MASCULINITIES IN MOROCCO AND JORDAN:
EMBODYING TRADITIONS WITH NEW ASPIRATIONS

A study by Equimundo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABOUT EQUIMUNDO

Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice has worked internationally and in the United States since 2011 to engage men and boys as allies in gender equality, promote healthy manhood, and prevent violence. Equimundo works to achieve gender equality and social justice by transforming intergenerational patterns of harm and promoting patterns of care, empathy, and accountability among boys and men throughout their lives. This study is part of the Generation Gender global partnership and Equimundo's research portfolio that works to strengthen evidence and build partnerships on healthy masculinities with researchers, practitioners, policymakers, media, philanthropy, sports, and the corporate sector. *Find out more about Equimundo.*

ABOUT GENERATION GENDER GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Imagine a world where you can be who you want to be. A gender-just and violence-free world where everyone can live in their full diversity. It's possible. But it requires fundamental change. The Generation G partnership strives to do so. It equips youth leaders and civil society organizations to address the root causes of gender inequality and encourages sustainable change. The Generation G partnership places young people at the heart of the program: as catalysts for systemic change and as a key target group. Doing so we will achieve sustainable, inclusive, and stable societies. *Find out more about Generation Gender.*

SUGGESTED CITATION

Hennani, S., Bhatnagar, I., and Gupta, T. (2025). *Masculinities in Morocco and Jordan: Embodying traditions with new aspirations.* Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice and Rutgers International.

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INTRODUCTION

Around the world, feminist demands have gained traction and legitimacy, as exemplified by the #MeToo movement. At the same time, there has been a rise in anti-feminist rhetoric seeking to defend acquired privileges and delegitimize the struggle (Faludi, 1991; Weiler, 2023).

In particular, anti-rights movements are pushing narratives of gender ideology as a threat to the natural order or a "Western agenda" rooted in cultural imperialism and ideological colonization, and they are stirring up sensitive issues such as abortion to fuel fears. This anti-feminist, reactionary backlash has become even more evident with social media and narratives of harmful masculinity fueled by conservative movements. Such ideologies not only thwart or reverse women's gains but also find appeal among men during times of economic precarity and expanded online spaces in which social connection and definitions of masculinity can be found (Barker et al., 2023).

In many countries, including in the Arab world, feminists are portrayed by their detractors as threats to cultural identity, "agents from outside" peddling imported values (Weiler, 2023).

In the Arab world, this polarization has hindered the women's movement for many decades, and social media has made this division particularly visible. In Morocco, for example, the summer of 2018 was marked by a virulent social media campaign around the hashtag #Koun_Rajel ("be a man"), calling on men to control how "their" women dress (Thevenin, 2018). This misogynistic slogan sparked a wave of indignation, to which civil society responded with the hashtag #SoisUneFemmeLibre ("be a free woman") in defense of women's freedom (Thevenin, 2018). More recently, in Jordan, a lawyer committed to women's rights was harassed online in 2023 after announcing a course on feminism: she was accused of imposing a "Western model" and promoting the hatred of men (Christou, 2023).

These examples illustrate the identity tensions at work: in the face of rapid social change, some seek to retreat to values around manhood that are presented as "traditional" or "authentic," as opposed to influences deemed foreign. Profound changes and tensions currently affecting Moroccan and Jordanian societies are also being shaped by, and shaping, masculinities among men in the Maghreb and the Middle East, where younger generations are torn between a stubborn legacy of traditional manhood and new aspirations.

It is in this contrasting social and political context, both hopeful and fraught with tension, that this study aims to better understand masculinities. It uses evidence from two Generation G partner countries, Morocco and Jordan, to help understand what factors are barriers and supports to men's allyship to gender equality. The global Generation G partnership, together with youth leaders, tackles gender inequality by increasing public support for gender justice, developing youth-inclusive policymaking and legislation, and strengthening civil society so it can fight for gender justice.

In Morocco, the issue of gender equality has gradually entered the public debate, particularly under the impetus of a strong feminist movement since the 1980s and 1990s. A major turning point came in 2004 with the overhaul of the Family Code (Moudawana), which significantly improved women's rights in relation to marriage, child custody, and divorce. Then, the 2011 Constitution enshrined the principle of equality for citizens regardless of gender. Morocco has also acceded to international conventions (such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), and in 2022, introduced paternity leave for civil servants to involve fathers more in family life (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2024). However, these legal advances have not eradicated traditional practices or social resistance. The debate on equal inheritance, for example, is fiercely contested, and women's economic participation is stagnating. In other words, in Morocco, progressive laws coexist with a sociocultural foundation that largely maintains traditional conceptions of manhood.

For its part, Jordan is a kingdom where modernization has been more gradual and closely controlled by the monarchy. A signatory to international treaties promoting women's rights, Jordan has long espoused official rhetoric in favor of equality (UN Women, 2022). In practice, however, progress has been slow and measured. Some legislative reforms have nevertheless taken place: the 2017 abolition of Article 308 of the Penal Code (which allowed a rapist to escape prison by marrying his victim) was an important step, as was the amendment of the Personal Status Code to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls and improve the rights of divorced mothers. Nevertheless, the traditional model of manhood remains firmly entrenched, particularly in tribal communities, and the female labor force participation rate remains very low. In short, Jordan also shows a gap between its official commitment to equality and the persistence of entrenched structures featuring traditional manhood in everyday life.

This research aims to create new spaces for dialogue in the Arab world on the place and role of men in contributing to and building more egalitarian societies. A better understanding of men's resistance will enable engaging men as positive agents of change. Our hope is to support the emergence of **reflective, inclusive, and supportive masculinities**: ways of being a man that involve questioning one's privileges, opening up to dialogues on feminism and many models of masculinity, and positioning oneself as a partner rather than a rival within society. Civil society initiatives are already beginning to chart this course. In Morocco, for example, the Generation G "Manchoufouch" campaign launched in 2024 explicitly aims to promote more inclusive, egalitarian, and nonviolent forms of masculinity by calling for a change in attitudes starting with the education of boys (El Haïti, 2024; Equimundo, 2025; #MenEnoughGenG). This type of initiative, which encourages men to reflect on their role and commit to combating gender-based violence, is precisely the kind of change that this study hopes to inspire and replicate.

