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Exposure to Violent Conflict and Attitudes toward Wife-Beating in Africa

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Abstract

Despite growing attention being paid to the societal impacts of violent conflict, little is known about how exposure thereto shapes gender attitudes, particularly in Africa. This study addresses that gap by examining the relationship between exposure to violent conflict and attitudes toward wife-beating using data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, spanning 39 African countries ($n \approx 100{,}000$). Exposure to conflict is operationalized as the number of such incidents occurring within a 30-kilometer radius of each respondent's dwelling. Attitudes toward wife-beating are assessed based on answers to a question asking whether it is ever justifiable for a man to beat his wife. Contrary to expectations, regression analysis reveals a robust negative association: individuals exposed to more violent conflict are significantly less likely to justify wife-beating. This relationship persists across gender-disaggregated subsamples. These findings suggest that direct or proximate experience with violence may foster greater awareness of its harms, thereby reducing normative support for interpersonal violence. Additionally, conflict-affected areas may be more likely to host peacebuilding or gender-focused interventions that contribute to attitudinal changes. By highlighting the ways in which exposure to collective violence can influence individual outlooks on gender-based violence, this study contributes to broader theoretical debates on norm transformation, post-conflict reconstruction, and the global gender-security nexus.

JEL: J16, I25, Z12

Keywords: Africa, Violent conflict, Wife-beating, Attitudes, Intimate partner violence, IPV, Gender

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Article Outline

1 Introduction

In the biblical book of Matthew, a verse states that when a man and a woman marry, they become one.[1] Similarly, Ephesians teaches: "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."[2] Yet, intimate partner violence

1 Matthew 19:5-6 (New International Version). An online version of the Bible is available here: https://www.bible.com/bible/111/JHN.1.NIV.

2 Ephesians 5:28 (NIV).

(IPV) remains a persistent global issue. According to the World Health Organization (2024), 27 percent of women aged 15–49 and in a relationship report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partner. Data from Round 9 of the Afrobarometer survey, conducted across 39 African countries between 2021 and 2023, highlights troubling societal attitudes toward IPV.[3] The survey found that 30 percent of Africans believe it is either "sometimes justified" or "always justified" for a man to beat his wife if she does something he deems wrong. While this belief is more common among men (32 percent), a significant proportion of women (27 percent) also share this view—an alarmingly high figure that underscores the deep-rooted normalization of this phenomenon.[4]

Beyond attitudes toward IPV, the survey also highlights concerns about law enforcement's role in addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Some 17 percent of Africans believe the police are either "very unlikely" or "somewhat unlikely" to take a woman's report of GBV seriously. Additionally, public opinion is divided on whether domestic violence should involve law enforcement: while 48 percent agree that it is a criminal matter requiring police intervention, 49 percent contrariwise believe it is a private issue best handled within the family. These findings reflect the persistent societal and institutional barriers to effectively addressing IPV and ensuring justice for survivors.

Several studies have examined the determinants of IPV and attitudes toward it. Yoshikawa et al. (2014) conducted a study of 717 couples in Nepal and found no statistically significant difference between husbands and wives in terms of their respective acceptance of wife-beating. However, their analysis revealed a positive correlation between men's acceptance of wife-beating and their engagement in IPV in the past year—a relationship that was not observed among women. Similarly, Mondal and Paul (2021) found that in India some 48 percent of women believed it was justified for men to beat their wives. Their study further indicated that the acceptance of wife-beating, along with controlling behavior by the husband, significantly increased a woman's risk of experiencing IPV. Rani and Bonu (2009) examined data from seven Asian countries: Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, and Turkey. Their findings suggested that improvements in socioeconomic conditions and higher education levels negatively correlate with the acceptance of wife-beating.

Schuster et al. (2021) examined attitudes toward IPV in Jordan, finding that an adolescent being in favor of the controlling of female sexuality significantly increased the likelihood of them also condoning wife-beating. Their study also revealed gendered patterns to the influence of parental discipline: having a harsh mother was a strong predictor of favorable attitudes toward wife-beating among girls but not boys, while having a harsh father had the same effect on boys but not girls. Khawaja et al. (2008) conducted a study among Palestinian refugees in

3 See: https://www.afrobarometer.org/data/merged-data/.

4 These statistics likely understate the true extent of IPV's acceptance, particularly given the influence of social-desirability bias during interview.

Jordan, finding that women who had experienced IPV were more likely to hold supportive attitudes toward wife-beating. They noted that

> women living in patriarchal communities with no legal or social protection for victims of IPV may justify wife beating after experiencing abuse as a coping mechanism. (Khawaja et al. 2008, p. 216)

These respective discoveries highlight the complex interplay between cultural norms, socioeconomic factors, and individual experiences in shaping attitudes toward IPV.

Some scholars have specifically focused on African countries. For instance, Speizer (2010) conducted a study in Uganda and found that more than half of men aged 15–54 expressed support for wife-beating. Among women aged 15–49 this figure was even higher, with 3 out of 4 endorsing the practice. Additionally, over half of married women reported experiencing IPV, while 40 percent of married men admitted to perpetrating it (Speizer 2010). Seidu et al. (2022) found that women in Mali who participated in household decision-making were less likely to support wife-beating compared to those who did not. In Nigeria, research by Ekhator-Mobayode et al. (2002) indicated that exposure to attacks involving the radical Islamist group Boko Haram increased the likelihood of women experiencing IPV.

The following examines, then, how exposure to violent conflict influences attitudes toward wife-beating in Africa. While prior research has explored the relationship between violent conflict and IPV, primary focus thus far has been on direct victimization rather than attitudinal support for IPV (e.g. Svallfors et al. 2023; Stojetz & Brück 2023; Ekhator-Mobayode et al. 2022; Kelly et al. 2018; Østby 2016; Annan & Brier 2010).[5] Additionally, much of this work is country-specific, limiting the ability to generalize findings across diverse African contexts. Though some cross-national studies do examine attitudes toward wife-beating, they typically rely on DHS data, focus exclusively on women, and overlook the role of conflict exposure (e.g. Zegeye et al. 2022; Aboagye et al. 2021). This leaves unaddressed a critical gap in our understanding of how exposure to collective violence may shape normative attitudes around GBV. Drawing on data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys—covering approximately 100,000 respondents across 39 African countries, with equal gender representation—this represents one of the first continent-wide analyses of how conflict shapes attitudes toward wife-beating among both men and women. By investigating these dynamics, the study contributes to broader debates on norm transformation, the gendered legacies of conflict, and the role of violence in shaping social values in post-conflict societies.[6]

5 Østby's (2016) study, based on Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data, focuses exclusively on women across 17 sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries.

6 Although this present work investigates violence against women, it is important to note that men are also victims of IPV (Tshoane et al. 2024; Simon et al. 2024; Hogan et al. 2022; Dim & Elabor-Idemudia 2017; Strauss 2008). In fact, a study in Canada has revealed that the prevalence of IPV between men and women is similar (Dim & Elabor-Idemudia 2020). A significant challenge in measuring IPV is underreporting, particularly among

To measure exposure to violent conflict, I used QGIS software to spatially link respondents with nearby occurrences thereof. Specifically, I calculated the total number of violent incidents occurring within a 30-kilometer radius of each respondent's dwelling, using georeferenced data from Afrobarometer and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) (Raleigh et al. 2010). Attitudes toward wife-beating were assessed by asking respondents whether they believe it is ever justifiable for a man to beat his wife, with answers recorded on a three-point scale: "1 = never justified," "2 = sometimes justified," "3 = always justified."

Contrary to expectations, regression analyses reveal a robust negative association between exposure to violent conflict and support for wife-beating. In other words, individuals living in areas witnessing violent conflict with greater frequency are less likely to justify wife-beating. This relationship holds when the data are disaggregated by gender. It also persists when the analysis is limited to respondents who experienced at least one incident of conflict near their homes, when an alternative estimation method is applied, and when different operationalizations of both conflict exposure and attitudes toward wife-beating are considered.

One possible explanation for this discovery is that individuals who witness or live near violent conflict develop greater awareness of its destructive consequences and thus become less likely to condone interpersonal forms thereof. Another possibility is that peacebuilding efforts—focused on reconciliation, forgiveness, and violence prevention—are often concentrated in conflict-affected areas. As a result, individuals in these regions may have greater exposure to programs promoting nonviolence, which may in turn shape/alter their outlooks. Notably, these findings differ from those reported in several single-country studies in Africa, which tend to note a positive relationship between conflict exposure and IPV victimization (e.g. Stojetz & Brück 2023; Ekhator-Mobayode et al. 2022).[7]

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and outlines the study's hypotheses. Section 3 introduces the data, describes the key variables used in the analysis, and specifies the regression model. It also includes the descriptive statistics. Section 4 presents and interprets the results. Section 5 summarizes the key findings and concludes.

2 Theoretical Considerations

Some theories help explain attitudes toward IPV and its perpetuation. One is "Social Learning Theory," which posits that individuals learn behaviors by observing others, particularly role

men. Many of them choose to remain silent due to cultural norms that pressure them to appear strong, as well as the fear of being disbelieved or ridiculed (Bates 2020).

