

Limits of gender equality: Poor, uneducated Mozambicans less likely to see improvement

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 291 | Sadhiska Bhoojedhur and Thomas Isbell

Summary

Gender equality is enshrined in Mozambique's Constitution and promoted through its participation in international conventions and treaties as well as its 2004 Family Code, which requires equality in property and family law, including sharing of assets within marriage (International Federation for Human Rights, 2007; UN Women, 2012). During the launch of a National Plan of Action on Women, Peace, and Security in June 2018, the Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare reiterated the government's commitment to promoting gender equality, emphasizing that equal participation of men and women in all spheres of society is a prerequisite for sustainable development (AllAfrica, 2018).

Yet gender disparities are a persistent reality for many women in Mozambique, in forms ranging from child marriage and teen pregnancy to domestic violence and sexual abuse (Cumbe, Materula, Sadler, & Agosta, 2017; Christensen, 2018). According to a United Nations Country Team report (2013), more than half of Mozambican women report having suffered some form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence, and almost three-fourths of girls said they were aware of cases of sexual abuse and harassment in their schools. Mozambique ranks 138th out of 164 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's (2018) Gender Development Index, and especially in the North and in rural areas, traditional patriarchal values remain strong (Tvedten, 2011).

In leadership roles, Mozambican women are better represented than women in many other African countries: 40% of the Mozambican Parliament are women (World Bank, 2018). However, while the Global Gender Gap Report ranked Mozambique No. 1 in Africa in 2008 in terms of economic participation and opportunity, by 2018 the country had dropped to No. 7 (No. 49 in the world) because of setbacks in women's labour-force participation, particularly in senior and managerial positions (World Economic Forum, 2008, 2018).

According to the latest Afrobarometer survey, a majority of Mozambicans think gender equality has been achieved with regard to education, work, and land, and give the government good marks on promoting opportunities for women. However, poor and less-educated citizens are considerably less likely to perceive progress on gender equality. Moreover, Mozambicans' support for equality is uneven: While most endorse equality in access to land and political leadership, majorities prioritize men when it comes to getting a job and say families are better off if a woman, rather than a man, takes care of home and children.

Afrobarometer survey

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Six rounds of surveys were conducted in up to 37 countries between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 surveys were completed in 2018. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face

interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Mozambique, led by Ipsos Mozambique, interviewed a nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 2,400 adult Mozambicans between 13 June and 26 August 2018. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys have been conducted in Mozambique in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012, and 2015.

Key findings

- About four in 10 Mozambicans (42%) say that equal opportunities and treatment for women are "better" or "much better" now than "a few years ago." But more say things have stayed the same (34%) or gotten worse (17%). Poor and less-educated respondents are less likely to see progress on equal rights for women.
- More than seven in 10 survey respondents say that girls and boys have an equal chance to get an education (77%) and that men and women have an equal right to land¹ (74%) and to get a paying job (73%).
- About one in 10 women (11%) and men (10%) say they experienced gender-based discrimination at least once during the 12 months preceding the survey.
- More than three-fourths (77%) of Mozambicans say that a man is "never justified" in beating his wife.
- Strong majorities support women's equal right to land (79%) and to be elected to public office (66%). But a majority (54%) say that when jobs are scarce, men should be given priority.
- Six in 10 Mozambicans (62%) feel that it is better for a family if a woman, rather than a man, has the main responsibility for taking care of the home and children.
- More than half (57%) of Mozambicans say the government doing "fairly well" or "very well" in promoting equal rights and opportunities for women. Poor and less-educated citizens are less likely to praise the government's performance.

Perceptions of equal opportunities and treatment for women

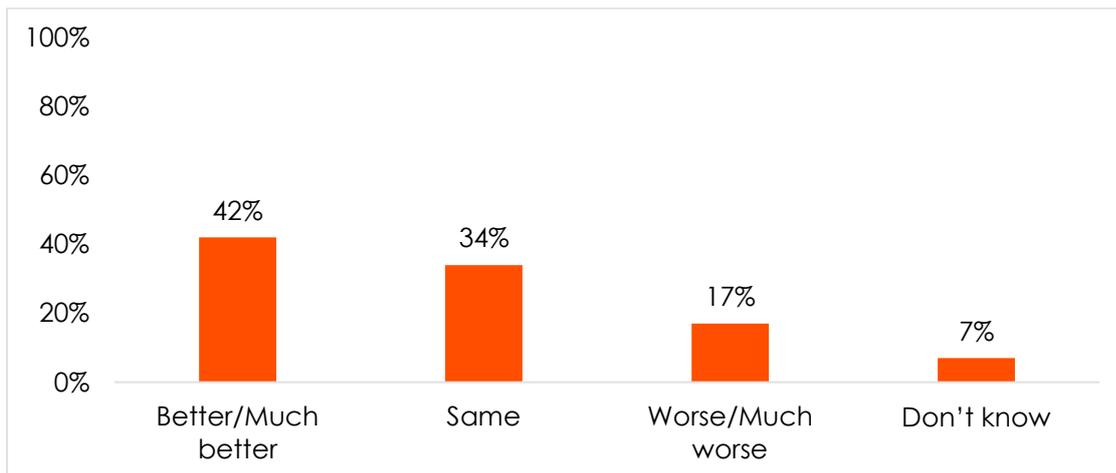
Despite Mozambique's lower ranking on the Global Gender Gap Report, only about one in six Mozambicans (17%) agree that things have gotten worse. About four in 10 (42%) say that equal opportunities and treatment for women are "better" or "much better" now than "a few years ago," while one in three (34%) say things have stayed the same (Figure 1). Compared to other African countries surveyed by Afrobarometer, Mozambique falls below the 34-country average of 47% who say that equal opportunities and treatment have improved.