METHODS AND SAMPLE
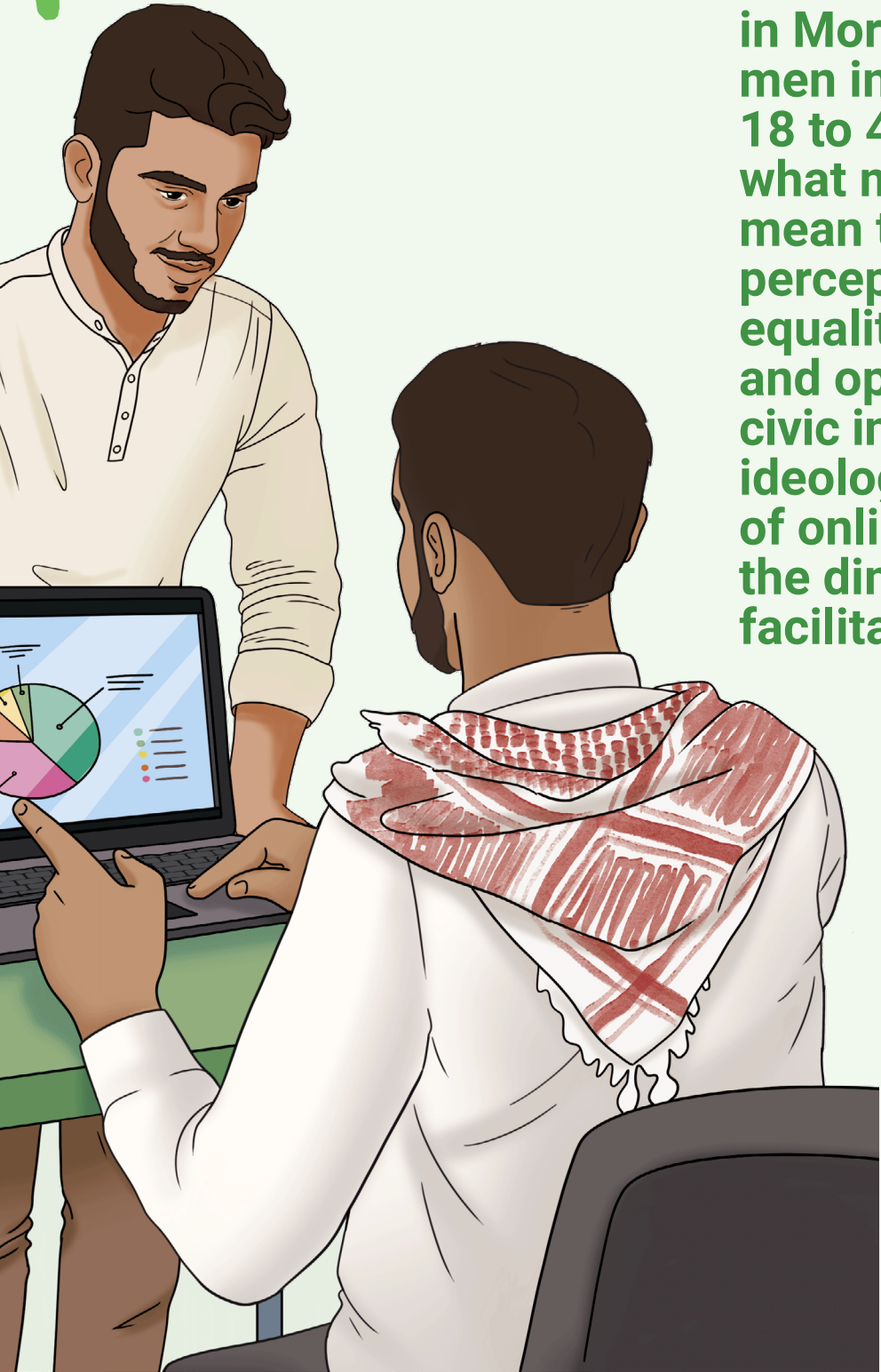
This study reflects the views of 527 men in Morocco and 541 men in Jordan, ages 18 to 40. It highlights what masculinities mean to men and their perceptions of gender equality, purpose in life and optimism, trust in civic institutions, political ideology, the influence of online spaces, and the dimensions of tech-facilitated violence. —————

The questionnaire draws on questions developed and tested by Equimundo and others used in large-scale surveys, all informed by existing research on men (Barker et al., 2023; Equimundo, 2025b). The survey was developed as an initial pre-testing survey for State of the World's Men, to be published by Equimundo in 2026, and the key indices and scales gauge purpose in life, optimism, attitudes about masculinity, gender threat, trust in political institutions, and the influence of online influencers. Attitudes about masculinity are measured using Equimundo's Man Box Scale, which captures men's adherence to a restrictive, dominance-driven view of manhood (Hill et al., 2020; Barker et al., 2023). Examples of items under the Man Box include "men should

be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families," "men make better business executives than women," "a gay man is a not a 'real man,'" and "successful men have families." Examples of items related to gender threat include "men have it harder than women when it comes to new opportunities," "no one cares about men's issues today," and "feminism is about favoring women over men."

Factor analysis allowed us to create a single variable based on the latent factor we found that connected a subset of items related to the Man Box. This single variable comprised a score we used as a predictor for purpose in life, optimism, and political ideology in various linear regression models. Similarly, factor analysis allowed us to create gender threat variables based on two latent factors that connected a subset of items related to gender threat. These items have been tested in the Arab region earlier (e.g., the International Men and Gender Equality Survey – Middle East and North

Africa, or IMAGES MENA). Further, Generation G partner organizations based in Jordan and Morocco reviewed the questionnaire to ensure it was contextually relevant.

The data was collected using an online questionnaire administered to 797 participants in Morocco and 800 in Jordan. Participants were recruited through research panels, with quotas to identify a sample that closely matched the socioeconomic and ethnic demographic distribution of each country's population. A quota was programmed to guarantee that at least 70 percent of the sample was male. Men were oversampled to draw a complex portrait of what it means to be a man in this region. The survey was open to all people aged 18 to 40, an age group selected to explore perspectives from "young adulthood," which is a focus of the Generation G partnership. The online survey was administered between November 2024 and February 2025, and data was analyzed in Stata.

DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY.

In Jordan, one-third of respondents were women (32 percent) and two-thirds men (68 percent), with one person identifying as neither gender. In Morocco, the proportions were similar: 34 percent were women, 66 percent were men, and four people were outside the binary framework. Table 1 provides the characteristics of the men's sample, and it shows that most men had attained a high level of education, and a large proportion were employed. In both countries, the mean age was 28, and around one-third of participants were married, and a third were looking for a partner. In Morocco, 53 percent of respondents had care responsibilities (children, dependent relatives), while in Jordan, this was the case for just 43 percent.

Additionally, in Morocco, respondents came from a variety of regions, including Casablanca-Settat, Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, and Marrakech-Safi, as well as Tangier-Tétouan-Al Hoceima, Fez-Meknes, and Souss-Massa. The majority of respondents in Jordan lived in the Central Region, followed by the North and then the South. A large proportion (88 percent) identified as Arab, and 9 percent identified as Palestinians. Around 3 percent each comprised of minority groups, such as Circassians, Chechens, Armenians, and Kurds. In Morocco, 72 percent identified as Arab, a quarter as Amazigh, and a small minority as having other origins (e.g., European, Jewish, or sub-Saharan African).

