

Afrobarometer
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News release

African women face persistent gender gaps in education, jobs, and digital access, Afrobarometer survey finds

Despite widespread popular support for gender equality, African women are still disadvantaged by persistent gender gaps in education, employment, control over key assets, and access to technology, a new analysis from Afrobarometer shows.



Findings from national surveys in 34 African countries are detailed in Afrobarometer's new Pan-Africa Profile based on a special gender-equality survey module. The [analysis](#), released today, reports that although there are substantial cross-country differences, African societies are generally supportive of women's equality in principle, report considerable success in achieving equality in practice, and tend to applaud government performance in promoting rights and opportunities for women.

But women still trail men on almost all indicators, in almost all countries, when it comes to educational attainment, labour-force participation and employment, and control over household assets and resources. In the digital world – a source of critical economic, social, and political opportunities – African women may even be falling further behind.

Key findings

- On average across 34 African countries, substantial majorities support women's right to run for political office (71%) and to own and inherit land (72%). They are less committed to full economic equality: A much slimmer majority (53%) favour equal access to jobs, compared to 42% who say men should have preference (Figure 1).
- More than one in four Africans (28%) – including 24% of women – see wife-beating as justifiable. In Gabon and Liberia, seven in 10 citizens share this view (Figure 2).
- While most Africans say girls and boys now have equal access to education, significant gender gaps in educational achievement remain (Figure 3). Even among the youngest cohort, more women than men have no formal education, and more men than women have post-primary schooling.
- Large majorities also say women have achieved equal access to jobs. But women are less likely to participate in the labour market (55% vs. 67% of men), and among those who do, women are more likely to be unemployed (52% vs. 39%) (Figure 4).
- About one in eight women (12%) say they experienced discrimination based on their gender during the past year. One in three (32%) Liberian women report this experience.
- Women lag behind men in ownership of assets (Figure 5) and are substantially less likely to have decision-making power over household resources.
- Women also trail men on indicators of digital access and connection (Figure 6). And the gap may be widening: Although women's Internet use has doubled over the past five years, the gender gap in regular Internet use has increased.

- Africans are divided on the question of whether women are making progress; 49% say equal opportunities and treatment for women are better than a few years ago, but almost as many say they are the same (31%) or worse (19%).
- Nonetheless, almost two-thirds (64%) give their governments positive marks on promoting equal rights. There is, in short, some disconnect between popular satisfaction with equality performance and significant – and sometimes growing – gaps in actual achievement.

Afrobarometer surveys

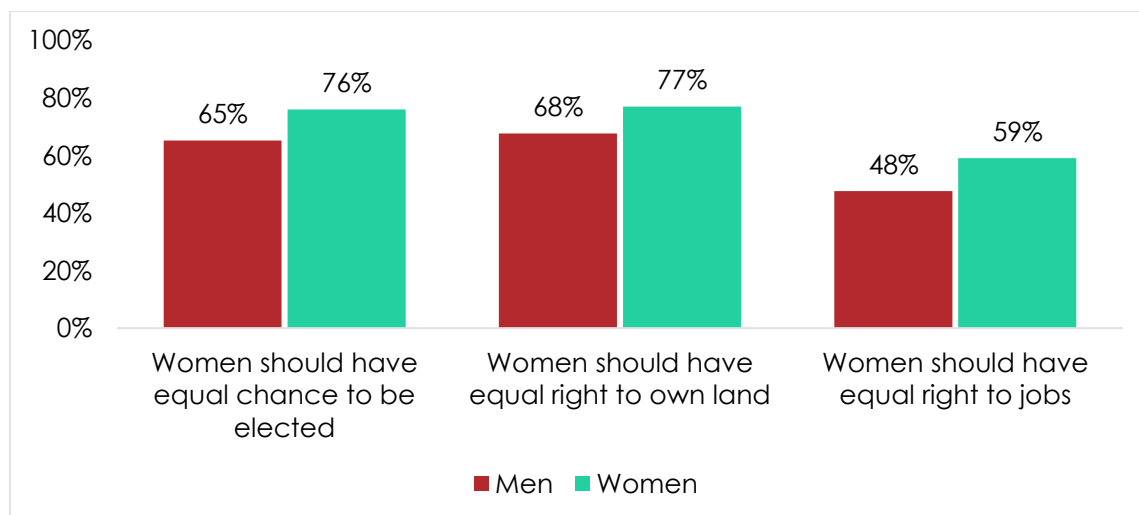
Afrobarometer heads a pan-African, nonpartisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across Africa. After six rounds of surveys in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2015, Round 7 surveys included 45,823 interviews completed in 34 countries between September 2016 and September 2018. The special module on gender equality was carried out in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Round 8 surveys are planned in at least 35 countries in 2019/2020. Interested readers may follow all our releases, including our Pan-Africa Profiles series of cross-country analyses, at #VoicesAfrica, and sign up for our distribution list at www.afrobarometer.org.

