



Survey Warehouse
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News release

Slim majority of Namibians would support higher taxes in exchange for more government services, Afrobarometer survey shows

More than half of Namibians would support paying higher taxes in exchange for more government services, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey.

Responses to a series of survey questions on taxation show that only about one-third of Namibians are unhappy about tax rates, but at the same time, few citizens find it easy to get information about required taxes and fees.

Majorities do not want the government to emphasize tax collection among small traders and informal businesses, consider it fair to tax the wealthy to help the poor, and think the government generally uses tax revenues to benefit the population.

Key findings

- A slim majority (51%) of Namibians favour paying higher taxes if it will mean more government services. But almost four in 10 (38%) would prefer lower taxes even if it means fewer government services. Citizens who actually pay income taxes are less supportive of higher taxes than those who don't pay income taxes (Figure 1).
- Only three out of 10 Namibians (29%) say it's easy to find out what taxes and fees they are supposed to pay to the government, while a large majority find it difficult (50%) or say they "don't know" (21%). Respondents who pay income taxes are twice as likely as those who don't pay income taxes to say it's easy (48% vs. 24%), suggesting that experience with the tax system makes an important difference in understanding how it works (Figure 2).
- More Namibians think ordinary people are taxed too much (36%) and rich people are taxed too little (32%) than think the reverse (12% and 17%, respectively). But more than half of respondents have no complaint about tax rates, saying either that the amounts are about right or that they "don't know" (Figure 3).
- Only three out of 10 Namibians (31%) want the government to make sure that small traders and other people working in the informal sector pay taxes on their businesses (Figure 4). At the same time, a majority (59%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that it is fair to tax rich people at higher rates than ordinary people to help pay for government programs to benefit the poor. A similar majority (54%) believe that the government usually uses the taxes it collects for the well-being of the population.
- One-third (32%) of Namibians say citizens "often" or "always" avoid paying taxes they owe. About half (48%) say this happens "rarely" or "never," while 20% say they "don't know" (Figure 5).

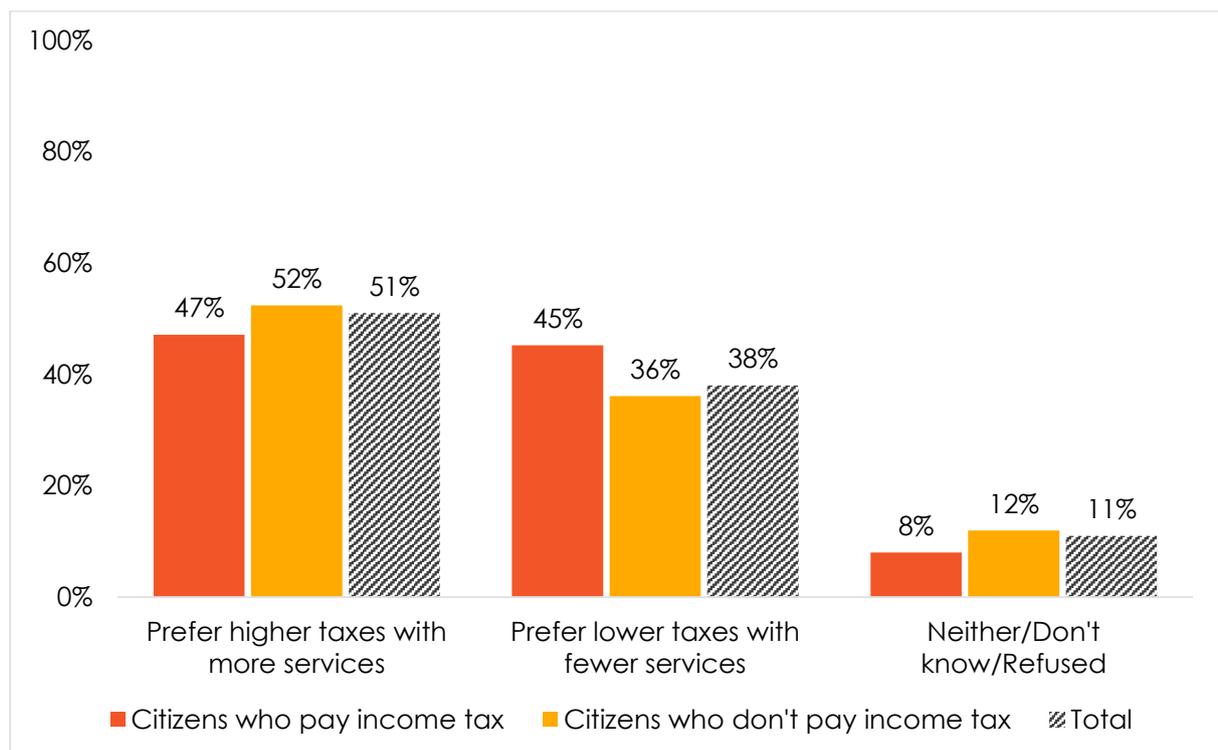
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' experiences and evaluations of quality of life, governance, and democracy. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys are planned in at least 35 countries in 2019/2020. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Namibia, led by Survey Warehouse, interviewed 1,200 adult Namibians in August 2019. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Namibia in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2017