TABLE 1 | **SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AMONG MEN**

	Morocco	Jordan
Total	**527**	**541**
AGE		
18-23	23.1	27.8
24-30	39.3	35.4
31-40	37.7	36.8
Mean	28.3 (SD: 6.1)	28.8 (SD: 5.7)

	Morocco	Jordan
EDUCATION		
Less than high school	7.8	6.8
High school	23.2	21.6
Vocational degree	15.2	26.3
Bachelor's degree	36.4	37.9
Master's degree	17.5	7.4
RELATIONSHIP STATUS*		
Single, looking for a partner	38.2	31.3
Single, not looking for a partner	22.1	27.0
In a relationship, not married	6.1	13.3
Married	31.3	27.3
Divorced/ widowed/separated	2.4	1.1
EMPLOYMENT		
Men	65.8	82.4
Partner has an income	68.4	68.7
Has children and/or cares for others	52.8	42.7
ECONOMIC STANDING		
Basic needs not mostly met	26.4	25.8
Middle	49.9	33.5
Basic and important needs tend to be met	23.7	40.7

FIGURE 3

ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF MEN'S SAMPLE, MOROCCO (n=527)

- Arab — 72%
- Amazigh — 24%
- Other — 4%
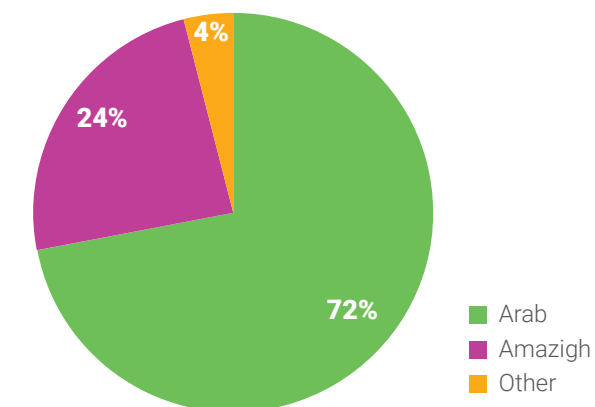
FIGURE 4

ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF MEN'S SAMPLE, JORDAN (n=541)

- Arab — 88%
- Palestinians — 9%
- Others — 3%
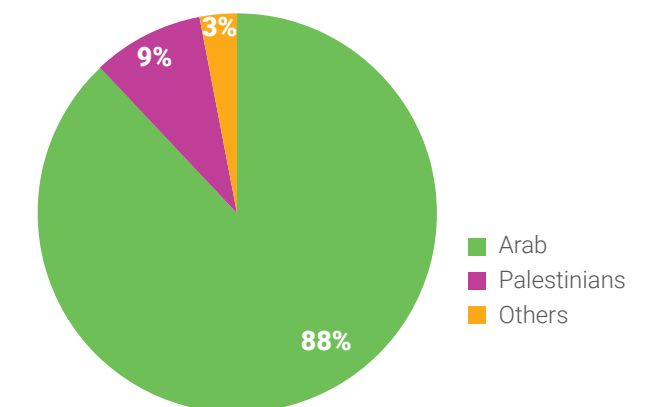
FIGURE 1

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MEN'S SAMPLE, MOROCCO (n=527)

- Casablanca-Settat — 27%
- Rabat-Salé-Kénitra — 18%
- Fez-Meknés — 12%
- Tangier-Tétouan-Al Hoceima — 10%
- Marrakech-Safi — 13%
- Souss-Massa — 9%
- Other regions — 11%
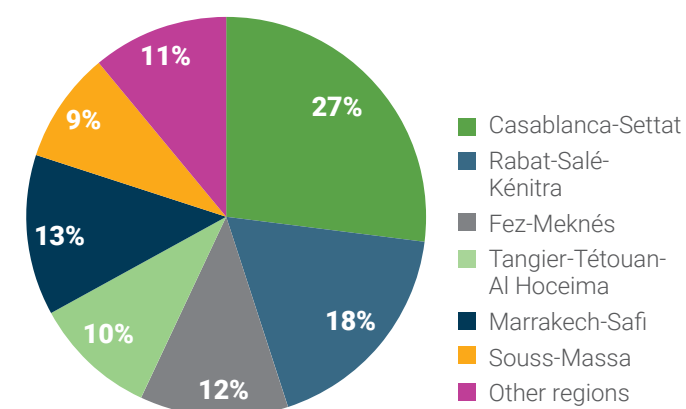
FIGURE 2

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MEN'S SAMPLE, JORDAN (n=541)

- North Region — 28%
- Central Region — 60%
- South Region — 12%
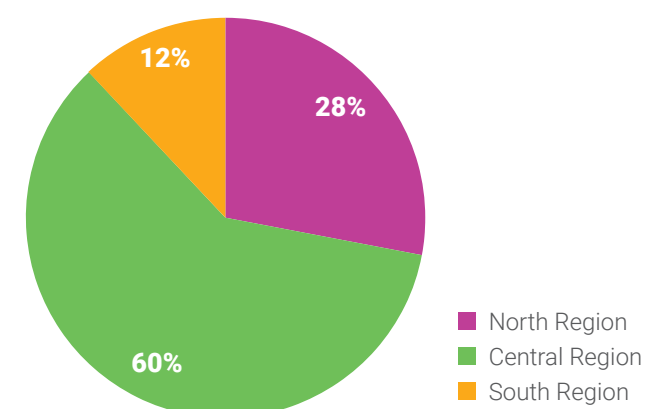
THE HEADLINES

MASCULINITY EMBODIES TRADITIONS.

The survey data reveals that **a large majority of men in both Morocco and Jordan adhere to traditional gender norms:** 84 percent of men in Morocco and 71 percent of men in Jordan believe that only men should bring home the money. This echoes an earlier large-scale exploration of masculinities, Equimundo's IMAGES MENA, which found that men's pressure to fulfill their socially prescribed role as financial provider was a source of stress and associated with lower well-being (El Feki et al., 2017; UN Women, 2022).

While women in Morocco and Jordan are generally less likely than men to support inequitable norms, a significant proportion validate certain traditional expectations of men. **However, women and men do differ substantially on inequitable attitudes associated with women's economic gains and leadership.** For instance, in Morocco, while 47 percent of men believe that a higher female salary inevitably creates problems, only 39 percent of women reported this is so. Similarly, 60 percent of men and just 26 percent of women say men make better business leaders. A similar trend is visible in Jordan, with 67 percent of men and 40 percent of women agreeing that men make better business leaders.

Most women and men support men being in control in relationships. For instance, in Morocco, 84 percent of men and 73 percent of women believe that a man deserves to know where his partner is at all times. In Jordan, 68 percent of men and 62 percent of women agreed with this statement. In Morocco, 84 percent of men and 66 percent of women believe that it is up to men to ensure women's modesty, and 69 percent of men and 65 percent of women say that successful men have families. A full 68 percent of men, but only 31 percent of women, believe that a man should always have the last word in a relationship.

The proportions are lower, but still notable, in Jordan: 55 percent of men and 33 percent of women believe that a man should always have the last word in a relationship, and more than 83 percent of women and men say a gay man is not a "real" man. Additionally, two-thirds of men and half of women agree that "getting married is the key to achieving my life goals." In both Jordan and Morocco, while 62 percent of men and 72 percent of women report they worry about their family's financial future, a large proportion of women assert that it is a man's role to provide economic security.