7 These studies examine the relationship between conflict exposure and the concrete experience of IPV (i.e. victimization). While the present work focuses on perceptions rather than actual experiences of IPV, the two remain closely linked: prior research has shown that attitudes toward violence are strong predictors of violent behavior (e.g. Mondal & Paul 2021; Speizer 2010; Kantor & Strauss 1987).

models (Sellers et al. 2005; Grusec 1994; Akers 1973; Bandura 1971, 1969; Bandura et al. 1961). Accordingly, exposure to violence (e.g. in a conflict zone or the household) can lead individuals to imitate violent behaviors, including IPV. Closely related to this is "Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory," which suggests that violence is passed down from one generation to the next. In other words, children who witness or experience violence are more likely to engage in such behavior as adults (Ehrensaft & Langhinrichsen-Rohling 2022; Pinna 2016; Van de Weijer et al. 2014; Black et al. 2010; Kwong et al. 2003). This might be because individuals frequently exposed to violence become desensitized to it and come to see it as an acceptable way of resolving conflicts in intimate relationships and otherwise.

Empirical research supports these two theories. Haj-Yahia and Zoysa (2007) conducted a study among medical students in Sri Lanka and found that those exposed to violence during childhood and adolescence were more likely to support wife-beating. Similarly, a cohort study by White and Widom (2003) in the United States revealed that young adults who had experienced childhood abuse and neglect had significantly higher rates of IPV perpetration compared to those who had not. In Uganda, Speizer (2010) identified how those who had witnessed their fathers beating their mothers were more likely to support wife-beating than those who had not. Additionally, the study showed a direct link between childhood witnessing of IPV and later experiences of violence: women who had seen their fathers abusing their mothers were more likely to become victims of IPV, while men with similar histories were more likely to be perpetrators. These findings underscore the lasting impact of childhood violence on attitudes and behaviors related to IPV. Additional studies have reinforced this correlation, including research among Nigerian women (Ekhator-Mobayode et al. 2022), medical students in Turkey (Haj-Yahia & Uysal 2008), adult men in the same country (Ozcakir et al. 2008), physicians in Palestine (Haj-Yahia et al. 2015), young Filipino adults (Mandal & Hindin 2015), Nepalese men and women (Clark et al. 2019), women in Papua New Guinea (Aboagye et al. 2023), and women in SSA (Aboagye 2021).

Furthermore, some studies have also examined how exposure to civil war and intercommunal violence influence IPV enactment. Analyzing DHS data from 17 SSA countries, Østby (2016) found that women living in regions with high-intensity armed conflict (measured in terms of fatalities) were more likely to experience IPV. Similarly, using the same dataset in the Nigerian context, Ekhator-Mobayode et al. (2022) found that women who experienced attacks involving Boko Haram extremists within a 10 km radius of their dwellings faced an increased risk of being subjected to IPV. Likewise, Kelly et al. (2018) examined the latter's prevalence among Liberian women and discovered that those living in conflict-affected districts had a 50-percentage-point higher risk of experiencing IPV compared to women in non-conflict areas. Additional research reinforcing the positive association between conflict exposure and IPV has been conducted in various other contexts, including Angola (Stojetz & Brück 2023), Colombia

(Svallfors 2023), Honduras (Wheeler et al. 2021), Palestine (Clark et al. 2010), Paraguay (Boggiano 2024), Sri Lanka (Guruge et al. 2017), Turkey (Cesur & Kibris 2023), and the US (Cesur & Sabia 2016).

In a qualitative study conducted among women in Colombia, Restrepo et al. (2024) explored some of the pathways through which armed conflict may influence IPV. At the societal level, they found that armed conflict reinforced patriarchal norms and exacerbated men's expressions of hypermasculinity through violence. One of their respondents noted:

> They [men] see the guerrillas' violence, and when they are home, they say, 'We are the men; we are the ones who make the law.' (Restrepo et al. 2024, p. 8)

At the communal level, armed groups imposed rules normalizing IPV, particularly when women failed to conform to traditional gender roles as wives and caretakers. For instance, while a husband was prohibited from beating his wife without any justification, he was permitted to do so if he returned home and found that she had not prepared a meal (Restrepo et al. 2024, p. 9).

Furthermore, exposure to violent conflict can lead to psychological distress and PTSD (Musisi & Kinyanda 2020; Stevanović et al. 2016; Gupta et al. 2014; Thabet et al. 2008; Farhood et al. 2006), both of which are strong predictors of IPV perpetration (Bourey et al. 2024; Gilbar & Ford 2020; Portnoy et al. 2020; Breet et al. 2019; Hahn et al. 2015; Marshall et al. 2011). In addition to its direct effects, violent conflict may also influence IPV indirectly by undermining socioeconomic conditions. Conflict impedes economic growth, reduces income levels, and increases the risk of poverty onset (Tuki 2022; Collier 2008). These hardships can undermine men's ability to fulfill their expected role as providers. Faced with the inability to live up to these norms, some men may resort to wife-beating as a means of asserting control and maintaining dominance within the household (Cardoso et al. 2016; Kohli et al. 2015).

Building on everything discussed thus far, I anticipate that Africans who are exposed to violent conflict should exhibit more positive attitudes toward the practice of wife-beating. This expectation leads to the first hypothesis that this study aims to test:

H1: Exposure to violent conflict is positively correlated with support for wife-beating in Africa.

However, individuals who have experienced violence do not necessarily go on to perpetrate it. They may develop greater empathy—becoming more sensitive to the suffering of others (Trach et al. 2023; Van Nooren et al. 2016). In fact, such trauma can instill a profound aversion to violence, fostering a deeper appreciation for peace and a stronger commitment to nonviolence (Tedesch 1999). Firsthand encounters with suffering make those concerned acutely aware of the devastating consequences of violence, motivating them to advocate for a more just and peaceful world. Holocaust survivors like Elie Wiesel (1928–2016), Hannah Pick-Goslar (1928–2022), and Roman Kent (1929–2021) exemplify this transformation, dedicating their lives to promoting peace and defending human rights.

A substantial body of research has also emphasized the concept of "post-traumatic growth"—a phenomenon whereby people, instead of being consumed by their trauma, use it as an opportunity for personal and moral development (Hoover & Metz 2024; Jayawickreme & Blackie 2014; Joseph et al. 2012; Tedeschi et al. 2007; Pat-Horenczyk & Brom 2007; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004; Janoff-Bulman 2004). Several studies have specifically examined the impact of violence on post-traumatic growth. Bechara et al. (2021) studied Colombian war survivors and found a positive correlation between post-traumatic growth and the traits of hope and forgiveness. Likewise, Shamia et al. (2015) analyzed survey data collected from a random sample of 274 nurses in Gaza immediately after the 2009 war and observed a similar relationship between traumatic experiences and post-traumatic growth. These experiences included witnessing the killing of friends and seeing their neighbors' homes fired on by tanks and heavy artillery. In Sri Lanka's warzones, Jayasuriya (2014) found that individuals who had experienced short-term displacement and taken shelter in camps reported greater well-being and mental health compared to those in post-conflict areas who had never been subjected to displacement. Likewise, a study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Anderson et al. (2019) revealed that survivors of conflict-related sexual violence relied on optimism and positive reinterpretation as coping strategies, which, in turn, fostered post-traumatic growth.

Research has also identified a positive correlation between interpersonal violence and post-traumatic growth. For instance, Bakaitytė et al. (2022) worked with 217 Lithuanian women who had experienced IPV and found that, over time, many reported significant personal growth. They concluded that:

> [W]ith more time after the traumatic interpersonal relationship experience, women tended to discover more positive changes in self, relationships with others, and life overall, as a result of their traumatic experience. (Bakaitytė et al. 2022, p. 1070)

Similarly, Pertek (2022) conducted a qualitative study on SSA female migrants in Tunisia who had endured GBV and trafficking. It underscored these women's resilience, which was deeply rooted in their faith and reliance on prayer. As one participant reflected:

> After all these events, I had not lost faith. I had hope that God would do something. Often, I imagined, I prayed, I prayed. It made me stronger. (Pertek 2022, p. 6)

Collectively, these works suggest that, despite the severe adversity associated with war and violence, many individuals find ways to transform their suffering into resilience and personal growth.

