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STATE OF NORDIC MEN 2026

1 IN 3 MEN*

aged 18-24 question whether women and men should be treated equally

1 IN 4 MEN*

don't believe they'll find love

80%*

of men say caring for others defines being a man*

68%*

of men believe the economic and political structures are stacked against them

*These statistics represent the selected sample of men in the study.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

Nordic Council of Ministers

equimundo's

STATE OF NORDIC MEN 2026





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The Nordic Council of Ministers is the official body for inter-governmental cooperation in the Nordic Region. Established in 1971, it brings together ministers and senior officials from across the region and across a range of policy areas. Together, the Nordic Council of Ministers strive to turn Vision 2030 into a reality – a green, competitive, and socially sustainable Nordic region. Among these core policy areas include gender equality and equal rights for LGBTQIA+ people. The Nordic Council of Ministers commissioned this report to inform and contribute to this policy area.

Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice is a global leader in promoting gender equality and preventing violence in societies, communities, and homes around the world. Equimundo's work – including high-impact research, evidence-based programming, and targeted advocacy efforts – seeks to transform inequitable gender relations and promote nonviolent and caring definitions of manhood, to improve the lives of women, children, and men. As part of its work, Equimundo is conducting its inaugural State of the World's Men study, to which this State of Nordic Men study will contribute.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS V

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

A NOTE ON THE METHODS
WHAT THIS REPORT CAN AND CAN'T DO 4

INTRODUCTION 6

METHODOLOGY 8

CHAPTER 1
BEING A MAN AND THE "MAN BOX" IN THE NORDIC REGION 12

CHAPTER 2
MEN'S SENSE OF PURPOSE, ECONOMIC PRECARITY, AND CONNECTION IN UNCERTAIN TIMES 20

CHAPTER 3
MEN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 28

CHAPTER 4
MEN, RELATIONSHIPS, AND DATING 34

CHAPTER 5
MEN'S ONLINE LIVES AND DIGITAL MISOGYNY 42

CHAPTER 6
MEN, PUBLIC TRUST, AND DEMOCRACY 50

CONCLUSIONS 58

LOOKING AHEAD
CHARTING PATHWAYS TOWARD REGIONAL SOLUTIONS 60

ANNEX 1
EQUIMUNDO'S STATE OF NORDIC MEN: EXTENDED METHODOLOGY 64

ENDNOTES 92

BOXES

BOX 1.
THE MAN BOX 16

BOX 2.
ETHNOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS FROM QASIGIANNGUIT, UPERNAVIK, AND TASIILAQ 17

BOX 3.
ENCOURAGING NORWEGIAN MEN TO JOIN CARING AND EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONS 19

BOX 4.
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND MEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKUREYRI, ICELAND 22

BOX 5.
NORWEGIAN MEN'S EQUALITY COMMISSION 31

BOX 6.
GENDER EQUALITY IN SWEDEN 36

BOX 7.
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GRIEVANCE-BASED NARRATIVES AMPLIFIED ONLINE 47

TABLES

TABLE 1.
WHAT THIS REPORT CAN AND CAN'T DO 5

TABLE 2.
ADDITIONAL SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS PERCENTAGE BY COUNTRY 11

TABLE 3.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S AGREEMENT WITH MAN BOX STATEMENTS
(percent strongly agree / agree) 18

TABLE 4.
OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE ACROSS NORDIC COUNTRIES, BY AGE
(percent believe things will be better) 24

TABLE 5.
OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE ACROSS NORDIC COUNTRIES, MEN ONLY
(percent believe things will be better) 25

TABLE 6.
OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE ACROSS NORDIC COUNTRIES, WOMEN ONLY
(percent believe things will be better) 25

TABLE 7.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS
(percent strongly agree / agree) 37

TABLE 8.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ENDORSEMENT OF GRIEVANCE-BASED NARRATIVES AMPLIFIED ONLINE, BY AGE
(percent strongly agree / agree) 49

TABLE 9.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ENDORSEMENT OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC SENTIMENTS, BY AGE
(percent strongly agree / agree) 55

TABLE 10.
TOTAL SURVEY COMPLETION AND QUALIFICATION RATES ACROSS THE NORDIC COUNTRIES 65

TABLE 11.
TOTAL SAMPLE SIZE, BY COUNTRY AND BY GENDER 66

TABLE 12.
DETAILED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUOTAS – DENMARK 67

TABLE 13.
DETAILED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUOTAS – FINLAND 70

TABLE 14.
DETAILED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUOTAS – ICELAND 75

TABLE 15.
DETAILED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUOTAS – NORWAY 79

TABLE 16.
DETAILED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUOTAS – SWEDEN 83

TABLE 17.
PREDICTOR VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSIS 89

TABLE 18.
OUTCOME VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSIS 90

FIGURES

FIGURE 1.
IN PARTICIPANTS' OWN WORDS, "THE IDEAL MAN IS…" 14

FIGURE 2.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF MANHOOD ACROSS NORDIC COUNTRIES
(percent strongly agree / agree) 15

FIGURE 3.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SUPPORT STRUCTURES ACROSS THE REGION, BY GENDER 23

FIGURE 4.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF FINANCIAL WEALTH AND PATHWAYS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY, BY AGE
(percent strongly agree / agree) 26

FIGURE 5.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S REPORTED EXPERIENCES OF MENTAL HEALTH DISTRESS IN LAST TWO WEEKS
(percent some of the time to most days) 30

FIGURE 6.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH AND HEALTH SEEKING
(percent usually or most of the time) 33

FIGURE 7.
LIFE ASPIRATIONS: HOW MEN AND WOMEN FEEL ABOUT HAVING CHILDREN 37

FIGURE 8.
LIFE ASPIRATIONS: HOW MEN AND WOMEN FEEL ABOUT GETTING MARRIED 37

FIGURE 9.
DATING APP USE ACROSS THE REGION, BY GENDER 39

FIGURE 10.
EXPERIENCES WITH DATING APPS ACROSS THE REGION, BY AGE AND GENDER 38

FIGURE 11.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF ONLINE DATING ACROSS THE REGION, BY GENDER 40

FIGURE 12.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF USING VIRTUAL COMPANIONS
(percent strongly agree / agree) 41

FIGURE 13.
REASONS FOR GOING ONLINE ACROSS THE REGION, BY GENDER
(percent strongly agree / agree) 45

FIGURE 14.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ONLINE PLATFORM USAGE ACROSS THE REGION, BY AGE
(where participants spend the most time during an average week) 44

FIGURE 15.
LIST OF TOP FIVE INFLUENCERS AND INFLUENTIAL FIGURES
WHO MEN RECOGNIZE AND/OR FOLLOW ACROSS THE REGION 46

FIGURE 16.
MEN'S EXPOSURE TO GRIEVANCE-BASED NARRATIVES AMPLIFIED ONLINE ACROSS THE REGION
(percent recalling seeing these narratives sometimes or often) 48

FIGURE 17.
MEN AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION 53

FIGURE 18.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE REGION, BY GENDER
(percent trusting 'most' or 'all of the time') 53

FIGURE 19.
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SUPPORT FOR ANTI-DEMOCRATIC SENTIMENTS ACROSS COUNTRIES
(percent strongly agree / agree) 56

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Globally, conversations about what it means to be a man are more present than ever. This report sheds light on men's lives across Nordic countries – from ideas about being a man, to their purpose, aspirations, and anxieties. It shines a light on Nordic men's outlooks on the future, their health, and their economic prospects and sense of safety, to their beliefs about relationships, their lives online, and their perceptions of public and political life. Using quantitative survey data from five countries and with 4,547 people aged between 18 and 45.

This study was designed to identify trends in the lives of men across a range of topics affecting men's lives across the Nordic region (see Table 1). As detailed in the report (see Annex 1), the sample was constructed to achieve specific representation goals, while maintaining geographic and demographic representation. However, the study used online sampling and was not designed to produce a statistically representative sample of the Nordic population.

The online recruitment approach was intentional, as the study sought to better understand the attitudes and experiences of people who are frequently online. The findings therefore describe the respondents who participated in the study, including the patterns observed within this heterogeneous sample of men and women. They can provide insight into the experiences and perspectives of these respondents, but should not be interpreted as estimates of the prevalence of particular attitudes or experiences among all men or women aged 18–45 in the Nordic region.

CHANGING MASCULINITIES: BETWEEN CONNECTION AND CONSTRAINT

Nordic masculinity is anchored in care and connection, while traditional expectations persist. Four in five Nordic men said caring for others is central to being a man. And women agreed. Being a friend was the foremost quality the Nordic men and women surveyed associated with manhood, identified by 84 percent of men and 89 percent of women surveyed. This was closely followed by helping those who need it (83 percent), sharing care work (80 percent), and navigating conflict with communication (80 percent).

Gay men held these ideas more loosely, valuing friendship and communication above all, selected by 79 percent and 78 percent of this group, respectively. At the same time, traditional expectations of manhood continue to resonate strongly with men, but measurably less so with women. Notably, 83 percent of men valued providing for their family as core to their conception of being a man, while a smaller number of women – 70 percent – agreed. Overall, participants were least likely to associate manhood with violence (38 percent) and protecting their community (33 percent).

The "Man Box" has a hold on a sizeable portion of men – and economic precarity appears to be strongly connected to this hold. As men navigate complex, competing, and, at times, confusing expectations of what it means to be a man, some find solace in more rigid ideas of manhood distilled in the Man Box. The Man Box represents a restrictive set of ideas about male identity, centered on ideas of self-sufficiency, acting tough, adhering to rigid gender roles, and heterosexuality. Two-thirds of men said they choose to work through their problems alone and 40 percent endorse beliefs about the superiority of male leadership, traditional gender norms in family settings, and narrow ideas about sexuality. The analysis indicated that financial insecurity is closely correlated with men's endorsement of these more rigid ideas of manhood. Strikingly, every reported increase in financial precarity was linked to a 7.4 times higher likelihood of subscribing to the Man Box. The effect of adhering to the Man Box cuts both ways: while men who "buy in" are twice as likely to report a strong sense of purpose in life, they are also 6.5 times more likely to harbor thoughts of suicide and self-harm in the previous two weeks than men who did not.

MEN'S WELL-BEING: PURPOSE, PRECARITY, AND SECURITY

Most men report a strong sense of purpose, connection, and belonging – however, precarity, isolation, and mental distress are palpable. Two-thirds of men reported real meaning in their lives, with only 12 percent saying they feel little or no purpose in their lives. Purpose increases with age, fatherhood, and financial security. Notably, men in the highest income group were three times more likely to report higher degrees of purpose relative to the lowest earning group. This connection is important, as achieving financial security is a significant concern among men. Nearly 70 percent of men surveyed agreed that financial stability is harder to achieve today relative to previous generations and half believe that the possibility of home ownership is out of reach. This is affecting men's mental and relational well-being. Indeed, social disconnection and reported mental health outcomes were found to be more severe among lower income and economically precarious men. Across these outcomes, gay men presented higher risks of reporting financial precarity and mental distress.

The report finds that men surveyed showed a high propensity for healthcare-seeking when they are unwell, at least some of the time. Strikingly and contrary to prevailing knowledge about gendered patterns of healthcare seeking behaviour, men surveyed were found to be more likely than women to report healthcare-seeking at least some of the time. Further analysis indicates that men in the lowest income bracket drove the high levels of healthcare seeking behaviour reported. Given this surprising finding, we examined other items and found a contradictory finding - even though more men reported going to the doctor more than women (usually or most of the time), more women know where to get medical advice than men, fewer women take time off work for health reasons. Perhaps the sampled population is over-reporting on health-seeking itself, however when seen in the larger patterns of health attitudes and behaviours, we see the overall trends line up with known literature to a greater extent. We propose additional research would be required to better understand the reasons behind this trend.

Men's sense of security matters and is strongly associated with positive outcomes across multiple dimensions. Nordic men generally say they live healthy and safe lives. That said, many are quietly struggling, particularly with their mental health, and a significant number have been exposed to violence over the course of their lives. Overall, 55 percent of men disclosed exhibiting at least one symptom of mental distress in the past two weeks, with more than 60 percent experiencing feelings of failure, more than half experiencing catastrophic thinking, and 43 percent disclosing thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Looking at disclosures of violence, one in two men reported experiencing, witnessing, or being threatened by violence during their lifetimes. These experiences notwithstanding, a clear majority of men reported feeling safe day-to-day at least some of the time – 71 percent in public, 80 percent at home, and 72 percent online. The analysis suggests that men's sense of safety can generate virtuous cycles of positive pro-social outcomes. Concretely, the study found that men who feel safe are almost half as likely to adhere to rigid Man Box ideals (-45 percent). And, they are almost twice as likely to speak up against gender-based harms committed by others.

RELATIONSHIPS AND DIGITAL LIFE: NEW OPPORTUNITIES, NEW RISKS

Romantic disconnection is tangible and has implications for well-being. Technology is contributing to these trends. Men and women are drifting apart romantically and appear to be struggling to find their way back to each other. Four in ten respondents in the sample were single or unpartnered – with a quarter saying they are looking for a romantic relationship. Across the sample, more than 60 percent of men and women said that it is difficult to meet romantic partners these days, while one in four believed they will never meet anyone with whom to share their life. Romantic disenchantment carries risk: participants who doubt they'll find love were four times more likely to report suicidal thoughts, while men with negative perceptions of offline relationships and who use dating apps were found to be more prone to find resonance in grievance-based narratives online.

Online spaces are amplifying misogyny and grievance, particularly among younger men. This is shaping how men and women see each other. Whether through online dating, scrolling on social media, creating content, gaming with online communities, or interacting with artificial intelligence (AI) companions, digital realms are embedded in our everyday lives. When online, men are exposed to hardening and divisive ideas about gender and society, and those ideas are contributing to declining support for gender equality. More than half of men reported seeing misogynistic content on their social media over the last month, regardless of who they follow. Most men see such online narratives for what they are: 60 percent said platforms deliberately pit groups against each other. Nonetheless, misogynistic and grievance-centered narratives amplified online resonate with many. More than half think feminism means favoring women over men and 60 percent believe that men can have their reputation destroyed just for speaking their minds. Younger men are the most skeptical that men and women should be treated equally, with one in three men aged 18 to 24 questioning gender equality.

MEN, DEMOCRACY, AND THE FUTURE: FRAYING TRUST AND PATHWAYS FORWARD

Political trust is weakening, particularly among young and economically precarious men. Yet, support for democratic engagement remains present and there is considerable common ground around constructive policy solutions. Four in ten men surveyed trust the prime minister or president, parties, and local government most or all of the time, although trust in the police and military runs higher. While 80 percent of participants agreed that elections matter to their country's well-being, more than 70 percent felt their political leaders don't care what people like them think. In this vein, 68 percent of men felt that the political and economic system is stacked against them, while 47 percent agreed that their country would be better off with a strong leader who ignores parliament and elections. Such anti-democratic sentiments were three times more likely to be held by men who endorsed grievance-based narratives amplified online than those who did not.

In line with global trends, the findings surface perceptible levels of disenchantment with political and economic structures across the Nordic region. In the context of political and systemic distrust, men surveyed in this study expressed support for anti-democratic sentiments, including support for the belief that "burning it all down" is the only way forward. However, agreement with this statement should not necessarily be interpreted as literal support for dismantling democratic institutions or rejecting democracy. It may instead reflect frustration with existing political and economic systems, a sense that these systems are unresponsive to people's needs, or a desire for fundamental change.

As self-reported responses to closed survey questions, the findings do not allow us to distinguish between these possible interpretations or determine the extent to which respondents intended the statement literally. We are constrained in our capacity to discern the underlying meaning and interpretation of such sentiments. We can speculate that this reflects a sense of disillusionment with existing systems, or at least a sense that anti-establishment ideas garner some resonance among young men surveyed in particular. The survey does not purport to lay any claim on participants' intention or likelihood to act on these sentiments, nor on their generalisability generalizability among men more broadly, given the study's sampling methodology. They do, however, point to the potential presence of some level of democratic disenchantment among men surveyed. Yet, the study reveals significant and consistent common ground among men and women on core policies they would stand behind – these include tighter regulation of technology and social media platforms, more support for fathers, and greater government investment in local services and infrastructure.

A NOTE ON THE METHODS: WHAT THIS REPORT CAN AND CAN'T DO

Presenting research findings that encompass a region comprised of five distinct countries, each with rich and distinct cultures, histories, languages, and social realities can pose a great challenge. This study, which presents survey data from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden aims to illuminate specific themes relating to the lives, experiences, anxieties, relationships, and aspirations of young men and women - both online and offline. Pioneering in its scope and its reach, this study explores prevailing ideas of masculinity and manhood today, including around men's roles in and perceptions of society, politics, and at home, men's place in and relationship to work in the current economic climate, as well as men's sense of purpose, connection, violence, and care relative to themselves and others in their lives.

It is crucial to understand that while this research presents valuable insights, they only surface a fraction of young men's and women's intricate and complex realities during a rapidly changing time. We invite readers to appreciate the mixed, at times paradoxical, insights surfaced from participants surveyed in this report. We invite readers to do so while recognising that our scope, though broad and wide-ranging, does not capture the breadth and depth of the lives, experiences, outlooks, aspirations, hopes, and anxieties of men and women across the Nordic region. This report does not contend to offer the final or definitive word on the lives of Nordic men, but hopes to offer a contribution to the evidence base, identify questions and areas for further exploration through research, inviting readers to reflect on these insights alongside existing and future research. We hope these findings will inform future research that deepens understanding of the patterns, tensions, and differences surfaced here, as well as experiences and perspectives this study could not fully capture. We encourage readers to approach these findings – and the very real challenges facing young men in the world today - with care, compassion, and curiosity.

We are committed to being transparent about the limits of our data and to contributing meaningfully to the evidence base and solutions-focused conversations about the very real challenges facing men today within the scope of our research.

Table 1. *What This Report Can and Can't Do*

What This Report Can Do:	What This Report Can't Do:
Provide a detailed snapshot of insights from survey data across five Nordic countries	Represent the region's diversity and complexity
Highlight prescient themes relating to men, gender, and society	Generalise findings to all countries or populations within the region
Offer comparative analysis between different sub-groups of men's and women's perspectives	Provide causal links between experiences facing young men and their outlook on themselves, gender, and society
Offer insights into LGBTQIA+ identifying participants' perspectives	Cover all gender-related topics relevant to the region
Contribute to broader discussions on gender equality, manhood, relationships, digital lives, and public life across the Nordic region	Address all aspects of variables of the themes explored or provide in-depth qualitative insights into the meaning behind some of the findings surfaced
Encourage curiosity about gender, masculinity, and society today and explore more in-depth regional and country-level research	Reduce the need for further localized and contextualized research
Provide some basis for comparing the region to global trends, including those generated through our State of the World's Men study (forthcoming in 2027)	Provide a comprehensive cross-country analysis of the trends surfaced in the report

INTRODUCTION

A REGIONAL STUDY OF MEN'S CARE, CONNECTION, AND PURPOSE IN UNCERTAIN AND DIVIDED TIMES

The question of what "being a man" means in Nordic societies has been the subject of decades of research and the focus of government policies across the region,[1] spanning the positive dimensions of masculinities and more concerning issues, including men's mental health.[2] What contemporary Nordic masculinities look – and should look – like is also increasingly a matter of intense political and societal debate. Globally, gender equality is facing growing pushback, including calls to return to so-called "traditional" gender roles. The Nordic region is not untouched by these trends.[3] To better understand the experiences, perspectives, and aspirations of men across the Nordic region, the Nordic Council of Ministers commissioned Equimundo to conduct an online survey of 4,547 men and women in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden in early 2026.

What do our findings tell us about how men and women conceive of "being a Nordic man?"

The findings paint a picture that is part hopeful and part troubling. On the one hand, participants shared that their ideals of what it means to be a Nordic man are unwaveringly anchored in care, community, and connection. Men across the region share a generally optimistic and purposeful outlook on life and their prospects, and a generally consistent level of trust in a range of public institutions. Yet, even as support for gender equality remains high, the data also make clear that men – especially younger men – may not be immune to backsliding tendencies.

As seen elsewhere around Europe and beyond,[4] a sizable portion of men are questioning the place of equality and democracy in their lives, with some feeling left behind and adrift in a rapidly changing world. In this climate of uncertainty, some men are turning toward more rigid notions of manhood that are associated with the "Man Box." Ideas of emotional stoicism, self-reliance, and control can provide men with a sense of clarity and purpose, especially when these may be in shorter supply. As shown in the report, this sense of purpose can quickly turn to pressure, as men who subscribe to Man Box ideals report higher levels of anxiety and suicidality.

Some men experience the weight of financial uncertainty more than others. Across the study, the data revealed strong and consistent correlations between men's economic precarity and their outlook on themselves and the world around them.[5] These trends were especially pronounced relative to men's likelihood to embrace restrictive ideas about gender, grievance-based thinking,[6] and declining trust in public institutions and participation in democratic life. Against this backdrop, the study revealed that men's perceptions of wealth and traditional pathways to social mobility may be shifting as young men, appear to be turning away from higher education and drawn toward opportunities to "get rich quick."