Literature suggests that men say they are attached to women (e.g., as mothers, wives, or sisters) and want "what's best for them," while at the same time feeling that it is necessary to make decisions on their behalf for their own safety. This so-called "benevolent" traditional manhood is reflected, for example, in the widely shared idea that men are the natural protectors of women and know best what is good for them. A man might encourage his daughter's education, or even support her working, while simultaneously considering it normal to choose her future husband or forbid her from going on certain outings he deems risky. **This contradictory paternalism – with declared good intentions and denial of women's autonomy – is a subtle but real obstacle to emancipation.**

In Jordan, about half of the 541 men surveyed perceive themselves as "totally masculine" (55 percent for their behavior, 53 percent for their external appearance, 51 percent for their interests, and 47 percent for their attitudes). In Morocco, this self-assessment was more pronounced: about three-fifths of the 527 men surveyed gave themselves the highest score for their attitudes (60 percent), behavior (60 percent), interests (58 percent), and outward appearance (65 percent). These results show that **a self-affirmation of masculinity particularly occurs in terms of appearance and behavior.**

In both countries, 58 percent express the wish to be even more masculine. While the image of a man is less focused on overt aggression and "being tough," the imperatives of traditional masculinity, such as a man's duty to exercise guardianship over the women in his family, remain strong. This "guardian" stance illustrates benevolent paternalism, where the man defines himself by his responsibility over "his" women, not only for their safety but also to control their conduct.

GENDER EQUALITY SEEN BOTH AS A THREAT AND AN ASPIRATION.

In both countries, more than 65 percent of men say they feel that men encounter more difficulties than women when it comes to seizing new opportunities, feel ignored when it comes to their own problems, see feminism as a favor done to women at the expense of men, and see the media as biased against men. In Morocco, 74 percent of men and 45 percent of women feel that feminism is about favoring women over men. Although the proportion is lower among Jordanian men (56 percent), 43 percent of women also say this is true. These differences are significantly different between women and men ($p<0.001$). This "zero-sum" mentality (women's gains being men's losses) fuels widespread resistance: it pushes men to maintain their prerogative as head of the family under the guise of protecting family equilibrium and moral order.

Figure 5 illustrates this tension between traditional forms of masculinity and new aspirations, showing that **although a notable proportion of respondents support women's political participation, a majority believe that men make better politicians than women.** Norms around youth activism and political engagement are also associated with the tribal system or a collective norm, rather than personal beliefs (Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development [ARDD], 2025). Hence, tapping into the system could be a way forward.

In both countries, **men who felt that they are in good economic standing, were significantly less likely to adhere to inequitable gender-attitudes.** Linear regression results show that in Jordan, men who felt the least economic hardship were less likely to adhere

to the Man Box and believe that gender equality efforts are a threat to men, compared to those who felt the most economic hardship (p<0.001). In Morocco, similar regression analysis shows that men who felt the least economic hardship were less likely to see gender equality efforts as a threat to men (p<0.01).

AGREEMENT ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG MEN (PERCENTAGE)

■ Jordan (n=541) ■ Morocco (n=527)

- Men make better politicians than women.
- Women do not have enough opportunities to participate in leadership positions.
- I am in favor of any quota that increases the number of women in the parliament in my country.
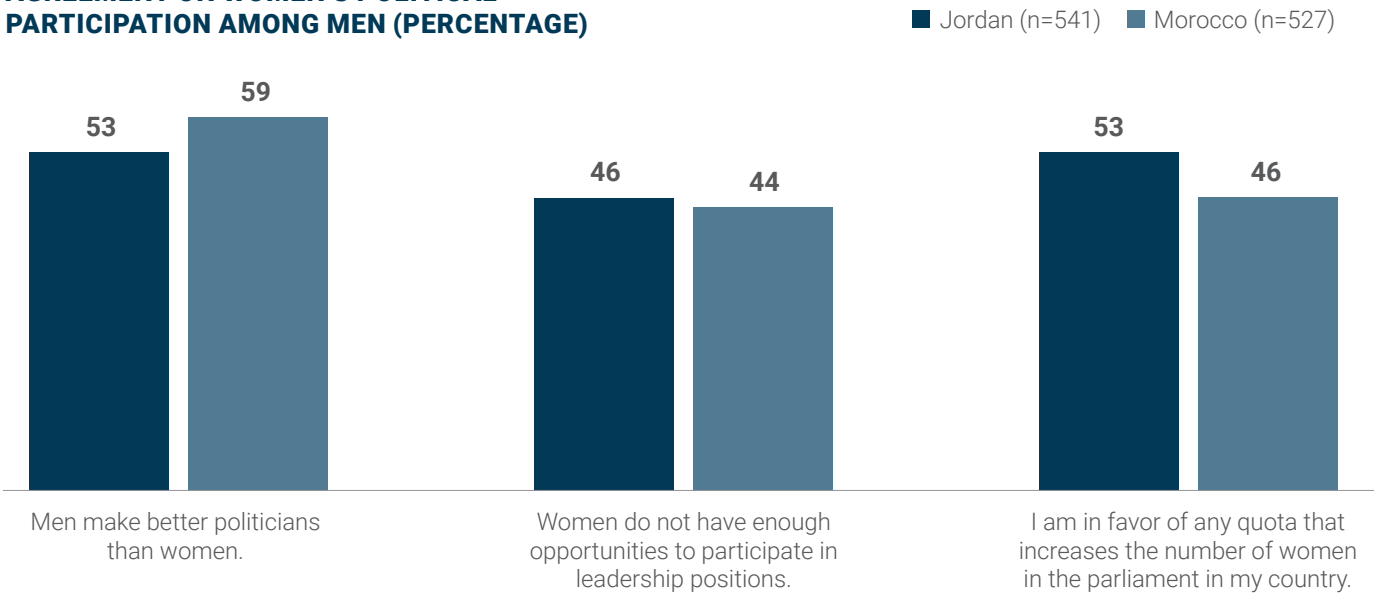
MANY MEN ARE POLITICALLY MODERATE – AND POLITICALLY ACTIVE.

In both countries, a large proportion of men describe themselves as moderate-leaning (59 percent in Morocco and 43 percent in Jordan), followed by conservative-leaning (32 percent in Morocco and 24 percent in Jordan). Just 9 percent identify as liberal-leaning in Morocco, while 33 percent do so in Jordan. Hence, a larger proportion of men in Morocco identify as conservative and moderate than in Jordan; correspondingly, a significantly higher proportion consider themselves liberal in Jordan compared to Morocco. Logistic regression showed that adhering to traditional forms of masculinity, or the Man Box, is significantly associated with political conservatism (p<0.001). While this is a self-report survey and we cannot ensure that all participants understand the terms conservative, liberal, and moderate in the same way, using these terms to categorize political views has risen in popularity. Thus, we believe these results represent the average political viewpoints of the sample as can best be captured using a self-report survey.

In both countries, men are significantly more likely than women to be involved in most political activities. Political engagement through attending a rally or speech; attending a local political meeting; contacting a national, state, or local government official; and being an active member of any group to influence public policy is relatively low, at less than 40 percent of men, in both countries (in the past one year). However, in both Morocco and Jordan, around half of men say they have worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in their community, suggesting this is the most popular form of political engagement (Table 2).