A number of organizations—including the United Nations Development Programme, International Crisis Group, Mercy Corps, Catholic Relief Services, and Search for Common Ground—are actively implementing peacebuilding programs across Africa at present. These initiatives aim to prevent violence and foster reconciliation and forgiveness, with a particular focus on conflict-affected communities. As a result, individuals in these regions may be more likely to encounter such programs, which may reduce their support for violent behavior. By

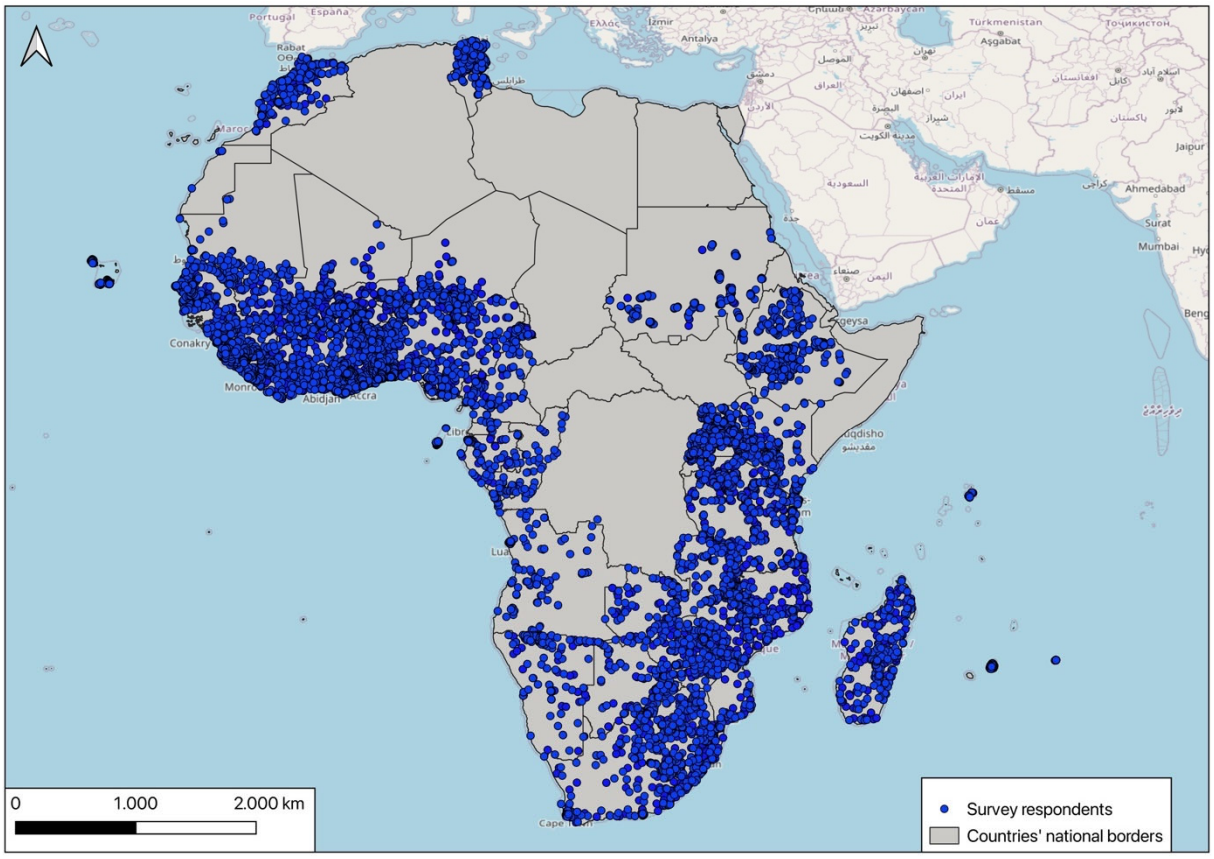
helping individuals process trauma, learn peaceful conflict-resolution strategies, and rebuild trust in interpersonal relationships, these initiatives should contribute to a decrease in the favoring of practices such as wife-beating.

This all leads to the second hypothesis that this study seeks to test:

H2: Exposure to violent conflict is negatively correlated with support for wife-beating in Africa.

3 Data and Methodology

Figure 1. Scope of Rounds 7 and 9 Afrobarometer Data



Note: The figure displays the geolocations of respondents interviewed during Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, covering 39 African countries.

This study draws, as noted, on Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer survey. I used data particularly from these two survey rounds because they contain the relevant question on attitudes toward wife-beating from which the dependent variable was derived. A total of 99,267 respondents from 39 African countries were interviewed, with an equal representation of men and women (50:50).[8] Figure 1 above illustrates the geographic spread of respondents. All were

8 Table A6 in the Appendix lists the countries in the sample and the number of observations drawn from each.

at least 18 years old. Since Afrobarometer employs probabilistic sampling, the data are representative of the overall populations in the surveyed countries.[9]

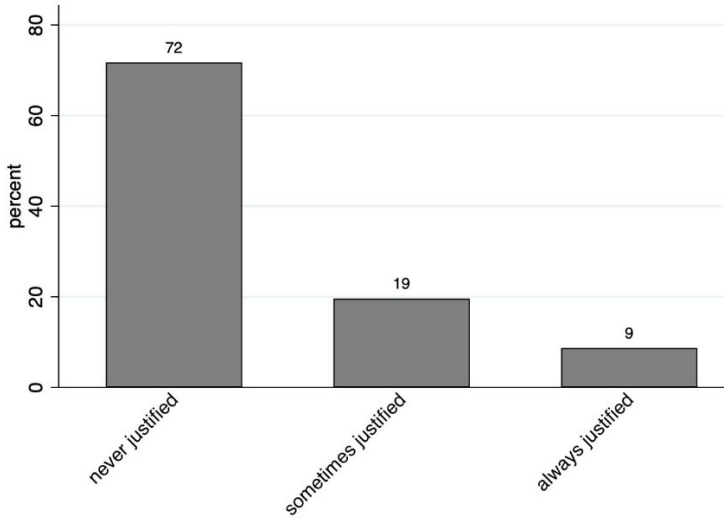
However, the survey does not cover some African countries with a high incidence of violent conflict, such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Libya. It is also important to recognize that Afrobarometer has made commendable efforts to conduct interviews in fragile states seeing significant conflict, including Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, and Nigeria among others.

3.1 Operationalization of variables

3.1.1 Dependent variable

Wife-beating. This variable captures respondents' attitudes toward this practice, based on their responses to the question: "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?"[10] Responses were recorded on a three-point scale: "1 = never justified," "2 = sometimes justified," "3 = always justified."

Figure 2. Attitudes toward Wife-Beating among African Adults



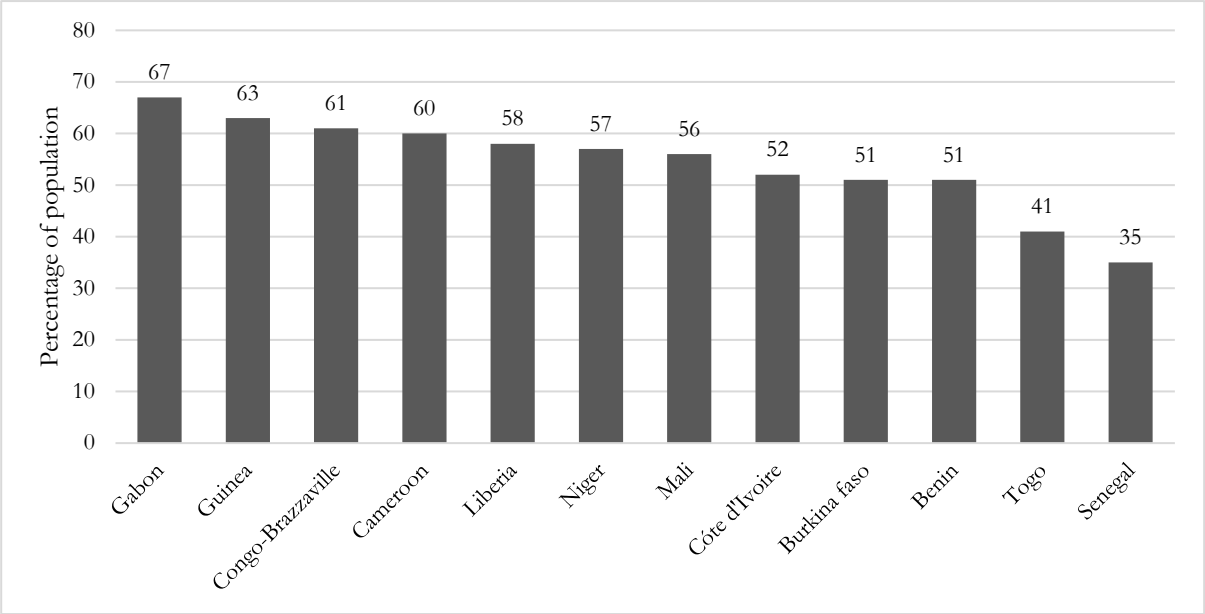
Notes: The horizontal axis shows the responses to a question asking whether it is ever justifiable for a man to beat his wife, while the vertical axis indicates the percentage of corresponding responses. The figure is based on pooled data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, covering 39 countries (n = 99,267). The surveys were conducted between 2016 and 2023.

9 For more information on the sampling strategy used by Afrobarometer, visit: https://www.afrobarometer.org/surveys-and-methods/sampling/.

10 This statement is from the Round 7 survey. In Round 9, the last part of the sentence was phrased slightly differently: "For a man to use physical discipline on his wife if she has done something he doesn't like or thinks is wrong?" Despite this variation, I combined the responses from both survey rounds, as the questions are fundamentally similar. Notably, the response options remained consistent across both rounds.