Charts

Figure 1: Higher taxes with more government services vs. lower taxes with fewer government services | Namibia | 2019



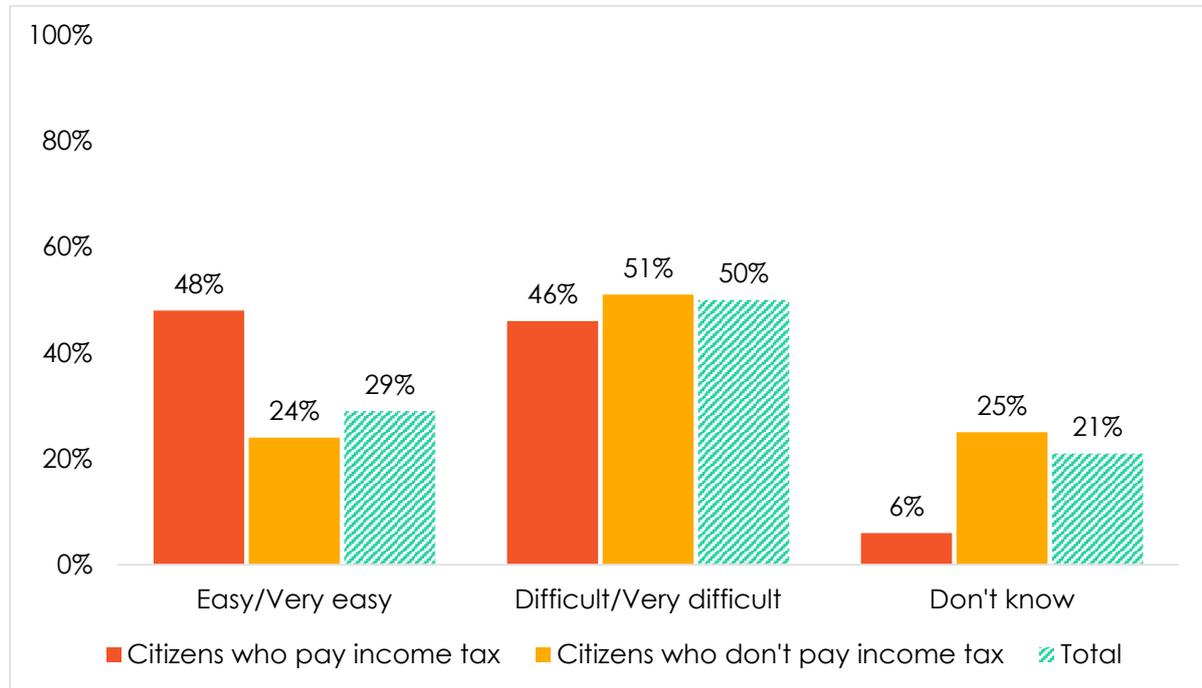
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view? (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

Statement 1: It is better to pay higher taxes if it means that there will be more services provided by government.

Statement 2: It is better to pay lower taxes, even if it means there will be fewer services provided by government.

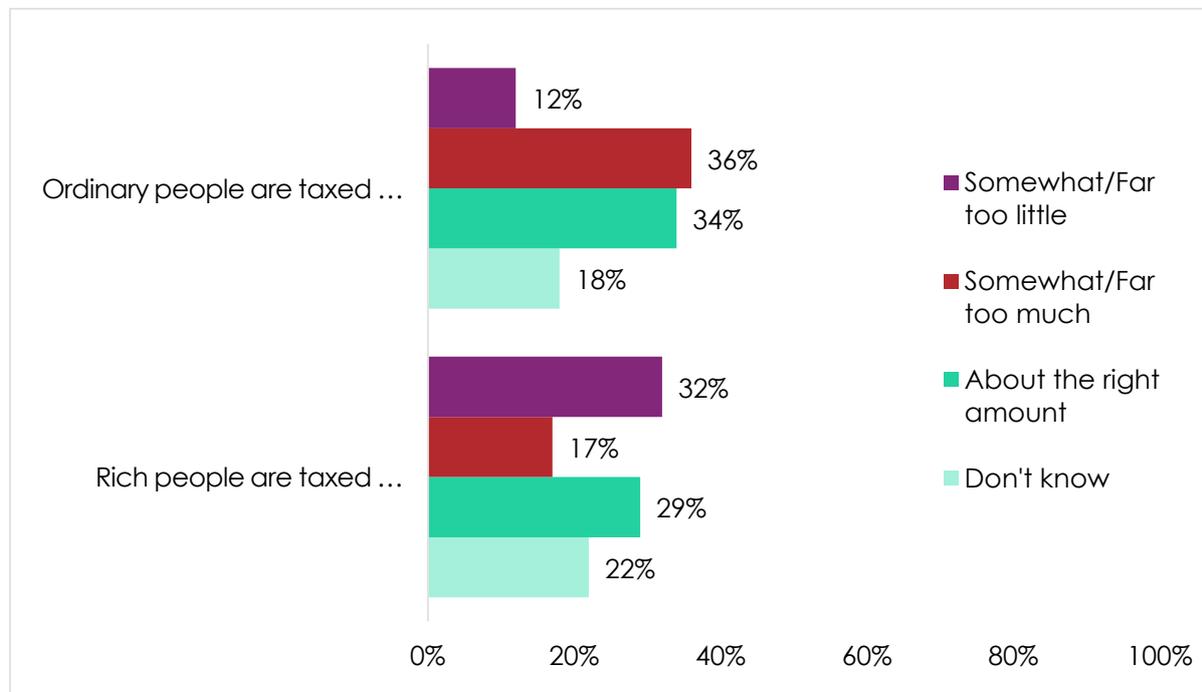
Respondents who said they have a paid income were asked: If you have paid employment, that is, regular employment for which you receive something like an hourly wage or a regular salary, are you required to pay an income tax, that is, a tax deducted from your wages by your employer?

