People’s development agenda, leaders’ performance, national dialogue, freedoms, and perceptions of social media

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 8 survey in Zimbabwe

7 July 2021
At a glance

- **People’s development agenda:** Unemployment is the single most important problem that Zimbabweans want their government to address, followed by infrastructure/roads and education.

- **National dialogue:** Almost three-fourths (73%) of Zimbabweans call for an all-inclusive national dialogue that goes beyond political parties.

- **Views on fundamental freedoms:** Almost four out of five citizens (79%) say they “often” or “always” have to be careful what they say about politics.
What is Afrobarometer?

- A pan-African, non-partisan, non-profit survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans’ experiences and evaluations of quality of life, governance, and democracy.


- **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.

- A national partner in each country conducts the survey. In Zimbabwe, the Afrobarometer Round 8 survey was conducted by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI).
Where Afrobarometer works
Methodology

• Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
  - All respondents are randomly selected.
  - Sample is distributed across regions/states/provinces 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 Zimbabwe of 1,200 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

• Fieldwork for Round 8 in Zimbabwe was conducted between 16 April and 1 May 2021.
## Survey demographics

| Zimbabwe | 2021 |

### Gender

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>50</td>
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### Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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### Education

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<td>Primary</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>16</td>
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### Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland East</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mashonaland West</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mashonaland Central</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matabeleland South</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matabeleland North</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>
People’s development agenda
Key findings

- Unemployment is the most important problem that Zimbabweans want their government to address, cited by 38% of respondents as one of their three priorities.

- Infrastructure/roads (33%), education (31%), and management of the economy (26%), follow as top priorities on citizens’ agenda.
**Most important problem that the government should address** | **Zimbabwe** | **2021**

- **Unemployment**: 38%
- **Infrastructure/Roads**: 33%
- **Education**: 31%
- **Management of the economy**: 26%
- **Water supply**: 20%
- **Health**: 19%
- **Corruption**: 17%
- **Food shortage/Famine**: 15%
- **Rates and taxes**: 7%
- **Cash crisis**: 7%

**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Up to three responses per person)
Leaders’ performance ratings
Key findings

- More than half (52%) of Zimbabweans disapprove of the way President Mnangagwa has performed his job over the past 12 months.

- Six in 10 (61%) rate their member of Parliament’s performance poorly.

- Opinions are split on how local councillors did their jobs: 48% approve and 47% disapprove of their performance.

- Traditional leaders received the most positive ratings, with 72% approving of their performance.
Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: President Emmerson Mnangagwa?
Performance rating for members of Parliament | by urban-rural location and party affiliation | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: Your member of Parliament?

Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: Your member of Parliament?
Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: Your elected local government councillor?
Respondents were asked: Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the following people have performed their jobs over the past 12 months, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say: Your traditional leader?
National dialogue
Key findings

- Almost three out of four Zimbabweans (73%) call for a national dialogue that extends beyond political parties to include other stakeholders such as businesses, churches, and civil society.

- More rural residents (76%) than urbanites (68%) are supportive of an all-inclusive national dialogue.

- A huge majority (90%) of residents in Mashonaland Central province “agree” or “strongly agree” that a national dialogue going beyond political parties is needed.
Support for an all-inclusive national dialogue | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: For the following statement, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven’t you heard enough to say: The national dialogue process in Zimbabwe should go beyond political parties and include the participation of other stakeholders, including businesses, churches, and civil society?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree/Strongly agree</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree/Strongly disagree</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree/ Don't know/Refused</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support for an all-inclusive national dialogue
| by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: For the following statement, please tell me whether you disagree or agree, or haven’t you heard enough to say: The national dialogue process in Zimbabwe should go beyond political parties and include the participation of other stakeholders, including businesses, churches, and civil society? (% who “agree” or “strongly agree”)

- Women: 68%
- Men: 78%
- 56+ years: 73%
- 36-55 years: 77%
- 18-35 years: 70%
- Rural: 76%
- Urban: 68%
- Post-secondary education: 71%
- Secondary education: 75%
- Primary/No formal education: 70%
- Mashonaland Central: 90%
- Manicaland: 85%
- Mashonaland East: 80%
- Mashonaland West: 76%
- Masvingo: 72%
- Midlands: 70%
- Bulawayo/Mat North/Mat South: 68%
- Harare: 59%
Support for POLAD | Zimbabwe | 2021

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: The ongoing Political Actors Dialogue (or POLAD) framework is the only option to bring about national stability and development in Zimbabwe?

- Agree/Strongly agree: 49%
- Disagree/Strongly disagree: 23%
- Neither agree nor disagree/ Don't know/ Refused: 28%
Perceptions of freedoms
Key findings

- More than half (54%) of Zimbabweans say they are “somewhat free” or “completely free” to say what they think, a 6-percentage-point increase compared to 2017 (48%).

- But eight out of 10 citizens (79%) say they “often” or “always” have to be careful about what they say regarding politics.

- More than four out of 10 respondents (42%) say they are “not very free” or “not at all free” to join any political organization they want.