Figure 2 illustrates African adults' attitudes hereto. The majority oppose the practice, with 72 percent stating it is "never justified." Meanwhile, approximately 19 percent believe it is "sometimes justified," and 9 percent consider it "always justified" for a man to beat his wife. Since most responses are concentrated around the "never justified" option, I created a modified version of the dependent variable—*wife-beating (binary)*. In this version, I coded "sometimes justified" and "always justified" as 1, and "never justified" as 0. This new variable was then used for a robustness check.

Figure 3. African Countries Seeing the Highest Levels of Support for Wife-Beating

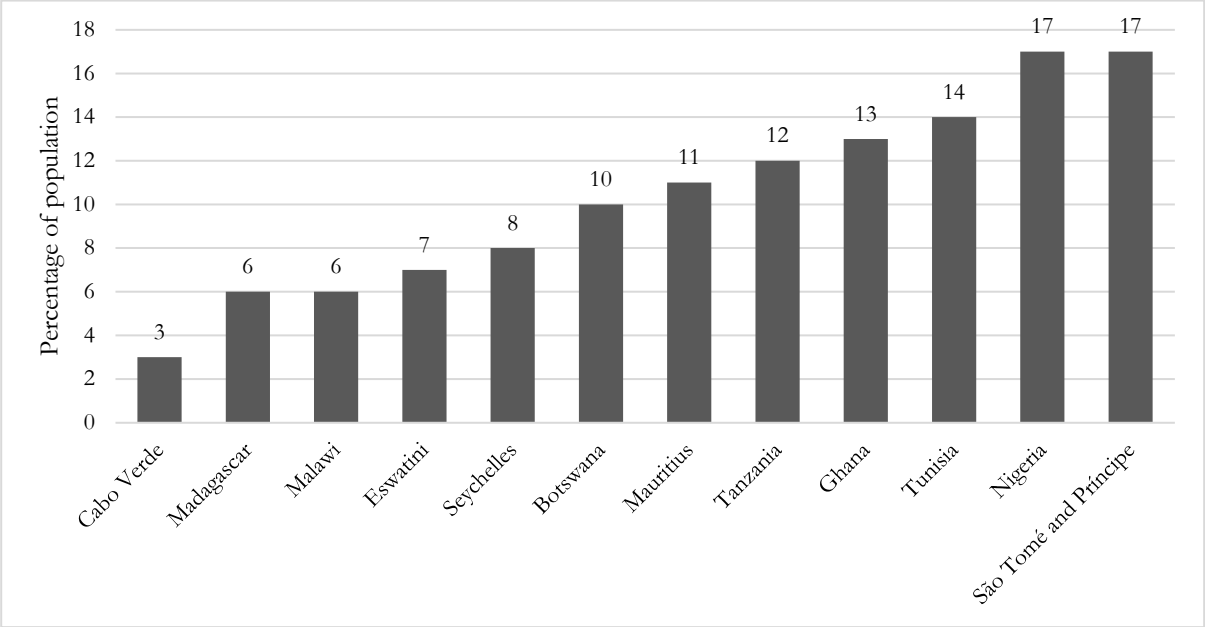


Notes: The vertical axis represents the percentage of the population in each country who believe that it is either "sometimes justified" or "always justified" for a man to beat his wife. The horizontal axis lists the 12 countries recording the highest levels of support for wife-beating. The data are drawn from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted between 2016 and 2023.

To explore variations in attitudes toward wife-beating across the African continent, I calculated the percentage of the population in each of the 39 surveyed countries who believe that it is either "sometimes justified" or "always justified" for a man to beat his wife. Table A6 in the Appendix presents these statistics for all 39 of the countries surveyed. To highlight the extremes, I used simple bar charts to visualize the countries seeing the highest and lowest levels of support for the practice respectively. Figure 3 above focuses on the 12 African countries where support for wife-beating is most prevalent. Gabon ranks highest, with 67 percent of the population—equivalent to two out of every three adults—endorsing the practice. Guinea follows closely (63 percent in support), while Congo-Brazzaville and Cameroon rank third and fourth (61 and 60 percent in favor, respectively). Figure 4, conversely, highlights the 12 countries recording the lowest levels of support for wife-beating. Cabo Verde ranks first (only 3 percent of its people endorsing the practice). Madagascar and Malawi follow in joint second

place (6 percent support each). Eswatini and Seychelles rank fourth and fifth, (7 and 8 percent of the population in favor of wife-beating, respectively).

Figure 4. African Countries Seeing the Lowest Levels of Support for Wife-Beating



Notes: The vertical axis represents the percentage of the population in each country who believe that it is either "sometimes justified" or "always justified" for a man to beat his wife. The horizontal axis lists the 12 countries recording the lowest levels of support for wife-beating. The data are drawn from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted between 2016 and 2023.

3.1.2 Explanatory variables

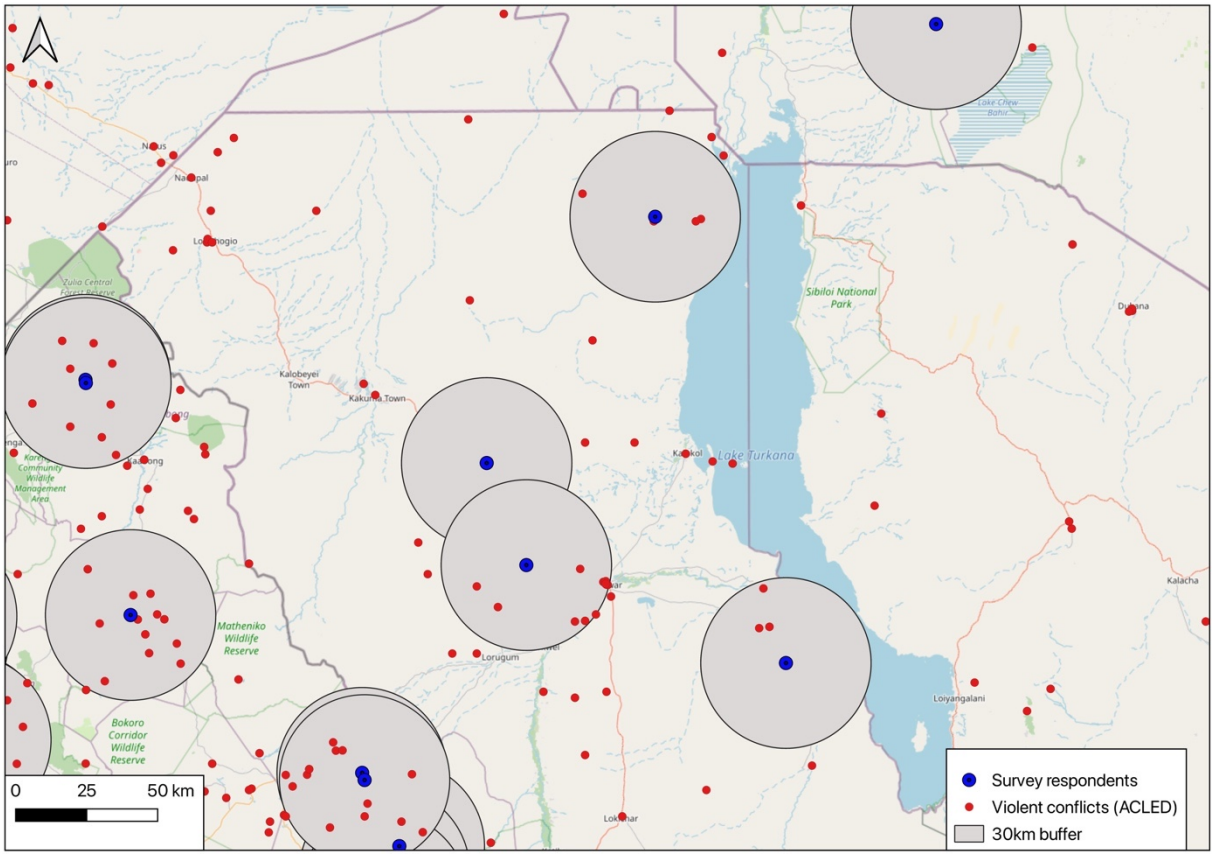
*Violent conflict***.** This variable measures the total number of such incidents that occurred within a 30 km radius of each respondent's dwelling in the time between 1997 and the year before the survey was conducted (see Figure 5 below). If surveyed in 2023, for example, the variable would capture such occurrences between 1997 and 2022. This one-year lag helps mitigate the problem of reverse causation, as present attitudes cannot influence past exposure to conflict. I deliberately measured conflict exposure over an extended period because its effects tend to be persistent (Tuki 2025, 2024, Boggiano 2024; Stojetz & Brück 2023). The 30 km radius was chosen to account for the fact that the consequences of violent conflict typically extend beyond its immediate location, affecting individuals living further away.