Overall, the results on political engagement suggest a fear of the consequences of activism, which can further shrink the space for civil society. This finding is important as efforts such as Generation Gender work to build public support for gender justice, strengthen gender-transformative and youth-inclusive policymaking, and build a strong civil society that is able to fight for gender justice.

Officially, the Moroccan and Jordanian governments have made strong commitments to equality.

However, for many men, political commitments seem distant. **Many perceive equality policies as the result of external pressure (such as from international organizations or conditions of receiving aid) rather than as a genuine national priority or an action/policy that directly benefits the community.** As a result, there is a certain mistrust of the institutions responsible for promoting equality, such as ministries, official bodies, and women's nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) – especially as concrete progress is slow to materialize. Campaigns to raise awareness of gender-based violence or initiatives to promote women's economic empowerment are sometimes perceived as leaving no room for male concerns, such as young men's difficulties in finding a job or getting married due to lack of means.

TABLE 2 | **MEN'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE PAST YEAR**

	Jordan (%), n=541	Morocco (%), n=527
Attended a political rally or speech	21.8	31.7
Attended an organized protest of any kind	18.7	36.1
Attended a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs	28.5	36.2
Worked or volunteered for a political party or candidate	24.4	22.4
Been an active member of any group that tries to influence public policy or government, not including a political party	19.8	18.8
Worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in your community	50.3	51.8
Contacted a national, state, or local government official in person, by phone call, or by letter about an issue that is important to you	26.4	24.5
Contacted a national, state, or local government official online, by email, or by text message about an issue that is important to you	33.3	25.8
Signed a petition online	38.8	30.2
Posted or reposted pictures or video online related to a political or social issue	38.6	39.5

IN MOROCCO AND JORDAN, TRUST IN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IS HIGH.

In general, trust in political and civic institutions is quite high. **Around 70 percent of men in both countries report that they trust most people, and around 60 percent trust the national government, local government, and news media.** However, around half of men in both countries say they do not have much trust in political parties. In Jordan, individuals generally trust the tribal system, are positive about the government and public systems (ARDD, 2025a), and see the community and government as matters of pride; in Morocco, though, criticism of government policies is not uncommon. However, while social institutions in Jordan such as the tribal system offer critical connections for women and men's political participation, the system can be difficult for women to gain a larger role in since these connections are largely men (ARDD, 2024b).

MEN STRONGLY SUPPORT CARE POLICIES.

The results **indicate there is a strong consensus among men in favor of government intervention in the health care sector and care economy,** as Figure 6 shows.

MEN WHO FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE CERTAIN CARE-RELATED ACTIONS (PERCENTAGE)

■ Jordan (n=541) ■ Morocco (n=527)

	Jordan	Morocco
Ensure better access to paternity/maternity/care-related leave	61	49
Increase investments in affordable care; childcare, elder care, for people with disabilities	72	68
Support more young people to go into care professions	72	69
Make sure all people have access to health care	76	68
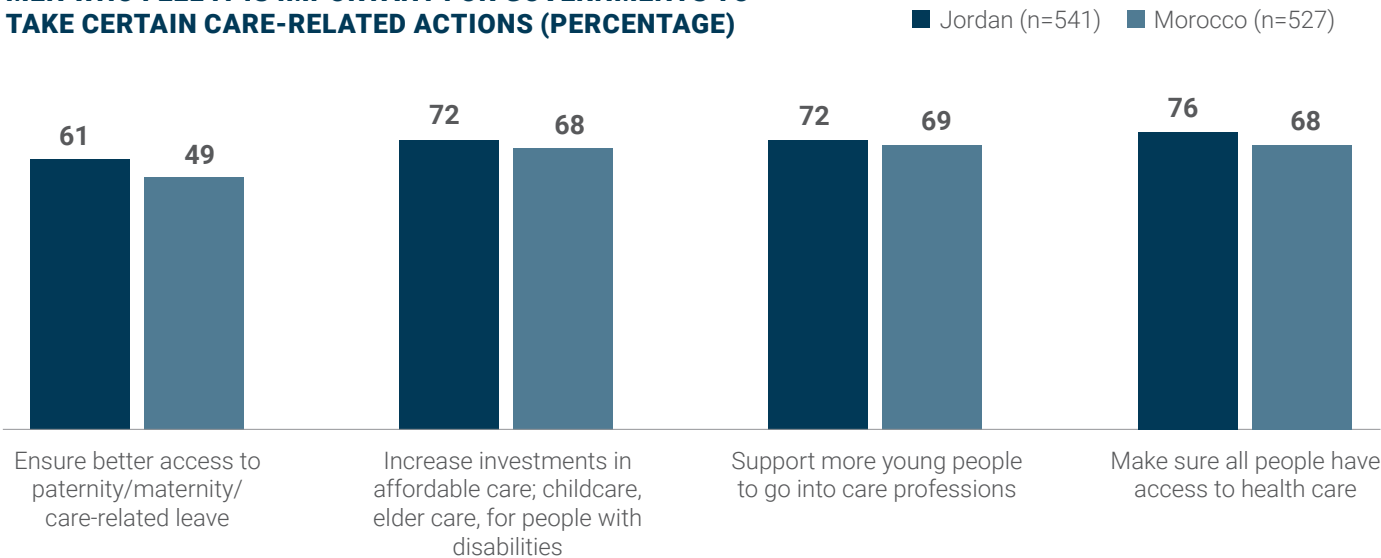
OVERALL, MEN ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE AND FEEL A SENSE OF PURPOSE.

The results reveal men are widely optimistic about their personal future, with a large majority saying they are able to establish connections and feel accepted by others. Jordanians generally report feeling more socially connected: for example, 74 percent of men in Jordan feel close to others versus 62 percent in Morocco, and 85 percent of men in Jordan versus 77 percent in Morocco feel accepted. Further, the data shows a stronger general sense of meaning and engagement in life among men than among women, with these gender differences even more pronounced in Jordan than in Morocco. These differences could be attributed to the tribal system in Jordan, which transcends economic class, region (urban or rural), and religion (ARDD, 2025a).

Overall, 84 percent of men in Jordan and 70 percent of men in Morocco report a sense of purpose in life. Linear regression shows that adhering to traditional forms of masculinity, or the Man Box, is significantly associated with low optimism and lower purpose of life (p<0.001). This mirrors other studies finding that rigid forms of masculinity are often isolating and disconnecting from the social and emotional self, meaning it is unsurprising that these views are related to overall lower optimism in life (Barker et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2025).

