

# Zambians overwhelmingly disapprove of domestic violence and corporal punishment

**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 20 | Fison Mujenja**

## Summary

An overwhelming majority of Zambians say they are opposed to physical violence as a way to discipline women and children, Afrobarometer's most recent survey reveals.<sup>1</sup> Disapproval of wife battering is so widespread in Zambia that there is little or no difference in views across genders, urban/rural locations, or education levels.

Opposition to corporal punishment of children, both at home and at school, is also the majority view, though less widespread than disapproval of physical discipline of wives.

Even though most Zambians "strongly disagree" with the idea that husbands, parents, and teachers have the right to punish wives, children, and pupils, respectively, the 2013-2014 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey reports that 47% of married women have been victims of violence from their current or former husbands/partners, and 43% of victims incurred physical injuries (Zambia Central Statistical Office, 2015).

## Afrobarometer survey

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in Zambia, led by RuralNet Associates, interviewed 1,200 adult Zambians in October 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 Zambia in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, and 2012.

## Key findings

- Nearly nine out of 10 Zambians (87%) say husbands should not have the right to physically punish their wives. Men (85%) are almost as likely as women (89%) to hold this view, which is shared equally by urban and rural residents.
- About six out of 10 Zambians disapprove of parents using physical punishment to discipline their children, and about seven out of 10 do not agree that teachers have the right to physically punish pupils. Disapproval of corporal punishment of children is the majority view across respondents' genders, locations, and education levels.

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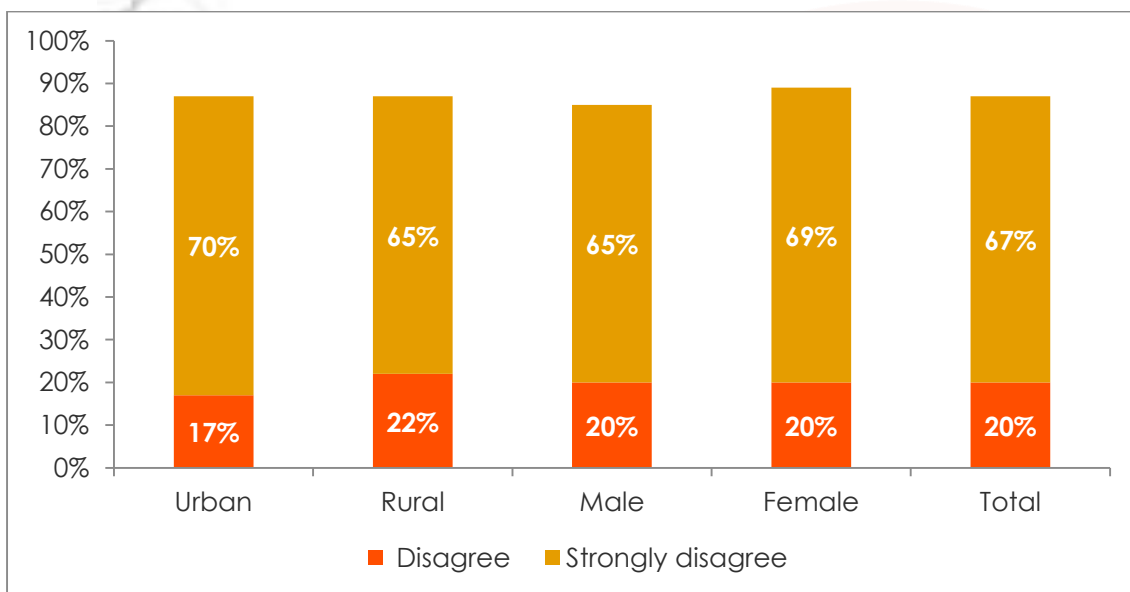
<sup>1</sup> This dispatch corrects initial Afrobarometer reports that misstated survey findings due to a coding error.

**Zambians do not condone physical punishment of wives**

An overwhelming majority (87%) of Zambians do not believe that a husband should have the right to physically punish his wife (Figure 1). Disapproval of wife battering is the norm amongst both men (85%) and women (89%). It matters little whether survey respondents live in urban or rural areas – their attitudes toward battering are roughly the same. Further analysis indicates the strength of public opinion regarding domestic violence: More than three times as many respondents “strongly disagree” (67%) as simply “disagree” (20%) with husbands’ right to beat their wives.