Relatedly, while men overall reported healthy levels of social belonging and acceptance, the data surfaced areas of disconnection in men's lives, including emotionally and romantically. More than one in two men across the region feel that no one really knows them and feel that no one cares if men are okay these days. In the romantic sphere, one in four men believe they will never find love. As the world becomes increasingly connected through digital means, and for many, this provides opportunities for new ways to foster meaningful community, to meet prospective partners, and find advice about all areas of life. For others, spending time in digital arenas may amplify a sense of alienation and disconnection, exposing them to hardening, divisive, and misogynistic messages that are gaining traction among many across the region.

While taking heed of these warning signs, there is a great deal to engender hope. Men haven't turned their back on gender equality completely. In fact, men across the region still overwhelmingly support gender equality in principle. Furthermore, despite a burgeoning 'crisis of love,' a majority of men still want romantic relationships and aspire to marriage and having a family. Men report



Photo: Laura Lumimaa via Pexels

that they want to spend less time online and, while they are online, they want to see greater regulation of social media platforms. Men are calling for more support to be the present fathers they want to be, and men want to see their government invest more – not less – in their local communities. Overall, Nordic men value visions of being a man anchored in care, community, and connection. It is important to pay attention where this belief may be fraying, and to work together to ensure that men, alongside women and persons of diverse and expansive gender identities and sexualities, can trust in their shared stake in more caring and connected futures.

METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this report come from an online questionnaire administered between February and April 2026 to 4,547 respondents aged between 18 and 45 across the Nordic region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). The sample was constructed to achieve specific representation goals, while maintaining geographic and demographic representation. Given men's and women's shared stake in gender equality, the sample intentionally included women and men, although men were over-sampled.

This regional study forms part of Equimundo's ongoing global study on the State of the World's Men. To ensure regional contextualization, Equimundo assembled a regional advisory council with representation from experts across civil society, government, and academia within each country. The advisory council reviewed the questionnaire and translations to ensure their relevance and applicability to each setting. The Nordic Council of Ministers and Senior Officials from across the region also reviewed the survey questionnaire before implementation.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

The research team employed a purposive sampling approach with disproportionate stratification to ensure robust representation of men in the sample. The data partner, RepData, recruited respondents from established online research panels, utilizing quota sampling to achieve predetermined demographic targets.

As thoroughly detailed in the Annex 1, the sample was constructed to achieve specific representation goals, while maintaining geographic and demographic representation, but is not designed to be generalizable.

In each country, the study aimed for a total sample of 1,000 participants, of whom approximately 70 percent were men and 30 percent were women. The participant sample also aimed to meet demographic quotas for LGBTQIA+ participants, regional representation within the countries, and age representation. Beyond these quotas, the survey also included a comprehensive demographic section to ensure wider clarity on the make-up of the sample.

The study was able to reach a full sample of participants across all countries except Iceland, due to its smaller population. As a result, the total sample reached for Iceland is 547.



Photo: Sitraka via Unsplash

GENDER AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The study team deliberately oversampled men to allow for in-depth analysis of male perspectives and experiences:

- Men: 73 percent (n = 3,319)
- Women: 27 percent (n = 1,228)

This gender distribution enabled comprehensive subgroup analysis among men while maintaining a substantial comparison group of women to examine gender differences in key outcomes.

Of the 4,547 participants, 13 percent (n = 591) identified as LGBTQIA+. This sample proportion was designed to align with recent population data across the Nordic countries, ensuring that the findings are broadly representative of regional representation. This sub-sample included broad representation across the spectrum of the LGBTQIA+ communities.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The following age range allowed for focused analysis of individuals navigating key life transitions including education completion, career establishment, and family formation.

- 18 to 24 years: 19 percent (n = 864)
- 25 to 34 years: 40 percent (n = 1,818)
- 35 to 45 years: 41 percent (n = 1,863)

Table 2 presents additional sample characteristics by country.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND QUALITY CONTROL MEASURES

The survey was administered online in each country's local language. To ensure accuracy and applicability, the regional advisory council, which included first language speakers and subject matter experts for each country, closely assessed the translations of the surveys. The advisory council also reviewed and tested the survey links once each country version had been programmed. Respondents accessed the survey via personalized links distributed through recruitment partner panels. The questionnaire took approximately 25 minutes to complete.

Several quality control procedures were implemented:

- Attention check questions throughout the survey
- Minimum completion time requirements
- IP address verification to prevent duplicate responses
- Post-collection data cleaning to remove incomplete or inconsistent responses

KEY TOPIC AREAS

The survey content covered seven key topic areas:

- Gender attitudes and masculinity: Beliefs about gender roles, adherence to traditional masculine norms, and support for gender equality
- Purpose, social connection, and support: Measures of social isolation, relationship quality, and community engagement
- Work and economic security: Employment status, financial stress, and career aspirations
- Mental health and well-being: Depression symptoms, life satisfaction, and purpose
- Political and social views: Trust in institutions, political engagement, and social attitudes
- Online behavior: Internet use patterns, social media engagement, and digital relationships
- Romantic and sexual relationships: Partnership status, dating experiences, and relationship satisfaction

LIMITATIONS

The exclusive use of online data collection may underrepresent individuals with limited internet access or digital literacy, potentially excluding some of the most marginalized populations. It may also overrepresent participants who spend a disproportionate amount of time online. Despite quota controls, online panel participants may differ from the general population in terms of engagement, attitudes, or behaviors. Views expressed in surveys may also not be reflective of participants' everyday practices. As a cross-sectional study capturing a single point in time, the survey design limits our ability to make causal inferences about the relationships observed. While the deliberate oversampling of men (73/27 male/female split) strengthens our analysis of male subgroups, it requires careful interpretation when making overall population estimates. Finally, all measures rely on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly for sensitive topics such as mental health, relationship quality, and adherence to traditional gender norms. To mitigate these limitations to the extent possible, the study team triangulated the data through discussions with experts and existing research.

Table 2. *Additional sample characteristics percentage by country*

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
GENDER AND SEXUAL IDENTITY					
Women	30%	30.5%	18%	30%	30%
Men	70%	69.5%	82%	70%	70%
Identitify as LGBTQIA+	12.5%	15%	11%	11%	14%
AGE					
18-24	20.5%	18%	18%	20%	18%
25-34	42%	43%	35%	43%	38%
35+	37.5%	38%	46%	37%	44%
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION					
None	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Primary	10%	5%	4%	3%	4%
Secondary	19%	13%	10%	6%	37%
Vocational/technical	22%	39%	11%	33%	12%
Diploma	0%	0%	17%	0%	3%
Bachelor's	34%	29%	43%	42%	29%
Honors or postgraduate diploma	10%	0%	10%	5%	9%
Master's or higher	2%	14%	4%	10%	6%
INCOME					
Lowest tertile	34%	51%	36%	49%	47%
Middle tertile	41%	25%	43%	28%	30%
Highest tertile	25%	24%	21%	23%	23%

CHAPTER 1

BEING A MAN AND THE “MAN BOX” IN THE NORDIC REGION



Photo: Peter Platou via Pexels

BEING A NORDIC MAN

Across the Nordic region, ideas of "being a man" are anchored in care, connection and communication, alongside more traditional ideas of masculinity like being a provider for their family and being in charge (see Figures 1 and 2). When asked what being a man means today, 8 out of 10 men affirmed that caring for others defines manhood to them. And women agreed. When presented with a list of 20 qualities, traits, and attributes associated with masculinity, on average, more than 80 percent of men identified being a friend (84 percent), helping those who need it (83 percent), and sharing care work and housework (80 percent). Eighty percent of men also identified being a man with managing conflict with communication. Women shared such associations between masculinity, friendship, and care – each of these qualities were identified as defining attributes of masculinity today by more than 85 percent of women across the region. At 89 percent, friendship was the quality women respondents most connected with their conception of Nordic manhood today.

Alongside these more overtly cared-centered traits, a strong majority of Nordic men also identified with traditional characteristics associated with being a man. Eight of every 10 men also associate manhood with providing for their family (84 percent), being in charge (83 percent), and having a salaried job (81.5 percent). While financial markers featured highly among core characteristics of manhood across the region, they are primarily linked to achieving financial stability, rather than accruing wealth for wealth's sake.

Figure 1. *In participants' own words, "the ideal man is..."*

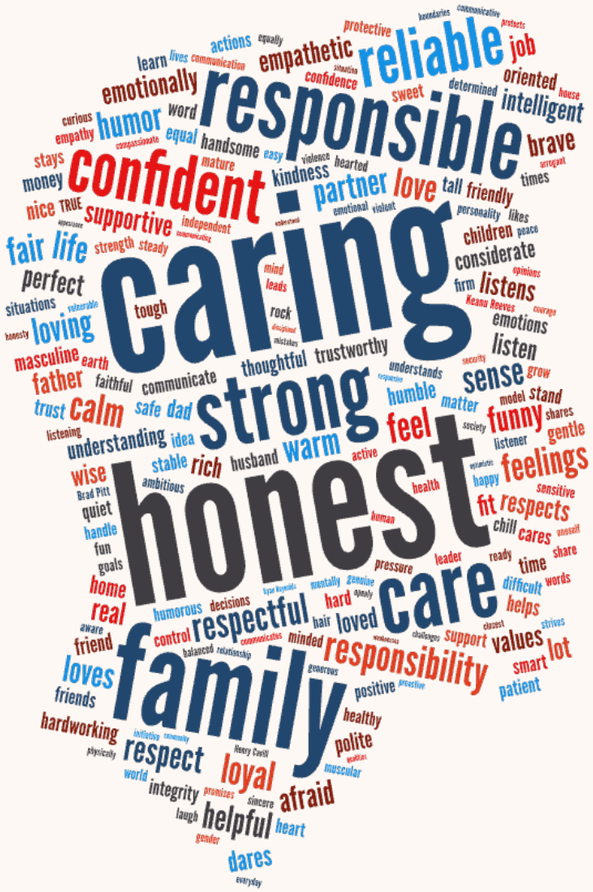
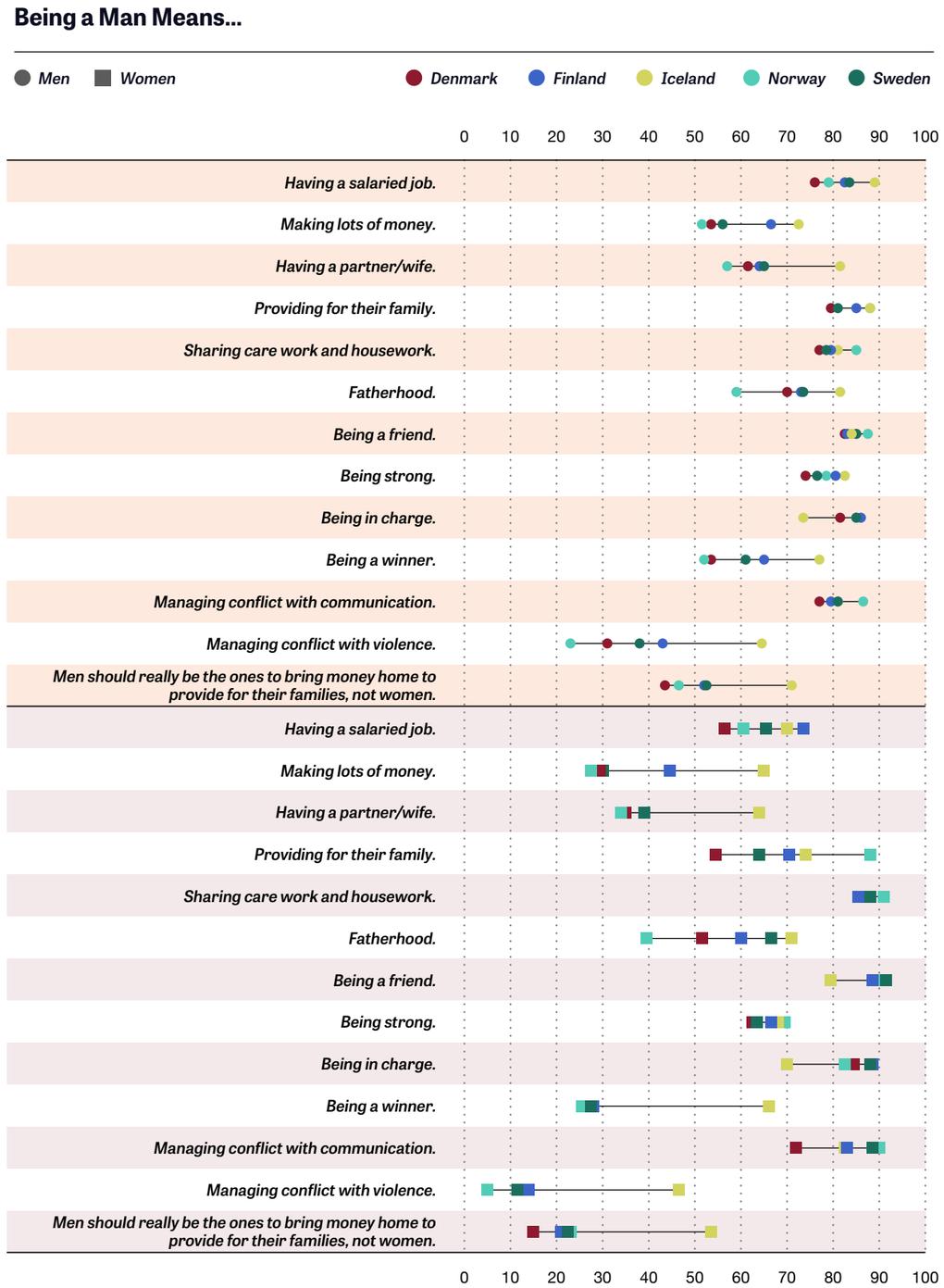


Figure 2. *Men's and women's perceptions of manhood across Nordic countries (percent strongly agree / agree)*



An observably lower proportion of men – 59 percent – associated being a man with making lots of money. As shown later in the report, men's relationship to wealth and conventional pathways to success may be changing among the younger generation. Gay men appeared to hold these traits more loosely than cisgender heterosexual men but broadly valued the same characteristics. Gay men placed most the value on friendship (79 percent), communication (78 percent), sharing care work (77 percent), and helping others (75 percent). This group was also less likely to define manhood in relation to financial markers like having a salaried job (62 percent), making lots of money (46.5 percent), and being a provider (71 percent).

Conversely, Nordic men least associate manhood today with violence and protecting their community, each of which were identified by fewer than four in 10 men as defining masculinity to them. On the whole, a third – 33 percent – of Nordic men say that protecting their community is core to their idea of being a man, while just over a third – 38 percent – associate addressing conflict through violence as a core feature of manhood. At an aggregate level, the analysis did not point to significant differences across different age cohorts. Using a country-specific lens presents a far more varied picture across countries and age cohorts. In Finland, the youngest cohort of men – ages 18 to 24 – were the most likely to associate manhood with violence (31 percent), while the oldest cohort – ages 35 to 45 – were the least likely (16 percent). In both Norway and Sweden, it was men aged 24 to 35 who had the highest likelihood of identifying manhood with violence to resolve conflict. While in Iceland and Denmark, the youngest men were the least likely to identify manhood with violence, although to significantly different degrees across both countries, representing 58.5 percent and 29 percent, respectively. Men's exposure to violence is explored in Chapter 3.

THE MAN BOX IN THE NORDIC REGION

Rigid ideas of what it means to be a man associated with the Man Box are prevalent among some men, particularly among younger and economically precarious men across the region. While the Man Box gives men a sense of purpose in an uncertain and changing world, it is also harming them.

Man Box ideals have considerable appeal among a sizable group of men across the Nordic region, demonstrating that care-centered expressions of manhood can sit alongside more rigid and restrictive masculine ideals (see Table 3). Just under half of the men surveyed were found to be in the Man Box. Certain Man Box ideals held more sway with men across the region than others. The belief that held most sway among Nordic men – resonating with more than two-thirds of men – was that men should solve problems on their own rather than discussing them with others (66 percent). Other ideas that resonated with more than 40 percent of men across the region include beliefs about the superiority of men's leadership in professional settings, men's and women's roles in the home, and narrow ideas about masculinity and sexuality.

Overall, men in the younger age cohorts were slightly, but observably, more likely to endorse traditional and restrictive beliefs around men's roles in relationships and workplaces, as well as around sexuality. Indicatively, men in the younger cohorts were most likely to believe that men should be the breadwinners (55 percent) and that men should have the final say in their intimate relationships (42 percent). The youngest group – aged 18 to 24 – were also the most likely to agree that men make better business leaders than women (51 percent). Yet, on the other side of the age spectrum sampled, men aged 35 and above were the group most likely to express a sense of sexual entitlement, with more than half of men in this group agreeing that a man has the right to be upset if he is denied sex (51 percent).

Box 1. *The Man Box*

WHAT IS "THE MAN BOX?"

First used by Paul Kivel of the Oakland Men's Project and Tony Porter of A Call to Men, the Man Box refers to a rigid and often restrictive set of ideas about what it means to be a man, including emotional stoicism, dominance, and self-reliance. Building on this concept, Equimundo constructed an attitude scale that has been widely used and validated in studies globally.[7]



Economic precarity may be driving more rigid ideas of manhood. Every unit increase in men's reported sense of economic precarity was correlated with a 7.4 times higher likelihood of endorsing Man Box ideals. Pointing to a similar tendency, while a strong majority of Nordic men – 61 percent – say they wish they were more masculine, agreement with this statement was especially stark among the youngest men surveyed and among men experiencing financial stress. In effect, the youngest cohort of men surveyed (ages 18 to 24) were 58 percent more likely to say that they wish they were more masculine than the oldest cohort (ages 35 to 45), and every unit increase in economic precarity doubles men's likelihood of agreeing that they wish they were more masculine.

While it is important to better understand the meaning behind this perceived masculinity gap, these findings suggest that some men may fall back on rigid gender norms to redress a perceived sense of a "masculine deficit." That said, the data indicate that the relationship between financial wealth, financial precarity, and attitudes toward gender is more complex than being determined by income levels alone. While financial precarity is strongly correlated with a higher likelihood of endorsing more restrictive gender norms, so, too, are higher income levels. Men in the highest income bracket surveyed were more than twice as likely to endorse the Man Box than men in the lowest income group.

Box 2. *Ethnographic insights from Qasigiannguit, Upernavik, and Tasiilaq*

MASCULINITY IN MOTION IN GREENLAND

Anthropologist Jeppe Trolle Linnet (PhD) of DareGender conducted ethnographic research across Greenland to better understand the lives of young Greenlandic men. From June to December 2025, they spent approximately six weeks in each of three small fishing towns—Qasigiannguit (west coast), Upernavik (northern west coast), and Tasiilaq (east coast)—followed by a month in Nuuk. The study draws on 25 individual interviews with men in their mid-twenties to their seventies and a further 15 interviews with local professionals in municipal services, family centers, health centers, police, schools and psychological services provided additional context. Through open-ended interviews inviting men to speak about their lives, strengths, difficulties, and economic conditions, the report explores how masculinity is lived and changing in postcolonial Greenland.

For generations, the "hunter-fisherman" has been the symbolic centre of Greenlandic masculinity. Men in Greenland were expected to demonstrate physical strength, self-reliance, foresight, and discipline, providing for their family through fishing or hunting, and sharing resources with their communit. Fishing remains both an economic livelihood and a tool of social policy, with state-owned fish factories helping sustain small towns. Yet, this traditional role is under severe pressure. Climate change has reduced catches by 60 to 70 percent in some areas, while large offshore trawlers outcompete small-scale dinghy fishermen. The costs of equipment and upkeep have risen sharply, making independent fishing economically fragile.

Against this backdrop, Greenlandic men today are caught between traditional expectations and modern demands. Women have moved more successfully into education and public-sector employment, often becoming the family's more stable breadwinner. After relationship breakdowns, women frequently relocate to larger towns for work or study, while men stay behind, struggling to form new relationships and facing a shrinking pool of partners. Such shifts leave many Greenlandic men uncertain about their role.

Faced with trauma, suicide, substance abuse, and violence, younger generations of men in Greenland are actively redefining what it means to be a man. Through emotional and relational work, they are learning to open up about abuse and mental health, seek help, share domestic responsibilities, and prioritize presence with children and their families. Initiatives such as the municipal project Angutivik ("a real man") use strongman competitions as entry points to conversations about mental wellbeing, reframing strength as the courage to talk.

These ethnographic portraits reveal a complex picture: Greenlandic men are not rejecting tradition wholesale, but are redefining manhood and tradition: re resilience, competence and connection to nature, while loosening the grip of silence, violence, and emotional suppression. The challenge is to support this movement, meeting men where they are, and recognizing that change is already underway.

This research was supported by the Caring Masculinity Fund.

Table 3. *Men's and women's agreement with Man Box statements (percent strongly agree / agree)*

	Men	Women
*Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.**	52%	24%
*If a guy has a girlfriend or a wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time.**	44%	23%
*A man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage.**	40%	10%
If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems.	37%	17%
On the whole, men make better business executives than women do.	49%	15%
*Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.**	43%	13%
*A real man would never say no to sex.**	37%	10%
*A gay guy is not a "real man".**	42%	11%
People take jokes about typical men and women's stereotypes too seriously these days.	68%	48%
A woman's most important role is to take care of her home,	44%	19%
*I try to solve my own problems rather than discussing them with others.**	66%	49%
I have to look out for myself, no one has my back.	55%	39%
I believe men are getting weaker these days.	56%	32%
Caring for the people in my life is important to me.	80%	89%
A man has the right to be upset when denied sex.	44%	14%
I would be ashamed if I had a homosexual son.	44%	13%
No one really knows me well.	56%	41%

**Items with a star are original Man Box items*

As Nordic men feel caught between expanding, competing, and at times confusing expectations of manhood and find unreliable solace in more restrictive ideas of manhood, many men come to believe that the only way through tough times is to go at it alone.

