2014 Elections, the Constitution, and Democracy in Namibia

Results from the Round 6 Afrobarometer Survey in Namibia

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At a glance

- **Voter preferences**: Namibians endorse continuity in voter preferences and parties, with stronger voter engagement as elections approach. SWAPO continues to dominate.

- **Tolerance for opposition**: Namibians express greater tolerance for opposition parties with new leadership.

- **3rd Constitutional amendment**: The amendment process was handled poorly, according to a large majority (59%), including a 55% majority of SWAPO supporters.

- **Support for democracy**: Democratic values seem to be strengthening.
What is Afrobarometer?

- An African-led, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- Goal: To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.
- National Partners in each country conduct the survey. In Namibia, Afrobarometer Round 6 survey was conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research and Survey Warehouse.

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Where Afrobarometer works

Face-to-Face Interviews | 35 Countries
Surveys by state, region
Methodology

• Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
  □ All respondents are randomly selected.
  □ Sample is distributed across regions and urban/rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
  □ Every adult citizen has an equal chance of being selected.

• Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice.

• Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.

• Sample size in Namibia of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/- 3% at a 95% confidence level.

• Fieldwork for Round 6 in Namibia was conducted by Survey Warehouse between 27 August and 19 September 2014.
Political parties and voting preferences
Key findings

- Three-fourths of Namibians say they feel close to a particular political party. Party affiliation has grown stronger since 2008 (up 10% to 76%) and is stronger in rural areas (82%) than in urban areas (70%).

- SWAPO has increased its support by 5% since 2012 and would handily win a presidential election today. Opposition parties survive at smaller levels of support.

- Trust for the ruling party is strong at 72% “somewhat or a lot”, but responses may also reflect growing tolerance for opposition parties.

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Voter closeness to a political party 2014

Q: Do you feel close to any particular political party?

- Yes: 76%
- No: 20%
- Don't know: 4%
Closeness to a political party: Trend 2008-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Respondents were asked: If a presidential election were held tomorrow, which party’s candidate would you vote for?
Ruling party trusted: tolerance for opposition parties may be increasing

Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough to say: the ruling party? the opposition political parties?
Executive leadership: Trust and Performance
Key findings

- Trust in the president and prime minister is strong in 2014 at around 80% positive.

- Performance approval ratings are high (88-89%) for both the president and the prime minister.

- Namibian leaders have been near the top ranking in prior Afrobarometer surveys going back to 1999. This trend of strong institutional support from respondents continues in 2014.
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough to say: the President; the Prime Minister?
Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: President Hifikiプンや Pohamba; Prime Minister Hage Geingob?
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough to say: the President; the Prime Minister?

Trust and Performance Trends

- President Nujoma 2002
- President Pohamba 2014
- Prime Minister Geingob 2014

Trust somewhat /A lot
- President Nujoma: 76%
- President Pohamba: 80%
- Prime Minister: 79%

Performance approve/strongly approve
- President Nujoma: 78%
- President Pohamba: 88%
- Prime Minister: 89%

Respondents were asked: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough to say: the President; the Prime Minister?
Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: President Hifikipunye Pohamba; President Sam Nujoma.

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Constitutional changes: 3rd Amendment Bill
Key findings

- Eight out of ten Namibians (80%) express a preference for widespread consultation when constitutional changes are proposed.

- The same is true of a majority of SWAPO supporters (55%).

- A majority of all respondents (59%) say there was a lack of adequate consultation for the Third Amendment process. A majority of SWAPO supporters (55%) said the same.
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: “Government should make changes to the Constitution that they think are important without considering the views of ordinary citizens.”

Statement 2: “Government should always consult the public widely when considering changes to the Constitution.”

- Strongly agree w/1; agree w/1: 19%
- Strongly agree w/2; Agree w/2: 80%
Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Government has not consulted sufficiently on the recent Constitutional change proposals – for example for an appointed vice-president and a 50% increase in the size of Parliament.
Key democratic values
Key findings

- More Namibians are satisfied with the way their democracy is working (73%) than was the case in 2008 (67%) and 2012 (62%).

- A large majority (72%) believe that Namibia has “a full democracy” or “a democracy with minor problems.”

- Three-fourths (74%) believe that democracy is preferable to any other form of government. This increased from 64% in 2012 and is the highest level recorded for Namibia.
Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Namibia today?*

**Extent of democracy in Namibia**

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<th>Category</th>
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<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>A democracy with major problems</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>A democracy with minor problems</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>A full democracy</td>
<td>41</td>
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Respondents were asked: Which of these three statements is closest to your opinion:

- Statement 1: “Democracy is preferable to any other type of government.”
- Statement 2: “In some circumstances, non-democratic government can be preferable.”
- Statement 3: “For someone like me, it doesn’t matter what kind of government we have.”
Satisfaction with democracy in Namibia

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<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>69%</td>
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<td>67%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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Not at all satisfied/not very satisfied vs. Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied
Conclusions

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Conclusions

- Namibians maintain continuity in voter preferences and party alignments, with SWAPO dominance but survival of smaller parties.

- Survey respondents express high trust levels (around 80%) in both the president and the Prime Minister. Performance levels are around 88%.

- The Constitutional amendment process was handled poorly, according to a large majority (59%), including a majority of SWAPO supporters (55%).

- Democratic values seem to be strengthening among Namibians: including stronger voter engagement as elections approach, greater preference for democracy (74%), as well as a greater tolerance for opposition parties with new leadership.
Thank you for your attention