This finding is exacerbated by the cultural taboos restricting emotional vulnerability among men. In many Arab societies, it is uncommon for men to openly express grief or anxiety for fear of being stigmatized (Sompairac, 2024). For instance, our study found that only 40 percent of men in Jordan and 50 percent in Morocco allow themselves to experience distressing emotions. Around 60 percent of women in both countries report the same. Slightly less than two-thirds of men say the conditions of their lives are good, and 43 percent feel that although they have a job, they do not have status and reputation. **This unveils the tension between how men are expected to be financial providers, yet meeting economic needs or having a job is not perceived as the be-all and end-all in defining men's aspirations. Men also aspire to gain intangible achievements, namely status and reputation.**

MASCULINITIES THROUGH THE PRISM OF TECHNOLOGY

MEN IN MOROCCO AND JORDAN ARE MODERATE INTERNET USERS.

The data collected show that most internet use is of moderate duration in both Morocco and Jordan. In other words, the most frequent daily connection is a few hours a day. In fact, in both countries, the highest percentages of users are found in the intervals of three to five hours or one to three hours of connection daily. This predominance of moderate use suggests that while the internet plays an important role in daily life, it does not monopolize people's time.

In Morocco, men and women have very similar online profiles. For example, just over a third of Moroccans – both men and women – say they spend three to five hours online on a typical day. Similarly, around a quarter of each gender goes online for one to three hours a day. A minority report intensive use (more than eight hours a day) or very low use (less than one hour a day), with about the same proportion of men as women reporting these levels of use. In Jordan, although moderate internet use is also the norm, there are more pronounced differences between men and women.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTUBE ARE KEY RESOURCES FOR MEN.

Almost the entire population of Morocco and Jordan is connected to the internet, with a penetration rate of 91 percent and millions of social network users (21.2 million in Morocco and 6.4 million in Jordan) (Kemp 2024a, 2024b). **In both countries, entertaining and viral content dominate the digital space, but the nature of accounts that individuals follow varies considerably.** Among our respondents in both countries, Instagram and YouTube are among the most popular platforms, reflecting their global popularity; for men, YouTube is the most visited platform, while Instagram comes out on top for women.

While video is the preferred format in both countries, the most-followed accounts reveal very different national priorities. In Jordan, internet users turn to public and institutional figures, with the accounts of King Abdullah II, Queen Rania, journalists such as Sara Al-Rousan, and organizations such as Jordan Tourism Board being widely followed. Jordanians show a strong attachment to royal figures, local news, and national prestige. International accounts, such as those of Cristiano Ronaldo or MrBeast, are present but secondary.
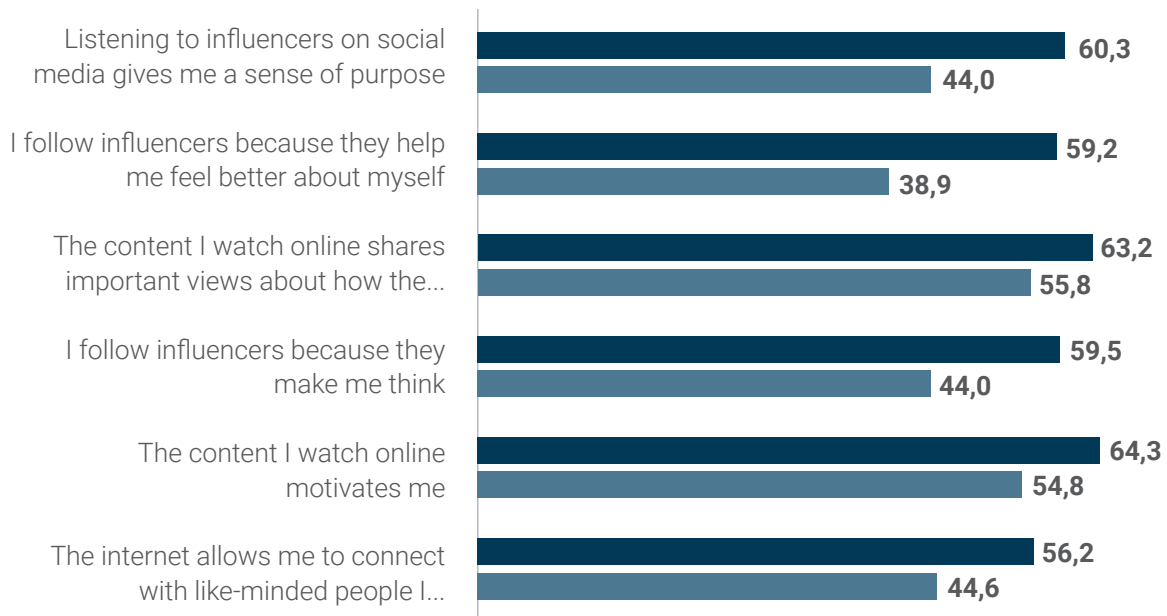
In Morocco, the online world is quite different. The most-followed accounts include local entertainment influencers, such as Ilyas El Maliki and Farouk Life, joined by global stars such as MrBeast. Traditional media and institutional accounts are much less visible. The emphasis is on viral content: sketches, humor, challenges, and lighthearted videos.

In both countries, international media such as Al Jazeera, BBC, and CNN enjoy a stable audience. In Jordan, the news media are followed for their educational and political value, and accounts linked to the monarchy and NGOs reinforce this civic orientation. In Morocco, the media followed are mainly geared toward sports and viral news (e.g., beIN Sports, Hespress), reflecting a clear preference for entertainment. **Only a third of men in both countries report they get news from influencers rather than journalists, and the same proportion say their online life is more engaging than their offline social life.** However, online spaces are deeply influential. As shown in Figure 7, around 60 percent of men in Jordan and around 40 percent in Morocco say that they follow influencers because influencers make them think, make them feel better about themselves, and give them a sense of purpose; a similar proportion say online content motivates them.

FIGURE 7

MEN WHO FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE CERTAIN CARE-RELATED ACTIONS (PERCENTAGE)

■ Jordan (n=541) ■ Morocco (n=527)

	Jordan	Morocco
Listening to influencers on social media gives me a sense of purpose	60,3	44,0
I follow influencers because they help me feel better about myself	59,2	38,9
The content I watch online shares important views about how the…	63,2	55,8
I follow influencers because they make me think	59,5	44,0
The content I watch online motivates me	64,3	54,8
The internet allows me to connect with like-minded people I…	56,2	44,6

MANY MEN AND WOMEN HAVE USED A DATING WEBSITE OR APP.

Data from Morocco and Jordan highlights notable trends in young adults' use of online dating platforms. **In Morocco, 55 percent of men and 62 percent of women say they have used a dating website or app. Similarly, in Jordan, 44 percent of men and 55 percent of women have used online dating services.** In both countries, women are slightly more likely than men to report using online dating platforms, a trend that aligns with wider international observations on the adoption of social and dating technologies by gender. In addition to current use, future interest in online dating is particularly high among men. In Jordan, 48 percent of men who had not yet used a dating platform say they are ready to do so, compared to 36 percent of men in Morocco.

Given these findings, it would be useful to study the experiences of people who form romantic relationships through online or offline channels. In addition, a more in-depth analysis of which dating platforms are most widely used and how patterns of use vary according to age, level of education, and place of residence (urban or rural) could provide richer insights. Finally, understanding the cultural factors influencing attitudes toward online dating in Morocco and Jordan would help to better contextualize these use patterns. This is particularly important given that a third of men report that they are looking for a partner and marriage is of significant value and purpose in one's life.