Charts

Figure 1: Support for women's equality | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked:

Which of the following statements is closest to your view? (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with Statement 2)

Statement 1: Men make better political leaders than women, and should be elected rather than women.

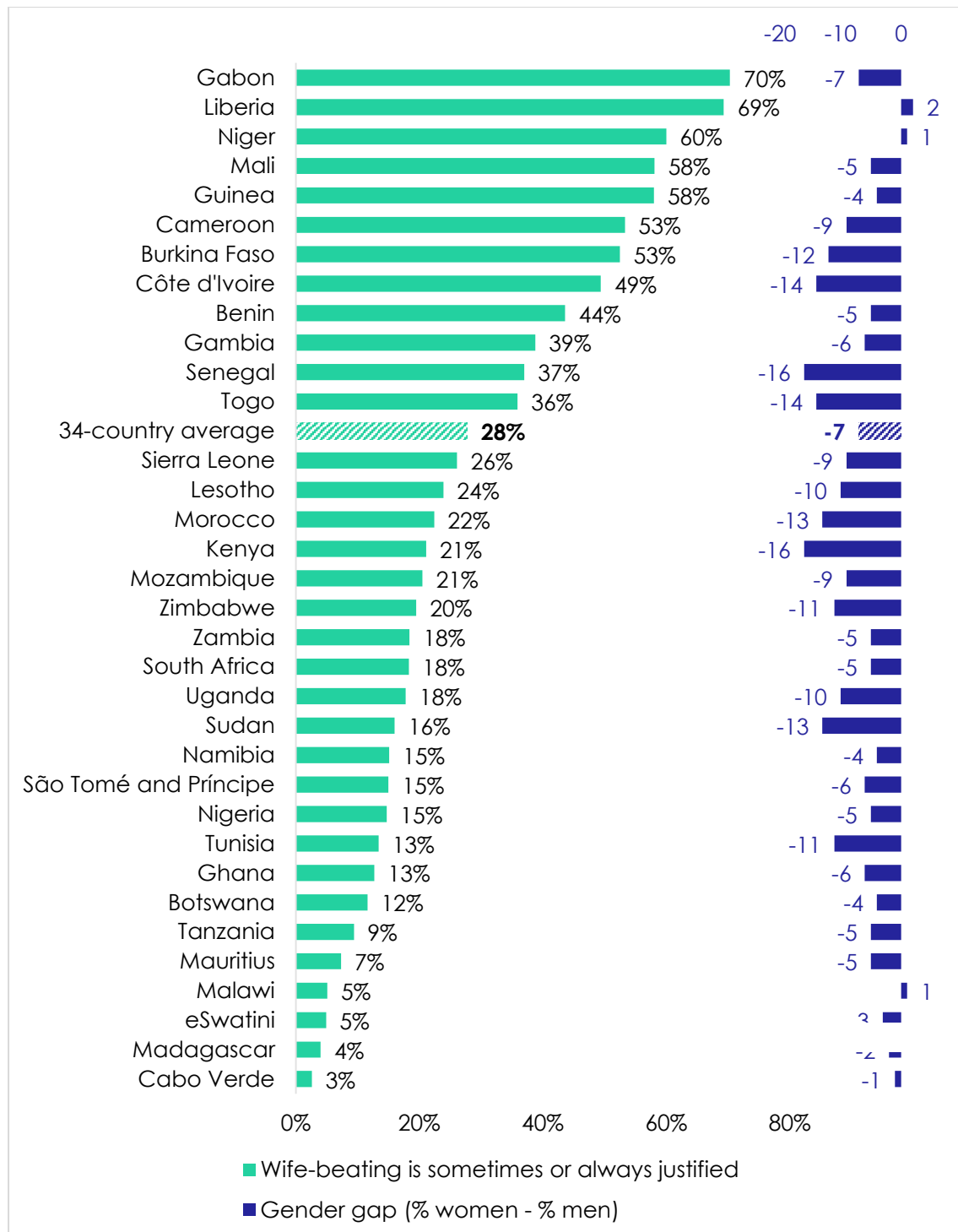
Statement 2: Women should have the same chance of being elected to political office as men.