While women and men share similar views with regard to progress on equal opportunity, citizens who are poor and/or less educated are considerably less likely to say things have gotten better (Figure 2). Among respondents with no formal education, only one in three (33%) see improvement, compared to almost half of those with secondary (47%) or post-

¹ In Mozambique, land is formally owned by the state; the Land Law of 1997 gives people the legal right to use and benefit from land.

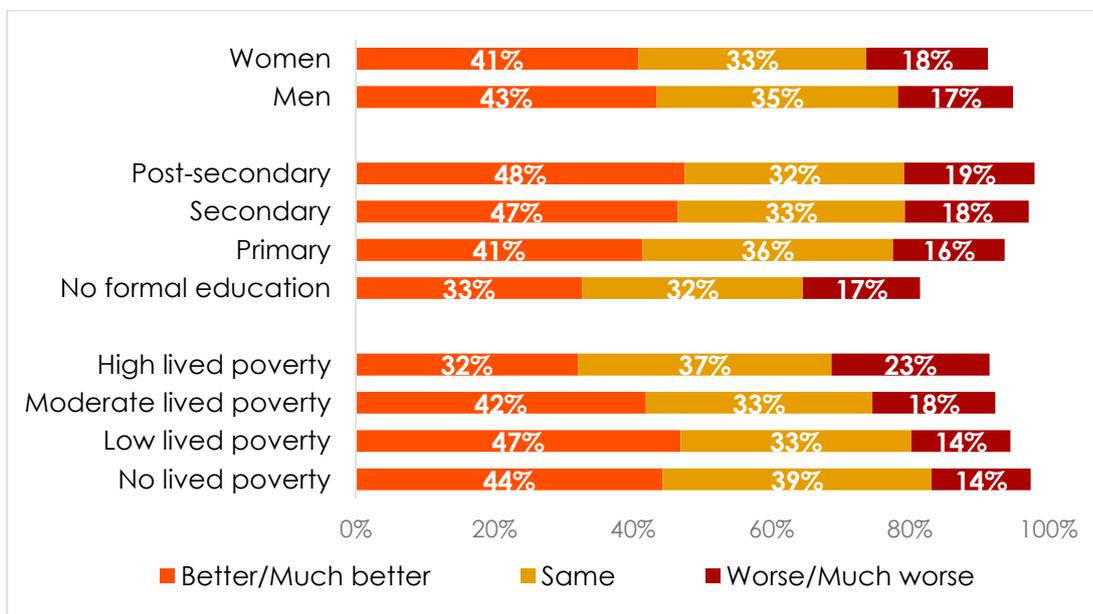
secondary (48%) qualifications. Similarly, among citizens with high “lived poverty,”² just 32% see improvement, compared to 44%-47% of those with no or low lived poverty. These perceptions may reflect disparities in opportunities available to women at different educational and economic levels.

Figure 1: Better or worse: Equal opportunities and treatment for women
 | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Equal opportunities and treatment for women?

Figure 2: Better or worse: Equal opportunities and treatment for women
 | by socio-demographic group | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Equal opportunities and treatment for women?

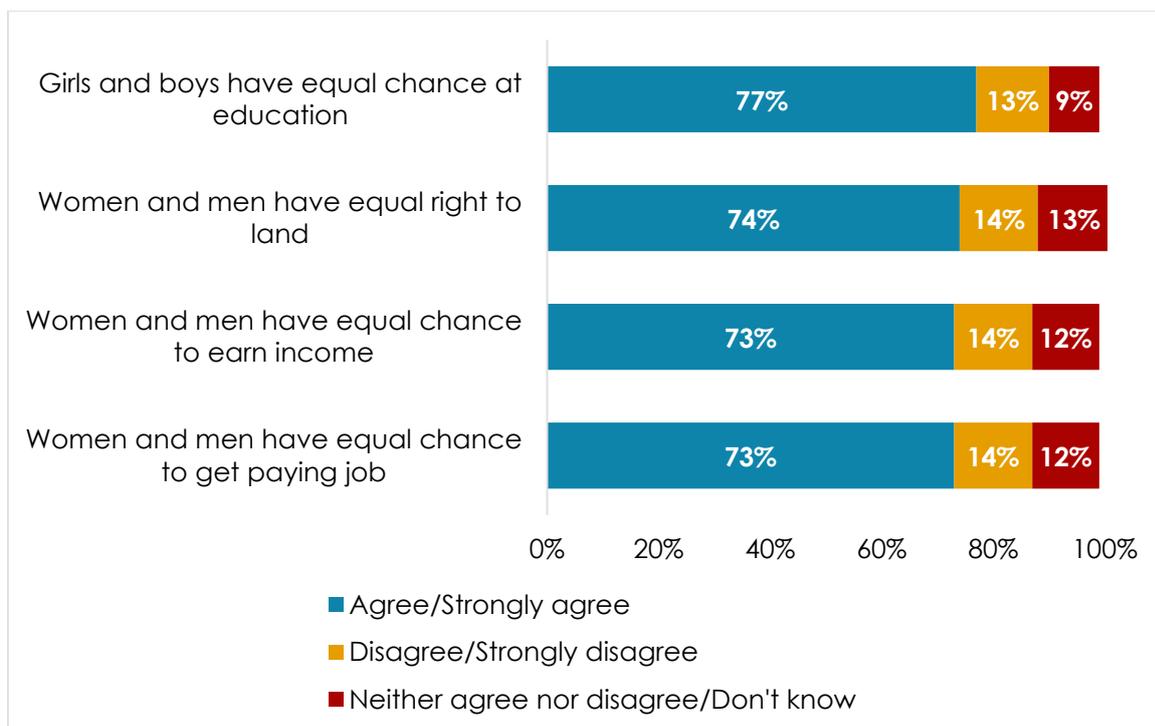
² Afrobarometer assesses lived poverty based on responses to the following questions: “Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?”