Being in the 'Man Box' offers men a sense of purpose and clarity that may be especially valuable in the face of future uncertainties and rapid social, cultural, and economic change. As Equimundo research has shown across a range of other settings, Man Box endorsement is correlated with men reporting a higher sense of purpose in life. Across the Nordic region, men in the Man Box are twice as likely to report a sense of purpose, as well as a higher sense of self-esteem. Yet, as Equimundo has also found elsewhere, Man Box endorsement is also associated with troublesome negative mental health and social outcomes, notably including suicidality.[8] Across Nordic countries, men surveyed who endorse rigid gender ideals associated with the Man Box are six and a half times more likely to report thoughts of suicide and self-harm over the last two weeks. Men's stoicism and propensity to tackle challenges on their own may be instructive here. Indeed, despite valuing friendship so unambiguously, two thirds of men across the region affirmed that they try to solve their problems on their own before discussing them with others. This suggests that while endorsing Man Box ideals may provide men with a sense of purpose and clarity – it may be leading them into a false sense of safety in the face of an uncertain and changing world.

Box 3. *Encouraging Norwegian men to join caring and educational professions*

WHERE ARE MY BROTHERS?

A new project by the Oslo Metropolitan University, Hvor er mine brødre? (Where are my brothers?), encourages Norwegian men from multicultural backgrounds to engage with education and carework opportunities in higher education, such as becoming kindergarten teachers, teachers, and child welfare educators. The project works with Norwegian men of diverse backgrounds who have chosen this career path to act as role models for boys and young men in schools in eastern Oslo. Through the initiative, men in the care and education professions hold presentations and conversations in schools, where they share their own life and career experiences, but also their struggles with issues such as dropping out of school and feelings of alienation, facilitating internship arrangements, organizing social and professional activities for boys and young men in targeted neighborhoods, and producing outreach material on social media.

THE MAN BOX ACROSS THE NORDIC REGION: A SNAPSHOT

66% 66 percent of men agree that "I try to solve my own problems rather than discussing them with others"

56% 56 percent of men agree that "men are getting weaker these days"

52% 52 percent of men agree that "men should really be the ones to bring home the money to provide for their families, not women"

48% 48 percent of men agree that "on the whole, men make better business executives than women"

43% 43 percent of men agree that "if a guy has a girlfriend, he deserves to know where she is all the time"

43.5% 43.5 percent of men agree that "a woman's most important role is to take care of her home"

44% 44 percent of men agree that "I would be ashamed if I had a homosexual son"

41% 41 percent of men agree that "a man has the right to be upset when he is denied sex"

40% 40 percent of men agree that "men should have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage"

CHAPTER 2

MEN'S SENSE OF PURPOSE, ECONOMIC PRECARITY, AND CONNECTION IN UNCERTAIN TIMES



Photo: Andreas Wagner via Unsplash

Overall, a majority of Nordic men feel a strong sense of purpose and are optimistic about the future. However, one in three men are concerned about the future of their country, and young men are rethinking traditional pathways to success. Global studies on people's happiness and societal cohesion have shown Nordic countries consistently scoring among the highest globally. This is often attributed to "a cluster of factors that tend to co-occur, including high life satisfaction, high levels of social and institutional trust, high-quality democratic institutions, extensive welfare benefits, and social-economic equality."[9] This optimism is largely reflected in this study. Yet this general positive outlook and solid sense of purpose and belonging sit alongside tangible levels of disconnection and alienation, particularly among men. As experienced elsewhere, Nordic countries are exposed to rapid social, economic, and technological shifts, creating or exacerbating financial pressures for many. In this climate, looking toward and planning for a financially stable future can be a challenge, leading younger generations – and younger generations of men in particular – to rethink traditional pathways to success.

MEN'S SENSE OF PURPOSE

Nordic men have a strong sense of purpose and meaning in life. This sense of purpose increases with age, income levels, and fatherhood. Two in three men report feeling a strong sense of purpose and meaning in their lives, with only 12 percent of men reporting that they feel little to no purpose. Men aged 35 years and older reported the strongest sense of purpose relative to younger men, with 71 percent affirming that they mostly or always find a reason to live, compared to 66 percent of men aged 25 to 34, and 64 percent of men aged 18 to 24. Gay men showed measurably lower levels of meaning and purpose (-5 percent relative to men's regional mean), while fathers were found to be 1.3 times more likely to report a sense of purpose than their child-free counterparts.[10] Additionally, a clear and consistent relationship was found between purpose and income levels: the highest earning men were more than three times more likely to feel a sense of purpose in life than men in the lowest income bracket. Overall, women were perceptibly less likely to say they feel their lives always have purpose, with only half of the women respondents affirming that they find significant meaning in their lives.

SOMEONE TO TURN TO: MEN'S SOCIAL CONNECTION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Nordic men convey robust levels of social connection and most have someone to turn to when times are tough. But loneliness is widespread. On average, more than 70 percent of men affirmed feeling accepted and like they belong. Positive social connection scores were relatively evenly distributed across different age cohorts, although men 35 and above were the group most likely to report feeling accepted by others (+6 percent relative to the youngest cohort). Gay men in the region affirmed comparable levels of belonging relative to cisgender heterosexual men, but they were 10 percentage points less likely to report feeling accepted by others. Income levels also have a bearing on perceptions of social connection: participants in the highest earning group surveyed were 27 percent more likely to report positive social connection and belonging than those in the lowest earning group, and 11 percent more likely than participants in the middle income tertile. Alongside elevated levels of social belonging, a significant portion of men also experience palpable levels of disconnection and alienation. Across the region, 57 percent of men believe that no one really knows them well. This is 16 percentage points higher than the regional mean for women. While 50 percent of men aged 18 to 24 feel no one really understands them, men 35 years and older and gay men were most likely to report this sense of emotional isolation – reaching closer to 60 percent.

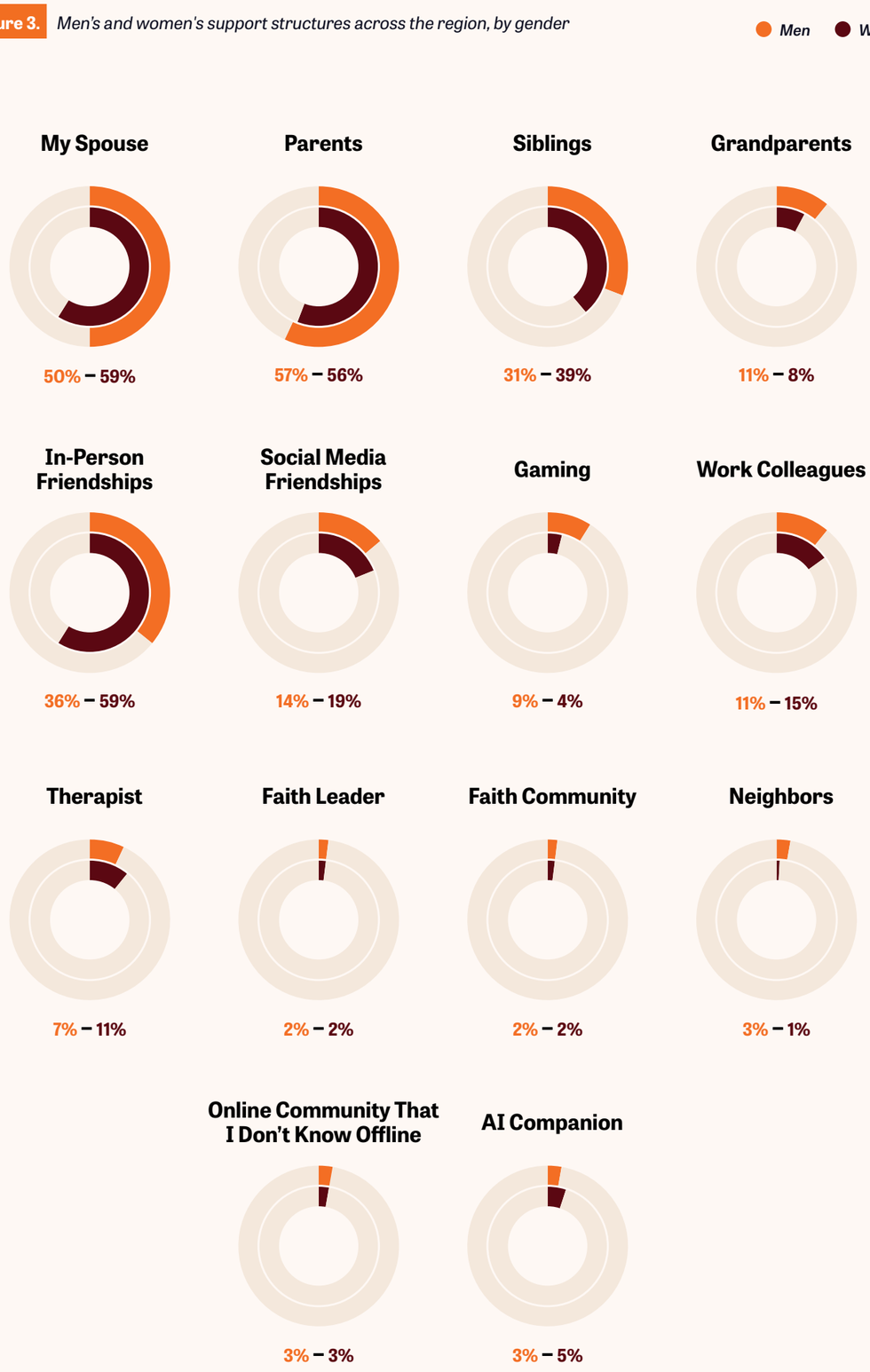
Men identified a range of support mechanisms at their disposal when faced with difficulties. Whether in the form of family, friends, and work colleagues, men across the Nordic region pointed to a variety of sources of support they can access when they need (see Figure 3).

Box 4. *Vocational Training and Men at the University of Akureyri, Iceland*

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND MEN

Across Iceland, women make-up almost two-thirds of the student population (64 percent).[11] At the University of Akureyri, in Northern Iceland, the gender imbalance is even more pronounced, with women representing more than three-quarters of the student body on campus. The University of Akureyri offers a range of vocational studies, aimed at filling gaps in the labor market, particularly in the rural areas of the country. The university has large faculties in health sciences and social sciences that offer courses including nursing, teaching, law, natural resources sciences, policing, and business, among others. In 2024, the university approved its 2025–2028 Equality Policy and Action Plan aimed at enhancing diversity among the student population, including among men. Such strategies include curriculum diversification to introduce and expand applied engineering, computer science, and technology courses in collaboration with the local business community, as well as introducing flexible distance learning and education to allow men who are already in the workforce or living in rural areas to study without relocating.

Figure 3. *Men's and women's support structures across the region, by gender*



Men were most likely to name their parents and partners as the people they lean on, identified by more than half the men surveyed. Within the realm of family support networks, an additional 30.5 percent said they would turn to a sibling. Friends are also a part of men's support networks – both online and offline. As our lives are increasingly spent online, many are finding and building community in virtual spaces. One in four men said they turn to friends online – be that on social media, gaming, or online fora – and 3 percent turn to an AI companion. Reflecting different life stages, the data indicated that men aged 18 to 24 were more likely to report turning to friends, while men aged 35 and above were more likely to report turning to a partner or spouse.

Gay men surveyed were almost half as likely to turn to a partner or spouse (28 percent) but were markedly more likely to say they turn to friends, both online and virtually. Gay men also had an above-average chance of consulting an AI companion for support. As a whole, women's social support networks were similar to men's. However, women were almost twice as likely as men to say that they lean on their friends offline when they need support.

ECONOMIC PRECARITY AND OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE

Nordic men are financially secure and optimistic in their outlook on their prospects. They are less likely to be optimistic about the future of their country. Three-quarters of men say their income is sufficient to meet their daily needs and save for the future, while just more than half – 57 percent – say that their financial conditions are excellent. When asked whether they believed various aspects of their lives – including their family lives, economic security, job opportunities, and romantic lives – would be better or worse in the next 10 years, participants were remarkably positive.

Across the board, three in four men (75 percent) and four in five (79 percent) women said they believed life would be better in the next decade (see Figure 4 on the following page). Men were most optimistic about their prospective home, family, and economic life. While still reaching more than 70 percent, men were less optimistic about their romantic and social lives, as well as their job prospects. Participants were perceptibly less optimistic about their country, with 38 percent of men and 55 percent of women believing their country will be a worse place in the next 10 years. Gay men were generally less optimistic about the future, scoring an average of 10 percentage points lower on the optimism scale. Women were very optimistic about their own futures, reaching more than 80 percent on all measures, except future job opportunities.

Men's financial optimism coexists with financial worry in almost equal measure. Despite overall optimism, many also feel a sense of financial precarity. Seven out of 10 men agree that it is harder for their generation to feel financially secure relative to their parents' generation, and more than a quarter strongly agreed with this sentiment.

Table 4. *Outlook on the future across Nordic countries, by age (percent believe things will be better)*

	Men			Women		
	18–24	25–34	35–45	18–24	25–34	35–45
My family life	78.5%	79%	75%	89.5%	88%	84%
My economic security	82%	78%	77%	86%	85%	85%
My job opportunities	79%	74%	67%	82.5%	79%	66%
My social life	73.5%	74%	73%	79%	82%	82%
My apartment, house, or living arrangement	82%	80%	78%	89%	89%	88%
My romantic life	78.5%	77%	75%	89%	86%	81%
My country	63.5%	62%	61%	56%	54%	55%

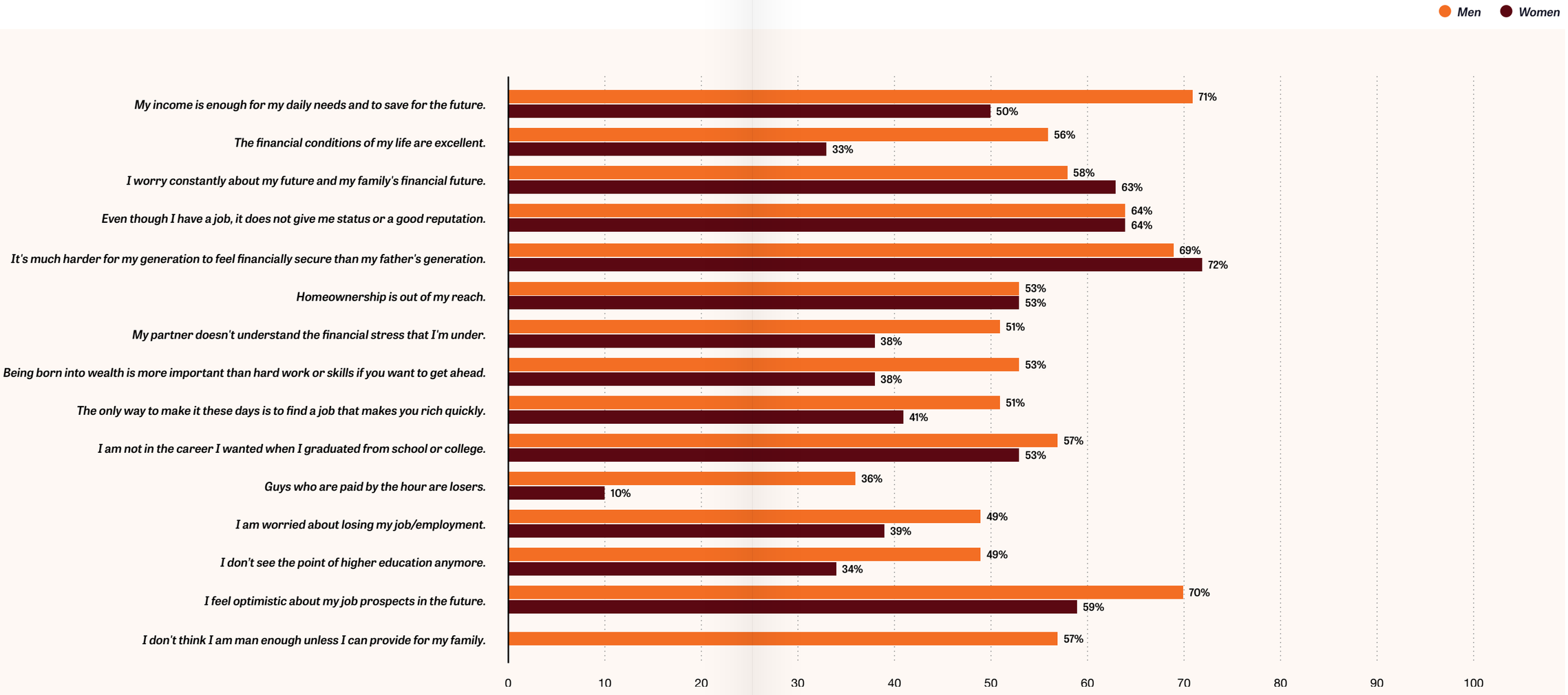
Table 5. *Outlook on the future across Nordic countries, men only (percent believe things will be better)*

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
My family life	81.5%	79.5%	74%	73%	77%
My economic security	81.5%	80%	75.5%	75.5%	77.5%
My job opportunities	73.5%	68.5%	74%	71%	74%
My social life	75.5%	75%	72%	71.5%	73.5%
My apartment, house, or living arrangement	82%	81.5%	76.5%	80.5%	78%
My romantic life	78.5%	78.5%	75%	74%	75%
My country	64%	51.5%	77.5%	62.5%	60%

Table 6. *Outlook on the future across Nordic countries, women only (percent believe things will be better)*

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
My family life	89.5%	86.5%	62%	91.5%	88%
My economic security	87.5%	83%	74%	88%	85.5%
My job opportunities	80.5%	70%	59%	78.5%	75.5%
My social life	82.5%	84%	71%	79.5%	83%
My apartment, house, or living arrangement	92.5%	88%	70%	88.5%	90.5%
My romantic life	87%	86%	62%	86.5%	85.5%
My country	60%	52.5%	79.5%	54.5%	43%

Figure 4. *Men's and women's perceptions of financial wealth and pathways to social mobility, by age (percent strongly agree / agree)*



One in two men reported constantly worrying about their financial future and about losing their jobs, and just under half feel that their partners don't understand the financial stress they are under. Gay men were almost 10 percent less likely to say they could save for the future and were 20 percent more likely to say that homeownership is out of their reach. Overall, the youngest cohort of men were most likely to perceive home ownership as out of their reach and were least likely to report having the capacity to save for their future, with one in three saying this was not possible for them. Notably, the youngest cohort were also the most likely to link their financial well-being with their sense of manhood, with 61 percent agreeing that they would not feel "man enough" if they were not able to provide for their family. Women were 22 percentage points less likely to report their financial conditions are excellent and that they are able to save for their future.

Men's relationship to wealth and conventional pathways to success and social mobility is shifting (Figure 4). Against the backdrop of financial worry, 65 percent of Nordic men say that they feel their job does not give them status or good social standing, while more than half report that they are not in the job they envisaged when they graduated. In this context, the data point to a diminishing belief in conventional pathways to financial success and social mobility among men. Just under half of men – 49 percent – stated that they did not see the point of higher education anymore. Some of this may, at least in part, be underpinned by perceptions of economic structures being stacked against them, with just over one in two men believing that being born into wealth is more likely to guarantee success than working hard. For others, it may be a response to a changing economic landscape, the rise of the gig economy, and ever-increasing costs of living that contribute to the appeal of "get-rich-quick" approaches to financial wealth. This proposition resonated with the youngest cohort of men more than others, with 54 percent agreeing with this statement (+6 percentage points relative to men 35 and above and +7 percentage points relative to the regional mean). The analysis also indicated that these tendencies were more pronounced among gay men surveyed, with 61 percent of men in this subset questioning the value of higher education and close to 60 percent aspiring to "get rich quick." Women are more likely to maintain a belief in traditional avenues to social mobility, with two-thirds of women valuing the role of higher education.

CHAPTER 3

MEN’S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Photo: Till Daling via Unsplash

Nordic men generally report living healthy and safe lives. Yet, a sizable portion of men face a range of health challenges, particularly relating to their mental health, and may not recognize them as such. Addressing men's well-being is correlated with important positive relational and social outcomes. While the level of health care services and public health overall is high in the Nordic countries, men's – and especially young men's – mental and emotional health has been an issue of concern for some time.[12] Beyond the immediate individual and family and relationship level, this distress also comes at a high societal cost, and correlates in part with economic precarity and grievance-based narratives, but also with participants identifying as LGBTQIA+. The Nordic countries have historically been known for their high levels of public safety and comparatively low levels of crime and violence. Despite moderately high disclosures of violence in this study sample, participants reported generally high levels of safety. Paying attention to men's safety matters. As shown below, men's sense of security is correlated with a range of positive social outcomes.