Based on ACLED data, I define "violent conflict" as incidents categorized as battles, violence against civilians, or explosions/remote violence. Notably, I exclude less severe forms of conflict, such as protests, riots, and strategic developments.[11] To measure conflict exposure, I

11 According to the ACLED Codebook, strategic developments "captures contextually important information regarding incidents and activities of groups that are not recorded as 'Political violence' or 'Demonstrations' events, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states" (2023, p. 20). This includes subevents such as arrest, disrupted weapons use, and the nonviolent transfer of territory.

utilized QGIS software, leveraging the geocoded data from both the Afrobarometer and ACLED datasets. This spatial analysis approach—using buffers—is more precise than relying on administrative boundaries, as it allows for greater variation in terms of conflict exposure. In contrast, assigning all respondents within the same administrative unit an identical conflict exposure score would be overly simplistic. This approach overlooks the fact that incidents in other administrative units may actually be closer to a respondent's dwelling than those occurring in their own unit, particularly for individuals living near administrative borders. Additionally, administrative boundaries in Africa, particularly at lower levels, are often not clearly defined. Some 62 percent of respondents had experienced at least one conflict incident within a 30 km radius of their dwelling. Meanwhile, 30 percent had lived through at least ten such occurrences.[12]

Figure 5. Measuring Exposure to Violent Conflict



Note: The figure illustrates the geolocations of some hypothetical respondents, the 30 km buffer around their dwellings, and the geolocations of incidents of violent conflict.

12 Despite the benefit of matching respondents with the conflict occurring in proximity to their dwellings, this variable also has the limitation that it does not account for movement. For instance, some respondents may have been living elsewhere when some such incidents took place. Moreover, they may not have been born when certain events happened. However, this limitation does not necessarily undermine the analysis—especially if individual attitudes toward IPV are shaped by broader community norms. For instance, communities exposed to violence may develop enduring norms around IPV. If conflict events influenced these norms, their effects could persist over time and shape the attitudes of individuals born later.

I developed an alternative measure for the conflict exposure variable based on the incidence of terrorist attacks, using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2022).[13] According to the GTD Codebook, a terrorist attack is defined as

> the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a nonstate actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation. (2021, p. 11)

The methodology for constructing this new conflict exposure variable closely follows the approach described earlier.

However, since the GTD covers the years from 1970 to 2020, I calculated the total number of terrorist incidents within a 30 km radius of each respondent's dwelling during this time period. The variable is lagged by one year for observations measured between 2016 and 2021. For observations measured in 2022 and 2023, I incorporated two- and three-year lags respectively. This adjustment was necessary due to the unavailability of GTD data beyond 2020. I used the new variable—*violent conflict (GTD)*—to carry out a robustness check. Prior to inclusion in the regression analysis, I standardized the conflict exposure variable by subtracting its mean from each observation and dividing by the standard deviation. This transformation, which results in a variable with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, facilitates comparability across models and enhances the robustness of the analysis.

3.1.3. Control variables

Female. This variable is coded as 1 if a respondent is female and 0 if male. Women should be less supportive of wife-beating than men, as they are more likely to experience its negative consequences firsthand. Research has consistently shown that men hold more favorable attitudes toward wife-beating than women (Schuster et al. 2021; Sakall 2001).

Age. Research on the relationship between age (here, in years) and attitudes toward wife-beating has yielded mixed findings. While some studies have identified a negative correlation (Khawaja et al. 2008; Takyi & Mann 2006; Rani et al. 2004), others have reported the opposite (Obeid et al. 2010; Haj-Yahia 2003).

Educational level. This variable measures the highest level of education attained by respondents, using a ten-point ordinal scale ranging from "0 = no formal schooling" to "9 = postgraduate." Higher levels of education may weaken support for wife-beating by fostering critical thinking, which encourages individuals to question established cultural norms and traditions that justify violence against women (Alam et al. 2021; Dhaher et al. 2010; Zaatut & Haj-Yahia 2016; Gurmu & Endale 2017).

Lived poverty index. Following Mattes (2002), poverty was measured using an additive index that captures the frequency with which respondents and their household members were

13 See: https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd-research.

unable to meet their basic needs over the past year: "Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without, (a) Enough food to eat? (b) Enough clean water for home use? (c) Medicines or medical treatment? (d) Enough fuel to cook your food? (e) A cash income?" Responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from "0 = never" to "4 = always." To create the index, I totaled up the ordinal values across all five items, resulting in a scale ranging from 0 to 20, where higher values indicate greater levels of poverty. The index reveals strong internal reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78. Prior research has found a negative correlation between socioeconomic status and attitudes toward wife-beating (e.g. Hossain et al. 2022; Dickson et al. 2020; Zhu & Dalal 2010; Rani & Bonu 2009; Rani et al. 2004).

Unemployed. This variable is coded as 1 for unemployed respondents and 0 for those who currently hold a job: "Do you have a job that pays a cash income? [If yes, asked:] Is it full time or part time?" Responses were measured on a scale with four ordinal categories: "No" (0 = not looking, 1 = looking) and "Yes" (2 = part-time, 3 = full-time). I recoded all "No" responses (both "not looking" and "looking") as 1 (unemployed) and all "Yes" responses (both "part-time" and "full-time") as 0 (employed). Unemployment has previously been identified as positively correlated with the acceptance of wife-beating (Dhaher et al. 2010; Khawaja et al. 2008).

Rural region. This variable is coded as 1 for respondents living in rural areas and 0 for those residing in urban centers. Research indicates that individuals based in rural areas are more likely to support wife-beating (Seidu et al. 2022; Zegeye et al. 2021; Darteh et al. 2021; Speizer 2010).

Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the variables used to estimate the regression models.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Total observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Wife-beating$^{\sigma}$	98633	1.37	0.638	1	3
Wife-beating (binary)$^{\sigma}$	98633	0.283	0.45	0	1
Violent conflict	99142	44.85	134.34	0	1678
Violent conflict$^{\Lambda}$	99142	0	1	-0.334	12.157
Violent conflict (GTD)	99142	11.013	43.736	0	699
Violent conflict (GTD)$^{\Lambda}$	99142	0	1	-0.252	15.73
Female (Ref: Male)	99260	0.5	0.5	0	1
Age	99161	37.624	14.987	18	112
Educational level	98847	3.525	2.258	0	9
Lived poverty index	98400	6.59	4.7	0	20
Unemployed	97806	0.657	0.475	0	1
Rural area (Ref: Urban)	99267	0.537	0.499	0	1

Notes: "Ref" denotes "reference category." σ is the dependent variable. Λ indicates variables that have been standardized.

3.2 Analytical technique

To examine the correlation between exposure to violent conflict and attitudes toward wife-beating, I consider a model of the following general form:

$$\gamma_{ijt} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Violent\ conflict_i + \alpha_2 \varphi'_i + \Lambda_j + \tau_t + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

Where γ_i is the outcome variable which measures attitudes toward wife-beating for respondent i who lives in country j in year t, φ'_i is a vector of control variables, and Λ_j denotes country fixed effects—which account for the time-invariant factors unique to each country, such as cultural beliefs and physical geography, that may influence the outcome variable. τ_t denote year fixed effects—these speak to the factors that change over time but affect all observations, such as economic cycles, global epidemics, or technological advancements. They also help address minor variations in the wording of the survey question used to construct the dependent variable across different years. α_0 is the intercept, α_1 and α_2 are the coefficients of the explanatory and control variables respectively, while μ_i is the error term. I estimated the model using an ordered logit regression because the dependent variable consists of a limited number of categories. This approach respects the ordinal nature of the dependent variable, allowing me to assess the relationship between conflict exposure and each of the three categories of the outcome variable. Nevertheless, I also performed a robustness check using a binary version of the dependent variable and estimated a linear probability model (LPM) as an alternative approach.

4 Results and Discussion

Table 2 below presents the results of the regression models analyzing the relationship between exposure to violent conflict and attitudes toward wife-beating among African adults. The baseline model, which includes only the key explanatory variable, shows that conflict exposure is negatively associated with support for wife-beating. The coefficient is statistically significant at the 1 percent level, supporting H2. This suggests that individuals exposed to violent conflict may be less likely to endorse wife-beating, potentially due to heightened awareness of the harms of violence or increased exposure to community-based peace-and-reconciliation initiatives in conflict-affected areas.

Although these mechanisms are not directly tested in this study, they are plausible given the concentration of peacebuilding programs in regions witnessing sustained violence. Importantly, these findings challenge the dominant narrative that conflict exposure increases support for interpersonal violence, instead pointing to the potential for such occurrences to catalyze an attitudinal shift away in the other direction. Nonetheless, unobserved factors—such as preexisting anti-violence norms or selection effects in program implementation—may

partially account for the observed relationship. Future research using experimental or longitudinal data is needed to more clearly identify the mechanisms at work.