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. (% who "agree" or "agree very strongly")

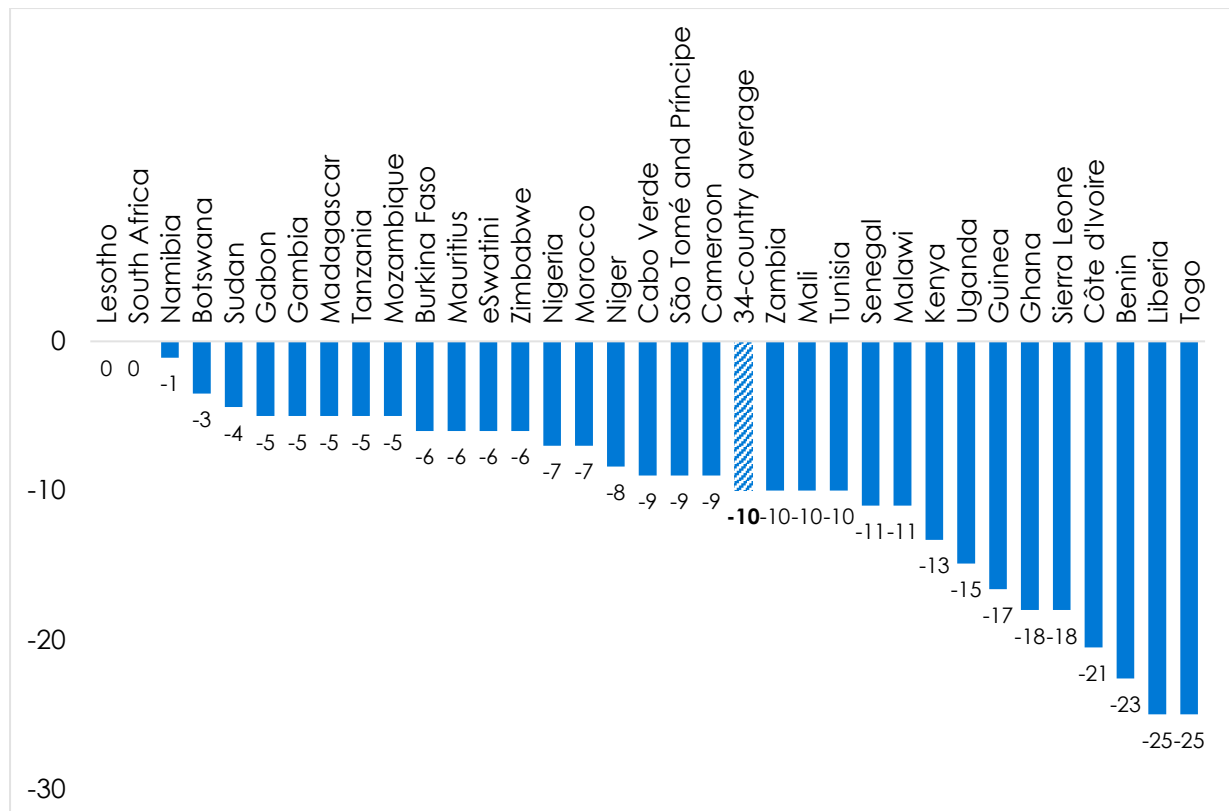
When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women. (% who "disagree" or "disagree very strongly")

Figure 2: Justified for men to beat their wives | % by country and gender gap
 | 34 countries | 2016/2018