MEN'S GENERAL HEALTH AND CARE-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

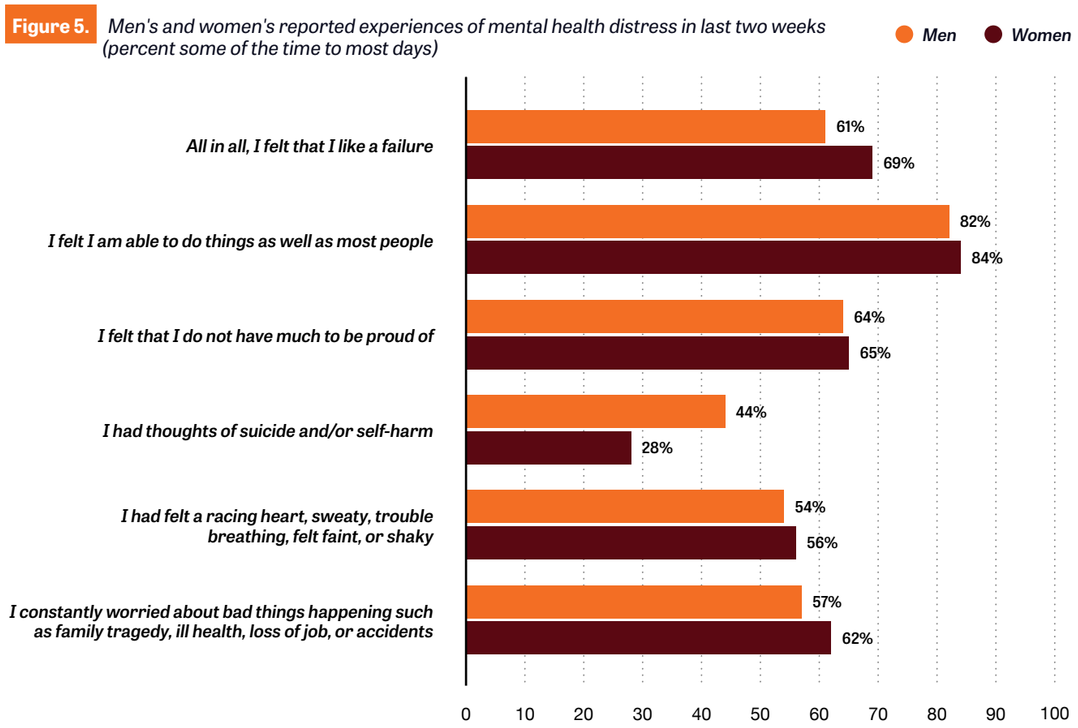
Across the region, men reported a range of health-related challenges, physical and mental-health related. A significant portion of men disclosed experiencing a number of symptoms associated with negative mental health outcomes than reported having a mental health condition, ranging from anxiety, catastrophic thinking, and suicidality (Figure 5).

Overall, 58 percent of men reported living with at least one health related condition, including physical condition (23 percent), a mental health condition (20 percent), a disability (6 percent), chronic pain (5 percent), and post-traumatic stress (3 percent). While 23 percent of men disclosed living with a mental health condition (including post-traumatic stress disorder), a greater number – 55 percent on average – recognized and disclosed experiencing a symptom of negative mental health over the previous two weeks. More than 60 percent of men recalled having felt like they had nothing to be proud of or felt like a failure at least some of the time over the last two weeks.

More than half (53 percent) recalled feeling anxious, while 57 percent disclosed worrying constantly about bad things happening, such as a family tragedy, ill health, losing their job, or having an accident at least at some point over the last two weeks. A significant minority of 43.5 percent disclosed having harbored thoughts of suicide or self-harm at least some of the time over the past two weeks.[13]

It is worth noting that these findings may not be directly comparable to other studies on these issues in Nordic countries given that this study may have used different kinds of questions and other parameters to inquire about suicidal and/or self-harm ideation, and that the figures above include any instances of such ideation over the past two weeks.[14] Furthermore, it is important to differentiate between ideation and actual attempts.

Figure 5. *Men's and women's reported experiences of mental health distress in last two weeks (percent some of the time to most days)*



VARIATION IN NEGATIVE MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AMONG NORDIC MEN:

5%	Men aged 25 to 34 are most likely to struggle with feelings of failure, suicidality, and catastrophic thinking (on average 5 percentage points variation relative to the lowest proportion reported by other age groups)
1.8X	Men who identify as gay, bisexual, or trans have 1.8 times higher likelihood of suicidal ideation
6.5X	Endorsing Man Box ideals is correlated with 6.5 times higher likelihood of suicidal ideation
2X	Endorsing gender threat rhetoric is correlated with 2 times higher likelihood of suicidal ideation
9X	Economic precarity is correlated with a 9 times higher likelihood of suicidal ideation
1.45X	Men who disclosed suicidal ideation have a 1.45 times higher likelihood of seeking support

Box 5. *Norwegian Men's Equality Commission*

The Norwegian government's Men's Equality Commission (Mannsutvalget) was appointed by royal decree in August 2022 and published its final report in April 2024. The Commission was established based on a recognition that boys and men have not been sufficiently included in Norwegian gender equality policy. Chaired by Claus Jervell, the 17-member Commission examined gender equality challenges across education, employment, family life, health, civic participation, and social exclusion, using an intersectional lens that considers differences in income, education, class, geography, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

Key findings: The Commission revealed that boys and men face challenges in several areas:

- **In education:** boys receive lower grades than girls in all subjects except physical education, and more boys drop out of upper secondary education (76 percent completion for boys versus 85 percent for girls). In 2023, boys averaged 40.5 points at the end of compulsory education compared to girls' 44.5. Fewer men enrol in higher education in Norway—today only 40 percent of students are men—with particularly low representation in teaching, health and social care.
- **In working life:** men dominate private-sector and male-dominated industries such as construction, where they face higher risks of work-related illness, injury and death. Between 2015–2019, 97 percent of occupational fatalities were men. Men also experience poorer work-life balance and fewer family-friendly standards, particularly in male-dominated workplaces.
- **In health outcomes:** men have 3.5 years shorter life expectancy than women, with higher death rates from drugs, accidents, mental illness, suicide and cancer. The life expectancy gap between highest and lowest income groups is 13.8 years for men versus 8.4 for women. Men use primary health services far less than women, with over 15 percent of men aged 20–50 having no GP consultation in 2017–2019 compared to 5 percent of women.
- **In experiencing violence:** almost half of men report serious physical violence after age 18, compared to 29 percent of women, though men more often face violence from strangers. Social exclusion manifests in higher rates of drug use, crime (93.5 percent of prison inmates are men), loneliness and lower voter turnout among young men.

Policy recommendations: The commission proposed 35 measures across four priority areas: men as caregivers (including equalizing parental leave and strengthening fathers' rights), reducing gender differences in education and working life, addressing vulnerability and health (including a commission on men's health and more accessible services), and ensuring equality policy includes all genders. It emphasized that addressing men's challenges need not undermine women's equality gains, advocating for an inclusive approach that recognises different obstacles faced by different groups of boys and men.

Source: Norwegian Gender Equality Commission

A majority of men report seeking medical care when they need it and are confident about knowing where to find reliable medical information. More than 70 percent of men affirm that they go to the doctor when they are unwell at least some of the time, and almost 90 percent report that they find reliable medical advice when they need it, at least some of the time (see Figure 6). Men are less likely to report seeking medical care usually or all of the time, at an average of 41 percent, a figure that drops to 35 percent for men aged 18 to 24. The youngest cohort of men were also the least likely to know where to turn for reliable and trustworthy medical information, with 52 percent reporting they know where to look usually or frequently. This is 7 percent below the regional average. A smaller proportion of men reported help seeking for mental health-related challenges, with only a quarter of men ever having sought mental health treatment or support. Men who identify as gay, bisexual, or trans had a 1.8 higher likelihood of reporting having sought mental health support at some point in their lives. Moreover, men who reach a crisis point in their mental health may be more likely to seek support, as the data indicated that men who disclosed suicidal ideation were 1.45 times more likely than all men surveyed to report having sought mental health support at some point in their lives. The analysis did not reveal significant differences across age cohorts. Interestingly, the youngest group of men surveyed were the most likely to be thinking about their fertility and reproductive health, with almost two-thirds of this group reporting that they had thought about these questions at least some of the time compared to 54 percent of men aged 35 and above.

The report finds that men surveyed showed a high propensity for healthcare-seeking when they are unwell, at least some of the time. Strikingly and contrary to prevailing knowledge about gendered patterns of healthcare seeking behaviour, men surveyed were found to be more likely than women to report healthcare-seeking at least some of the time. Further analysis indicates that men in the lowest income bracket drove the high levels of healthcare seeking behaviour reported. Given this surprising finding, we examined other items and found a contradictory finding - even though more men reported going to the doctor more than women (usually or most of the time), more women know where to get medical advice than men, fewer women take time off work for health reasons. Perhaps the sampled population is over-reporting on health-seeking itself, however when seen in the larger patterns of health attitudes and behaviours, we see the overall trends line up with known literature to a greater extent. We propose additional research would be required to better understand the reasons behind this trend.

EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE AND FEELINGS OF SAFETY

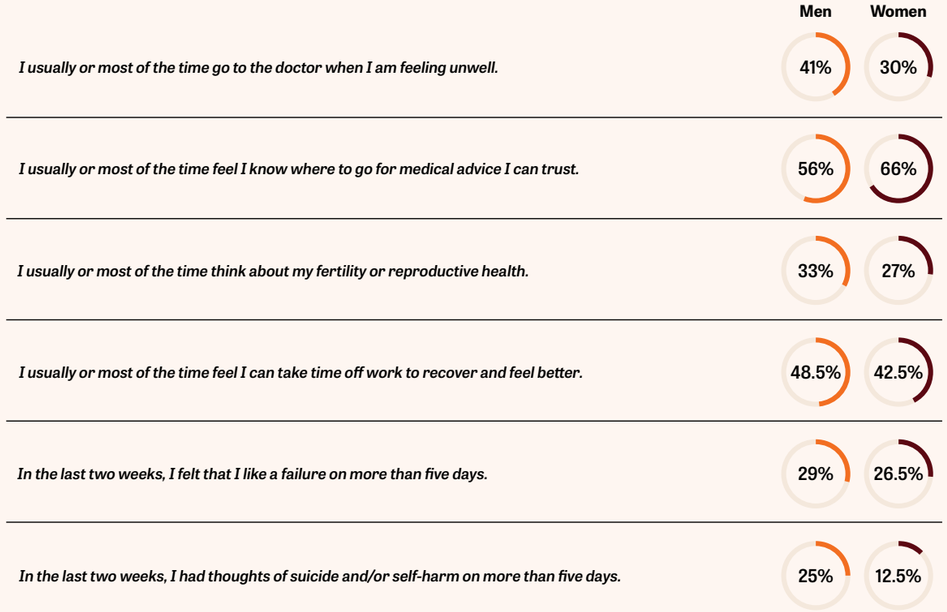
Approximately half of the men and women surveyed reported exposure to violence in their lifetime. Despite this, a clear majority of participants feel safe in their everyday lives. Overall, 51 percent of men disclosed experiencing, witnessing, or being threatened by violence at some point in their lifetime, with the youngest men being the most likely to report experiencing violence (5 percent above the regional mean). Across Nordic countries, 53.5 percent of women surveyed disclosed having been exposed to violence at some point during their lives. Gay men were 8 percent more likely than heterosexual men to disclose experiencing violence in their lifetime, reaching 59.5 percent.

The intention of presenting these findings is not to contribute to a hierarchy of harms experienced by women, men, and people of expansive gender identities and sexual orientations. Rather, the findings show how gender identities and sexual orientations correlate with exposure to qualitatively different kinds of harm, and that exposure to violence is pervasive across all groups surveyed. Participants were asked about the types of violence they had experienced. Men who reported experiencing violence were most likely to disclose being beaten in (37 percent) or participating in (36 percent) a physical fight that left someone injured. Just under a third of men reported experiencing violence at the hands of an adult as a child while growing up (31 percent), while an additional 26 percent reported witnessing violence against a child growing up. Just under one in five men reported experiencing intimate partner violence. A comparable proportion of men – 17 percent – reported experiencing or witnessing violence involving a firearm.[15]

Young men were most likely to own a weapon. The majority of owners stated having weapons for recreational purposes, though a significant minority mentioned owning them for protection.[16] Weapons ownership was highest among the youngest cohort, with 15.8 percent of 18- to 24-year-old men stating that they owned a weapon, compared to 11.7 percent of 25- to 34-year-old men, 11.5 percent of men over 35, and 3.6 percent of women overall.[17] Of those who owned weapons, most stated that it was for recreational purposes, though this figure was around 30 percentage points higher among male respondents compared to women. While responses were similar for women and men percentage-wise, it is notable that more women than men cited self-protection, protecting the family, or not trusting the police and justice system as a reason to have a weapon, with men slightly more likely than women to say that they felt stronger with a firearm. Compared to cisgender heterosexual participants, respondents who identified as LGBTQIA+ had 1.74 times higher odds of owning a weapon.

When asked about their sense of safety, an unambiguous majority of participants surveyed reported generally feeling safe in their day-to-day lives. The survey asked participants how safe they generally feel in public spaces, in their homes, and online. Almost three-quarters – 71 percent – of men affirmed that they mostly or always feel safe in public, 80 percent mostly or always feel safe at home, and 72 percent mostly or always feel safe online. Across the safety scale, men aged 25 to 34 were the group most likely to state feeling safe in these spaces only some of the time. Overall, men were most likely to report feeling unsafe in public spaces and when online, relative to their homes, with 28 percent of men stating that they feel rarely, sometimes, or never feel safe in these domains. Gay men also reported generally high perceptions of safety but were almost twice as likely to report feeling safe only some of the time across the scale. Income was also found to bear some relation on perceptions of safety with respondents in the middle and highest income tertiles recording 15 percent and 22 percent higher average safety score relative to the lowest earning group. Women surveyed also reported generally high levels of perceived safety, however, one in five women reported feeling safe in public only some of the time, while a quarter reported feeling safe online only some of the time.

Figure 6. *Men's and women's perceptions of health and health seeking (percent usually or most of the time)*



Men's sense of safety is correlated with a variety of positive social outcomes. The data indicate that as men feel safer, the less likely they are to subscribe to rigid and restrictive Man Box ideals, the less likely they are to report suicidal ideation, and the less likely they are to report owning a weapon. In particular, the analysis revealed that every unit increase in men's safety almost halved the likelihood of Man Box endorsement, more than halved the likelihood of reporting suicidality, and reduced the likelihood of owning a weapon by more than a quarter. In addition, the more men report feeling safe in the world, the more likely they are to report having purpose in life, the more likely they are to report positive social connections in their lives, and the more likely they are to speak out against gender-based harms and harassment against women. On these metrics, the data reveal that every unit increase in safety among men is associated with being 1.2 times more likely to report purpose and positive social connection, and 1.5 times higher likelihood of speaking out as a bystander when confronted with an incident of harm or harassment against a woman.

MEN'S SENSE OF SAFETY IS ASSOCIATED WITH:

- **58%** 58 percent lower likelihood of suicidal ideation
- **45%** 45 percent lower likelihood of being in the Man Box
- **27%** 27 percent lower likelihood of owning a weapon
- **1.2X** 1.2 times higher likelihood of having purpose in life
- **1.2X** 1.2 times higher likelihood of having positive social connection
- **1.5X** 1.5 times higher likelihood of intervening as a bystander in the face of gender-based harms and harassment

CHAPTER 4

MEN, RELATIONSHIPS, AND DATING



Photo: Krzysztof Maksimiuk via Unsplash

Men and women are growing apart romantically and are struggling to find a way back to each other. Technology is contributing to these trends. In many corners of the world romantic relationships and dating are shifting: trends point to people staying single for longer, choosing marriage later or not at all, and delaying having children or living child-free.[18] Moreover, while the infusion of online dating into romantic lives might, in theory, mean that meeting potential partners and prospects is much easier, the reality is less clear. These trends have led some observers to declare a "relationship recession" across a growing number of countries around the world.[19] What does the picture look like in the Nordic region? In recent decades, Nordic countries have also seen these changes with young people marrying later in life, many choosing long-term partnership over marriage, and many living solo for longer. Indeed, according to OECD data, in Finland single-person households account for 45 percent of households. This represents the higher end of the single-living scale in the region; the figure is 29 percent in Iceland, at the lower end of the spectrum.[20] The data in this study reflect these trends. While revealing an emerging romantic pessimism among young people surveyed, they have not turned their back on love completely.

PERCEPTIONS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING

The overall majority of participants surveyed were married or in a relationship. Among respondents in a long-term partnership, just under one in five reported not living together. And, also in line with regional trends, **a substantial minority – 40 percent – reported being single, separated, divorced, or widowed.** Of these, just more than a quarter – 27 percent – stated that they were looking for a partner, while 11 percent reported that they were not.

While many women and men reported a shared sense of romantic precarity, most men still consider marriage and children among their core life goals. Across the region, a majority of men – 58 percent – and a significant minority of women – 40 percent – affirm that getting married is crucial to their life goals (see Figure 8). When asked about where having children sits within their aspirations, 66 percent of men report that having a family is important to achieving their life goals. For women, the figure is just under two-thirds (61.5 percent).

Yet, when asked about their prospects for long-term romantic partnerships, men and women seem increasingly out of reach to each other.

Across the region, almost two-thirds of men and women surveyed agree that it is too difficult to meet potential romantic partners these days, while one in four women and men believe that they will never meet anyone to share their life with. Somewhat conflictingly, while more than half of men across the region report aspiring to marriage, 53 percent of men across the region believe that a serious relationship is too much of a commitment (see Figure 8 and Table 7). Moreover, and potentially reflecting changing expectations in romantic partnerships, more than two-thirds of men believe that women have too many expectations of men in relationships these days – and more than half of women agree.

Romantic disenchantment is pulling women and men apart with harmful effects for themselves and each other. The analysis indicates that romantic isolation is a strong and specific risk factor for negative mental health and harmful social outcomes, including heightened risks of suicidality and resonance with men's grievance-based narratives.

Box 6. *Gender Equality in Sweden*

ANNUAL GENDER EQUALITY SURVEYS

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency (Jämställdhetsmyndigheten) conducts annual gender equality surveys, reaching more than 3,300 residents of Sweden aged 16 and over. As seen in this study, the agency's latest 2025 report found widespread support for gender equality as a whole, with some growing skepticism among younger Swedish men. Overall, more than 90 percent of women and men agreed or partially agreed that greater gender equality contributes to a better society for everyone, a stronger economy, and to improved health for all. Yet, this year's survey also revealed that men were more likely than women to believe that gender equality had already been achieved, with the gap between women and men being the largest among the youngest cohort (aged 16–29). Instructively, the youngest men were 14 percent less likely than the youngest women to agree that gender equality leads to a better society for all. In the same age cohort, 62 percent of men agreed that "women use sexual harassment allegation to seek revenge against men," compared to 11 percent of women surveyed in the same age group. Further pointing to emerging divides among men of different age groups, the youngest men in Sweden surveyed by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency were also almost twice as likely to believe that "it is a problem that families' choices are limited by the State's efforts to achieve gender equality in Sweden" than men over 45 years of age.

Table 7. *Men's and women's perceptions of romantic relationships (percent strongly agree / agree)*

	Men	*Women*
A serious relationship is too big a commitment	53%	40%
A serious relationship is too big a financial commitment	46%	38%
When it comes to relationships, there are too many rules for what is expected of women	52%	50%
When it comes to relationships, there are too many rules for what is expected of men	59%	53.5%
I would have to change too much about myself, such as my values or behaviors, to make a serious relationship work long-term	48%	44%
It is too difficult to meet potential romantic partners these days	63%	62.5%
Women have too many expectations for how men should be in relationships these days	68.5%	58.5%

Figure 7. *Life aspirations: how men and women feel about having children*

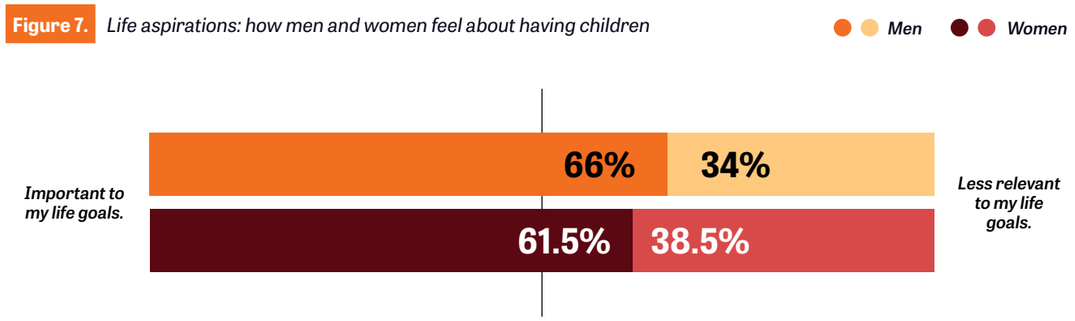
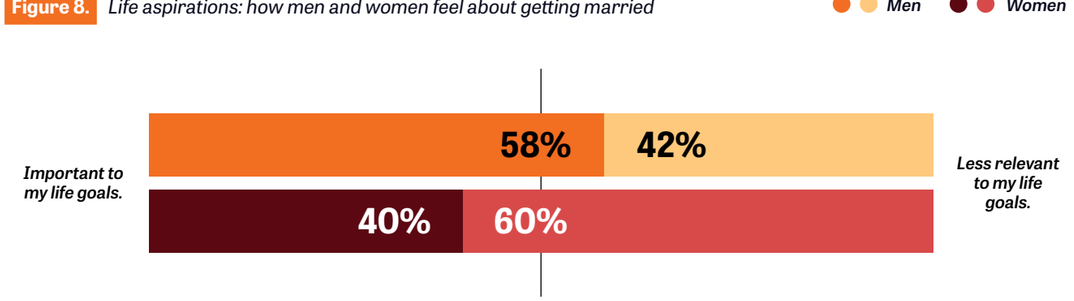


Figure 8. *Life aspirations: how men and women feel about getting married*



Indeed, participants who were pessimistic about finding love were found to be four times more likely to report suicidal ideation and thoughts of self-harm in the previous two weeks than those who were more optimistic. Additionally, the analysis revealed that every unit increase in reported negative perceptions of offline romantic relationships among men was correlated with a 36 percent average increase in likelihood of endorsing men's grievance-based narratives. A similar relationship was found between men's use of dating apps and endorsement of grievance-based thinking.