Table 2. Attitudes toward Wife-Beating and Exposure to Violent Conflict in Africa

Wife-beating$^{\sigma}$	Full sample				Gender subsamples	
	(1) Ologit	(2) Ologit	(3) Ologit	(4) LPM	(5) Ologit (Women)	(6) Ologit (Men)
Violent conflict$^{\Lambda}$	-0.035***	-0.021***	-0.056***	-0.009***	-0.064***	-0.052***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.001)	(0.014)	(0.012)
Female (Ref: Male)		-0.416***	-0.398***	-0.069***		
		(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.003)		
Age		-0.008***	-0.005***	-0.001***	-0.004***	-0.005***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Educational level		-0.097***	-0.073***	-0.012***	-0.076***	-0.067***
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Lived poverty index		0.055***	0.023***	0.004***	0.019***	0.026***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.00)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployed		0.317***	0.052***	0.009***	0.101***	0.037
		(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.003)	(0.029)	(0.023)
Rural region (Ref: Urban)		-0.032**	0.139***	0.024***	0.188***	0.1***
		(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.003)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Constant				0.641***		
				(0.02)		
Intercept 1	0.93***	0.649***	-0.62***		-0.07	-0.66***
	(0.007)	(0.034)	(0.105)		(0.17)	(0.138)
Intercept 2	2.353***	2.107***	1.004***		1.519***	0.996***
	(0.011)	(0.035)	(0.105)		(0.17)	(0.137)
Year fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	98509	95936	95936	95936	47998	47938
Pseudo R^2 or R^2	0.00	0.026	0.118	0.175	0.127	0.11
Log pseudolikelihood	-75856.019	-72240.449	-65454.607		-30436.85	-34854.948
AIC statistic	151718	144498.9	131011.2	101278.6	60973.7	69809.9
BIC statistic	151746.5	144584.1	131494.3	101752.2	61412.65	70248.78

Notes: σ denotes the dependent variable. Λ indicates variables that have been standardized. "Ref" indicates reference category. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression, except for model 4, which is estimated using LPM. The dependent variable measures respondents' beliefs regarding the acceptability of wife-beating on a scale with three ordinal categories in all the models, except in model 4 where it is measured binarily. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table 2's model 2 demonstrates that the negative association between conflict exposure and attitudes toward wife-beating remain robust even after incorporating control variables, all of which are statistically significant at the 1 percent level. The gender indicator has a negative coefficient, suggesting that women are less likely than men to endorse wife-beating. This result is unsurprising, given that women are the primary victims of such violence. Moreover, it aligns with findings from studies conducted among adolescents in Jordan (Schuster et al. 2021), undergraduate students in Turkey (Sakall 2001), and medical students in Sri Lanka (Haj-Yahia &

Zoysa 2007). The positive coefficient associated with age suggests that as people grow older, they become less supportive of wife-beating. This trend may stem from increased maturity and life experience, which foster a deeper understanding of the harms of violence and the importance of healthy relationships. This pattern is consistent with discoveries from Ghana (Dickson et al. 2020), Papua New Guinea (Aboagye et al. 2023; Adu et al. 2022), Senegal (Zegeye et al. 2021), South Africa (Dickson et al. 2021), and seven African countries (Benin, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) (Rani et al. 2004).

The negative coefficient for educational level indicates that higher such achievements are associated with reduced support for wife-beating. This relationship may exist because education exposes individuals to diverse perspectives and fosters gender-egalitarian attitudes (Tuki 2025a; Charles 2020; Kyoore & Sulemana 2019), challenging traditional patriarchal beliefs potentially justifying domestic violence. This align with studies conducted among Palestinian women (Zaatut & Haj-Yahia 2016), Jordanian women (Haj-Yahia 2002), Bangladeshi women (Hossain et al. 2022; Alam et al. 2021), Malian women (Seidu et al. 2022), Indian men (Zhu & Dalal 2010), Ghanaians (Dickson et al. 2020), and African women more broadly (Zegeye et al. 2022).

The positive coefficient associated with the poverty index suggests that higher levels thereof are linked to greater support for wife-beating. Living in poverty can generate significant stress, which often leads to frustration and anger. In some cases, individuals may cope with these emotions by resorting to aggression, including domestic violence. Additionally, in impoverished environments, individuals—especially men—may experience a sense of powerlessness in other areas of their lives, such as work, social status, or financial means. This perceived lack of control can lead to attempts to assert dominance within the home, with domestic violence becoming a means of reinforcing authority—particularly in societies where men are expected to hold power over women (Choi & Ting 2008).

Research supports this association, with studies from Ghana (Dickson et al. 2020; Takyi & Mann 2006), Bangladesh (Hossain et al. 2022), Senegal (Zegeye et al. 2021), South Africa (Dickson et al. 2021), and several African countries (Zegeye et al. 2022; Darteh et al. 2021) identifying a positive correlation between poverty and support for wife-beating. However, this trend does not hold universally; a study in Papua New Guinea found that women with higher wealth status were more likely to justify wife-beating (Adu et al. 2022), highlighting the complex and context-dependent nature of these relationships. The unemployment indicator shows a positive coefficient, suggesting that individuals without a job are more likely to support wife-beating than their income-earning counterparts. Similar observations have been reported from Palestine (Dhaher et al. 2010) and Jordan (Haj-Yahia 2002). The indicator for residence in a rural area has a negative coefficient and is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. This discovery is unexpected, as most prior research has identified a positive relationship between rural residence and support for wife-beating (e.g. Seidu et al. 2022; Dickson et al. 2021; Darteh et al. 2020; Speizer 2010; Gurmu & Endale 2017).

Model 3 demonstrates that the main results remain consistent even after incorporating fixed effects for both the survey year and country of residence. Additionally, model 3 has an AIC statistic of 131,011, which is lower than those of the earlier models, suggesting that it provides the best fit. Notably, the coefficient for residence in a rural region changed sign with the inclusion of fixed effects. The variable's positive coefficient in model 3 indicates that those living in rural areas are more likely to support wife-beating. Several factors may contribute to this, including higher levels of poverty, lower educational attainment, and the prevalence of more conservative and patriarchal norms in said areas.

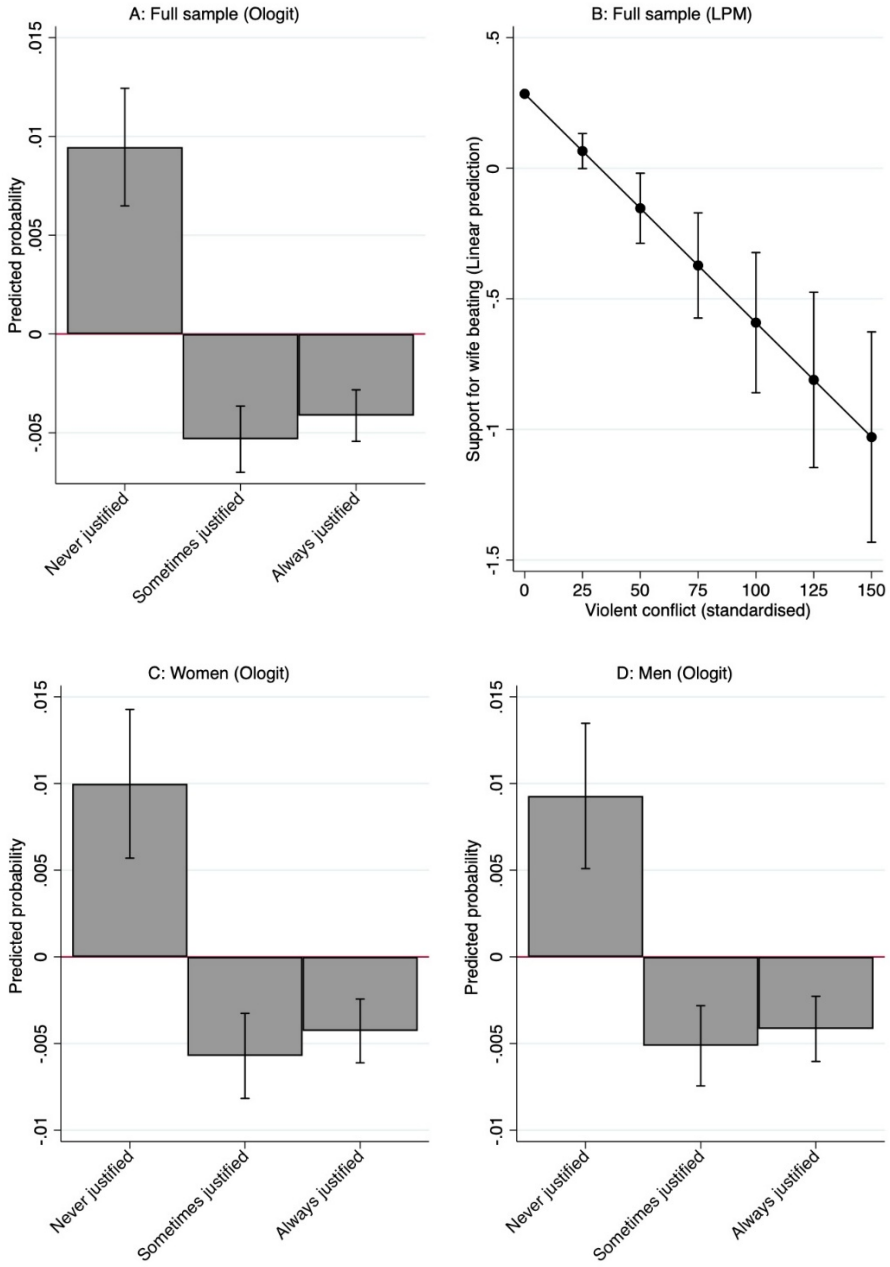
Indeed, pooled data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer survey reveal significant disparities between Africans living in rural and urban areas. The average educational level in rural areas was 2.84, compared to 4.32 in urban centers, reflecting an educational gap of 1.48. Similarly, the mean poverty level in rural areas was 7.33, while in urban centers it was 5.73, resulting in a poverty gap of 1.6. These socioeconomic differences likely contribute to the stronger support for wife-beating observed in rural communities. Model 4 illustrates that the findings are also robust to using a binary operationalization of the dependent variable and to applying LPM as an alternative estimation technique.