Figure 2: How easy or difficult to find out about taxes or fees to pay | Namibia | 2019



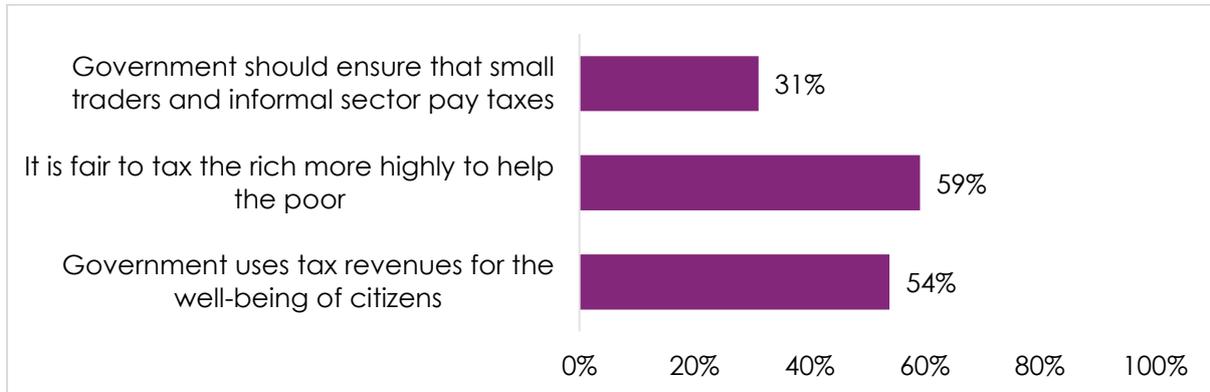
Respondents were asked: Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to do each of the following: To find out what taxes and fees you are supposed to pay to the government?

Figure 3: Taxes too high or low: Rich vs. ordinary people | Namibia | 2019



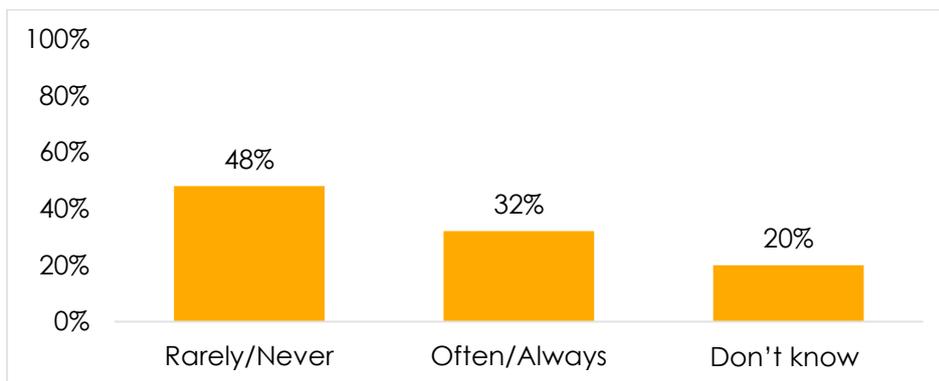
Respondents were asked: Do you think that the amount of taxes ordinary people/rich people in Namibia are required to pay to the government is too little, too much, or about the right amount?

Figure 4: Views on taxing the informal sector and the rich, use of tax revenues
 | Namibia | 2019



Respondents were asked: Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
 Government should make sure small traders and other people working in the informal sector pay taxes on their businesses.
 It is fair to tax rich people at a higher rate than ordinary people in order to help pay for government programs to benefit the poor.
 The government usually uses the tax revenues it collects for the well-being of citizens.

Figure 5: How often do people avoid paying taxes? | Namibia | 2019



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country, do people avoid paying taxes that they owe the government?

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