The mental health costs of romantic isolation

- Men who believe that no one will fall in love with them are 4.3 times more likely to report suicidal ideation and thoughts of self-harm in the last two weeks
- Women who believe that no one will fall in love with them are 4.5 times more likely to report suicidal ideation and thoughts of self-harm in the last two weeks

TECH AND RELATIONSHIPS

From online dating, to seeking dating advice online, to interacting with virtual companions, technology is playing an ever-growing role in the dating landscape across the region, however, the digital realm plays different roles for women and men. On average, one in two participants across the region have used online dating at some point in their dating lives. Men are overall 14 percent less likely than women to report using online dating. Just under 40 percent of men report using online dating platforms to look for a long-term relationship or a life partner (see Figure 9). A similar proportion – 43 percent – report using online dating apps more casually, to seek out hook-ups or to figure out their dating goals, with an additional 15.5 percent using dating platforms to make friends. As might be expected for this life stage, men aged 18 to 24 are most likely to use online dating more casually and to explore their dating goals, while men in the 35- to 45-year-old cohort were most likely to say they are looking for a long-term partner. The availability of online dating platforms may have a greater role facilitating potential connections among the LGBTQIA+ community, with participants in this demographic 1.3 times more likely than cisgender heterosexual participants to report using dating apps to meet people.

One in two participants who reported a positive experience with online dating state that they either met their current partner online or have had successful relationships with people they met online. Yet, dating app fatigue is setting in for some. Men were, on average, 10 percentage points more likely than women to report finding it easy to meet people they are interested in online. Despite this, one in four men reported finding it hard to meet people they are interested in online and feel that people are always looking for someone better on the next swipe. In turn, women are more than twice as likely than men to say that they feel unsafe dating online – with close to one in four women reporting a bad experience (see Figures 10 and 11). Looking at perceptions among gay men, 17 percent reported feeling unsafe online dating and a similar number – 15.5 percent – reported having had a bad experience.

While dating apps do open a world of romantic and dating possibilities to meet prospective partners, the data here signal potential dating app fatigue across the region, which may be contributing to stalling romantic connections, rather than facilitating them.

Figure 9. *Dating app use across the region, by gender*

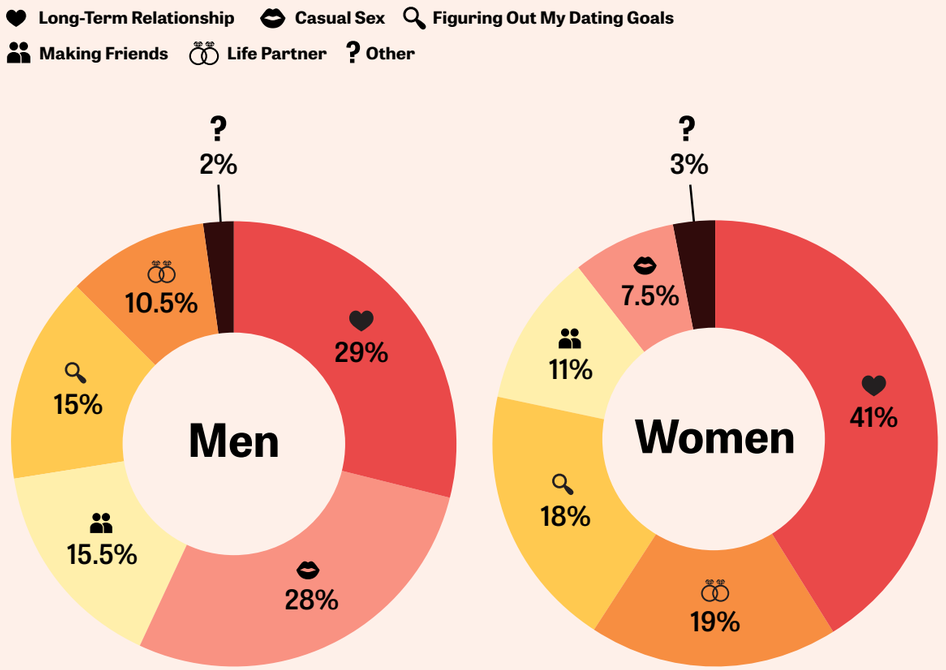


Figure 10. *Experiences with dating apps across the region, by age and gender*

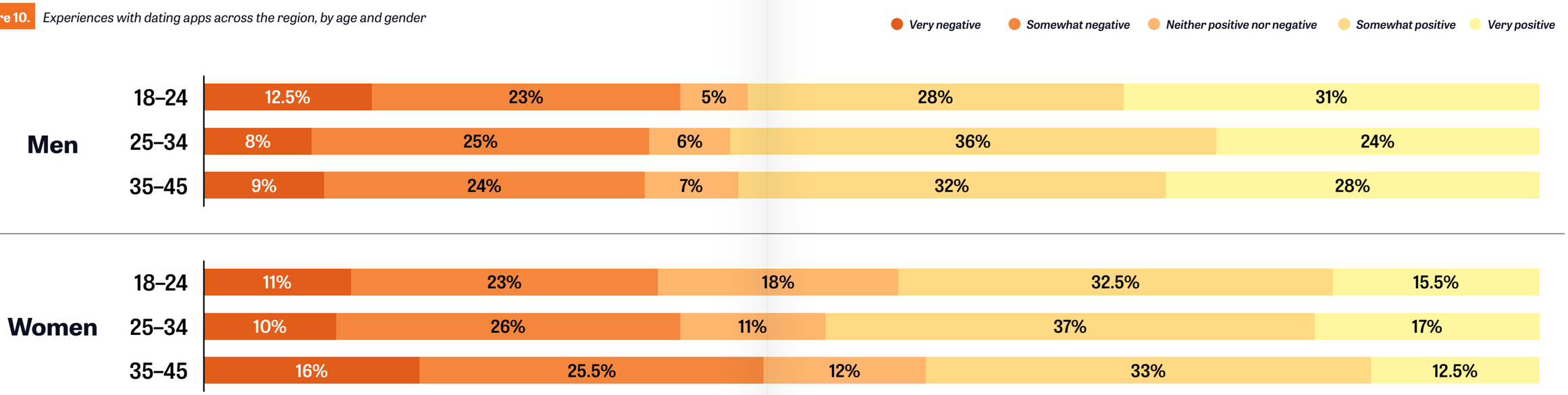


Figure 11. *Men's and women's experiences of online dating across the region, by gender*

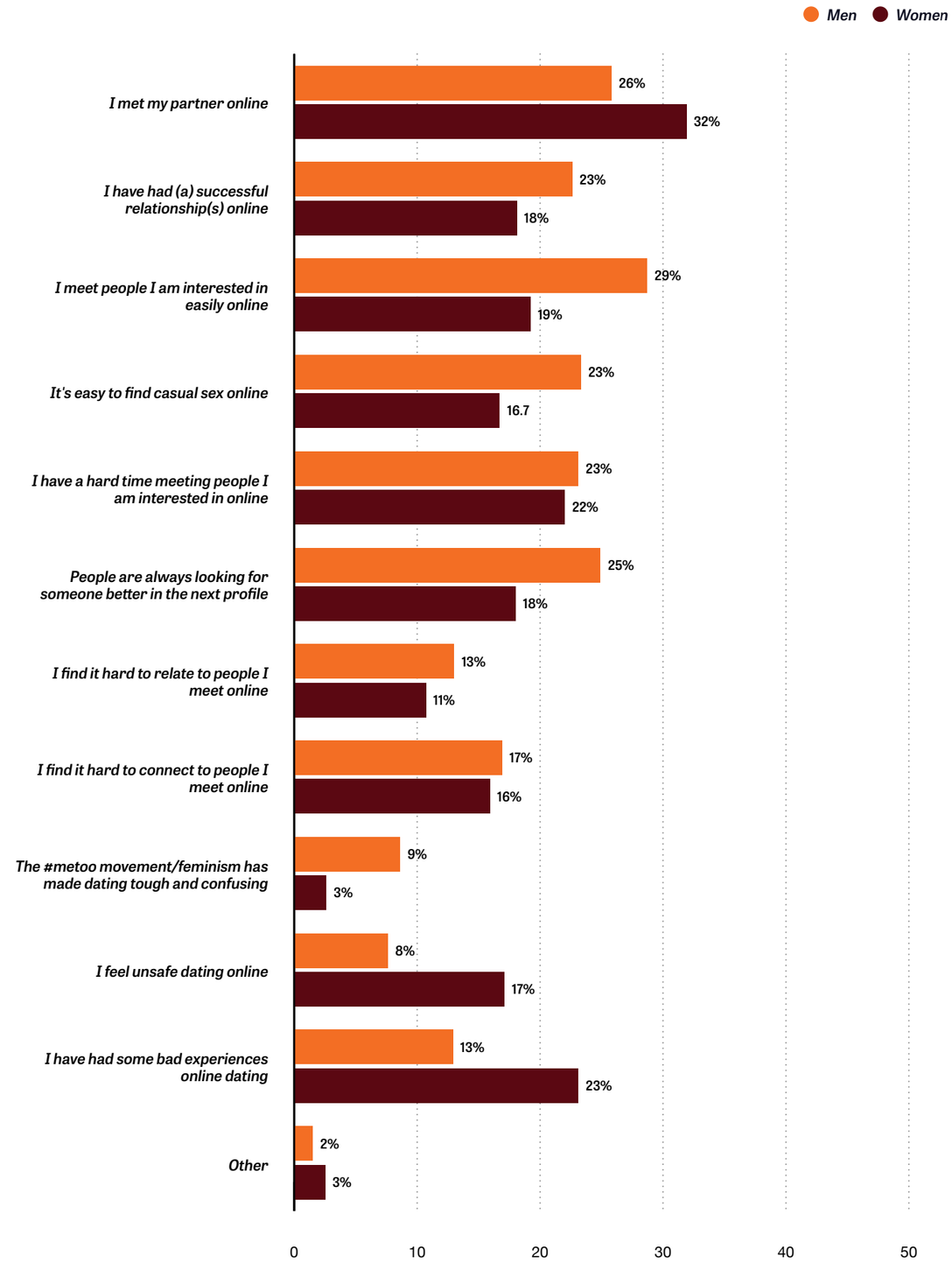
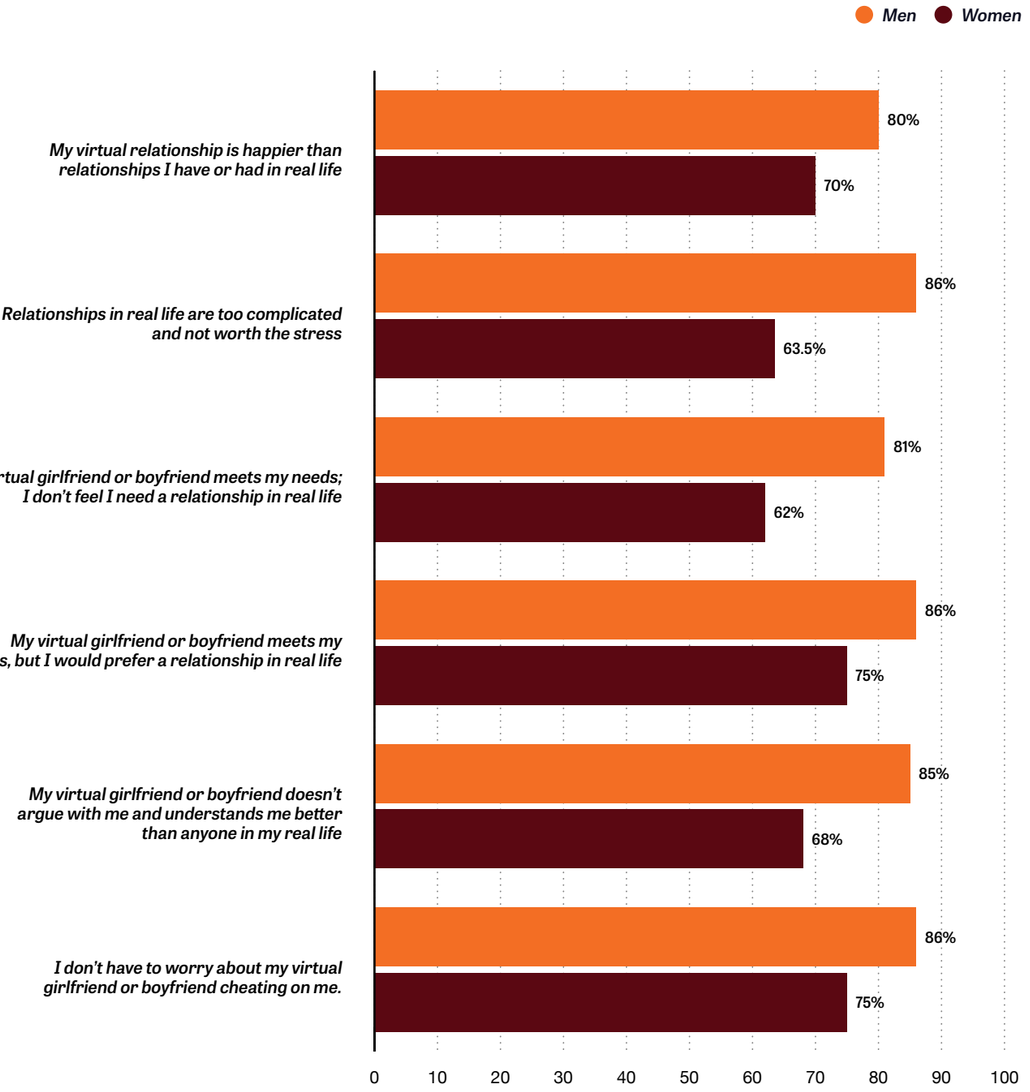


Figure 12. *Men's and women's experiences of using virtual companions (percent strongly agree / agree)*



For some, virtual partners and companions offer a seductive alternative to real-life relationships. Across the sample, one in ten men reported having engaged with a virtual or AI partner. The youngest cohorts of participants were most likely to report having interacted with a virtual partner. While this may reflect a greater generational ease and familiarity with these rapidly evolving technologies, by bypassing the complexities of human relationships, interacting with AI companions may contribute to diminishing socio-emotional and relational skills among those who rely on them.

Encouragingly, a clear majority of participants who have engaged with virtual partners say they would prefer to have a relationship in real life. Yet, eight in ten men in this group say that their virtual partner meets all their needs, while 91 percent of men 18 to 24 say their virtual partner understands them better than anyone in their real life.

CHAPTER 5

MEN'S ONLINE LIVES AND DIGITAL MISOGYNY



Photo: Radoslav Bali via Unsplash

As men spend time online seeking advice, meaning, and community, they are exposed to hardening, divisive, regressive, and hardening ideas about gender and masculinity. These ideas are gaining traction, leaving men's support for gender equality across the region hanging in the balance.

Our social, cultural, personal, political, and professional lives are increasingly lived online. In the sample for this study, almost all participants surveyed – 96.5 percent – estimate spending at least one hour online a day and more than half estimate spending four to eight hours online a day outside of work or education. One of the notable global online trends of the past decade has been the growth of the so-called "manosphere," which is both globally connected and rooted in national or even hyperlocal online and real-life discourses, including in the Nordic countries.[21] This has overlapped with an upsurge in "masculinist politics" that seeks to roll back gender equality measures, including in the Nordics.[22] Over the years, researchers have seen an increase in digital misogyny in the Nordic region, and an embracing of men's grievance-based narratives among different segments of the population.[23]

MEN'S ONLINE LIVES

When asked about their online lives, a clear majority of men expressed a keen awareness that the modus operandi of many online platforms center on promoting divisive content, with 60 percent of men across the region agreeing that "online platforms deliberately show content that pits one group against another." The same proportion of men – 60 percent – affirmed that they frequently feel as though they have no autonomy over their social media feeds. In this context, more than half of the men surveyed have normalized the aggressive and hardening nature of communication online, with 55 percent of men believing that aggressive and threatening comments is just how people communicate online.

Men are turning to online platforms for advice on self-improvement and about their futures, as well as to find community, feel heard and understood, and express anger and frustration about the world. The most common reasons participants identified for going online were to seek fun and entertainment and to switch off and be distracted, selected by 70 percent of participants across Nordic countries (see Figures 13 and 14).

Beyond seeking moments of levity and escapism, sizeable portions of men surveyed reported turning to digital spaces for self-improvement (60 percent), to find community (51 percent), to feel heard (40 percent) and understood (48.5 percent), to seek advice about the future (48 percent), and to express anger and frustration (39 percent). Relative to men aged 35 to 45, men in the youngest age cohort had a 10 percentage points higher propensity to report going online for advice about the future, relationships, and making money.

Figure 13. *Reasons for going online across the region, by gender (percent strongly agree / agree)*

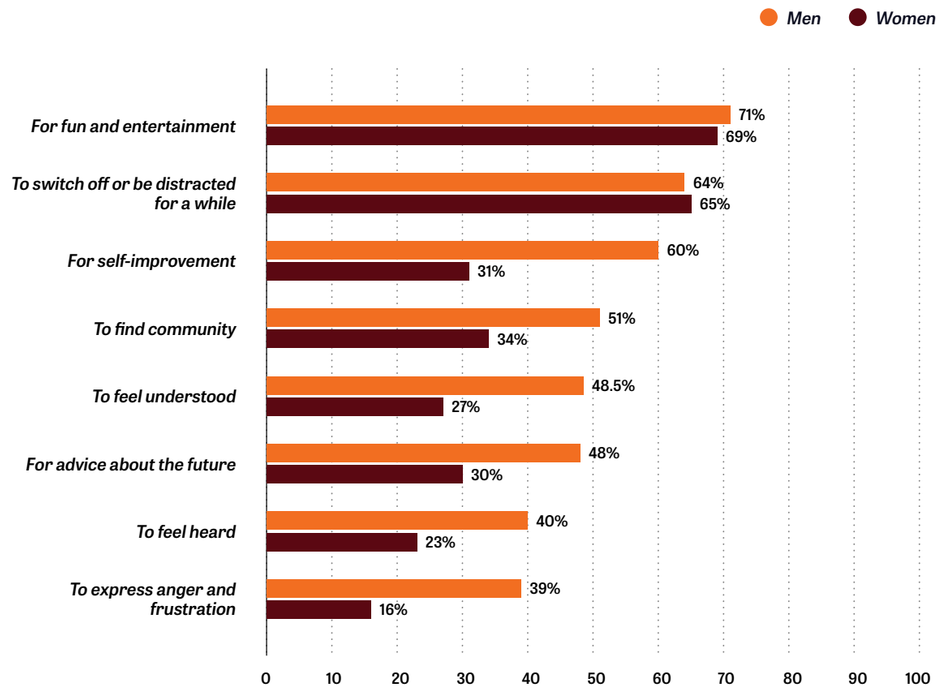


Figure 14. *Men's and women's online platform usage across the region, by age (where participants spend the most time during an average week)*

Percentages from left to right correspond to age groups 18–24, 25–34, and 35–45.
Rings begin at outermost shell and move inward, representing age groups 18–24, 25–34, and 35–45.



Figure 15. *List of top five influencers and influential figures who men recognize and/or follow across the region*[24]



Men aged 18 to 24 were also on average 7 percentage points more likely than the older cohorts of men surveyed to affirm going online to find community, to express their ideas, and to express their anger and frustration. Gay men were among the groups most likely to affirm going online to seek community and feel understood and for advice about the future. Given our increasing understanding of the ways algorithms operate to identify, mirror, and amplify users' emotional states of mind – notably rage, outrage, and insecurities – this may offer an important insight into the types of content men may be more likely to interact with.

Some observable patterns emerged relative to participants' social media diets. This is shaping how men and women see the world and each other. Where we spend time, the content we are exposed to, and the internet subcultures we are immersed in can interact with and influence how we view the world around us. These insights point to online spaces that may pose higher risks of promoting divisive and hardening online narratives and associated harms, as well as revealing online spaces that may offer opportunities to forge and foster more caring online communities. Overall, the data indicate that YouTube is the platform of choice for men across the region, followed by Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter). Looking at platform usage more closely across the sample, some clear variation emerged between the younger and older men surveyed. Men aged 18 to 24 were almost three times more likely to report spending the most time on Snapchat during an average week and twice as likely to spend time on TikTok and Discord than men in the older cohorts. The most used platforms were different for men age 35 and up: they were two times more likely to spend the most time on Reddit and Facebook during an average week than younger men surveyed. Notably, while representing a small minority, men aged 25 to 34 in the sample drive reported usage of the anonymous online forum 4Chan.

