



Institute for Public Policy Research

Institute for Public Policy Research
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News release

Electoral Continuity Expected in 2014: SWAPO dominates, but opposition parties survive and tolerance may be increasing

The SWAPO Party of Namibia continues to dominate the political scene in Namibia, with strong advantages in public trust and voter preference, but public tolerance of opposition parties may also be on the increase, according to the latest Afrobarometer survey. The opposition parties continue to survive and scramble for the minor places, with the DTA of Namibia and the Rally for Democracy and Progress in a close race for a distant second place behind the ruling SWAPO.

The survey, conducted in the run-up to the November 28 presidential and parliamentary elections, confirms continuity of party identification and voting preferences. Encouraging signs point to a stronger engagement of voters, with 7% fewer respondents saying they were not close to any party (31% in 2012 to 24% in 2014). Perhaps this is due to the approaching elections. Increasing tolerance of the opposition parties, perhaps due to new leadership in the opposition and restrained behaviour called for by SWAPO leaders.

Key findings

- The SWAPO Party of Namibia continues its dominance, with 53% of respondents identifying themselves as “close to” the party and 65% saying they would “vote for” SWAPO (Figure 1).
- Party attachment has increased from previous rounds of the Afrobarometer survey, with 76% of respondents saying they are “close to” a political party (Figure 2), a 7 percentage point increase from 2012.
- Trust in both SWAPO (72% indicating they trust the party “somewhat” or “a lot”) and the opposition parties (46% indicating “somewhat” or “a lot”) has continued to grow since previous surveys (Figure 3).
- A change in attitudes toward the opposition parties indicates that Namibians are becoming more tolerant of other parties. Trust in opposition parties rose 14% in the “somewhat /a lot” categories (from 32 to 46% from 2012 to 2014 and declined 13%, from 66% to 53% over the same period, in the “just a little/ not at all”. This may indicate an increase in tolerance as the parties change and political maturity increases.

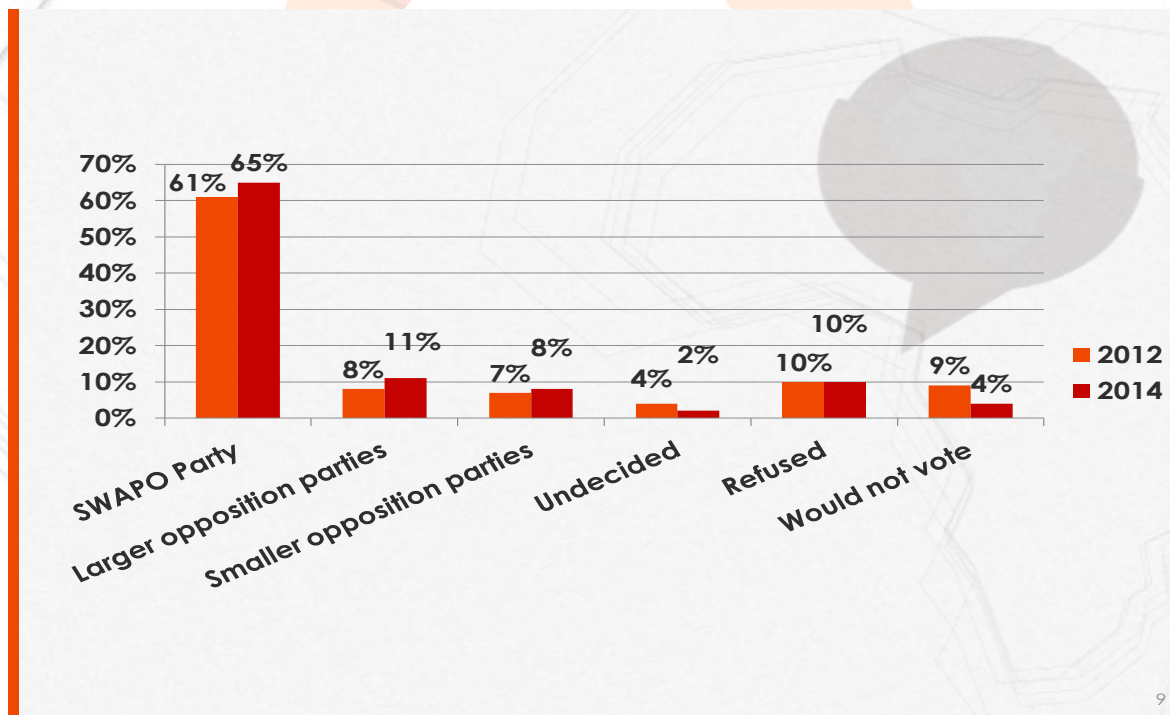
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research project that has measured countries' social, political, and economic atmosphere since 1999. In its sixth survey round (2014-15), it is covering 35 countries. Afrobarometer is funded by the UK Department of International Development (DFID), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Mo Ibrahim Foundation and the World Bank.

The Afrobarometer team in Namibia, led by the Institute for Public Policy Research and Survey Warehouse, interviewed adult Namibians in August and September 2014. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Namibia in 1999, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2012.