The relationship between conflict exposure and attitudes toward wife-beating may differ between men and women. To explore this, I disaggregated the data by gender and estimated separate models for female and male respondents. In models 5 and 6, which focus on women and men respectively, exposure to violent conflict remained statistically significant in both instances, with a consistent negative coefficient. Additionally, the signs of all control variables aligned with those observed in the models based on the full sample. Moreover, all the coefficients were statistically significant, except for unemployment in model 6 (p-value of 0.11). While earlier explanations related to the poverty index and unemployment primarily reflected the male perspective, it is equally important to consider the female one as well. In poorer households, women often have lower levels of education and awareness about their rights and the harmful effects of domestic violence. This lack of knowledge can contribute to the normalization of abuse, as women may fail to recognize it as a violation of their rights or may have internalized harmful gender norms. Furthermore, unemployed women, with limited financial independence, often depend on their husbands for economic support. This can create a power imbalance, making women feel compelled to tolerate abusive behavior in order to maintain access to financial resources and basic needs.

Notably, the results in Table 2 remain consistent even after excluding observations with no conflict incidents within a 30 km radius (see Table A1, Appendix), when conflict is measured using a radius of 10 km (Table A4, Appendix), and when using an alternative measure of conflict exposure (Table A2, Appendix). The findings are also consistent when employing a binary operationalization of the explanatory variable—coded as 1 if a respondent experienced at least one violent conflict incident within 30 km of their place of residence and 0 otherwise (Table A3, Appendix)—and when I include fixed effects for their ethnic group (Table A5, Appendix).

Finally, the results hold when I re-estimate the models using the unstandardized version of the explanatory variable.[14]

Figure 6. Average Marginal Effects of Conflict Exposure and Attitudes toward Wife-Beating



Notes: Panel A, based on the full ordered logit model (Table 2, model 3), illustrates the correlation between violent conflict and each category of the dependent variable, which measures attitudes toward wife-beating among African adults. Panel B, based on the LPM model (Table 2, model 4), plots the linear predicted effect of violent conflict on the binary version of the dependent variable. Panels C and D, based on models 5 and 6 in Table 2, present these relationships for the male and female subsamples of respondents, respectively. Confidence intervals are set at the 95% level. These figures are based on data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted between 2016 and 2023.

14 I have not reported these regression results.

To illustrate the strength of the association between conflict exposure and attitudes toward wife-beating, I plotted the predicted probabilities in Figure 6 above. A quick examination of the three panels based on the ordered logit models (panels A, C, and D) reveals that this association is strongest and positive for the "never justified" response category. Conversely, it is negative for the "sometimes justified" and "always justified" categories. Specifically, panel A, which presents results for the full sample, shows that a 1-standard deviation increase in conflict incidence within a 30 km radius of each respondent's dwelling increases the probability of an individual believing that wife-beating is "never justified" by 0.95 percentage points. In contrast, it reduces the probability of selecting the "sometimes justified" and "always justified" categories by 0.53 and 0.41 percentage points respectively.

Panel B, also based on the full sample, presents the linear predictions of attitudes toward wife-beating at varying levels of conflict exposure, ranging from 0 to 150 incidents in intervals of 25. Notably, this figure is derived from Table 2's model 4, where the dependent variable is measured binarily and the model is estimated using LPM. The negative slope of the function provides further support for H2. Additionally, the figure illustrates that the predicted support for wife-beating is highest when conflict exposure is zero and steadily declines as said exposure increases.

Panel C, based on the female subsample, shows that a 1-standard deviation increase in conflict exposure raises the probability of selecting the "never justified" response category by 1 percentage point. Conversely, it reduces the probabilities of selecting the "sometimes justified" and "always justified" categories by 0.57 and 0.43 percentage points, respectively. Similarly, panel D, based on the male subsample, indicates that a 1-standard deviation increase in conflict exposure increases the probability of selecting the "never justified" category by 0.93 percentage points while decreasing the probabilities of selecting the "sometimes justified" and "always justified" categories by 0.51 and 0.42 percentage points, respectively.

5 Conclusion

This study has addressed a notable gap in the research by examining how exposure to violent conflict relates to attitudes toward wife-beating across 39 African countries. Contrary to expectations, regression analyses reveal a consistent negative association here: individuals with greater exposure to violent conflict are significantly less likely to justify wife-beating. This relationship holds across both male and female respondents. One plausible explanation is that firsthand experience with the harms of violence fosters a deeper rejection of interpersonal violence, including GBV. Additionally, conflict-affected regions may receive more targeted interventions promoting peace, gender equality, and nonviolence, potentially influencing local norms. While these mechanisms were, due to data limitations, not directly tested, they mark important avenues for future investigation. Mixed-methods research combining survey data

with qualitative fieldwork could better illuminate how violence shapes normative change. More broadly, these findings contribute to global debates on the social legacies of conflict, suggesting that exposure to collective violence may, paradoxically, reduce tolerance for IPV by reshaping outlooks and values around violence, justice, and gender.

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Appendix

Table A1. Replicating the Results in Table 2 Using Only Observations With at Least One Conflict Incident

Wife-beating$^{\sigma}$	Full sample				Gender subsamples	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Violent conflict$^{\Lambda}$	-0.042***	-0.031***	-0.053***	-0.008***	-0.062***	-0.047***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.001)	(0.014)	(0.012)
Female (Ref: Male)		-0.419***	-0.408***	-0.073***		
		(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.003)		
Age		-0.007***	-0.004***	-0.001***	-0.004***	-0.004***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Educational level		-0.088***	-0.072***	-0.013***	-0.075***	-0.067***
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Lived poverty index		0.047***	0.022***	0.004***	0.019***	0.026***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.00)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployed		0.307***	0.054***	0.009***	0.117***	0.025
		(0.018)	(0.02)	(0.003)	(0.032)	(0.026)
Rural region (Ref: Urban)		-0.064***	0.139***	0.025***	0.185***	0.102***
		(0.017)	(0.02)	(0.004)	(0.029)	(0.027)
Constant				0.611***		
				(0.021)		
Intercept 1	0.909***	0.622***	-0.502***		0.012	-0.508***
	(0.008)	(0.039)	(0.113)		(0.181)	(0.149)
Intercept 2	2.373***	2.115***	1.148***		1.619***	1.181***
	(0.013)	(0.04)	(0.113)		(0.181)	(0.149)
Year fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	75009	72774	72774	72774	36387	36387
Pseudo R^2 or R^2	0.00	0.022	0.109	0.162	0.117	0.101
Log pseudolikelihood	-57958.457	-55315.317	-50399.12		-23407.583	-26858.317
AIC statistic	115922.9	110648.6	100896.2	78584.35	46911.17	53812.63
BIC statistic	115950.6	110731.4	101346.8	79025.72	47319.26	54220.73

Notes: σ denotes the dependent variable. Λ indicates variables that have been standardized. "Ref" indicates reference category. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression, except for model 4 which is estimated using LPM. The dependent variable measures respondents' beliefs regarding the acceptability of wife-beating on a scale with three ordinal categories in all the models, except in model 4 where it is measured binarily. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A2. Replicating the Results in Table 2 Using an Alternative Measure of Conflict Exposure