The survey presented participants with a range of widely known influencers and influential figures across global and regional cultural and political discourse and asked them to identify who they recognized, followed, and trusted (Figure 15). Across the region, almost one in five men aged 18 to 24 reported following Andrew Tate, Elon Musk, and Donald Trump. This was marginally higher than for older age groups, with the exception of Elon Musk who was most likely to be followed by men aged 25 to 34. While offering an important indication, it is important to note that who people follow does not offer a full picture of the kinds of content they see and endorse.

ENDORSEMENT OF DIVISIVE NARRATIVES ONLINE

When online, Nordic men are in contact with divisive, hardening, and misogynistic narratives – and these narratives are undermining men's support for gender equality. A decisive majority of men surveyed do not purport to follow or trust key influencers and influential figures known to promote misogyny across online channels. Despite this, men are exposed to and potentially targeted by harmful online narratives in much higher numbers. The survey presented men with a series of statements taken from and designed to emulate "manfluencer" content online and asked them whether they had seen such statements in the last month and then asked how they would respond to such content (see Figure 16 and Table 8). Across the region, 55 percent of men on average reported seeing content presented on the digital misogyny scale sometimes or often, with 59 percent of men recalling seeing content affirming that "men are born to conquer." Overall, men were most likely to report often coming across online content communicating that there is no point dating these days and that women find 80 percent of men unattractive – with one in five men recalling frequently seeing such content over the last month. More than a third of men also recognized occasionally coming across narratives demonizing women, presenting feminism as a force turning men into women, and questioning the scale of sexual violence. Across most statements presented, the youngest cohort of men were most likely to be exposed to these narratives online.

Men's reactions to such content ranges from shock, to humor and trivialization, to perceiving misogynistic messages to be accurate, thought-provoking, and normal. Clear differences in reactions surfaced across different types of messages. Across age groups, one in five men dismissed such content as inaccurate, silly, shocking, or enraging – with these representing the most likely responses across the sample. The shock value of digital misogyny appears to diminish with age, while men's propensity to perceive such content as inaccurate increases with age. The youngest cohort of men were as likely to perceive misogynistic content to be shocking and as they were to see it being accurate, with 25 percent perceiving the content as shocking and 25 percent perceiving it to be accurate. Notably, one in five men across the region did believe such ideas to be accurate, while one in ten say they are thought-provoking. These ideas resonate with some and are plant seeds with others, almost regardless of who participants say they are following.

While the majority of men surveyed support gender equality in principle, misogynistic narratives hold sway with one in two men. Two-thirds of men support equal pay for equal work and three-quarters agree that women and men should be treated equally.[25] Yet, half of the men surveyed perceive feminism as being about favoring women over men and similar numbers believe that men have it harder than women when it comes to finding new opportunities these days. Strikingly, one in three men aged 18 to 24 say they disagreed with the idea that women and men should be treated equally.

Box 7. *The Political Economy of Grievance-Based Narratives Amplified Online*

The survey asked a set of questions around perceived or experienced grievances, including beliefs that efforts to promote gender equality have gone too far and that men are being discriminated against. These ideas – and the real fears and vulnerabilities that underpin them – are algorithmically amplified and monetized online, deliberately exploiting men's insecurities.[26] Coined by sociologists Rachel Kaliosh and Michael Kimmel, the idea of male "aggrieved entitlement" primarily describes a sense of feeling disadvantaged by measures promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion, even if the feeling does not match indicators of socioeconomic status.[27] Men's grievance-based messages are amplified online by what Reset Tech and Equimundo term "grievance entrepreneurs," and can cross over into misogynist and masculinist "red pill" ideologies. Offering seemingly clear explanations for the challenges they're facing in their lives, alongside seemingly clear easy fixes, the male grievance industry has a sizeable reach among men and is generating its currency on men's anger and desire for connection. As shown in this report, these ideas are gaining traction among men, shaping their views of gender equality and democracy.

Looking ahead, it may be valuable to continue tracking these trends among young men, to assess potential the potential effects of regular and consistent exposure to misogynistic content on normalizing these ideas and chipping away at beliefs in the possibility of healthy and equitable relationships with women in their personal, social, and professional lives.

The analysis revealed that regular use of certain platforms showed observable associations with grievance-based and divisive narratives, and Man Box endorsement. For example, every unit increase in men's endorsement of grievance-based narratives was associated with 1.5 times higher likelihood of spending most time on X – with similar tendencies seen between regular X use and Man Box endorsement. Perhaps unsurprisingly, men who reported regularly spending time on fringe online fora like Gab, 4Chan and Parler revealed significant correlations with grievance-based and divisive thinking, as well as Man Box endorsement. **For instance, the analysis revealed that men who reported regularly spending time on Gab were almost five times more likely to endorse grievance-based and divisive ideas.** Men who reported regularly using Instagram were found to be 21 percent less likely to agree with grievance-based and divisive narratives. It is worth noting that men's dating app use was also correlated with a higher likelihood – 2.3 times – of endorsing grievance-based thinking, echoing findings around romantic disenchantment discussed above.

Online spaces present new vectors for a range of potential harms. Almost a third of participants disclosed experiencing some form of tech-facilitated harm over the course of their lifetime. Men and women recognize their shared stake in safer and more caring online spaces and are calling for greater regulation of tech platforms. Tech-facilitated harms covered ranged from harassment and doxxing,[28] to receiving sexual threats, including non-consensual intimate image sharing, to cyber stalking and on- and off-line bullying. On average, 30 percent of participants reported experiencing at least one form of such harms during their lives, with members identifying as LGBTQIA+ at particular risk. Across the region, one in five women disclosed experiencing at least one form of tech-enabled harms over their lifetime. While this was below the regional average overall, this may reflect the ways women are interacting with online spaces in the Nordic region. Just more than a third of men surveyed – 37 percent – disclosed experiencing at least one form of tech-facilitated violence over their lifetimes. Among men surveyed, this mean average increased to 53 percent for gay men. Age also appeared to be a risk factor, with the youngest cohort of men being most likely to report having experienced tech-facilitated harms and harassment.

Among men, clear distinctions between victimization and perpetration of online harms breakdown. Thirty percent of men surveyed disclosed having engaged in some form of tech-facilitated harms – with an additional 7.5 percent reportedly being unsure. While being at overall higher risk of experiencing online harms and harassment, as shown above, gay men were 14 percent more than likely than men across the region as a whole to disclose committing online harms and harassment, with an additional 12 percent reportedly being unsure. The youngest cohort of men were most likely of the three age groups to report engaging in harmful online behavior. Ten percent of women disclosed having engaged in online harms over the course of their lifetimes – with the youngest cohort of women being marginally more likely to disclose committing online harms and harassment. These findings indicate that life online can be perilous and unsafe for internet users across demographic groups and points to the importance of recognizing that we all have a shared stake in realizing safer and more caring online spaces.

Figure 16. *Men's exposure to grievance-based narratives amplified online across the region (percent recalling seeing these narratives sometimes or often)*

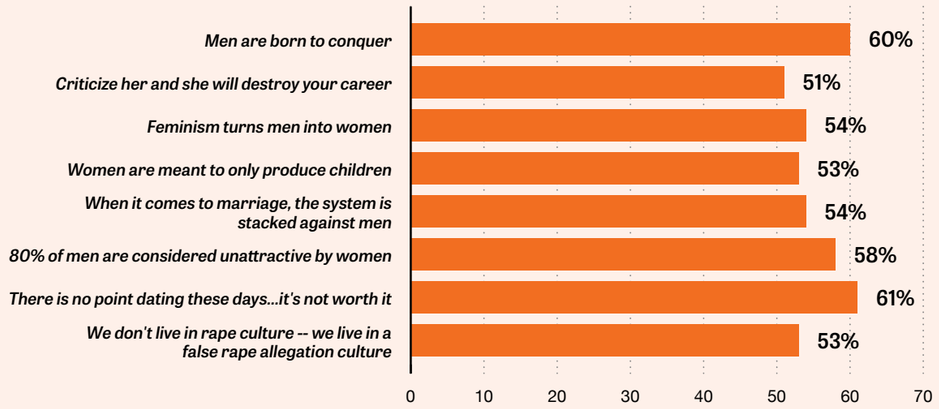


Table 8. *Men's and women's endorsement of grievance-based narratives amplified online, by age (percent strongly agree / agree)*

	Men			Women		
	18–24	25–34	35–45	18–24	25–34	35–45
Men have it harder than women when it comes to new opportunities.	54%	54%	54.5%	17%	25%	22%
Men can have their reputation destroyed just for speaking their minds these days.	58.5%	58%	63%	33%	38%	32%
Things are generally better when men bring in money and women take care of the home and/or kids.	47%	45%	45%	22%	19%	22%
Things would be better if women held more powerful positions in society and men did more around the house.	46%	51%	53%	61%	58.5%	55%
It should be a national law that women and men with the same qualifications in the same jobs get paid equally.	64%	66%	71%	80%	82%	85%
No one cares whether men are ok these days.	50%	57%	56%	31%	29%	25%
Feminism is about favouring women over men.	53%	54%	56%	19%	21%	28%
The media tend to paint men in a negative light.	59%	58%	58%	36.5%	33%	29%
All in all, men are well respected in today's society.	52%	56%	60%	65%	65%	69%
You must be an alpha male these days to get a partner.	43.5%	44%	46%	15%	16%	18%
It makes me so angry that unqualified people get promoted just because of diversity.	56%	59%	63%	55%	55%	56%
Women only seek out men who either have a lot of money or a really good job.	48%	48%	54%	20%	23%	23%
Workplaces need more masculine energy	46%	44%	44%	18%	18%	23.5%
For one group to succeed, one has to lose.	46%	45%	43%	21%	19%	20%
I support getting rid of equality, diversity, and inclusion policies.	47%	45%	50%	17.5%	21%	23%
I feel a lot of pressure to look a certain way to be successful in the dating world.	51%	49%	48%	55%	43%	34%
Most men don't stand a chance to meet someone on dating apps.	54%	53%	52%	13%	23%	21%
I find it difficult not to keep swiping on dating apps to see who else I can match with.	39%	38%	33%	23%	19%	18%
I respect men who are clearly wealthy.	58.5%	51.5%	51%	43%	32%	27.5%
Women and men should be treated equally.	68%	73%	81%	83.5%	82%	86%
These days, women don't respect men.	53%	53%	52%	26%	23%	25%
Women's rights have gone too far.	48%	45%	46%	17%	18%	21%

CHAPTER 6

MEN, PUBLIC TRUST, AND DEMOCRACY



Photo: Taha Yasir Yöney via Pexels

Trust in public institutions and belief in the importance of electoral processes are high overall. Yet political trust is wavering and anti-democratic sentiments are gaining ground, particularly among young men.

In recent years, many democratic nations across the world have seen an erosion in support for and trust in both state institutions, as well as in democracy more broadly, and marked political polarization.[29] In several Nordic countries, political polarization has been noticeably gendered when compared to other European countries, with men more likely to express support for right-wing parties, and women for left-wing parties.[30] Historically, the Nordic region has had high levels of public trust in its institutions and a societal consensus aimed at reducing inequalities.[31] The data also show both relatively high levels of trust in public institutions and continued support for gender equality alongside some more concerning trends. The findings suggest that while women respondents are especially skeptical of institutions in general, men trust law and order institutions more than they trust elected politicians. Respondents across the board reported a sense that the current system is skewed towards the wealthiest in society. These findings stand in partial contrast to the positive views most respondents have about their personal economic future but may go some way in explaining the comparatively lower optimism about the future of the country. Notably, a sizable minority of male respondents, especially younger ones, espoused anti-democratic views, and younger men, in particular, were also more likely to be skeptical about gender equality.

POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION

The survey revealed a broad spectrum of political leanings, including an observable portion who were not sure how they identified politically. The survey asked participants who they voted for in previous national-level elections and how they self-identify politically.[32] Across the Nordic countries, the sample included a wide range of political leanings, ranging from participants identifying with the extreme left (2 percent) to the far right (6 percent) (see Figure 17). The highest proportion of participants overall identified as moderate (19 percent), moderate or centrist (17.5 percent), and conservative (16 percent). A comparable, but slightly lower proportion of men, stated that they did not know (13 percent). The youngest cohort of participants were most likely to express uncertainty about how they identify politically, with 17 percent of men and 41 percent of women in this group stating they did not know. Recognizing that political leanings and labels carry distinct meanings across different country contexts, the data indicate that 8 percent of men surveyed identified with the far-right political label, while 1.5 percent identified with the extreme left. Among women surveyed, 2 percent identified with the far-right and the extreme left (see Figure 17).

PUBLIC TRUST

On average, just more than four in ten men across the Nordic region report trusting the prime minister or president, political parties, and local governments, most or all of the time. Trust in the security sector appeared higher, with two in three men reporting trusting the military and police most or all of the time.[33] Looking at levels of men's trust in political leadership, the figure increases to seven in ten when accounting for men who report trusting national and local political entities some of the time. Men expressed the highest degree of trust in the police and the military, with close to nine in ten men supporting the police and military some to all of the time. Men showed comparable levels of trust relative to the legal system. Among women, trust levels were similar, if slightly lower, especially with respect to elected officials, where trust levels were 15 percentage points lower. Levels of trust across public institutions were relatively evenly spread across age cohorts, however, men aged 18 to 24 were the least likely to express trusting their Prime Minister or President. Gay men showed lower levels of trust in the security and justice sectors, reporting 36 percent lower odds of trusting the police, 29 percent lower odds of trusting the courts and legal systems, and 30 percent lower likelihood of trusting the military.

The overall picture points to public trust being relatively high among men, yet the data also indicate that a sense of trust in political representatives may be eroding. When asked whether they believe their political leaders care what people like them think, participants across the board were less optimistic. Strikingly, 70 percent of men and 75 percent of women surveyed agreed that "most political representatives don't care what people like me think." Comparably and aligning with the public trust figures above, 41 percent of men and 14 percent of women believe that their political leaders care about their lives and their futures most or all of the time. Men who identified as gay had comparable levels of trust in political leaders: 44 percent affirmed that they believe their political leaders care about their lives and their future most or all of the time, while just over two-thirds – 68 percent – affirmed that their political leaders do not care what people like them think. Across the region, a substantial portion of participants expressed a sense that the system is stacked against them and are feeling the strain of rising costs of living. Indeed, just over 60 percent of men and 69 percent of women believe that their government does not care about the cost of living, while 68 percent of men and 71 percent of women agreed with the sentiment that the current economic and political structures benefit the rich more than anyone.

Public trust and income levels are closely correlated. Chiming in with perceptions that the economic and political structures are tilting toward the wealthier in society, men in the lowest income tertile were the least likely to express trust in public institutions across the board. Men in the highest income tertile were 2.5 times more likely than men in the lowest income tertile to trust the parliament, political parties, and municipal governments. Similar income-based variation was found relative to the civil service and corporations, with highest earners being 2.5 times more likely to trust

Figure 17. *Men and women's political self-identification*

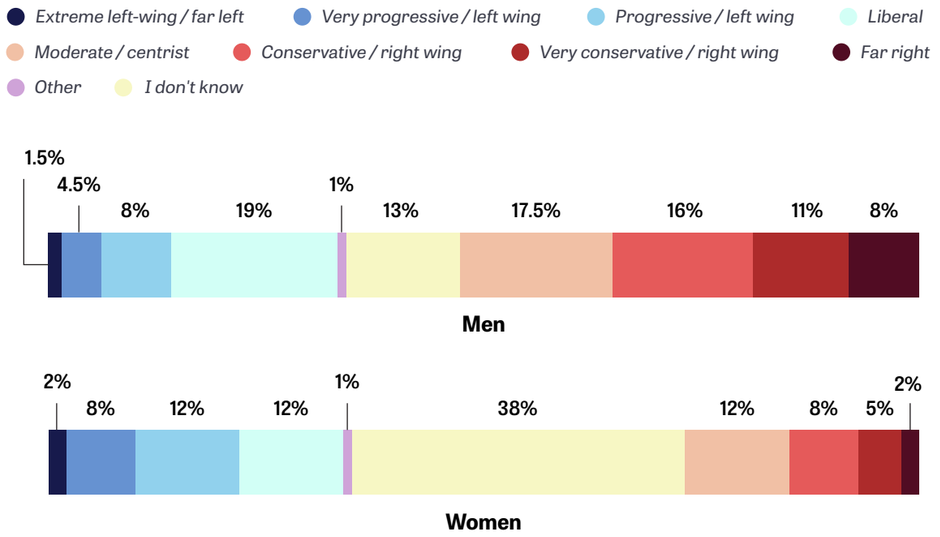
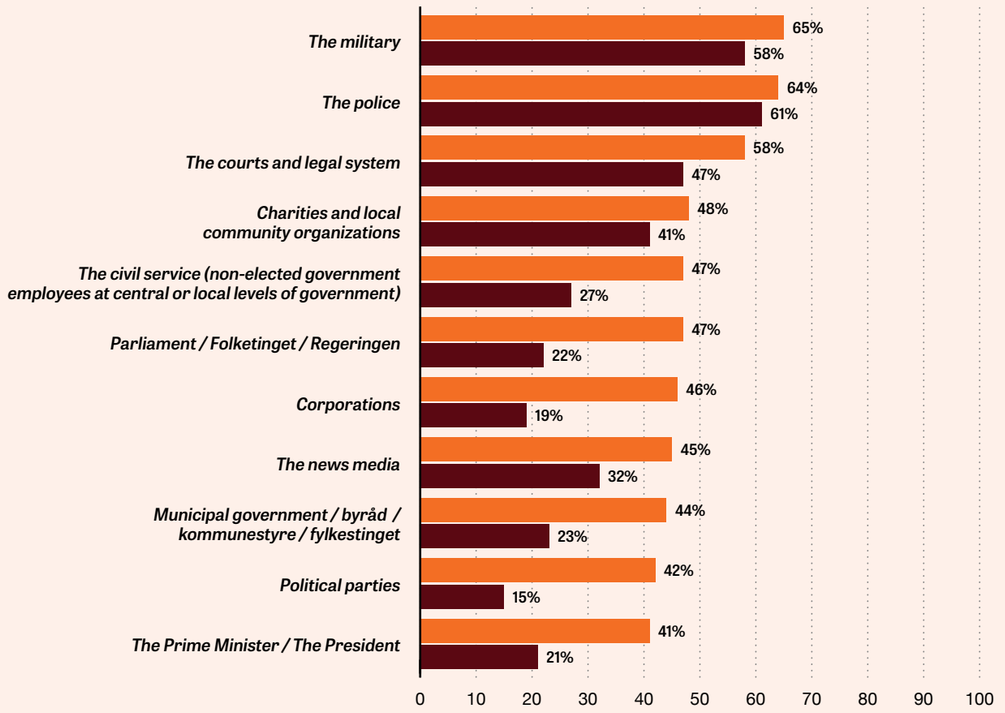


Figure 18. *Men's and women's trust in public institutions across the region, by gender (percent trusting 'most' or 'all of the time')*



both entities relative to the lowest earners surveyed. The disparity in public trust between income levels was least pronounced across the regional relative to the Prime Minister or President (1.8 times higher trust for the highest earners), the security sector – including both police (1.8 times higher trust for the highest earners) and military (1.9 times higher for the highest earners) – as well as the news media (1.6 times higher for the highest earners), and nongovernmental organizations (1.8 times higher for the highest earners).

TRUST IN DEMOCRACY

The vast majority of participants surveyed trust in democracy and democratic participation. Yet, for some, political distrust is manifesting in anti-democratic sentiments and support for radical measures, especially among younger men. Across the Nordic region, 80 percent of respondents agree that elections are important to the well-being of their country (see Table 9 and Figure 19). At the same time, the data also pointed to some paradoxical tendencies across the sample, notably around emerging endorsement of anti-democratic sentiments across Nordic countries.

Despite the high general support for electoral processes, almost half of men and a third of women respondents across the different age groups also stated voting does not matter. Strikingly, 47 percent of men and 27 percent of women surveyed expressed approval for the proposition that their country would be "better off with a strong leader in charge who doesn't bother with parliament or elections." Comparably, 41 percent of men and 16 percent of women endorsed the idea that "a government that burns it all down is the only way forward (see Figure 19). " The youngest cohort of men across the region were most likely to show support for "strong-man" style leadership. This tendency was also observable relative to support for "tear it all down" politics, for which the data pointed to a steady decrease in endorsement of this idea from the youngest to the oldest age cohort. Overall, men aged 18 to 24 were 8 percentage points more likely to endorse this idea than men in the oldest cohort. Four out of ten men also supported the idea that laws should be based on religious values, a much higher rate than among women respondents, and notable given broader long-term trends of secularization in Nordic countries, where the church plays a cultural rather than overtly political role.[34] These findings are not an indication of future intentions and further study is required to better understand the meaning underlying these responses. Yet, these findings do suggest that anti-democratic beliefs appear to hold more sway among Nordic men than they do among Nordic women.

In line with global trends, the findings surface perceptible levels of disenchantment with political and economic structures across the Nordic region. In the context of political and systemic distrust, men surveyed in this study expressed support for anti-democratic sentiments, including support for the belief that "burning it all down" is the only way forward. However, agreement with this statement should not necessarily be interpreted as literal support for dismantling democratic institutions or rejecting democracy. It may instead reflect frustration with existing political and economic systems, a sense that these systems are unresponsive to people's needs, or a desire for fundamental change.