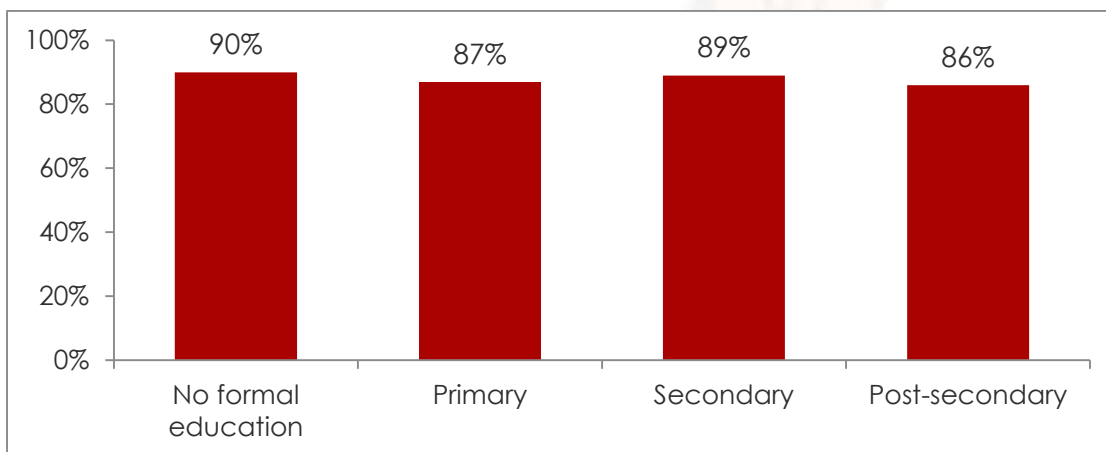
Respondents at all levels of educational attainment are about equally strong in their rejection of physical punishment of wives (Figure 2).

**Figure 1: Disapproval of physical punishment of wives | Zambia | 2014**



**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you agree or disagree: Husbands should have the right to use physical punishment on their wives as a way of disciplining them?

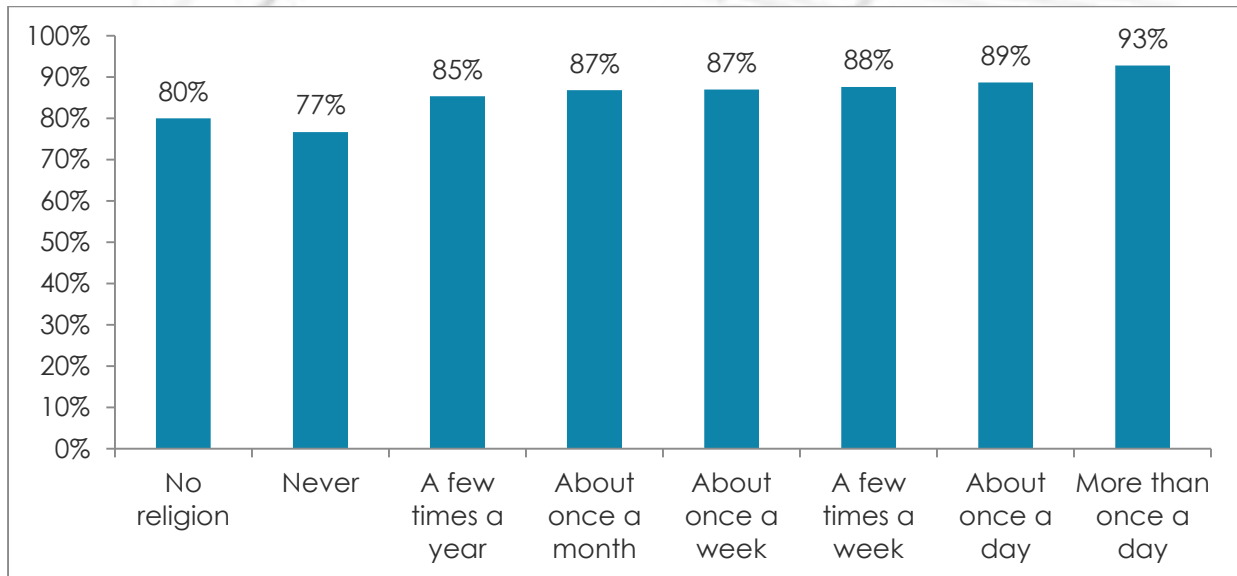
**Figure 2: Disapproval of physical punishment of wives | by respondent's education level | Zambia | 2014**