TECH-FACILITATED VIOLENCE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS WOMEN AND GIRLS.

In both countries, women are far more affected by digital violence than men (United Nations Population Fund, 2024; Akram, 2024; Centre Hubertine Auclert, 2024; Rutgers, 2024). Analyses highlight that cyberviolence against women is fueled by traditional norms related to manhood (Abiero & Mwaura, 2024). As a result, tech-facilitated gender-based violence is mainly aimed at women to intimidate or silence them. Women who are active online may be perceived as challenging norms (e.g., speaking out publicly), leading to reprisals (Akram, 2024).

Men can certainly suffer abuse online, but this more often happens in contexts that are not intimate but rather professional or among peers (e.g., defamation or threats between men). There is also an exposure bias: men are marginally more present online – slightly more Moroccan men than women are intensive users (LeMatin.ma, 2023) – but nevertheless, it is mainly women who suffer violence. In other words, gender is a determining factor.

Our survey data reveals a worryingly high incidence of technology-facilitated violence in Morocco and Jordan, with behavior ranging from digital intrusion to online sexual coercion. The most common act in both countries is looking through someone else's phone without authorization. While a third of men and women report looking through someone else's phone in Jordan, more than 45 percent of men and women report doing so at least a few times in the past year. However, 9 percent of men and 10 percent of women in Jordan and 16 percent men and 10 percent women in Morocco report that they looked through someone else's phone six times or more in the last one year. Other behaviors – such as forcing someone to reveal a password, changing their relationship status to hurt someone, or spreading rumors online – affect less than 10 percent of respondents. Acts such as digital threats or pressure to obtain intimate photos are less frequent. In all cases, the data shows that Moroccan and Jordanian women experience online violence more frequently than their male counterparts and that certain behaviors (such as looking at phones without permission or spreading rumors) are reported by a significant percentage of women in both countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

What men think should no longer be a gender policy blind spot. The following recommendations for action build on this study's findings and aim to promote positive masculinities in Morocco and Jordan. ────

Honor positive and inclusive models of masculinity.

Man Box-related expectations put pressure on boys and men – to provide for their families and be in charge in personal and public spaces. We must help redefine what it means to "be a man," encouraging traits such as respect, empathy, shared responsibility, and nonviolence.

This could involve:

- Making a place at the table for the many ways to "be a man" in public dialogues. This could include working with opinion leaders, educators, and the media to highlight examples of men taking care of their children, supporting their wives' careers, and expressing their emotions in a healthy way so that these behaviors become more acceptable.

- Conducting intergenerational dialogues on masculinity and caring fatherhood. These efforts should involve elders and influential community leaders (e.g., religious and civic leaders).

- Publicly supporting egalitarian policies, including paid paternity (family) leave, emphasizing that these policies would strongly signal that fatherhood is valued in society and that men don't become less of a man when they care for their children.

Call men in rather than calling them out.

Our survey respondents say that young men feel left behind – which means it is critical to connect with them in discussion, debate, and action about equality.

This could include:

- Encouraging educational programs in schools and universities, and media campaigns featuring male role models of equality.

- Developing programs with boys and men that focus on challenging the idea that gender equality is not a zero-sum game.

This work could build on existing models and partnerships. For example, the Moroccan platform Machi Rojola (literally, "That's not what it means to be a man") engages men in deconstructing sexism in and around themselves. Similarly, in Jordan, the involvement of organizations such as the King Hussein Foundation in the IMAGES study (UN Women, 2022) illustrates a growing institutional awareness.

Acknowledge the challenges of youth unemployment.

In Morocco and Jordan, youth unemployment has reached alarming levels, around 36 percent in Morocco and more than 40 percent in Jordan (Reuters, 2024; Tzannatos, 2025) – among the highest in the world. This hinders many men's professional integration and delays their access to financial independence (and often marriage, which is closely linked to economic stability in these societies). Among those who do work, a significant proportion hold informal or insecure jobs, with no real income security.

Steps to support young men could involve:

- Stressing that this economic vulnerability is not just an individual issue but rather a generational and structural one in communication efforts with both young men and the broader public.

- Acknowledging this vulnerability is related to many men's struggle to financially provide for their families and how this relates to cultural norms around masculinity in terms of being a provider and protector.

- Supporting public policy efforts to tackle youth unemployment through training and employment programs, which would benefit men and reduce their feeling of being left behind while attention is focused on women.

Involve educational institutions in pursuing equality.

Schools and universities are key spaces in which attitudes are formed. In these spaces and beyond, it is vital to dialogue and portray boys as caring friends and family members.

Efforts could involve:

- Training teachers to spot and systematically dismantle gender stereotypes, organize mixed-gender activities that focus on collaboration and respect among the participants, and invite guest speakers (both male and female) as inspiring examples of gender equality.

- Incorporating content on ending gender stereotypes into school curricula and extracurricular activities from an early age.

- Conducting mixed-gender workshops on life skills, where boys and girls learn together about topics

such as nonviolent communication, sharing household chores, and respecting consent.

Moroccan and Jordanian youth are at the heart of political engagement for the betterment of their lives. Boys and young men – alongside girls and young women – should be supported from a young age in challenging harmful ideas of masculinity, developing empathy, and valuing cooperation over domination.

Push for stronger enforcement of laws against technology-facilitated violence and raise awareness.

Our survey results demonstrate that technology-facilitated violence remains persistent in Morocco and Jordan, and **we must respond on two fronts:**

- Having accountability mechanisms so that public officials rigorously enforce laws penalizing violence against women. This must involve training the police and the judiciary, protecting and supporting victims, and effectively punishing perpetrators.

- Working to dismantle the cultural justifications for violence through targeted public campaigns (e.g., messages in mosques insisting on the respect due to wives or respected male figures condemning violence as neither courageous nor honorable).

These efforts should stress that a "real man" never hits a woman; to the contrary, respect and self-control show strength of character.

Reconcile positive traditions and women's rights.

Given the weight of cultural and religious context in male perceptions, strategies to promote equality should seek to reconcile – rather than oppose – local values with women's rights.

This could involve, for example:

- Calling on progressive religious leaders to stress that equality and justice are principles that are also present in religion and that protecting one's family can mean supporting one's daughters in their studies as much as one's sons.

- Working with the guardians of these traditions (e.g., community elders, religious authorities, tribal community/groups) to change them from within.

Culture can be a basis for legitimizing reforms by showing that they are not imported but rooted in the society's values of respect and solidarity. This approach reduces the likelihood that community members will reflexively reject these ideas by presenting equality not as a rupture, but as a positive continuation of the principles to which men adhere.

