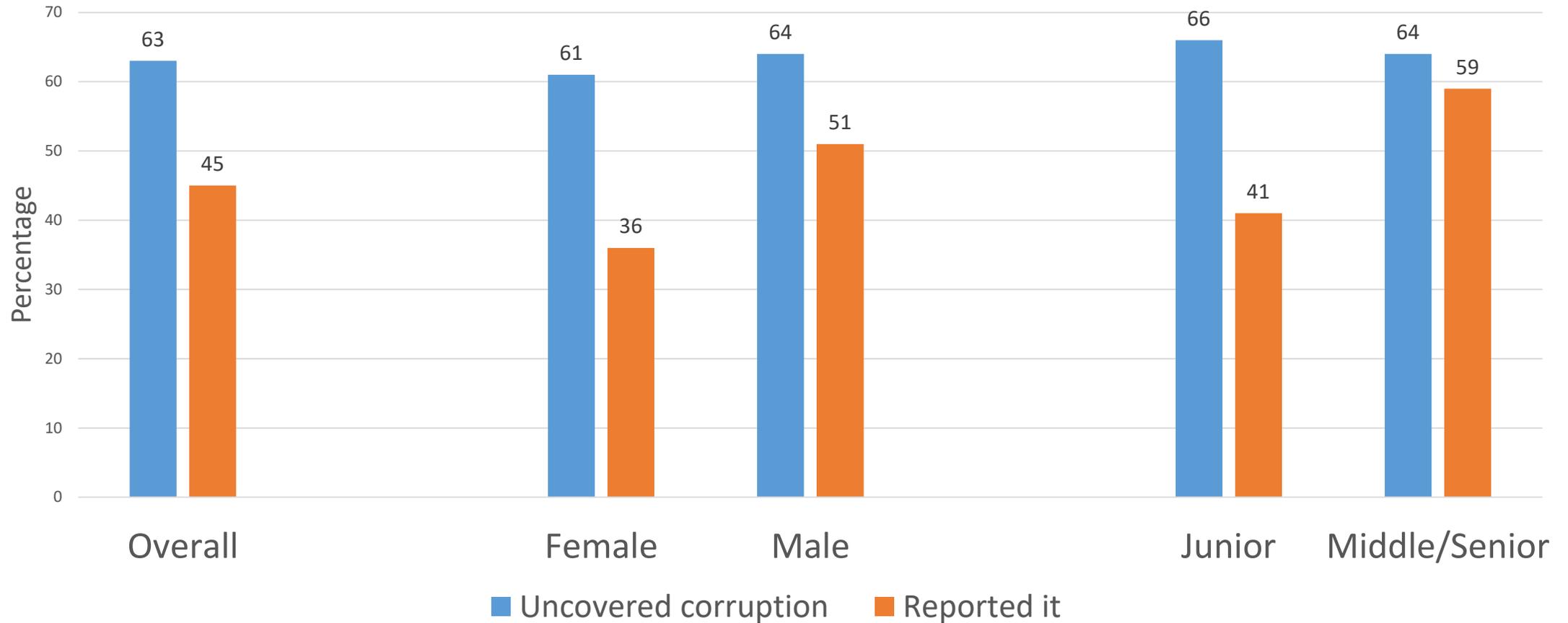
Possible explanations:

- corruption between government and business has increased between 2010/11 and 2018.
- Public servants are more likely to witness or hear about business influencing government for favours