**Respondents were asked:** What is your highest level of education? (% who “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with husbands’ right to physically discipline their wives)

Religious devotion may have a moderating effect on attitudes toward domestic violence: Respondents who are more religious (as measured by the frequency of personal engagement in religious practices such as prayer, reading a religious book, or attending a religious service or a meeting of a religious group) are slightly more likely to disapprove of physical punishment of wives than their less-religious counterparts (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Disapproval of physical punishment of wives** | by frequency of religious practice | Zambia | 2014



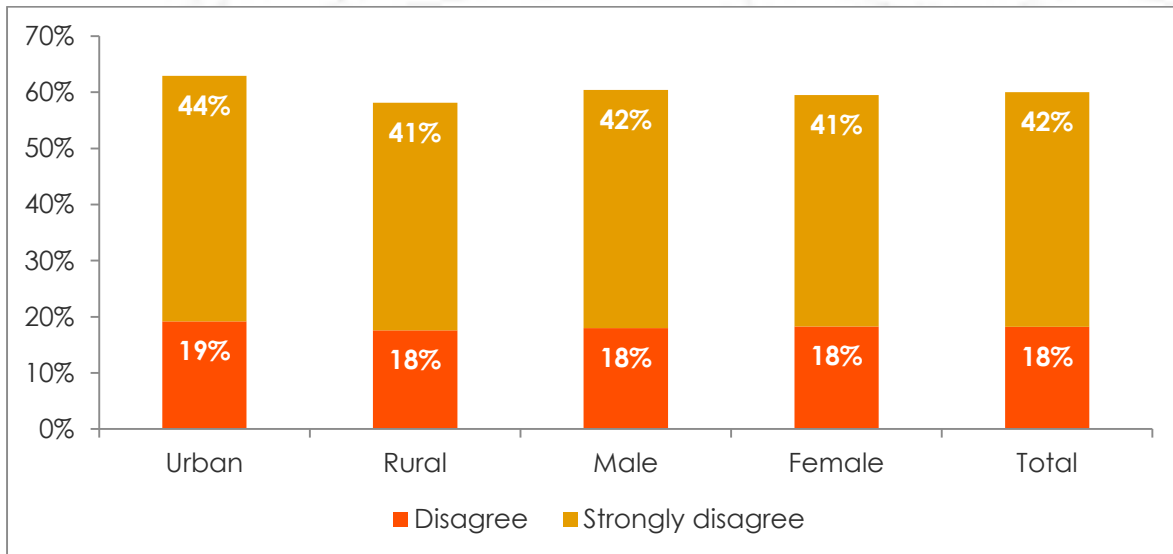
**Respondents were asked:** *People practice their religion in different ways. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you personally engage in religious practices like prayer, reading a religious book, or attending a religious service or a meeting of a religious group? (% who “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with husbands’ right to physically discipline their wives)*

### Zambians do not sanction corporal punishment of children at home or at school

In line with the potentially devastating effects of violence against children (Duvvury, Callan, Carney, & Raghavendra, 2013), Zambians do not sanction the use of corporal punishment at home or at school.