When it comes to specific indicators of gender equality, most Mozambicans say that in their country today, girls and boys have an equal chance to get an education (77%) and women and men have equal rights to land (74%), to get a paying job (73%), and to earn an income (73%) (Figure 3).

Only about one in seven respondents (13%-14%) disagree with these assessments, even though the view that gender equality has been achieved is more optimistic than reports by other observers. For example, UNESCO (2015; 2018), the United Nations Population Fund (2018), and the Education Policy and Data Center (2018) describe persistent gender inequalities in education, reflected in lower school enrollment and literacy rates for girls and young women.

With regard to land, Mozambique's Land Law (1997) and Constitution are widely seen as supporting one of the most gender-sensitive land regimes in Southern Africa, although critics note that many rural women lack information about their land rights and that land tenure is embedded within customary administrative and judicial systems that may reinforce gender disparities in control over land (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2007; Africa.com, 2019).

Figure 3: Perceptions of gender equality | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven't you heard enough to say? In our country today:

Girls and boys have equal opportunities to get an education?

Women and men have equal opportunities to own and inherit land?

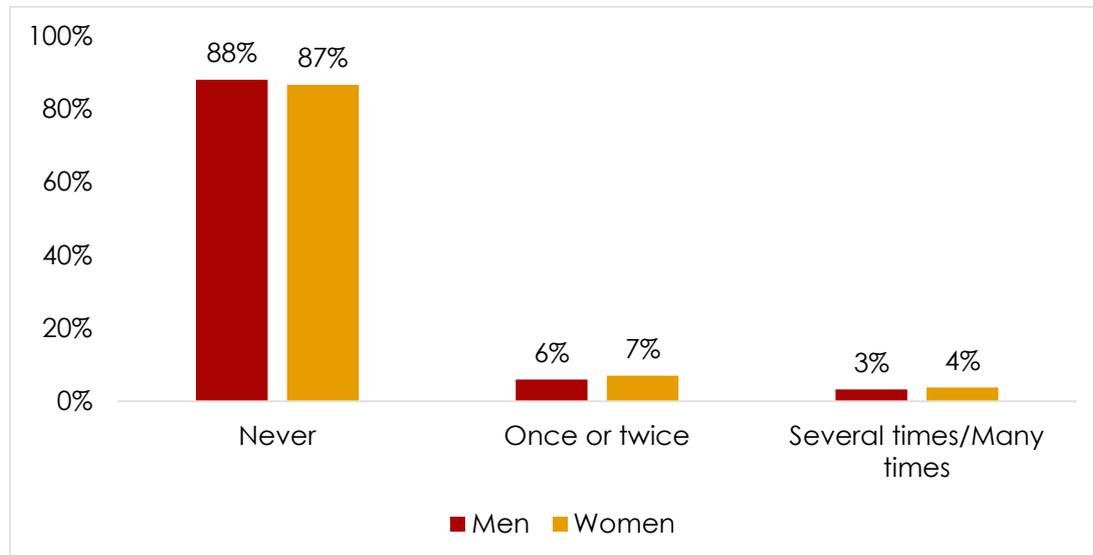
Women and men have equal opportunities to earn an income?

Women and men have equal opportunities to get a job that pays a wage or salary?

Gender-based discrimination and violence

In the Afrobarometer survey, about one in 10 women (11%) and men (10%) say they experienced gender-based discrimination at least once during the year preceding the survey, including 4% of women and 3% of men who say this occurred "several times" or "many times" (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Experienced discrimination based on gender | by gender | Mozambique | 2018



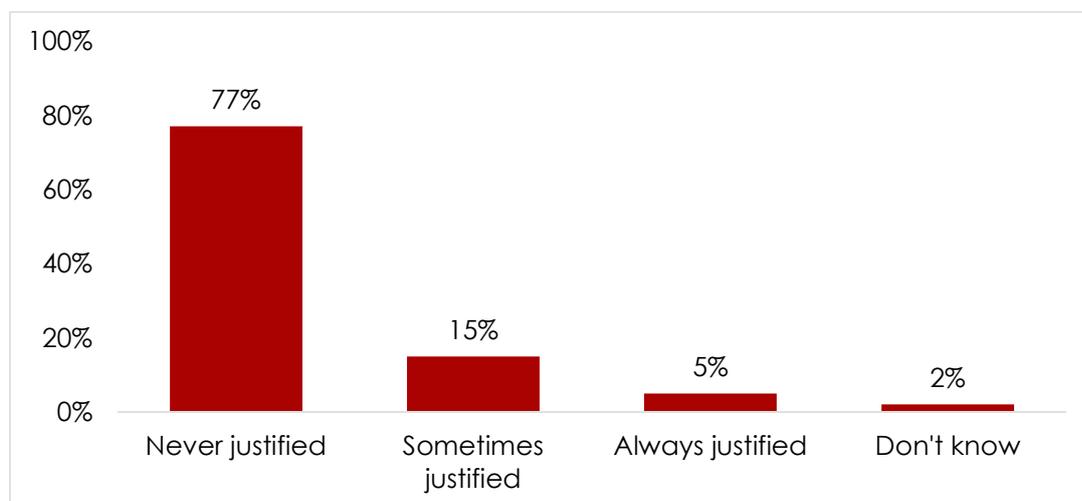
Respondents were asked: In the past year, how often, if at all, have you personally been discriminated against based on any of the following: Your gender?