As self-reported responses to closed survey questions, the findings do not allow us to distinguish between these possible interpretations or determine the extent to which respondents intended the statement literally. We are constrained in our capacity to discern the underlying meaning and interpretation of such sentiments. We can speculate that this reflects a sense of disillusionment with existing systems, or at least a sense that anti-establishment ideas garner some resonance among young men surveyed in particular. The survey does not purport to lay any claim on participants' intention or likelihood to act on these sentiments, nor on their generalisability generalizability among men more broadly, given the study's sampling methodology. They do, however, point to the potential presence of some level of democratic disenchantment among men surveyed.

Economic precarity and gender threat endorsement are correlated with support for anti-democratic sentiments. As an aggregate, every unit increase in economic precarity is associated with a 2.8 times higher likelihood of endorsing anti-democratic sentiments. The analysis indicated that the relationship was stronger between men's resonance with grievance-based gender threat narratives and democratic backsliding. Indeed, every unit increase in men's endorsement of the gender threat scale is correlated with a 3.6 times higher likelihood of supporting anti-democratic ideas. Looking at correlations across specific items across the scale, the most pronounced associations were found relative to perceptions that the welfare system is abuse, that the government should be less present in people's lives, and for endorsing the idea of authoritarian-style political leadership.

Pointing to potential grievances underlying both gender threat resonance and democratic disillusionment among certain subsets of men, the analysis indicated that gender threat endorsement is linked to 3.3 times higher odds of believing the government cares more about migrants than its own people and almost double the likelihood of believing that government does not care about the cost of living. There was also a strong correlation of close to 4 times between gender threat endorsement and a belief that the government should do more to support fathers.

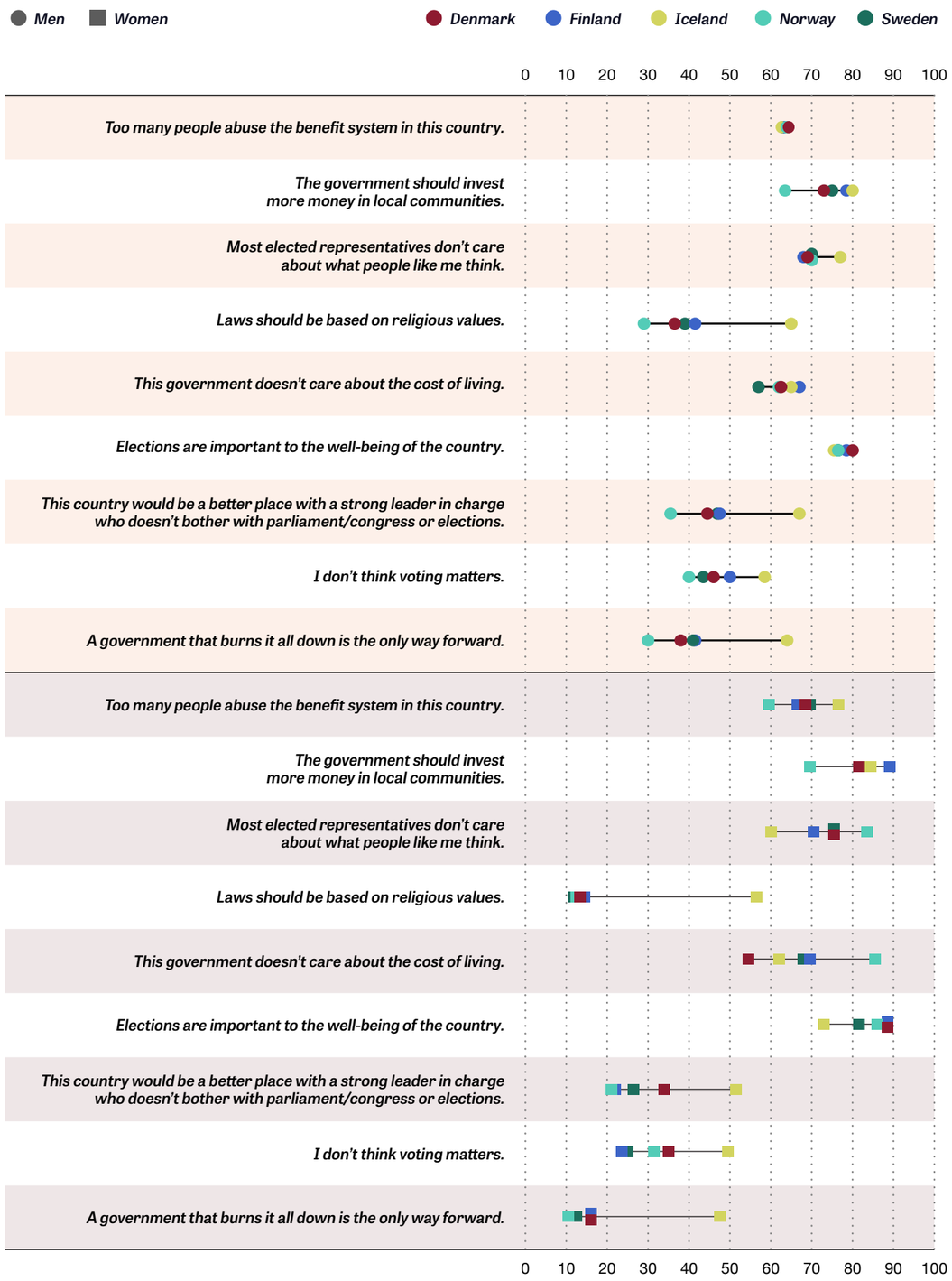
Taken together, these findings suggest that there may be a correlation between gender threat resonance, a loss of faith in democratic governance, and a sense among some men that they are either not getting their fair share of the pie – politically, economically, socially, professionally, and via public services – in society more broadly, or that others are getting "unfair" advantages.

Table 9. *Men's and women's endorsement of anti-democratic sentiments, by age (percent strongly agree / agree)*

	Men			Women		
	18–24	25–34	35–45	18–24	25–34	35–45
The economy works best when the government stays out of the way and lets people get ahead on their own.	58%	60%	60%	35%	34%	31%
Too many people abuse the benefit system in this country.	61%	62%	66%	67%	67%	66%
The government should invest more money in local communities.	69.5%	73%	76%	73%	81%	85%
Most elected representatives don't care about what people like me think.	65%	70%	73%	72%	77%	75%
Laws should be based on religious values.	43%	42%	38%	17%	16%	17%
This government doesn't care about the cost of living.	57.5%	63%	65%	62%	71%	70%
Elections are important to th e well-being of the country.	73%	77%	80%	81%	84%	89%
**This country would be a better place with a strong leader in charge who doesn't bother with parliament/congress or elections.*[35]	48.5%	47%	46%	27%	28%	28%
I don't think voting matters.	46%	49%	45%	30.5%	31%	30%
**A government that burns it all down is the only way forward.*[36]	45%	42.5%	38%	18%	17%	14%
The government cares more about migrants than its own people.	56.5%	57%	56%	46%	44%	44%
There should be more support for fathers in this country.	66%	70.5%	71.5%	59%	64%	59.5%
The current economic and political structure benefits the rich more than anyone.	59%	66%	74%	59%	73%	76%

**Translations of two of the survey items into Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish are provided in the endnotes.*

Figure 19. *Men's and women's support for anti-democratic sentiments across countries (percent strongly agree / agree)*



ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN ECONOMIC PRECARITY AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC SENTIMENTS

2X 2 times higher odds of believing representatives do not care

2X 2 times higher odds of wanting religious values in law

2.7X 2.7 times higher odds of believing the government does not care about the cost of living

21% 21 percent lower odds of believing elections are important

1.7X 1.7 times higher odds of wanting strong leader with no elections

2.9X 2.9 times higher odds of believing voting does not matter

2.9X 2.9 higher odds of wanting the government to tear it all down

1.6X 1.6 times higher odds of believing the government cares more about immigrants

1.4X 1.4 times higher odds of believing the government should support fathers more

3.6X 3.6 times higher odds of believing the current system benefits the rich

37% 37 percent lower odds of believing people are abusing benefits

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN GRIEVANCE-BASED THINKING AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC SENTIMENTS

3.5X 3.5 times higher odds of believing benefits are being abused

3.5X 3.5 times higher odds of supporting less government presence in people's lives

3.45X 3.45 times higher odds of supporting strong leader who would do away with elections

3.3X 3.30 times higher odds of believing the government cares more for migrants than its own people

1.9X 1.9 times higher odds of believing the government does not care about the cost of living

1.8X 1.8 times higher odds of thinking representatives do not care what people like them think

1.8X 1.8 times higher odds of thinking the government should all be torn down

1.7X 1.7 times higher odds of wanting religious values in law

1.6X 1.6 times higher odds of believing that voting does not matter

CONCLUSIONS

Photo: Finn Ruijter via Pexels



Overall, Nordic men are holding onto visions of "being a man" that are anchored in care, community, and connection. Roles and attitudes that have been more traditionally associated with manhood also continue to resonate with Nordic men, such as being the main provider in a relationship, being a decision-maker, and being self-reliant. While many of these traits and practices are positive, they can also have harmful effects, for example, by becoming a barrier to seeking help and support, and contributing to feelings of alienation from others.

The Nordic model was built on a societal consensus around supporting democratic values; fostering equality, including for persons of all genders but also to an extent economically; and, to varying degrees, encouraging a socially engaged state. The data suggest signs of doubt and backsliding on – but not necessarily a rejection of – some of these core values. It is important to pay attention where this belief may be fraying to ensure a shared stake in caring and connected futures for all. Of particular concern are the detrimental effects of increased economic precarity, both real and perceived, and attitudinal shifts among younger men. While these trends are not unique to the Nordic region, they must addressed through approaches that resonate with the particularities of the regional and respective national contexts.

While some of these findings are cause for concern, there are also many positive findings that can be capitalized upon to avoid backsliding on support for gender equality and democratic institutions and to reduce societal polarization. At the individual level, the study team found that men's increased sense of safety correlated both with improved mental well-being and more pro-social practices, including bystander intervention. At the more structural macro level, the importance of addressing economic precarity and societal polarization stood out. As other research on societal polarization in the Nordic states[37] has also pointed out, local-level solutions that increase social cohesion and trust in governance systems can play a central role here, and a sizable majority of the survey respondents did call for more state services at the local level.

A more complex but increasingly pressing challenge is men's online lives. While most respondents used online spaces for information, recreation, and connecting positively with others, the same spaces can also catalyze alienation, resentment, and polarization, including along gendered lines. The darker side of the internet can neither be simply ignored as inconsequential nor fully regulated away. Instead, a range of measures are needed, at individual and family levels all the way up to regional and supra-national levels, including engaging with the industry.

LOOKING AHEAD:
CHARTING PATHWAYS TOWARD REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

The findings presented in this report make clear that action is needed. Yet, they also point to an important opportunity: men across the Nordic region express a strong desire for care, community, connection, and purpose and there is clear recognition of a shared stake in building a more secure and caring world, online and off. Such a world is in reach. Decades of work engaging men and boys have shown that meaningful change requires both calling men in, by recognizing and building on their strengths, aspirations, and capacity to care, and calling men out, when they uphold harmful or inequitable norms and behaviors. As we work toward making caring manhood the new normal, we must capitalize on the desire many men already express to show up for themselves, their families, and their communities, while creating the conditions that enable and expect them to do so.

Across the Nordic region, civil society, academia, and research, politics and public policy are already generating promising approaches. We asked experts across the region about their existing work with men and boys of different ages and life stages. The recommendations that follow bring together illustrative examples of promising initiatives already underway across the region with approaches emerging from Equimundo's own global portfolio. These initiatives offer important starting points, demonstrating that there is already a strong foundation across the Nordic region for engaging men and boys and advancing more caring and equitable lives. Yet many of these efforts remain bounded within individual countries, communities, or programs, with limited opportunities to learn across borders, build shared evidence, or take promising approaches to scale.

There is an opportunity to think beyond individual interventions and more deliberately shape the systems and environments in which men and boys live their lives. This means leveraging the institutions, platforms, workplaces, communities, media, and online spaces that reach men and boys at scale, and working across these settings in mutually reinforcing ways. Equimundo's systems-level approach points to the potential of connecting and scaling what is already working while also shifting the norms, policies, practices, and narratives embedded in the spaces where men and boys spend their time. The opportunity is not simply to do more of what already exists, but to connect, institutionalize, and scale these efforts so that caring manhood becomes increasingly supported and expected across the systems that shape everyday life.

1. MEET MEN AND BOYS WHERE THEY ARE TO FOSTER FRIENDSHIP, CONNECTION, AND WELL-BEING

Leaders in the field emphasize the importance of meeting men and boys where they are, both physically and figuratively, while recognizing that men's and boys' lives are shaped by the people and institutions around them. In physical terms, this means identifying the spaces in which men spend time and creating opportunities for connection, reflection, and care there. In figurative terms, this also means meeting men and boys at their different ages and life stages, as well as relative to their outlook on themselves and the world. It also means starting early and recognizing the powerful role that parents, caregivers, educators, coaches, and other adults play in shaping children's understanding of relationships, care, and what it means to be a boy or man. Creating mutually reinforcing environments across homes, schools, communities, and other spaces where young peop le spend time can help make caring manhood visible, supported, and expected from an early age. For adult men, workplaces offer another powerful entry point. Because men spend significant portions of their lives at work, workplaces can create opportunities to support men's own well-being and experiences of connection and care, while also challenging norms that limit men's ability to participate fully in caregiving. In turn, enabling men to care at home and at work can have a multiplier effect, strengthening gender equality in the workplace and helping to normalize caring manhood across families, communities, and institutions.

In Denmark, the volunteer-based organisation DAREgender facilitates men's groups across the country, bringing a diversity of men together. Geared toward creating a more inclusive, safe, and equal culture and society for all genders, these spaces encourage men to **"dare" to speak about and challenge** narrow understandings and stereotypes of gender that men see and experience. **In Finland, Miessakit ry combines more specialized individual support with group-based support,** primarily for adult men, confronting a variety of **difficulties and transitions in their lives,** including fatherhood, divorce, isolation, and immigration. Alongside supporting self-style volunteer men's support groups - Men of Action - Miessakit ry's **Men of the Outer Circle initiative targets men experiencing social isolation, loneliness, and some, online radicalization.** Through a range of activities, this program equips men at the margins with the tools to open up, develop friendships, and regain a sense of community and belonging. Pointing to the potential of such interventions to reframe men's outlook on the world and themselves, one participant shared that his time in Men of the Outer Circle enabled him to "avoid great bitterness, which may have led to me doing something bad to myself or other people."

In Sweden, Locker Room Talk is designed for boys of younger ages, as well as the adults in their lives. Adapting group-based methods and using team sports and locker room settings, this initiative centers **emotional intelligence, value-based leadership, and an awareness of gender equality** in sports and beyond. Locker Room Talk is largely based around an eight-week curriculum for boys aged 10 to 14 years old, as well as sports coaches and educators in their lives. **Also in Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Gender Equality, recently launched Relationship Compass to equip children with the socio-relational skills they will need for intimate relationships later in their lives.** Premised on the importance of early intervention to lay strong foundations for adolescent and adult life, Relationship Compass is aimed at children aged 10 to 12, along with their parents and guardians. Following structured themes, the program includes a school-based component, a leisure-time component, and a parental support component, each with the goal of **fostering healthy and respectful relationships, and preventing violence.**

For many boys, schools are an important grounding force for developing a sense of identity, belonging, and purpose, yet disengagement from education can leave boys with fewer positive spaces and relationships through which to explore who they are and how they want to show up in the world. Through its Global Boyhood Initiative, Equimundo is working with education sector actors to **explore how a healthy masculinity lens can be integrated across teacher training, curricula, and school environments,** strengthening educators' capacity to engage boys and challenge the harmful gender narratives they may encounter. Models such as Equimundo and the Children's Society's Beyond Gender Stereotypes course in the United Kingdom, alongside global work through Lifting Barriers, offer approaches that could be adapted and scaled across the region.

2. CREATE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR DIGITAL LIVES

As life is increasingly lived online, developing opportunities to meet men and boys in digital spaces and provide them with the tools and support they need to navigate these spaces is crucial. As governments, policy-makers, and advocates continue to debate, legislate, and implement tighter regulation around tech and social media platforms and their use, there is significant scope to invest in a growing raft of emerging digital solutions. Across gaming, streaming, and digital communities, such initiatives can advance digital and media literacy, strengthen the ability to identify, report, and respond to online harms, and help prevent violence, hate, and harassment. But the absence of harm is not the same as the presence of care. Creating healthier digital environments also means intentionally nurturing spaces where people can build connection and community, encounter more caring and expansive models of manhood, and engage with content and cultures that support well-being, belonging, and mutual care. This is the opportunity of fostering **caring online spaces**: to move beyond simply reducing harm toward actively shaping online environments where care, connection, and respect can thrive, ultimately helping to turn away from algorithmically driven division.

Since 2004, the Center for Digital Youth Care (CFDP) in Denmark has developed an evolving suite of programming, support, and services for young people, parents, teachers and educators, and public policy leaders navigating online spaces. The centerpoint of their work is their online youth counseling service - Cyberhus.dk, which counts an estimated 2,000 consultative interactions with young people a year. Beyond this, the CFDP leverages gaming as a pedagogical tool as well as a space for meaningful connection, friendship, and support for young people. Recognizing the potential for online spaces to forge bonds, find community, and make sense of the world can unlock new opportunities to reshape online cultures and create opportunities for constructive dialogue. Bridging the online and offline realms, the CFDP recognizes the potential connections between exposure to divisive and

hardening online voices and influencing young people's outlooks on society, democracy, and their place in the world. **To equip young people to counter these trends, the CFDP runs youth-to-youth dialogue workshops to encourage curious conversations, and critical engagement with content they may encounter online to enable them to recognize and respond to early signs of risky online behavior.**

More recently established, the Danish-American platform for independently reporting threats and harms – Pirth.org – provides a globally accessible platform to report, track, and respond to online violence, abuse, and harassment. Pirth.org provides resources and support for any kind of online violence, including cyber-bullying, doxxing, exploitation, harassment, image-based abuse, physical threats, and is a trusted flagger with major platforms. Working with members ranging from private citizens to public figures, Pirth.org is also building a unique dataset that can be used to identify trends, detect coordinated campaigns, and disrupt networks. This dataset can also support the formulation of and advocacy behind evidence-based solutions and policies. **Platforms like Pirth.org enable both a clearer understanding of the nature and scale of online harms, offer robust responses to tackling such harms, and can work with tech platforms to stall, reduce, and ultimately prevent such harms.**

The findings of the study make clear that there is significant opportunity to identify, invest in, and amplify content creators, influencers, streamers, and community moderators promoting more caring, less divisive, and more expansive narratives and cultures of manhood online. Approaches that Equimundo has developed to drive forward digital and hybrid solutions, including the Young Men & Media Collective (YMMC) and Project Moonlight. Working with Movember, the YMMC invests in a cohort of content creators who challenge harmful online narratives, including by expanding ideas of what success means for men. Project Moonlight takes a different approach, partnering with moderators and game designers to prototype behavioral nudges and back-end tools that make virtual spaces safer, more meaningful, and more human, while bridging digital belonging and offline support.

3. BUILD SECURE, CARING, AND INCLUSIVE FUTURES

In the face of changing and uncertain economic landscapes, many men are turning away from conventional pathways to success and professional opportunities, including from higher education. At the same time, the findings presented above also showed that many men and women expressed feeling adrift from political decision-making that has the potential to shape their present and future lives. In this context, stakeholders across the region are working to make higher education and vocational training more accessible to men, while others are creating opportunities for communities to come together to participate in democratic life beyond election cycles.

In Iceland, the University in Akureyri is expanding opportunities for and access to higher education and vocational training across a range of courses to fill gaps in the labour market, particularly in rural areas. According to the university's course registration data, courses most popular among men include social sciences (including policing), law, natural resource science, and business administration. The natural resource sciences course (including fishing), has been promoted among young men in the country. The country has similarly sought to encourage men to go into nursing and teaching professions, courses which the University of Akureyri offers, but such efforts have not yet proved successful. **The Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway has made similar efforts to increase the number of men in the care and education sectors.** The **"Hvor er mine brødre?" (Where are my brothers?)** initiative by the Oslo Metropolitan University has been encouraging adolescent boys and young men, including from a range of backgrounds to pursue further education, especially in the care and education sector through the use of role models and organising internships. **Equimundo's work with Elige Educar in Chile offers one example of how narrative change can complement efforts to expand men's pathways into care and education.** Through research and a subsequent public campaign, the partnership explored the barriers and perceptions shaping men's participation in childcare and primary education, and used these insights to challenge narrow ideas about who can be a caregiver or educator. A similar approach could be adapted in the Nordic context, pairing efforts to recruit and support more men into care and education professions with deliberate efforts to shift the narratives around these roles, including through trusted public voices and content creators.

These efforts also need to be understood alongside the increasingly influential narratives boys and young men encounter online about success, status, and economic security, including "get rich quick" narratives that can offer narrow and often unrealistic pathways to achievement. Working with content creators and other influential voices, like in **Equimundo and Movember's YMMC**, to challenge these narratives and expand ideas of what a successful and purposeful life can look like is an important complement to efforts to strengthen education and employment pathways.