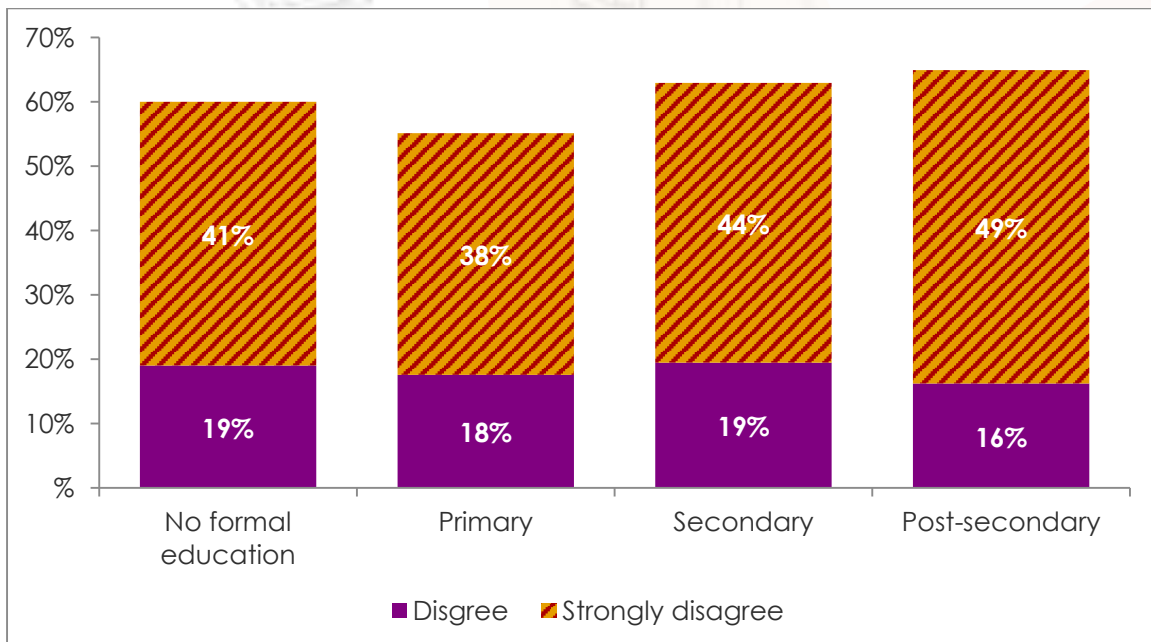
Survey results show that three out of five (60%) Zambians disagree with the idea that parents should have the right to physically punish their children. Urban and better-educated respondents are slightly more likely to oppose corporal punishment than rural and less-educated respondents (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

**Figure 4: Disapproval of physical punishment of children by parents | by respondent's location and gender | Zambia | 2014**



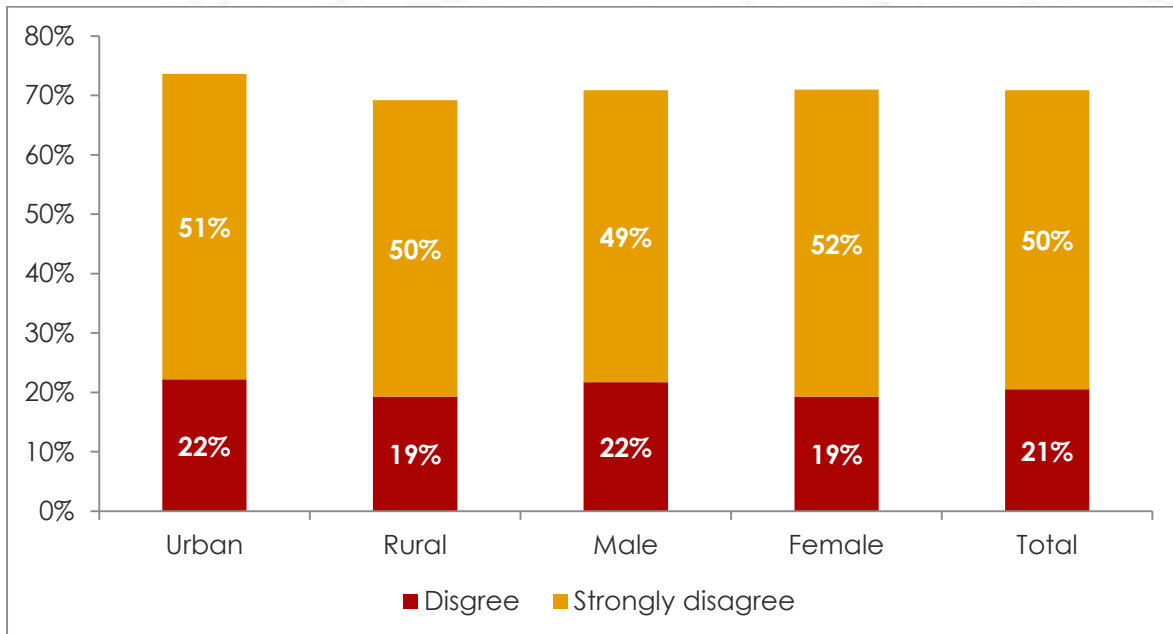
**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you agree or disagree: Parents should have the right to use physical punishment on their children as a way of disciplining them?