And while the survey did not ask about the personal experience of gender-based violence, more than three-fourths (77%) of respondents say it is “never justified” for a man to beat his wife. One in five say it is “sometimes” (15%) or “always” (5%) justified (Figure 5).

Women are more likely than men to categorically reject domestic violence (81% vs. 73%), as are citizens with post-secondary education (87%) compared to those with less education (73%-78%) (Figure 6). Similarly, respondents with no lived poverty are more likely to reject domestic violence (88%) than those who are less well off (76%-77%).

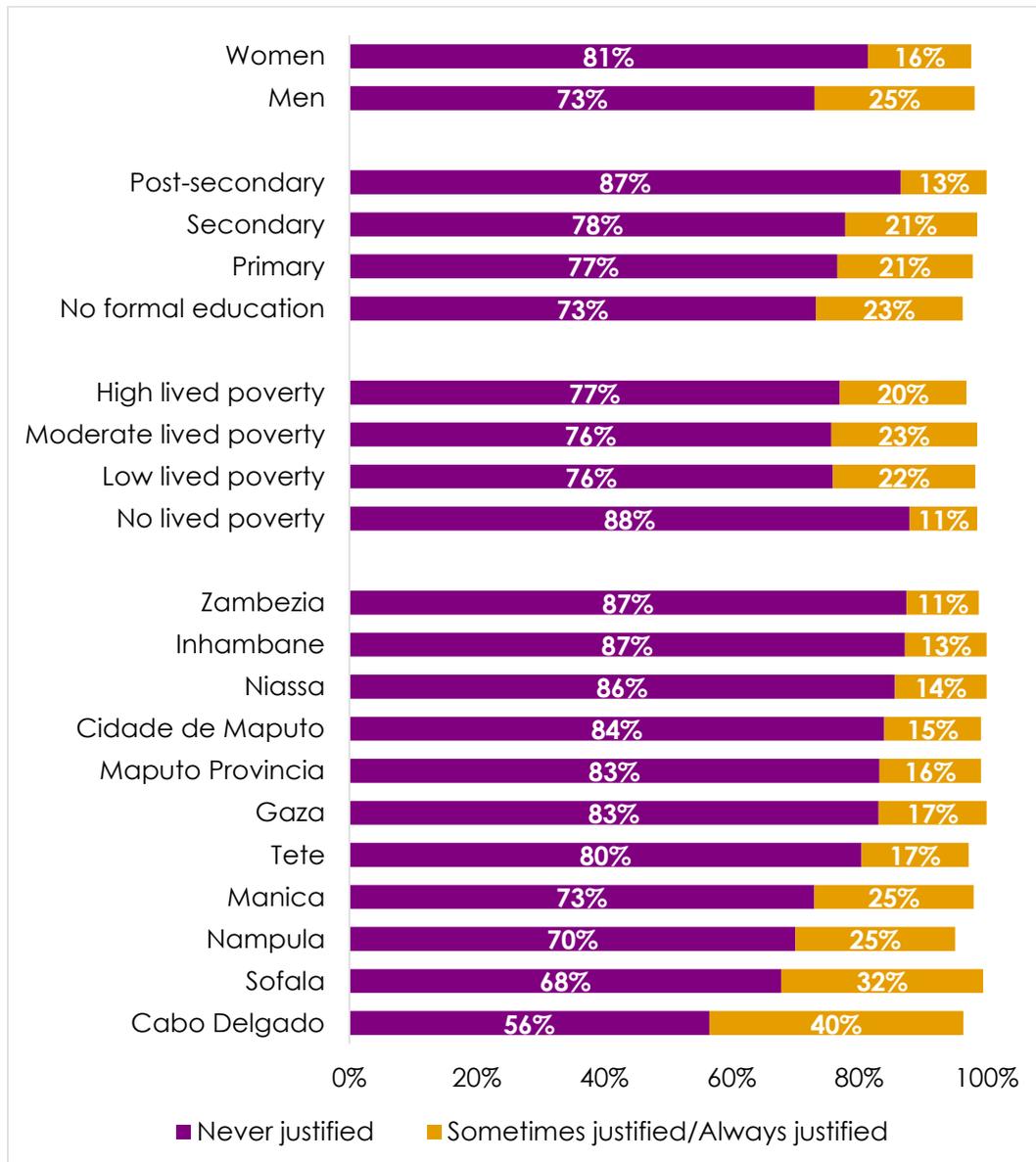
Geographically, the northern Cabo Delgado region stands out for its relatively weak (56%) stand against domestic violence; fully four in 10 residents (40%) say it is at least “sometimes” justified for a man to beat his wife.

Figure 5: Is domestic violence ever justified? | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For a man to beat his wife?