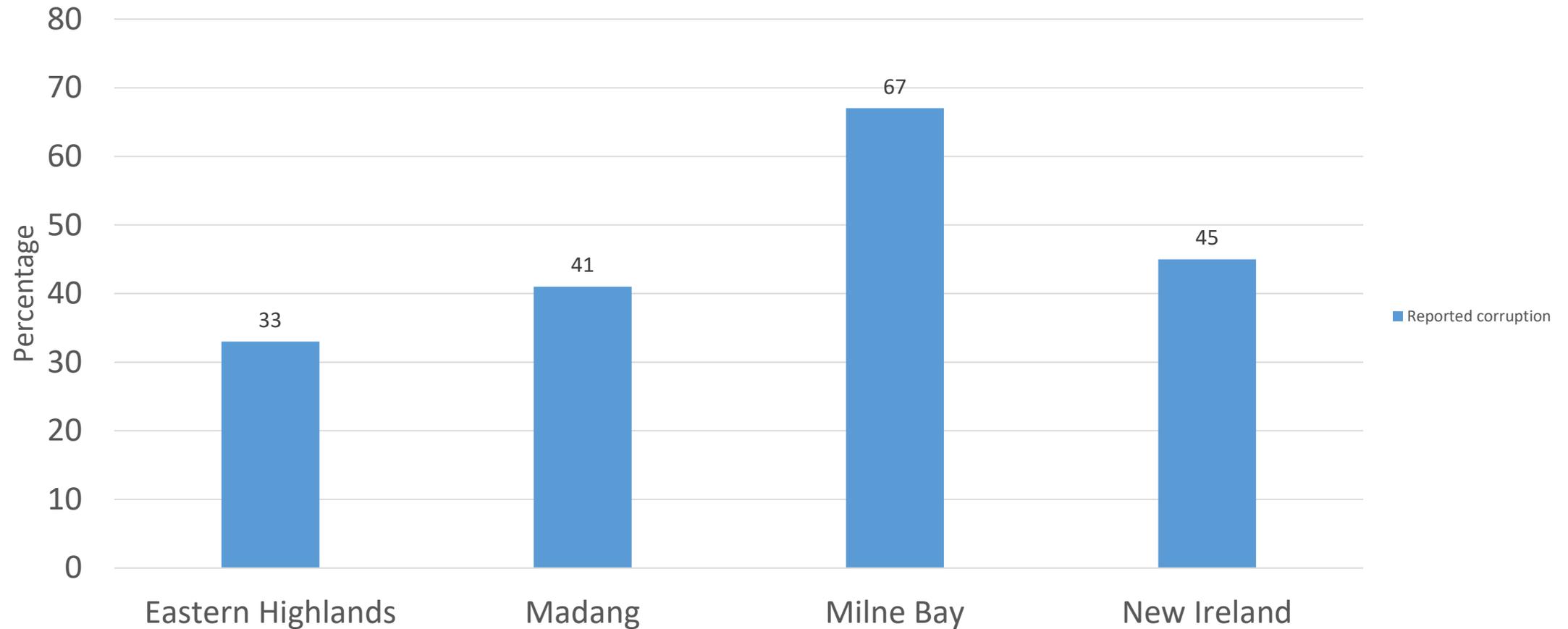
Reporting corruption: Men and Mid/Senior staff more likely to know how to report



Men and mid/senior staff more likely to say they report



Reporting different across provinces



Views on what should be done

Better leaders with better ethics

The carrot: Greater awareness and training

The stick: strengthening reporting mechanisms and law enforcement

“anti-corruption agencies should be established in all provinces so that they are easily accessible” (mid-level male administrator, Eastern Highlands)

Conclusions

Many public servants are unhappy with the status quo

Respondents' recommendations are worthwhile

- Awareness and training (particularly for junior staff)
- Improved reporting mechanisms (particularly for women)
 - ICAC/other AC agency at subnational level
- Increasing law enforcement

But...

Conclusion

- In PNG good governance is about delivering services
 - Reforms should be linked to service delivery
 - Many stifled and confused by rules and regulations
 - Need to be careful introducing more
- Corruption a key threat to good governance
 - Reforms have increased influence of business, politics
 - Review decentralisation/public service reforms
 - Reporting
 - Need to protect: Encouraging reporting might increase 'payback'

Governance and corruption in PNG's public service: insights from four subnational administrations

Grant Walton

Abstract

The Papua New Guinea (PNG) government and international donors have spent millions of kina trying to improve governance in the country's bureaucracy. Despite these efforts, there are few indicators of success: many consider PNG's public service to be rife with corruption. However, narratives about these problems have excluded public servants' perspectives: there is little empirical data about why public servants might support or resist corruption and poor governance. This paper draws on interviews with 136 public servants across four provinces – Eastern Highlands, Milne Bay, Madang and New Ireland – to provide insights into what PNG's bureaucrats think about these issues. It finds that public servants are often ill-informed about the laws and rules guiding their roles, and are under enormous pressure to provide unofficial favours to businesses, politicians and kith and kin. Yet, some are able to resist these pressures better than others, with senior staff, men, and those in Milne Bay and Madang better placed to push back against and report corruption. Findings suggest that policies that aim to support and inform the less enfranchised (women and junior staff) are particularly important for addressing corruption in PNG. However, this paper argues that efforts to shift the status quo must take into account the contextually-specific relationships between bureaucrats, politicians and citizens, which vary across time and space.

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Discussion paper



Phone Against
SMS
16321
CORRUPTION



PHONES AGAINST CORRUPTION



Say
"NO" to
Corruption!