**Figure 5: Disapproval of physical punishment of children by parents | by respondent's education level | Zambia | 2014**



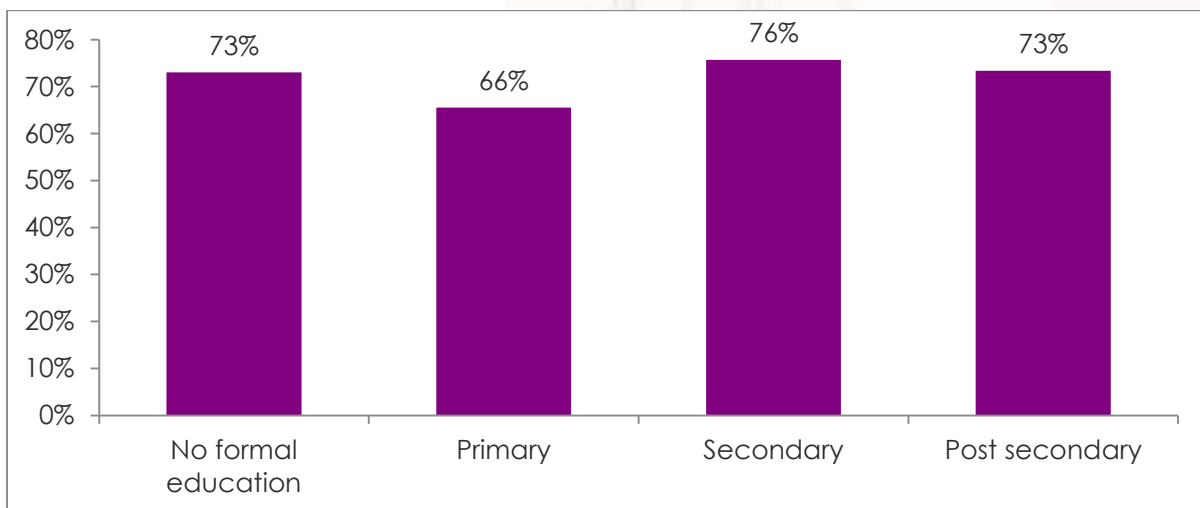
Corporal punishment is even less sanctioned at school: Seven out of 10 Zambians (70%) say teachers have no right to physically punish learners. Disapproval of physical discipline of pupils is strong among both men and women, urban as well as rural dwellers (Figure 6), and people with different levels of educational attainment (Figure 7).

**Figure 6: Disapproval of physical punishment of pupils by teachers | by respondent's location and gender | Zambia | 2014**



**Respondents were asked:** For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you agree or disagree: Teachers should have the right to use physical punishment on pupils as a way of disciplining them?

**Figure 7: Disapproval of physical punishment of pupils by teachers | by respondent's education level | Zambia | 2014**



(% who "disagree" or "strongly disagree")

## References

- Duvvury, N., Callan, A., Carney, P., & Raghavendra, S. (2013). Intimate partner violence: Economic costs and implications for growth and development. World Bank. Women's Voice, Agency, & Participation Research Series 2013 No. 3.
- Zambia Central Statistical Office. (2015). Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013-14. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR304/FR304.pdf>.

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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.

Core support for Afrobarometer Rounds 5 and 6 has been provided by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Bank.

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**Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 20 | 1 June 2015**