Figure 6: Is domestic violence ever justified? | by socio-demographic group
 | Mozambique | 2018



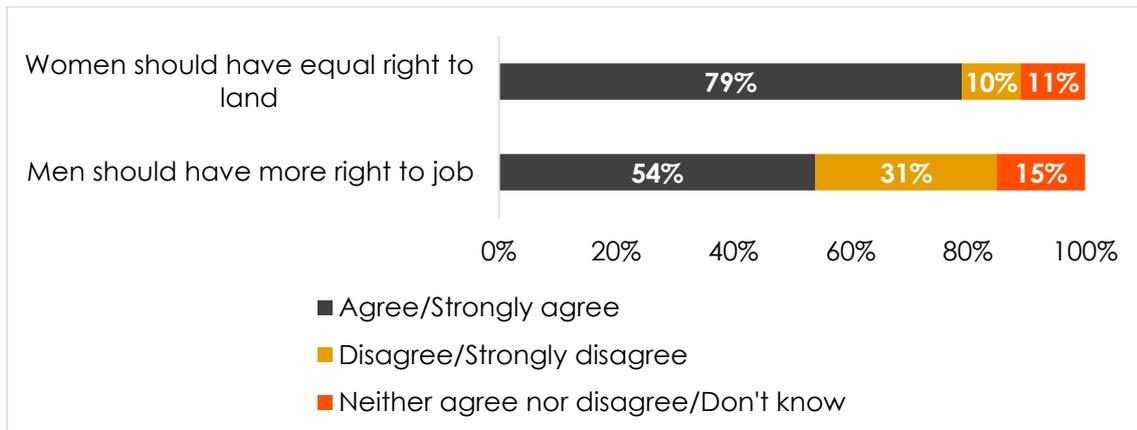
Respondents were asked: Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For a man to beat his wife?

Support for gender equality

Despite widespread perceptions that women enjoy equal rights, Mozambicans offer varying levels of support for equality when it comes to land, getting a job, caring for the home and children, and running for political office.

About eight in 10 (79%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that women should have the same right as men to land. But more than half (54%) say that when jobs are scarce, men should be given priority (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Support for equal rights to land and jobs | Mozambique | 2018



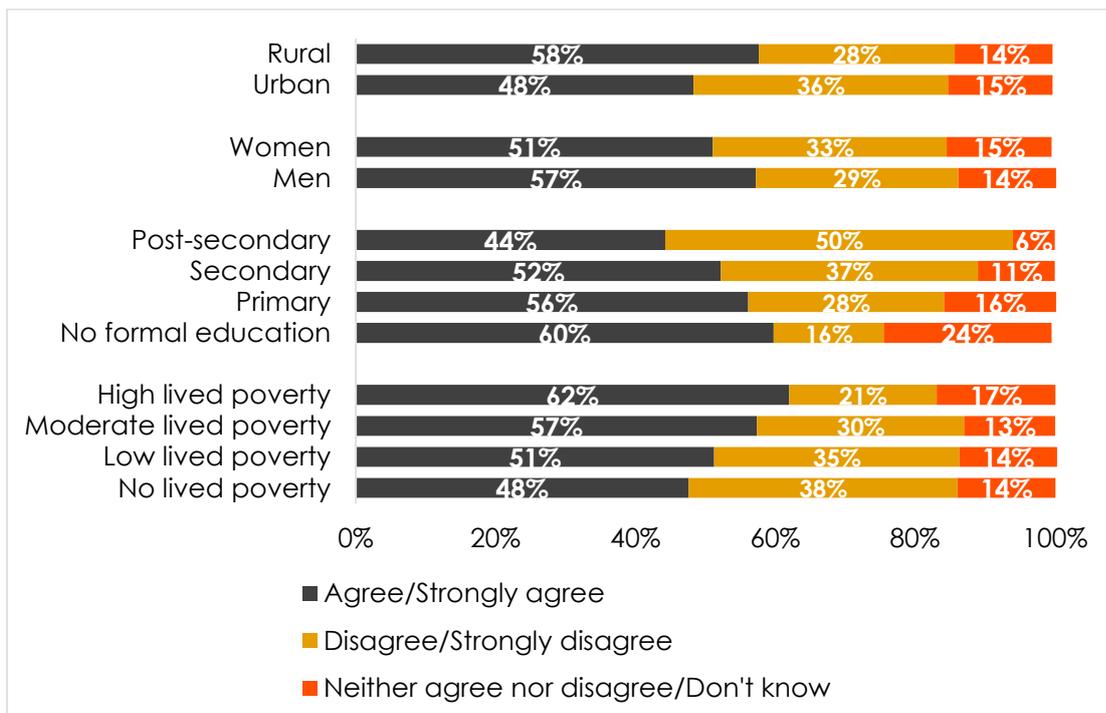
Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree:

Women should have the same rights as men to own and inherit land?

When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women?

The view that men should have more right to paying work than women is more common among men (57%), but even among women, more than half (51%) endorse this form of discrimination. It is also more prevalent in rural areas (58%) than in cities (48%), among less-educated citizens (60% of those with no formal education vs. 44% of those with post-secondary qualifications), and among the poor (62% of those with high lived poverty compared to 48% of those with no lived poverty) (Figure 8).