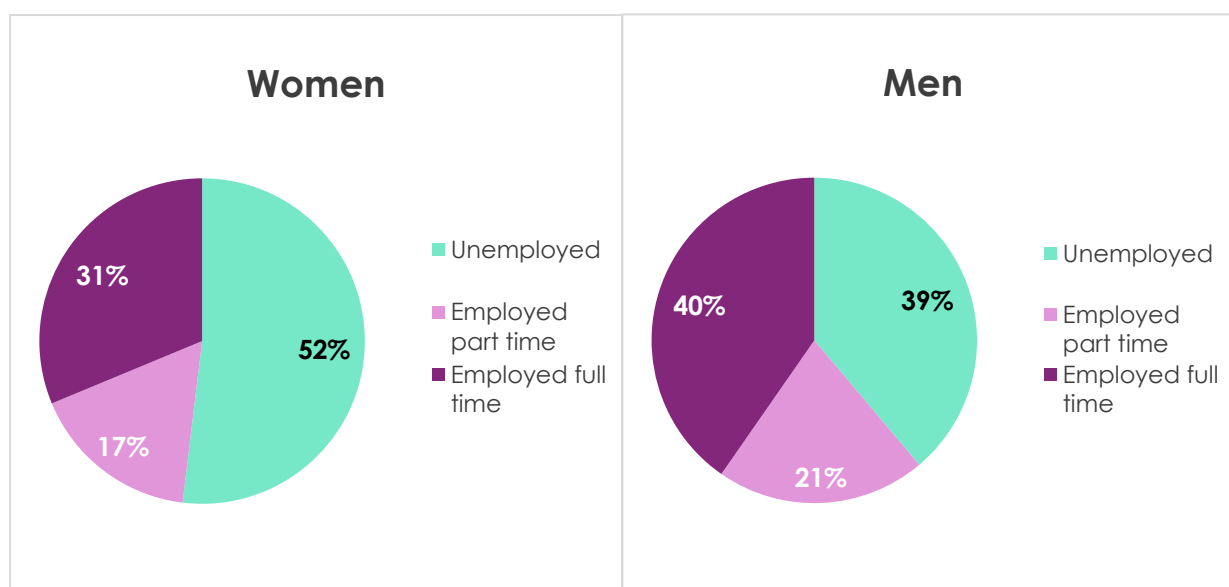
Respondents were asked: Please tell me for each of the following actions whether you think it can always be justified, sometimes be justified, or never be justified: For a man to beat his wife? (Bars on the left show % who say "sometimes justified" or "always justified"; bars on the right show the proportion of women minus the proportion of men who give these responses.)

Figure 3: Gender gap in post-primary education (percentage points) | 34 countries
 | 2016/2018



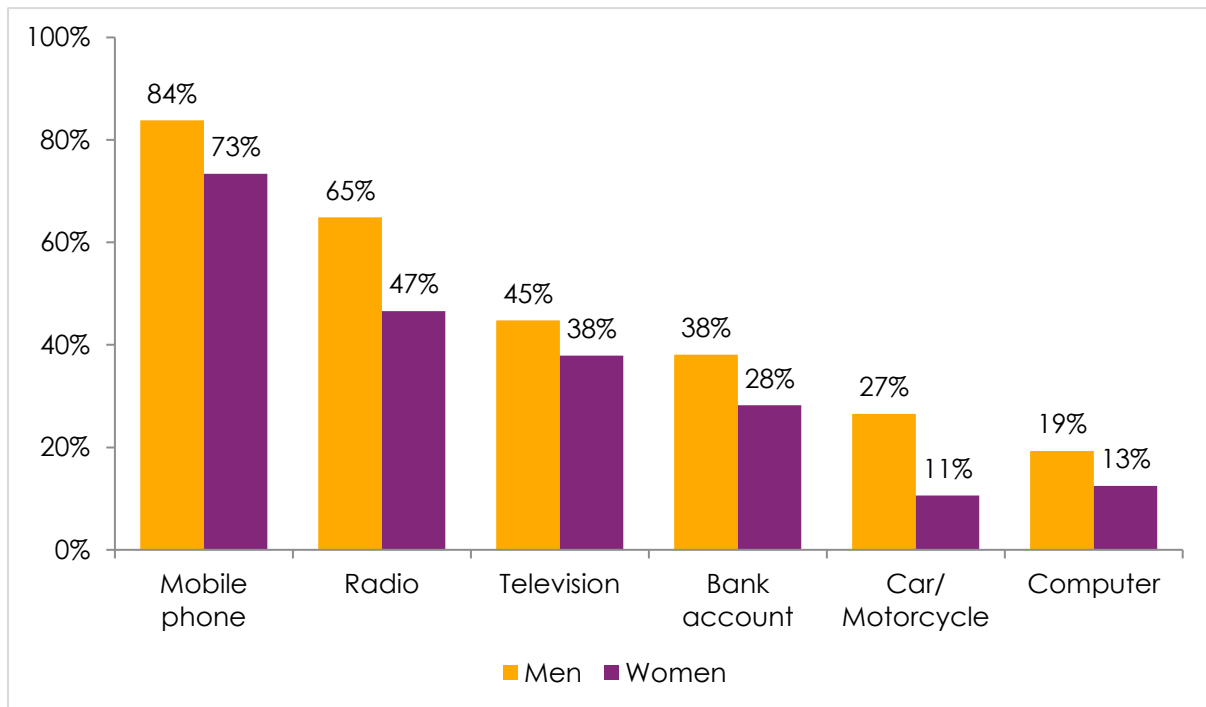
Respondents were asked: What is your highest level of education? (percentage-point difference between men and women in proportions reporting secondary or post-secondary education)