CONCLUSION

Our survey findings paint a rich, and sometimes paradoxical, picture of male attitudes in Morocco and Jordan.
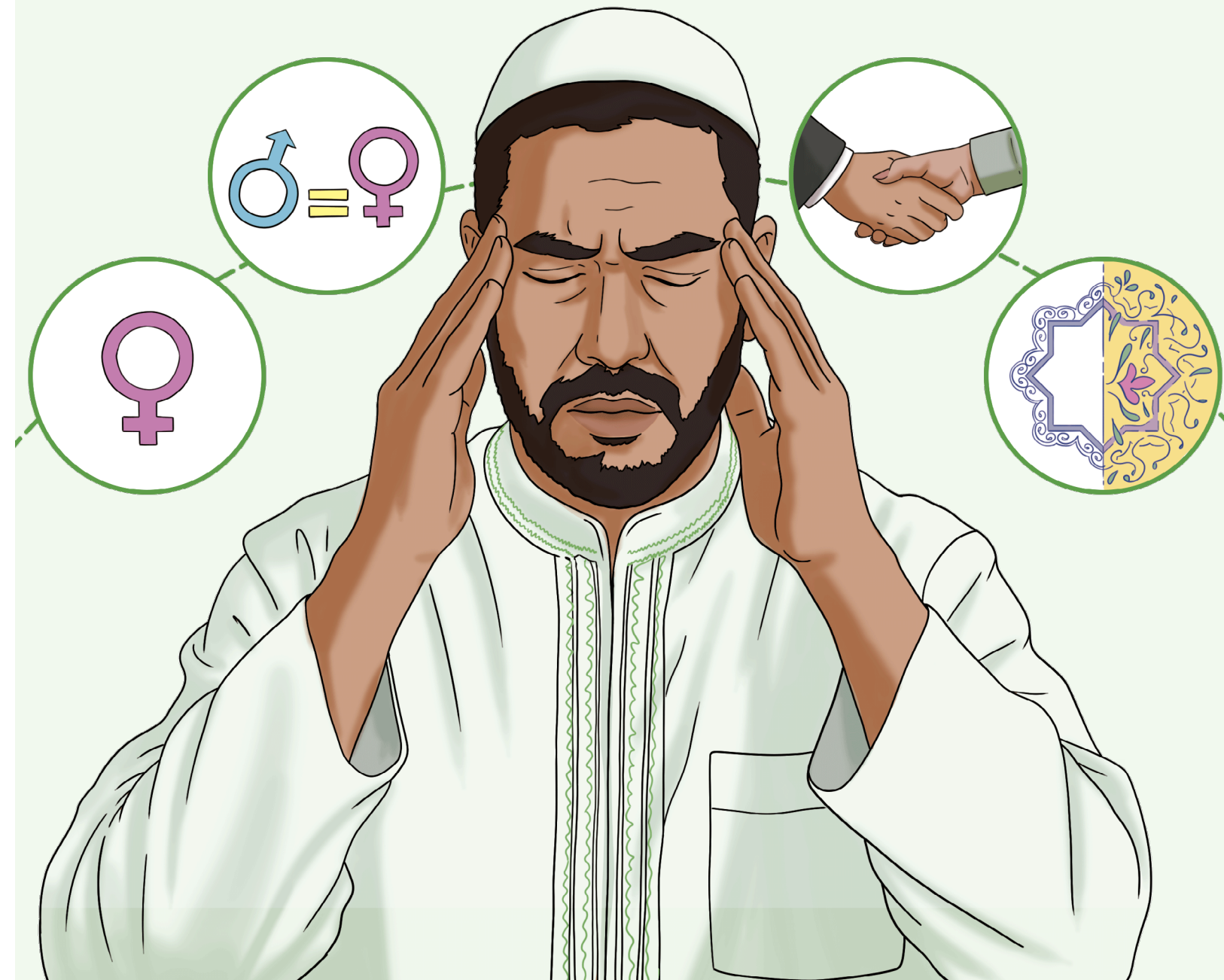
Firstly, they indicate that traditional masculine norms continue to exert a profound influence: overall, many men still adhere to the idea that men should be the head of the family and the main decisionmakers, and many are reluctant to embrace changes they perceive as contrary to custom. At the same time, many feel pressure to embody the traditional masculine ideal – being financially successful, protecting their family/community, and never showing vulnerability – which may generate hidden stress and anger. Expressing vulnerability remains largely taboo among men. The study also highlights a double standard: many support equality in theory but struggle to apply it in their daily lives. It is common for a man to approve of women's work in general while refusing to allow his wife or sister to work – proof that traditional manhood reflexes remain strong.

Despite these contradictions, the survey also reveals encouraging signs of a desire for change among many participants, especially among young, educated, urban ones. Many men aspire to more balanced relationships: to be more present parents than their own fathers were and to build relationships based on mutual understanding rather than authority. Some question the model of dominant masculinity and say they are open to a more egalitarian ideal. Several even say they feel relieved to share economic responsibility for the household with their spouse and recognize that women are just as capable of making family decisions. These realizations, still in the minority but very real, suggest that change is possible as spaces open up for men to express what they are experiencing and feeling.

Many men in Morocco and Jordan feel that public policies toward gender equality are focused on women and they feel invisible or left out of the debate. They see that economic and structural challenges – such as high unemployment – do not take expectations from men to be the family's sole provider, into account. As a result, some men feel that efforts to promote gender equality come at their expense. In Jordan, in particular, traditional male roles (such as protector, head of the family, and financial guarantor) are seen as a burden by some – though without any clear demand for change, fueling latent resentment.

This also fuels distrust of feminism and viewing equality as a threat. In the region, feminism is often constructed as a Western import that is incompatible with local values and pits women against men. Media coverage of violence against women or campaigns for women's rights are often greeted with skepticism, even hostility, by men who feel stigmatized by these messages. They criticize the media for painting a one-sided picture of men as oppressors and women as eternal victims without showing the more nuanced reality of their own experiences. In our study, many male respondents expressed distrust of the media, which they accused of magnifying men's wrongs and silencing women's wrongs (or responsibilities). This perception feeds the belief that the public debate on gender is biased and anti-male, reinforcing the idea that the traditional male role is under threat.

As a result of this mistrust, few men are prepared to declare themselves openly feminist or even allies of the cause of equality. In fact, identifying with feminism remains largely taboo: overall, only just over a third of men say they are personally feminist (Ipsos, 2023), and even fewer admit it publicly for fear of what people will say. In conservative societies, a man who campaigns for women's rights risks being ridiculed, suspected of weakness, or accused of going against "his own side." Such a context does not encourage male commitment to equality.

It is important to recognize the vulnerabilities that these same norms create for men, such as emotional isolation, constant social pressure, and anxiety linked to their role as breadwinners – although they cannot be used as a pretext to undermine women's rights. Acknowledging male suffering can enrich the debate by showing that traditional gender norms affect all genders. This is not about presenting men as victims in opposition to women, but rather about broadening the perspective: by emphasizing that equality frees everyone from imposed constraints, we affirm that addressing this struggle is mutually beneficial. Rather than excluding men from the debate, we must invite them to participate and contribute: this is how gender equality becomes a shared cause, where everyone has a role to play and everyone benefits. Male engagement in all its forms – participation in equality initiatives, public support for gender parity policies, and personal reflection – is a crucial step.

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