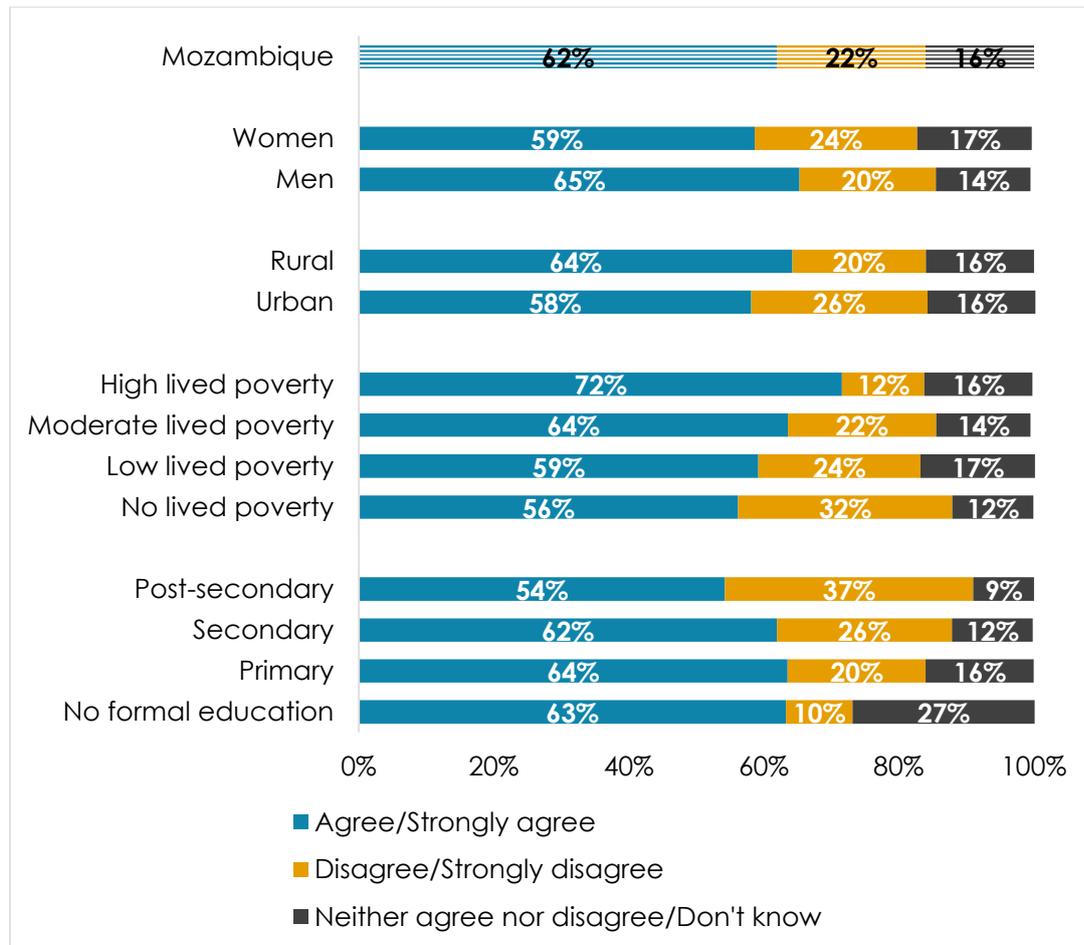
Figure 8: Should men have more right to a job? | by socio-demographic group | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women?

Moreover, more than six in 10 Mozambicans (62%) say it is better for a family if a woman, rather than a man, has the main responsibility for taking care of the home and children. This view is less widely shared, though still the majority opinion, among women (59% vs. 65% of men), urban residents (58% vs. 64% of rural dwellers), well-off respondents (56%), and the most-educated (54%) (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Better if women care for home and children? | by socio-demographic group | Mozambique | 2018

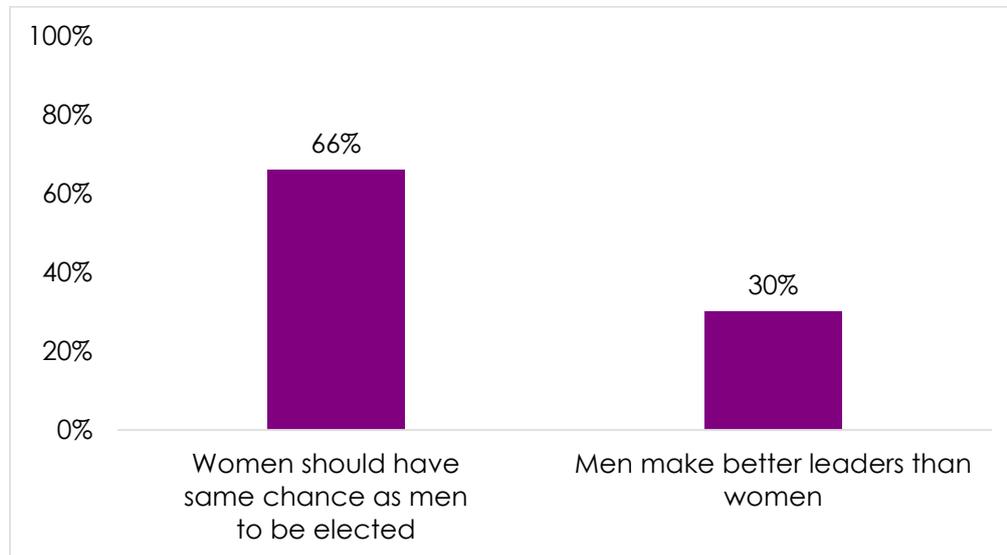


Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree: In general, it is better for a family if a woman has the main responsibility for taking care of the home and children rather than a man.

Two-thirds (66%) of Mozambicans, however, say that women should have the same chance as men of being elected to political office, while 30% believe that men make better leaders and should be elected rather than women (Figure 10).