- Almost seven out of 10 (68%) say they are “somewhat free” or “completely free” to vote for a candidate of their choice.
Respondents were asked: **In this country, how free are you to say what you think?**

- **Somewhat free / Completely free**: 54%
- **Not at all free / Not very free**: 45%
Respondents were asked: In this country, how free are you to say what you think? (% who say “somewhat free” or “completely free”)
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country do people have to be careful of what they say about politics?
Careful about political speech | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: In your opinion, how often, in this country do people have to be careful of what they say about politics? (% who say “often” or “always”)

- Women: 85%
- Men: 73%
- 56+ years: 72%
- 36-55 years: 85%
- 18-35 years: 76%
- Rural: 78%
- Urban: 81%
- Post-secondary education: 93%
- Secondary education: 78%
- Primary/No formal education: 73%
- Masvingo: 71%
- Bulawayo/Mat North/Mat South: 75%
- Harare: 76%
- Midlands: 78%
- Mashonaland Central: 78%
- Mashonaland East: 80%
- Mashonaland West: 81%
- Manicaland: 96%
Respondents were asked: In this country, how free are you to join any political organization you want?
Freedom to join any political organization | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: In this country, how free are you to join any political organization you want? (% who say “somewhat free” or “completely free”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Group</th>
<th>Freedom to Join</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary education</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/No formal education</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicaland</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland Central</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland West</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashonaland East</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masvingo</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulawayo/Mat North/Mat South</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56+ years</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-55 years</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked: In this country, how free are you to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured?
Respondents were asked: In this country, how free are you to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured? (% who say “somewhat free” or “completely free”)

Free to choose whom to vote for | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021
Perceptions of social media
Key findings

- Eight in 10 adult Zimbabweans (80%) say they have heard about social media.

- More than four in 10 (42%) say they get news from social media “every day” or “a few times a week.”

- About two-thirds (65%) hold the view that social media and the Internet help to keep citizens informed and active, and thus unrestricted access to them should be protected.

- Above half (55%) believe social media users spread information that they know is false.

- Among those who have heard about social media:
  - Six in 10 (61%) see its overall effects on society as positive.
  - But a majority (71%) also say social media makes people more likely to believe false news.
Heard about social media? | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Have you heard about social media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp?
Have you heard about social media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp? (% who say “yes”)

**Zimbabwe 2021**

**Respondents were asked:**

- Men: 82%
- Women: 77%
- 18-35 years: 86%
- 36-55 years: 80%
- 56+ years: 58%
- Rural: 72%
- Urban: 93%
- Primary/No formal education: 56%
- Secondary education: 85%
- Post-secondary education: 98%
- Harare: 92%
- Bulawayo/Mat North/Mat South: 78%
- Midlands: 74%
- Masvingo: 76%
- Mashonaland East: 80%
- Mashonaland West: 84%
- Mashonaland Central: 79%
- Manicaland: 66%

**Demographic Breakdown:**

- Age Groups: 18-35 years, 36-55 years, 56+ years
- Gender: Men, Women
- Education: Primary/No formal education, Secondary education, Post-secondary education
- Location: Urban, Rural
- Region: Harare, Bulawayo/Mat North/Mat South, Midlands, Masvingo, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central, Manicaland
Respondents were asked: How often do you get news from the following sources: Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or others? (% who say “a few times a week” or “every day”)

- **56+ years**: 19%
- **36-55 years**: 40%
- **18-35 years**: 49%

- **Post-secondary education**: 69%
- **Secondary education**: 48%
- **Primary/No formal education**: 8%

- **Women**: 34%
- **Men**: 49%

- **Rural**: 26%
- **Urban**: 67%

- **Average**: 42%

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Overall effects of social media on society are positive | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary education</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal/Primary education</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56+ years</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-55 years</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked: Overall, do you think that the effects of social media on society are mostly positive, mostly negative, or haven’t you heard enough to say? (% who say “somewhat positive” or “very positive”)

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Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Unrestricted access to the Internet and social media helps people to be more informed and active citizens, and should be protected.

Statement 2: Information shared on the Internet and social media is dividing Zimbabweans, so access should be regulated by government.

Agreement with each statement:
- Don't know: 10%
- Agree with neither: 4%
- Agree/Agree very strongly with 1: 65%
- Agree/Agree very strongly with 2: 21%
Specific positive and negative effects of social media
| Zimbabwe | 2021

**Respondents were asked:** Regardless of whether you personally use social media yourself, please tell me whether you agree or disagree that social media... (% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with each statement)

- **Makes people more informed about current events**: 91%
- **Makes people more likely to believe false information**: 71%
- **Helps people have more impact on political processes**: 49%
- **Makes people more intolerant of those with different views**: 44%
Social media users spread information that they know is false | Zimbabwe | 2021

Respondents were asked: Please tell me how often, in this country, you think people from each of the following groups spread information that they know is false: social media users.

- **Don’t know/Haven’t heard enough**: 29%
- **Sometimes/Often**: 55%
- **Rarely**: 11%
- **Never**: 5%

**Respondents were asked**: Please tell me how often, in this country, you think people from each of the following groups spread information that they know is false: social media users.
Conclusion
Conclusion

- Citizens want the government to deal with unemployment.
- More than half of Zimbabweans disapprove of the way President Mnangagwa has performed his job over the past 12 months.
- A majority want an all-inclusive national dialogue.
- Small majorities say they enjoy freedom of speech and freedom to join political organizations of their choice.
- But a huge majority of citizens say they “often” or “always” have to be careful about what they say regarding politics.
- Most Zimbabweans have heard about social media. Among those who are, a majority see its overall effects on society as positive, but a majority also think it makes people more likely to believe false news.
Thank you

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