An innovative way to expose and combat corruption using a Text Message System (SMS)



1 Send a Text Message to 16321 with any word, like CASE or Hi.

2 A welcome message appears, asking to choose your preferred language to report

3 The system ask you WHERE the alleged case of corruption occur

4 The system ask you WHEN did the alleged case of corruption occur

5 The system ask you if the case involve financial resources or not

6 The system ask you WHAT is the case

7 The system thanks your contribution and provides a brief feedback of the cases so far



QUALITIES OF GOOD LEADERSHIP

INTEGRITY

IS HE OR SHE A WELL RESPECTED PERSON IN THE COMMUNITY?

HONESTY

IS HE OR SHE AN HONEST PERSON?

FAIRNESS

WILL HE OR SHE BE FAIR TO EVERYONE DESPITE THEM NOT VOTING HIM OR HER?

ACCOUNTABILITY

WILL HE OR SHE BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OR HER ACTIONS?

TRANSPARENCY

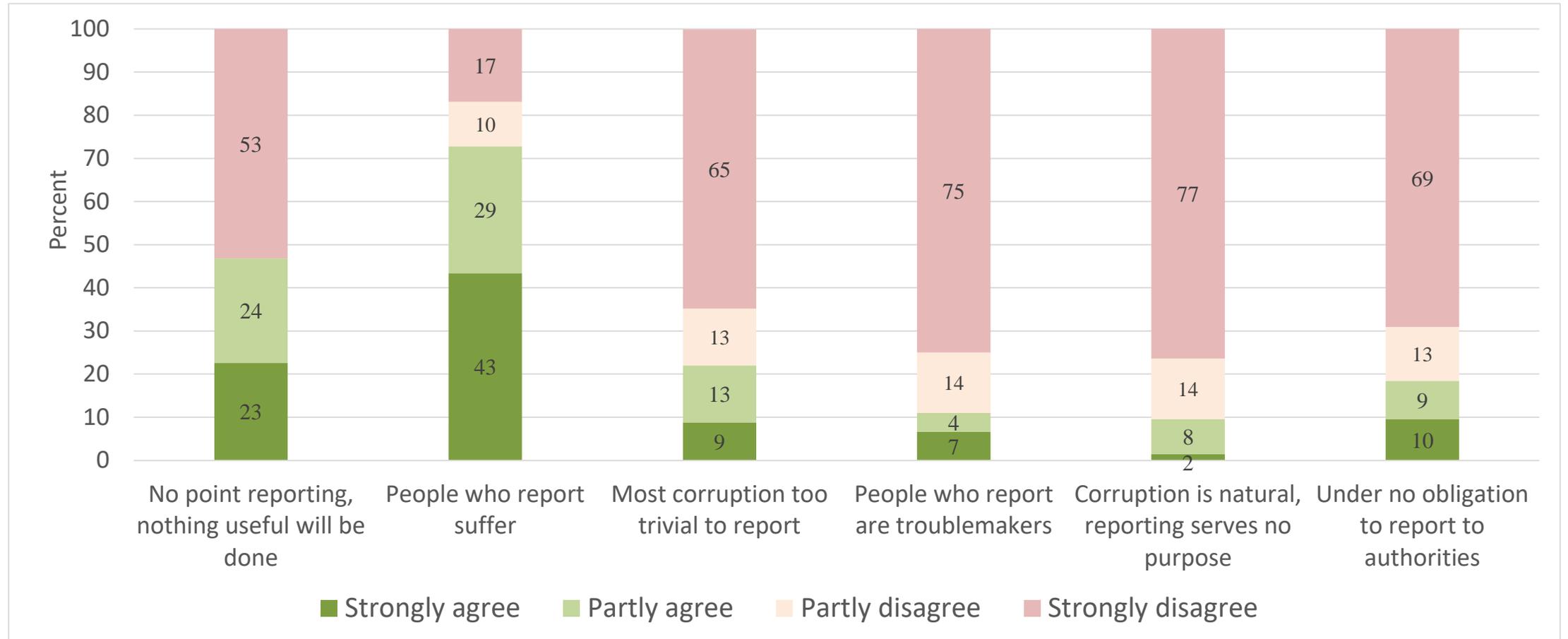
DOES HE OR SHE MAKE PUBLIC DECISIONS WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR?

SERVITUDE

WILL HE OR SHE BE A SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE WHEN HE OR SHE GETS INTO PARLIAMENT?

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

Responses to statements about reporting corruption



Reporting considered most effective in Milne Bay