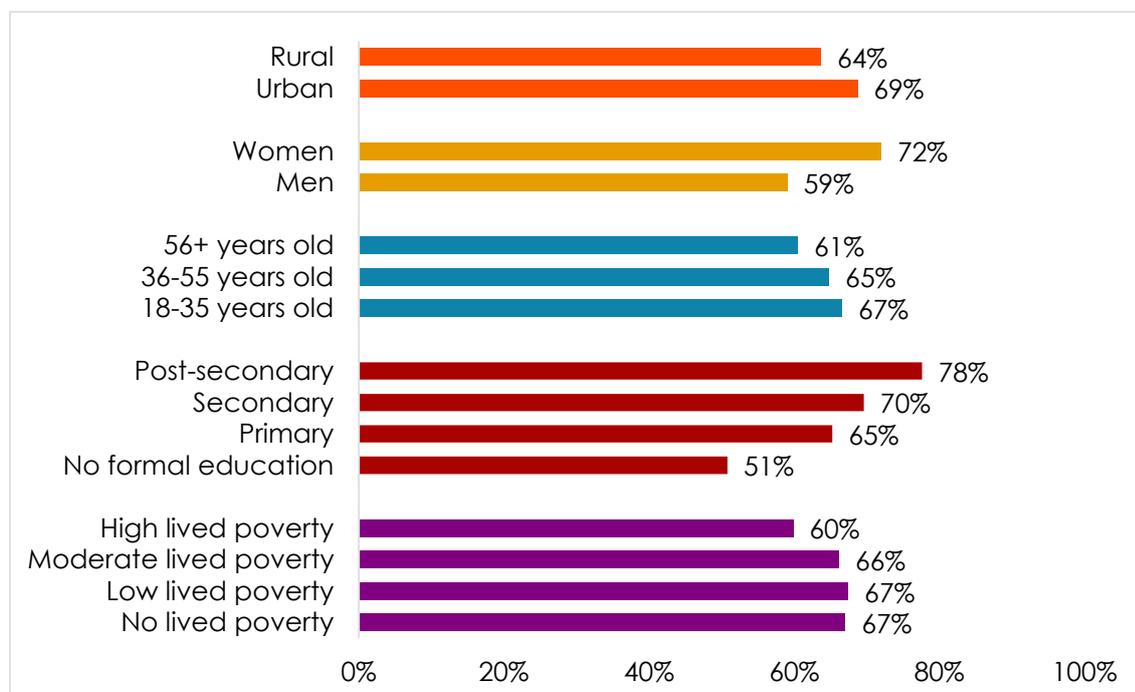
Majorities across key socio-demographic groups endorse equality when it comes to running for public office, although men (59%) are considerably less likely than women (72%) to support equality (Figure 11). Support increases strongly with respondents' education level, ranging from 51% of those with no formal schooling to 78% of those with post-secondary education, and is somewhat higher among urban residents, younger citizens, and economically better-off respondents.

Figure 10: Should women have equal chance to be elected to public office?
 | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women.
 Statement 2: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men.
 (% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” with each statement)

Figure 11: Support for women’s equal chance to be elected | by socio-demographic group | Mozambique | 2018



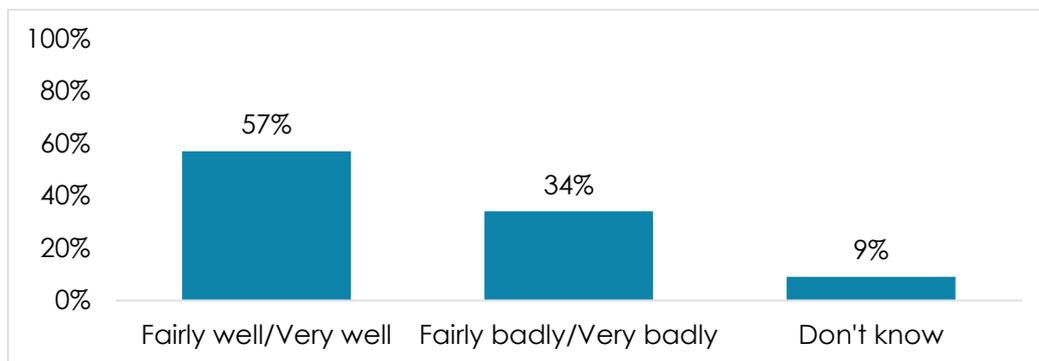
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women.
 Statement 2: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men.
 (% who “agree” or “agree very strongly” that women should have the same chance as men)

Government performance on promoting equal opportunity

Overall, a majority (57%) of Mozambicans say the government is doing “fairly well” or “very well” on promoting equal rights and opportunities for women, though a substantial minority (34%) disagree (Figure 12).