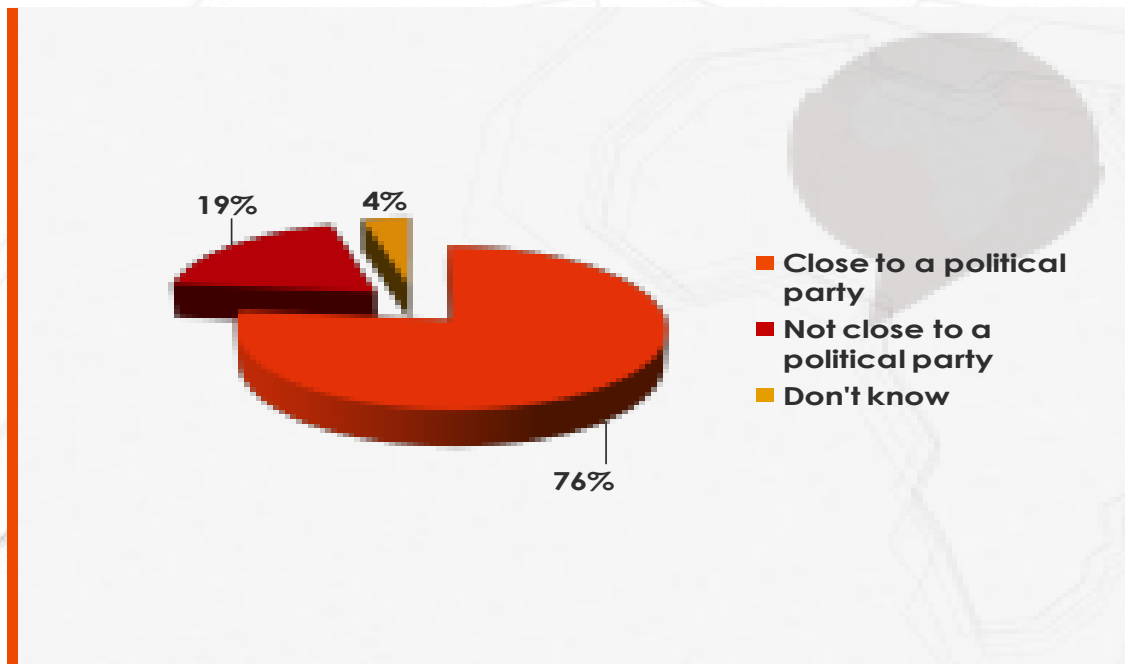
Charts

Figure 1: Vote for which party
 Namibia | 2012, 2014



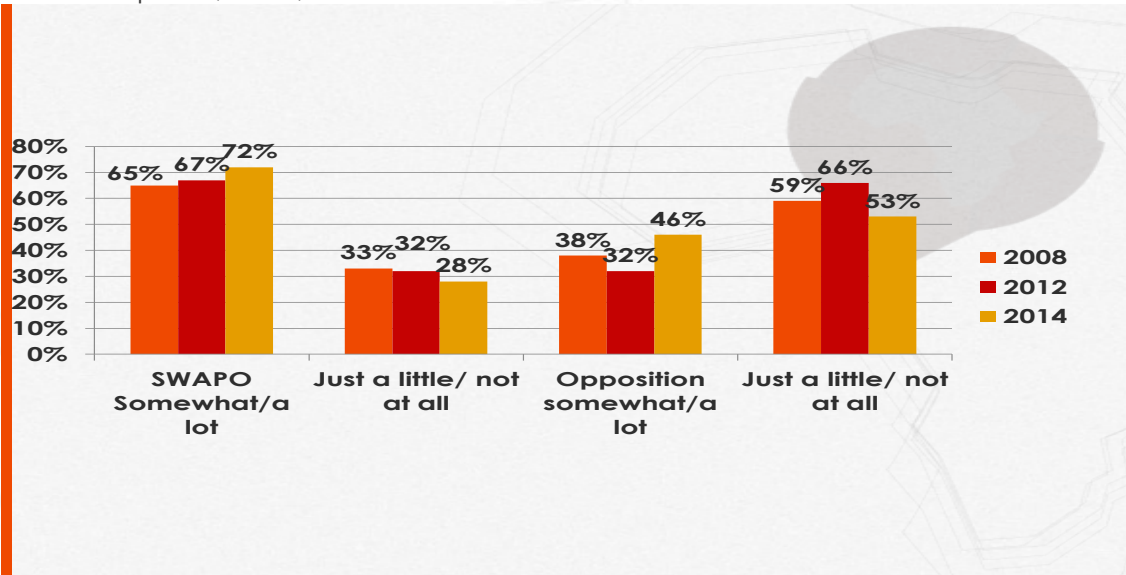
Respondents were asked: *If a presidential election were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you vote for?*

Figure 2: Voter Closeness to a Particular Political Party
Namibia | 2014



Respondents were asked: *Do you feel close to any particular political party?*

Figure 3 : Trust in the ruling and opposition parties
 Namibia | 2008, 2012, 2014



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?

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