Wife-beating$^{\sigma}$	Full sample				Gender subsamples	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Violent conflict (GTD) $^{\Lambda}$	-0.061***	-0.025***	-0.018*	-0.02 *(p = 0.16)*	-0.001*	-0.01 *(p = 0.49)*
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.014)
Female (Ref: Male)		-0.416***	-0.398***	-0.069***		
		(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.003)		
Age		-0.008***	-0.005***	-0.001***	-0.004***	-0.005***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Educational level		-0.097***	-0.074***	-0.013***	-0.077***	-0.068***
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Lived poverty index		0.054***	0.022***	0.003***	0.019***	0.026***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.00)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployed		0.317***	0.054***	0.009***	0.102***	0.039*
		(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.003)	(0.029)	(0.023)
Rural region (Ref: Urban)		-0.033**	0.156***	0.027***	0.204***	0.119***
		(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.003)	(0.025)	(0.023)
Constant				0.644***		
				(0.02)		
Intercept 1	0.931***	0.648***	-0.632***		-0.084	-0.671***
	(0.007)	(0.034)	(0.105)		(0.17)	(0.138)
Intercept 2	2.354***	2.106***	0.991***		1.504***	0.985***
	(0.011)	(0.035)	(0.105)		(0.17)	(0.137)
Year fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	98509	95936	95936	95936	47998	47938
Pseudo R^2 or R^2	0.00	0.026	0.118	0.175	0.126	0.109
Log pseudolikelihood	-75838.318	-72239.899	-65471.01		-30444.596	-34863.58
AIC statistic	151682.6	144497.8	131044	101309.3	60989.19	69827.16
BIC statistic	151711.1	144583	131527.1	101782.9	61428.14	70266.04

Notes: σ denotes the dependent variable. Λ indicates variables that have been standardized. "Ref" indicates reference category. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression, except for model 4 which is estimated using LPM. The dependent variable measures respondents' beliefs regarding the acceptability of wife-beating on a scale with three ordinal categories in all the models, except in model 4 where it is measured binarily. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A3. Replicating the Results in Table 2 Using a Binary Measure of Violent Conflict

Wife-beating$^{\sigma}$	Full sample				Gender subsamples	
	(1) Ologit	(2) Ologit	(3) Ologit	(4) LPM	(5) Ologit (Women)	(6) Ologit (Men)
Violent conflict (Binary)	0.052***	0.06***	-0.064***	-0.01***	-0.077**	-0.055*
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.004)	(0.03)	(0.029)
Female (Ref: Male)		-0.416***	-0.398***	-0.069***		
		(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.003)		
Age		-0.008***	-0.005***	-0.001***	-0.004***	-0.005***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Educational level		-0.099***	-0.073***	-0.012***	-0.077***	-0.067***
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Lived poverty index		0.054***	0.022***	0.003***	0.019***	0.026***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.00)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployed		0.317***	0.056***	0.009***	0.105***	0.041*
		(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.003)	(0.029)	(0.023)
Rural region (Ref: Urban)		-0.019	0.15***	0.026***	0.198***	0.112***
		(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.003)	(0.025)	(0.024)
Constant				0.653***		
				(0.02)		
Intercept 1	0.97***	0.695***	-0.689***		-0.153	-0.717***
	(0.015)	(0.037)	(0.106)		(0.171)	(0.139)
Intercept 2	2.392***	2.153***	0.934***		1.436***	0.938***
	(0.017)	(0.038)	(0.106)		(0.171)	(0.139)
Year fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	98633	96058	96058	96058	48059	47999
Pseudo R^2 or R^2	0.00	0.027	0.118	0.175	0.127	0.11
Log pseudolikelihood	-75955.018	-72324.225	-65541.054		-30473.566	-34905.316
AIC statistic	151916	144666.4	131184.1	101398.5	-30473.566	69910.63
BIC statistic	151944.5	144751.7	131667.2	101872.2	61486.14	70349.58

Notes: σ denotes the dependent variable. "Ref" indicates reference category. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression, except for model 4, which is estimated using LPM. The dependent variable measures respondents' beliefs regarding the acceptability of wife-beating on a scale with three ordinal categories in all the models, except in model 4 where it is measured binarily. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A4. Replicating the Results in Table 2 But Measuring Conflict within a 10 km Radius

Wife-beating$^{\sigma}$	Full sample				Gender subsamples	
	(1) Ologit	(2) Ologit	(3) Ologit	(4) LPM	(5) Ologit (Women)	(6) Ologit (Men)
Violent conflict (Binary)	-0.019***	0.005	-0.037***	-0.006***	-0.053***	-0.025**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.001)	(0.013)	(0.011)
Female (Ref: Male)		-0.416***	-0.398***	-0.069***		
		(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.003)		
Age		-0.008***	-0.005***	-0.001***	-0.004***	-0.005***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Educational level		-0.098***	-0.073***	-0.012***	-0.076***	-0.068***
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Lived poverty index		0.054***	0.022***	0.003***	0.019***	0.026***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.00)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployed		0.317***	0.053***	0.009***	0.101***	0.038
		(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.003)	(0.029)	(0.023)
Rural region (Ref: Urban)		-0.023	0.143***	0.025***	0.186***	0.109***
		(0.015)	(0.017)	(0.003)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Constant				0.643***		
				(0.02)		
Intercept 1	0.93***	0.649***	-0.634***		-0.084	-0.673***
	(0.007)	(0.034)	(0.105)		(0.17)	(0.138)
Intercept 2	2.353***	2.107***	0.99***		1.504***	0.984***
	(0.011)	(0.035)	(0.105)		(0.17)	(0.137)
Year fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	98509	95936	95936	95936	47998	47938
Pseudo R^2 or R^2	0.00	0.026	0.118	0.175	0.127	0.11
Log pseudolikelihood	-75864.259	-72244.277	-65463.761		-30438.676	-34861.375
AIC statistic	151734.5	144506.6	131029.5	101294.8	60977.35	69822.75
BIC statistic	151763	144591.8	131512.6	101768.4	61416.3	70261.63

Notes: σ denotes the dependent variable. Λ indicates variables that have been standardized. "Ref" indicates reference category. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression, except for model 4, which is estimated using LPM. The dependent variable measures respondents' beliefs regarding the acceptability of wife-beating on a scale with three ordinal categories in all the models, except in model 4 where it is measured binarily. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A5. Replicating the Full Models in Table 2 While Including Fixed Effects for Ethnic Group

Distrust Fulani$^{\Phi}$				
	Full sample		**Gender subsamples**	
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**
	Ologit	**LPM**	**Ologit Muslims**	**Ologit Christians**
Violent conflict$^{\Lambda}$	-0.046***	-0.007***	-0.059***	-0.039***
	(0.009)	(0.001)	(0.015)	(0.012)
Female (Ref: Male)	-0.393***	-0.066***		
	(0.016)	(0.003)		
Age	-0.004***	-0.001***	-0.003***	-0.004***
	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Educational level	-0.065***	-0.011***	-0.06***	-0.063***
	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Lived poverty index	0.023***	0.003***	0.02***	0.026***
	(0.002)	(0.00)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Unemployed	0.028	0.004	0.072**	0.018
	(0.018)	(0.003)	(0.03)	(0.024)
Rural region (Ref: Urban)	0.112***	0.019***	0.162***	0.073***
	(0.018)	(0.003)	(0.027)	(0.025)
Constant		0.732		
		(0.121)		
Intercept 1	-0.977**		-0.369	-1.022
	(0.461)		(0.667)	(0.645)
Intercept 2	0.681		1.264*	0.676
	(0.461)		(0.667)	(0.645)
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ethnic group fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	95936	95936	47998	47938
Pseudo R^2 or R^2	0.136	0.198	0.152	0.129
Log pseudolikelihood	-64148.931		-29542.694	0.129
AIC statistic	129649.9	99752.35	60379.39	69535.07
BIC statistic	136052.6	106107.7	66059.35	75416.11

Notes: σ denotes the dependent variable. Λ indicates variables that have been standardized. "Ref" indicates reference category. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression, except for model 4, which is estimated using LPM. The dependent variable measures respondents' beliefs regarding the acceptability of wife-beating on a scale with three ordinal categories in all the models, except in model 4 where it is measured binarily. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A6. List of 39 African Countries in the Sample, Number of Observations, and Percentage of their Respective Populations Supporting Wife-Beating

Country	Frequency	Percentage supporting wife-beating (%)
Angola	1200	30
Benin	2400	51
Botswana	2398	10
Burkina Faso	2400	51
Cabo Verde	2399	3
Cameroon	2402	60
Congo-Brazzaville	1200	61
Cóte d'Ivoire	2400	52
ESwatini	2400	7
Ethiopia	2400	29
Gabon	2399	67
Gambia	2400	33
Ghana	4769	13
Guinea	2394	63
Kenya	3999	19
Lesotho	2400	20
Liberia	2400	58
Madagascar	2400	6
Malawi	2400	6
Mali	2400	56
Mauritania	1200	32
Mauritius	2400	11
Morocco	2400	24
Mozambique	3512	29
Namibia	2400	28
Niger	2400	57
Nigeria	3200	17
São Tomé and Príncipe	2400	17
Senegal	2400	35
Seychelles	1176	8
Sierra Leone	2400	27
South Africa	3420	19
Sudan	2400	20
Tanzania	4800	12
Togo	2400	41
Tunisia	2399	14
Uganda	3600	26
Zambia	2400	23
Zimbabwe	2400	21
Total	**99267**	

Notes: This table lists the 39 African countries included in the cross-country analysis, along with the total number of observations collected from each. The third column displays the percentage of the population in each country who believe that a man beating his wife is either "sometimes justified" or "always justified." These statistics are based on pooled data from Rounds 7 and 9 of the Afrobarometer survey, collected between 2016 and 2023.

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