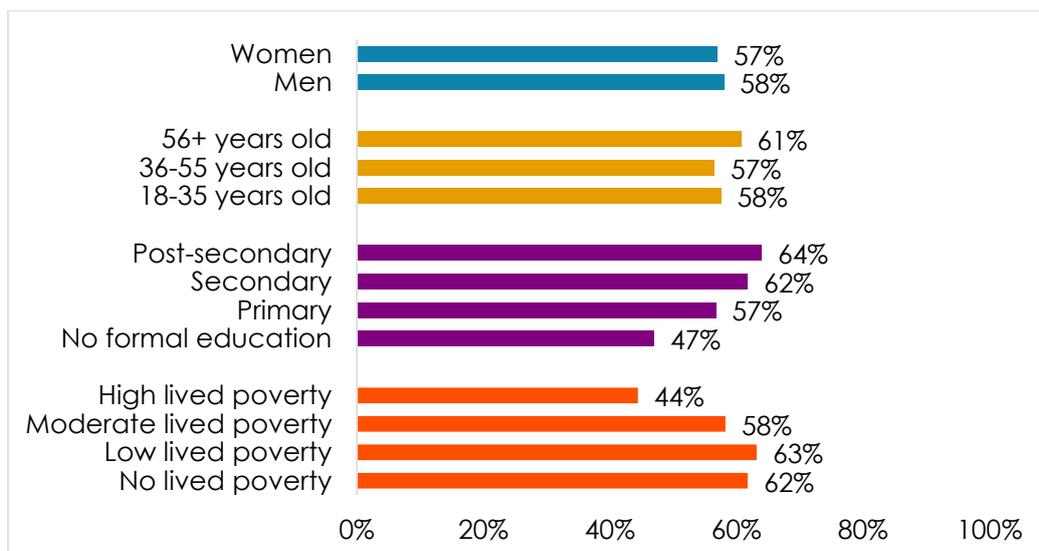
The most-educated respondents are most positive in their evaluations of government performance in promoting gender equality: More than six in 10 of those with post-secondary (64%) or secondary (62%) education say it is doing “fairly well” or “very well,” compared to just 47% of those with no formal education (Figure 13). Similarly, better-off citizens (62%-63%) are more likely to praise the government’s performance than their poorer compatriots (44% of those with high lived poverty). As with perceptions of progress on equal rights, these assessments may reflect the availability of better opportunities for educated and better-off women compared to less-educated and poorer women.

Figure 12: Government performance on promoting opportunities and equality for women | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Promoting opportunities and equality for women?

Figure 13: Government performing well on promoting opportunities and equality for women | by socio-demographic group | Mozambique | 2018



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Promoting opportunities and equality for women? (% who say “fairly well” or “very well”)

Conclusion

Survey findings suggest that while gender equality is widely supported – and perceived as having been attained – in Mozambique, there is room for continued improvement. Gender-based discrimination still affects a substantial number of citizens, and strong support for equality when it comes to land and politics does not extend to the job market and gender roles in the home.

Do your own analysis of Afrobarometer data – on any question,
for any country and survey round. It's easy and free at
www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.

References

- Africa.com. (2019). Mozambique: Land and property rights. 19 February. <https://www.africa.com/mozambique-land-and-property-rights/>.
- AllAfrica. (2018). Mozambique: Action plan on women, peace and security launched. 11 June. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806120229.html>.
- Christensen, H. (2018). Mozambique programme empowers girls to fight gender inequality, child marriage. United Nations Population Fund. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/mozambique-programme-empowers-girls-fight-gender-inequality-child-marriage>.
- Cumbe, N., Materula, D., Sadler, J., & Agosta, L. (2017). Providing journalists the tools and information to support women in Mozambique. 27 March. <https://www.irex.org/success-story/providing-journalists-tools-and-information-support-women-mozambique>.
- Education Policy and Data Center. (2018). Mozambique: Education overview. FHI360. <https://www.epdc.org/country/mozambique>.
- International Federation for Human Rights. (2007). Women's rights in Mozambique: Duty to end illegal practices. International Fact-Finding Mission Report. <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/mozambique474angconjointfemme.pdf>.
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. (2007). Towards gender equality in Mozambique: A profile on gender relations update 2006. https://www.sida.se/contentassets/80caaf7d1aaf48738b7b70386574b59e/towards-gender-equality-in-mozambique_693.pdf.
- Tvedten, I. (2011). Mozambique country case study: Gender equality and development. World Development Report 2012. World Bank. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/Tvedten-mozambique.pdf>.
- UN Women. (2012). Mozambique is moving towards gender equality. http://cebem.org/cmsfiles/publicaciones/Bulletin_gender_01.pdf.
- UNESCO. (2015). Women's literacy in Angola and Mozambique. <https://uil.unesco.org/case-study/effective-practices-database-litbase-0/womens-literacy-angola-and-mozambique-mozambique>.
- UNESCO. (2018). Women build better lives in Mozambique through education. <https://en.unesco.org/news/women-build-better-lives-mozambique-through-education>.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2018). Gender development index (GDI). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi>.
- United Nations Population Fund. (2018). Mozambique programme empowers girls to fight gender inequality, child marriage. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/mozambique-programme-empowers-girls-fight-gender-inequality-child-marriage>.
- World Bank. (2018). Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS?locations=MZ>.
- World Economic Forum. (2008). The global gender gap report 2008. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2008.pdf.
- World Economic Forum. (2018). The global gender gap report 2018. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf.

Sadhiska Bhoojedhur is a research analyst at StraConsult Ltd, the Afrobarometer national partner in Mauritius. Email: sadhiska.bhoojedhur@gmail.com.

Thomas Isbell is a PhD student at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Email: tisbell@afrobarometer.org.

Afrobarometer is produced collaboratively by social scientists from more than 30 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) in Ghana, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, and the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IREEP) in Benin. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) provide technical support to the network.

Financial support for Afrobarometer Round 7 has been provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development via the U.S. Institute of Peace, the National Endowment for Democracy, and Transparency International.

Donations help the Afrobarometer Project give voice to African citizens. Please consider making a contribution (at www.afrobarometer.org) or contact Felix Biga (felixbiga@afrobarometer.org) to discuss institutional funding.

For more information, please visit www.afrobarometer.org.



[/Afrobarometer](https://www.facebook.com/Afrobarometer)



[@Afrobarometer](https://twitter.com/Afrobarometer)



Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 291 | 4 April 2019