Figure 4: Employment status of women and men, excluding “not working/not looking”
 | 34 countries | 2016/2018



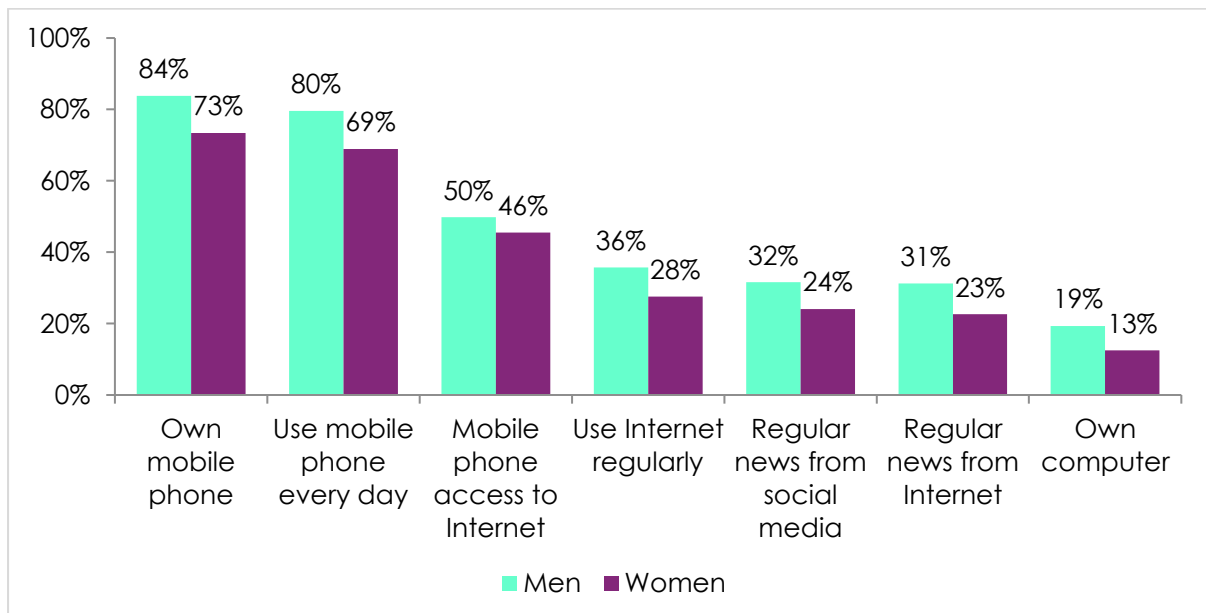
Respondents were asked: Do you have a job that pays a cash income? [If yes:] Is it full time or part time? [If no:] Are you currently looking for a job? (% excluding those who are inactive, i.e. those not working and not currently looking for work)

Figure 5: Asset ownership | 33 countries* | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked: Which of these things do you personally own? (% "yes")
 (* Data not available for Kenya, the first country surveyed in the round, because these questions were revised for subsequent countries.)

Figure 6: Evidence of a digital divide, by gender | 34 countries | 2016/2018



Respondents were asked:
 Which of these things do you personally own: Computer? Mobile phone? (% "yes")
 Does your phone have access to the Internet? (% "yes")
 How often do you use a mobile phone? (% "every day")
 How often do you use the Internet? (% "a few times a week" or "every day")
 How often do you get news from the following sources: Internet? Social media? (% "a few times a week" or "every day")

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