Across the region, a number of initiatives exist to encourage active participation in public and political life to share ideas and shape present and future policy-making. The Democracy Festivals Association organizes festivals across the region, and beyond, to revitalise democracy and strengthen the link between political systems and citizens. **By bringing "democracy on tour," civil society activists, entrepreneurs, government officials, politicians, and people at large sit together and talk in a casual setting about how to make their country a better place for everybody.** Similar initiatives exist focusing on younger generations, including youth councils intended to enable **young people's voices to be heard by decision-makers in municipal and regional governance structures and support the development of active and confident democratic citizens.** Driven by comparable objectives, Participation 2025 brings together a network of civil society actors and educational institutions across Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Estonia to work with young people to **develop critical thinking skills and create platforms for meaningful dialogue between young people and decision-makers, including on issues of gender equality.**

4. ENSURE REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND CITY-LEVEL BODIES PLAY A COLLECTIVE ROLE TO STRENGTHEN THE CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE FOR MEN'S CARE AND CARING MEN

Public institutions working on gender equality in the Nordic states have long engaged on issues affecting men and boys as part of their overall work at the regional, national, and municipal levels. In partnership with a range of actors and stakeholders, each of these governance mechanisms plays a central role in shaping citizens' sense of public institutions and of creating the structural and infrastructural conditions conducive to men's care, caring manhood, and gender equality.

To guide their work on men and gender equality, the governments of Iceland and Norway established dedicated bodies to better understand men's lives, perceptions, and challenges in their countries. In Norway, the 17-member **Men's Equality Commission (Mannsutvalget)** conducted its intersectional study of different men's experiences across various areas of life in 2022 – 2024 and formulated 35 policy recommendations on men as caregivers, gender differences in education and working life, men's vulnerability and health, and creating an equality policy that works for all. Among the recommendations actioned to date is a government grant scheme (Sosiale møsteplasser for gutter of unge meen 2026) to fund community initiatives creating meeting places for boys and men. While this was originally conceived to be for "at risk young men" as a crime prevention initiative, there is scope to expand such a scheme to be oriented to public health or geared toward social connection and community building. In Iceland, a similar **Commission on Men's Equality (Jafnréttisnefnd karla)** was established in 2026 and will continue its work until 2027. This commission is organizing public workshops with a wide range of Icelandic stakeholders to examine diverse men's and boys' experiences and possible challenges in the fields of education, health, employment, violence, and risk seeking, as well as their use of social media and engagement with other online spheres.

At city-level, municipalities across the region are leading and supporting efforts around gender equality and work with men and boys. Some of the initiatives described above are supported by municipal governments across the region. As one example, for the past decade, the **Municipality of Copenhagen** in Denmark has collaborated with the CFDP in its efforts to provide online counselling and support for parents to help them better understand on- and off-line risks their children may be facing (see above). **Building on this work, there may be opportunities for municipalities to consider what a whole of city-government approach to promoting men's care, caring manhood, and gender equality might look like within their jurisdictions.** Equimundo's MenCare Cities Initiative works toward this goal, directly partnering with networks of municipal officials to develop innovative cross-sectoral changes that prioritize care in their service delivery, urban infrastructure, campaigns, and policy reforms.

Recognizing the multitude of actors working with men and boys and to promote gender equality across the region, there is an opportunity to bring stakeholders together in a regional network to share lessons learned, questions, and solutions. There is movement behind this idea already. Housed at the Norwegian Institute for Social Research, a **Nordic Research and Policy Network on Boys and Men** is in development. This would offer an opportunity to bring stakeholders together across research and policy to share lessons learned, opportunities, and build regional solutions to regional challenges.

5. INVEST IN ADDITIONAL RESEARCH, MAPPING, AND SENSE-MAKING

Equimundo's State of Nordic Men is not intended to offer a final or definitive assessment of men's lives, experiences, aspirations, and challenges across the Nordic region. **Raising as many questions as it asks, we hope that this report offers a constructive contribution to such an understanding across a range of core areas of men's lives and inspires opportunities for further research and sense-making.** As a natural next step, there is an opportunity to build on this work through a **State of Nordic Boys,** another Equimundo flagship research series, deepening our understanding of how boys' experiences, aspirations, and pathways are taking shape from an earlier age and where systems can intervene to support more caring and equitable futures. Further research could also help us better understand the systems and environments shaping these experiences. **Equimundo's Digital Spark initiative**, for example, is conducting comprehensive digital ecosystem scans in Eastern Europe and Africa to **better understand the online spaces, narratives, and influences shaping young people's lives**. Other opportunities include deeper regional exploration of **men's health and gendered barriers to help-seeking, as well as perceptions of and engagement with democratic and public life.** Together, these efforts can strengthen the evidence base needed to **identify where and how to act, while ensuring that research continues to translate into practical pathways toward more caring futures.** The Nordic region has strong foundations to make those futures a present reality for all.

ANNEX 1:
EQUIMUNDO'S STATE OF NORDIC MEN: EXTENDED METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to identify trends in the lives of men across a range of topics affecting men's lives across the Nordic region. The data presented in this report come from an online questionnaire administered between February and April 2026 to 4,547 respondents aged between 18 and 45 across the Nordic region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). Online surveys are widely used in survey data collection, particularly in higher-income settings with higher internet connectivity. Additionally, given the attention given to men's online lives in this study - including socialization and polarization - meeting participants in environments commensurate to that focus represents a key piece of the recruitment strategy.

As detailed below, the sample was constructed to achieve specific representation goals, while maintaining geographic and demographic representation. Given men's and women's shared stake in gender equality, the sample intentionally included women and men, although men were over-sampled. The sample was designed to capture broad demographic representation across the countries, including in line with census data, but is not designed to be generalizable. Accordingly, percentages reported in this study describe the respondents in the achieved sample and point to existing trends among a heterogeneous subset of men and women across the Nordic countries. They should, therefore, not be interpreted as estimates of the prevalence of a given attitude or experience among all men or women aged 18–45 in the Nordic region.

This regional study forms part of Equimundo's ongoing global study on the State of the World's Men, applying a similar methodology. To ensure regional contextualization, Equimundo assembled a regional advisory council with representation from experts across civil society, government, and academia within each country. The advisory council reviewed the questionnaire and translations to ensure their relevance and applicability to each setting. The Nordic Council of Ministers and Senior Officials from across the region also reviewed the survey questionnaire before implementation.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was conducted by RepData, a global data collection firm with which Equimundo has collaborated on multiple multi-country studies. RepData works with a network of online panels in each country (Syno, Bilendi, InnovateMR and Borderless), each with its own recruitment methods (social media outreach, online publications, banner advertisements). All panel respondents are double-opted in, having actively consented twice to participate in research activities. For this survey, respondents are invited through their panel of origin via email and dashboard notifications. Participation was entirely voluntary, and Equimundo and RepData had no direct interaction with participants at any stage.

Each participant is assigned a unique ID and no personally identifiable information is included in datasets delivered to Equimundo, ensuring full anonymization. Data flows from panels to RepData as de-identified files, then to Equimundo where it is stored in a secure folder accessible only to authorized staff; external consultants must sign a data use agreement. Equimundo and Rep Data conduct several quality checks, including verifying response consistency, incorporating screening questions, and identifying response patterns. Because the study addresses sensitive topics—including gender-based violence and mental health—lighter questions are interspersed to reduce respondent burden, and country-specific mental health hotline information is provided at the end of each survey. The questionnaire took approximately 25 minutes to complete in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden and on average 30 minutes to complete in Iceland.

RepData's approach to data quality and fraud prevention is multi-faceted. The initial layer is Research Defender. The purpose of Defender is to immediately identify and remove respondents who are leveraging tech-enabled fraud (emulators, device inconsistencies, multiple instances, etc). RepData has scanned millions of respondents through Defender so the real time flags are based on historical data along with in-moment recognition of fraudulent behavior. The next phase includes ReDem which is used during field (2-3x on average) as well as post-field. ReDem is an AI module that produces a score on 5 key data points including keystrokes, time spent at the question level, respondent click patterns). Once the ReDem score is generated during each cleaning instance, the data services team reviews the output and cleans the data accordingly ultimately delivering a clean data set. RepData and Equimundo then conduct an additional layer of data quality screening by identifying observations through screening questions, IP address checks, deleting straight-shooters, checking for AI responses, back-checking questions, detecting patterns and inconsistencies.

SURVEY COMPLETION AND INCIDENCE RATES PER COUNTRY

Following data quality and fraud-prevention mechanisms described above, the survey achieved the following survey completion and qualification rates:

Table 10. *Total survey completion and qualification rates across the Nordic countries*

Country	Total Completions	Total Qualified	Percent Removed for Data
Denmark	2,012	1,000	50.3%
Finland	2,436	1,000	59%
Iceland	816	547	33%
Norway	2,131	1,000	53.1%
Sweden	2,517	1,000	60.3%
Total	9,912	4,547	54.2%

SAMPLING STRATEGY

The research team employed a quota-based non-probabilistic sampling approach with disproportionate stratification to ensure robust representation of men aged 18-45 in the sample. The data partner, RepData, recruited respondents from established online research panels (Syno, Bilendi, InnovateMR and Borderless), utilizing quota sampling to achieve predetermined demographic targets, according to gender, age, income levels, geographic location within countries, and LGBTQIA+ identities.

In each country, the study aimed for a total sample of 1,000 participants, of whom approximately 70 percent were men and 30 percent were women. The participant

Table 11. *Total sample size, by country and by gender*

	Total N	Total N - Men	Total N - Women	Total N - Non-Binary
Denmark	1,000	697	300	3
Finland	1,000	685	300	15
Iceland	547	448	97	2
Norway	1000	696	300	4
Sweden	1,000	696	300	4
Total	4,547	3,222	1,297	28

sample also aimed to meet demographic quotas for LGBTQIA+ participants, geographic representation within each country, age, and income levels. Beyond these quotas, the survey also included a comprehensive demographic section to ensure wider clarity on the make-up of the sample. While quotas for region, income, and LGBTQIA+ self-identification strove to align closely with national figures, age-based quotas do not reflect national representation.

Age ranges within the 18-45 sample parameter were determined to focus the analysis of individuals navigating key life transitions, including education completion, career establishment, and family formation.

- 18 to 24 years: 19 percent (n = 864)
- 25 to 34 years: 40 percent (n= 1,818)
- 35 to 45 years: 41 percent (n= 1,863)

Details on the quotas are given in Tables 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 on the following pages. All figures presented in the report are unweighted and selected through quotas to reflect the population of interest. The sample is designed to ensure sufficient subgroup sizes rather than match population proportions. The study was able to reach a full sample of participants across all countries except Iceland, due to its smaller population. As a result, the total sample reached for Iceland is 547.

Working with RepData and their established local providers means that participants are recruited through pre-established panels made up of people who have registered their agreement to take part in online research. Recruiting participants through online means introduces coverage bias, compounded by excluding the offline population, especially in regions that may have more limited internet connectivity. As a result, samples across the region may skew towards more connected, urban, more educated respondents, with the extent of this bias varying by country. As shown below, there was also some variation across the country samples relative to levels of economic hardship, reported sense of economic precarity, and relationship status. This also means that differences identified between countries may reflect panel coverage and participant self-selection, and any potential biases these factors may introduce. Recognising the limitations of this approach, given the significant interest of this study on men's online lives, experiences, and behaviours, it is important to collect data in a manner that is most appropriate to them and that medium. Moreover, in light of the growing need to understand men's digital lives - including socialization and polarization in online spaces - there is a great deal to learn about men's and online experiences from a participant sample recruited through a digital medium.

Table 12. *Detailed Sample Characteristics and Quotas – Denmark*

Denmark

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
GENDER (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Women	30.00%	–	30.90%
Men	70.00%	69.10%	–
AGE (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
18–24	20.00%	19.66%	22.67%
25–34	40.00%	41.46%	42.67%
35–45	40.00%	38.88%	34.67%
INCOME (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Less than 10,000 KR – 19,999 KR	25.00%	26.66%	51.06%
20, 000 KR – 59,999 KR	50.00%	43.30%	36.17%
60,000 KR – More than 80,000 KR	25.00%	30.04%	12.77%
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD BASIC ITEMS (E.G.) (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	0.72%	0.67%
Rarely	–	3.87%	2.00%
Sometimes	–	10.47%	8.00%
Often	–	25.82%	24.33%
Always	–	58.25%	63.67%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

Denmark

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD IMPORTANT ITEMS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	1.15%	1.00%
Rarely	–	3.59%	4.00%
Sometimes	–	11.76%	12.67%
Often	–	29.56%	27.00%
Always	–	52.94%	54.33%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%
REGION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Capital Region	30.00%	36.87%	24.33%
Central Denmark Region	25.00%	13.77%	14.33%
Region of Southern Denmark	20.00%	16.36%	21.67%
Region of Zealand	15.00%	23.67%	27.00%
North Denmark Region	10.00%	9.33%	12.67%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Self-Identifying LGBTQIA+	8.00%	12.54%	
RELATIONSHIP STATUS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Single & looking for a partner	–	28.98%	14.33%
Single & not looking for a partner	–	10.04%	18.67%
In a relationship, but not living together	–	9.18%	13.33%

Denmark

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Living with a partner, not married	–	17.22%	24.33%
Married, living with a partner	–	32.14%	26.33%
In an open marriage / relationship	–	0.43%	0.00%
Separated	–	0.14%	0.00%
Divorced	–	1.00%	1.67%
Widowed	–	0.57%	1.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%
EDUCATION (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
None	–	3.44%	0.67%
Primary school	–	9.47%	11.67%
Secondary school	–	17.79%	21.67%
Vocational / technical training	–	20.52%	25.00%
Diploma	–	0.43%	0.00%
Bachelor's degree	–	36.44%	29.00%
Honors or postgraduate degree	–	9.76%	10.33%
Master's degree or higher	–	2.15%	1.67%
ETHNICITY (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET, QUESTION PRESENTED AS SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)			
Majority ethnic Dane	–	87.95%	89.67%
Minority ethnic Dane	–	10.04%	8.67%
Other, please specify	–	2.30%	1.67%

Table 13. *Detailed Sample Characteristics and Quotas – Finland*

Finland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
GENDER (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Women	30.00%	–	30.46%
Men	70.00%	69.54%	–
AGE (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
18–24	20.00%	19.71%	15.33%
25–34	40.00%	41.17%	48.00%
35–45	40.00%	39.12%	36.67%
INCOME (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Less than €21,200 – €31,499	25.00%	43.90%	68.79%
€31,500 – €88,199	50.00%	26.93%	20.92%
€88,200 – More than €150,000	25.00%	29.17%	10.28%
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD BASIC ITEMS (E.G.) (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	0.58%	0.67%
Rarely	–	2.19%	2.33%
Sometimes	–	9.34%	7.67%
Often	–	25.55%	28.67%
Always	–	61.90%	60.67%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

Finland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD IMPORTANT ITEMS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	0.58%	1.00%
Rarely	–	4.96%	9.00%
Sometimes	–	12.99%	19.00%
Often	–	32.41%	35.33%
Always	–	48.61%	35.67%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%
REGION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Uusimaa (contains Helsinki)	30.00%	35.91%	27.00%
Southwest Finland	10.00%	8.76%	9.00%
Satakunta	5.00%	5.40%	2.67%
Kanta-Häme	20.00%*	3.36%	2.33%
Pirkanmaa	10.00%	9.49%	11.67%
Päijät-Häme	5.00%	4.38%	5.00%
Kymenlaakso	20.00%*	2.34%	3.33%
South Karelia	20.00%*	2.19%	2.33%
South Savo	20.00%*	1.31%	1.67%
North Savo	5.00%	3.50%	7.00%
North Karelia	20.00%*	2.48%	3.67%
Central Finland	5.00%	3.94%	7.00%

Finland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
South Ostrobothnia	20.00%*	2.19%	2.67%
Ostrobothnia	20.00%*	1.75%	0.33%
Central Ostrobothnia	20.00%*	1.31%	1.00%
North Ostrobothnia	10.00%	9.20%	8.67%
Kainuu	20.00%*	0.44%	1.67%
Lapland	20.00%*	2.04%	3.00%
Åland	–	0.00%	0.00%

**For geographic regions and territories within countries with smaller population sizes, sample quotas were combined.*

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Self-Identifying LGBTQIA+	8.00%	15.13%	

RELATIONSHIP STATUS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Single & looking for a partner	–	27.88%	12.33%
Single & not looking for a partner	–	14.60%	15.67%
In a relationship, but not living together	–	9.78%	15.00%
Living with a partner, not married	–	20.15%	29.00%
Married, living with a partner	–	21.61%	25.00%
In an open marriage / relationship	–	3.94%	0.33%
Separated	–	0.29%	0.33%
Divorced	–	1.17%	2.00%
Widowed	–	0.15%	0.00%

Finland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

EDUCATION (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

None	–	0.44%	0.00%
Primary school	–	5.11%	6.00%
Secondary school	–	12.12%	14.00%
Vocational / technical training	–	35.91%	45.00%
Diploma	–	0.00%	0.00%
Bachelor's degree	–	31.68%	22.33%
Master's degree or higher	–	14.74%	12.67%
Master's degree or higher	–	4.46%	1.03%

ETHNICITY (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET, QUESTION PRESENTED AS SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Finnish	–	95.18%	96.33%
Finnish-Swedish	–	4.96%	4.00%
Sámi	–	0.00%	0.67%
Nordic (excluding Finnish)	–	0.73%	1.67%
European (excluding Nordic countries)	–	1.02%	3.00%
Old Russians	–	0.58%	0.67%
Tartars	–	0.29%	0.00%
African / African descent	–	0.44%	0.33%
Asian / Asian Descent	–	0.73%	0.33%
Australian / Australasian / Oceanian / descent	–	0.00%	0.00%

Finland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Americas, including Latin American	–	0.29%	0.33%
Middle Eastern / Middle Eastern Descent	–	0.29%	0.00%
Roma	–	0.15%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.15%	0.33%
Other	–	0.15%	0.33%

Table 14. *Detailed Sample Characteristics and Quotas – Iceland*

The original sample goal for Iceland was set to 1000, in line with the other four countries in the study. In light of participant recruitment challenges, due to the smaller population size of Iceland, the total sample reached in Iceland was 547.

Iceland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
GENDER (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Women	30.00%	–	17.80%
Men	70.00%	82.20%	–
AGE (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
18–24	20.00%	18.30%	18.56%
25–34	40.00%	35.27%	36.08%
35–45	40.00%	46.43%	45.36%
INCOME (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Less than 199,999 ISK – 499,999 ISK	25.00%	33.94%	46.32%
500,000 ISK – 1,099,999 ISK	50.00%	42.76%	43.16%
1,100,000 ISK – More than 1,400,000 ISK	25.00%	23.30%	10.53%
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD BASIC ITEMS (E.G.) (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	1.34%	0.00%
Rarely	–	4.91%	3.09%
Sometimes	–	18.97%	35.05%
Often	–	27.68%	21.65%
Always	–	47.10%	39.18%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%

Iceland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD IMPORTANT ITEMS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Never	–	1.34%	2.06%
Rarely	–	4.24%	12.37%
Sometimes	–	21.65%	21.65%
Often	–	30.36%	28.87%
Always	–	41.74%	35.05%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

REGION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Capital Region	64.00%	62.72%	39.18%
Southern Peninsula	9.00%	5.80%	11.34%
West Iceland	5.00%	6.70%	10.31%
Westfjords	2.00%	4.24%	3.09%
Northwest Iceland	2.00%	4.69%	0.00%
Northeast Iceland (inc. Akureyri)	7.00%	8.04%	22.68%
East Iceland	3.00%	3.35%	8.25%
South Iceland	8.00%	4.46%	5.15%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Self-Identifying LGBTQIA+	5.00%	11.19%

Iceland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)

RELATIONSHIP STATUS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Single & looking for a partner	–	23.21%	17.53%
Single & not looking for a partner	–	4.24%	11.34%
In a relationship, but not living together	–	10.94%	8.25%
Living with a partner, not married	–	7.59%	6.19%
Married, living with a partner	–	52.01%	52.58%
In an open marriage / relationship	–	1.12%	0.00%
Separated	–	0.00%	0.00%
Divorced	–	0.45%	3.09%
Widowed	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

EDUCATION (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

None	–	0.22%	0.00%
Primary school	–	3.57%	7.22%
Secondary school	–	9.60%	13.40%
Vocational / technical training	–	11.16%	9.28%
Diploma	–	16.29%	22.68%
Bachelor's degree	–	42.19%	45.36%
Honors or postgraduate diploma	–	12.50%	1.03%
Master's degree or higher	–	4.46%	1.03%

Iceland

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
ETHNICITY (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET, QUESTION PRESENTED AS SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)			
Icelandic	–	92.41%	88.66%
Nordic (not Icelandic)	–	2.68%	7.22%
European (not Icelandic)	–	3.13%	5.15%
Asian / Asian Descent	–	0.89%	1.03%
African / African Descent	–	0.22%	3.09%
Australian / Australasian / Oceanian	–	2.01%	1.03%
Americas, including Latin America	–	2.68%	3.09%
Middle Eastern / Middle Eastern Descent	–	0.67%	1.03%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	2.06%

Table 15. *Detailed Sample Characteristics and Quotas – Norway*

Norway

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
GENDER (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Women	30.00%	–	30.12%
Men	70.00%	69.88%	–
AGE (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
18–24	20.00%	16.95%	27.33%
25–34	40.00%	44.40%	38.67%
35–45	40.00%	38.65%	34.00%
INCOME (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Less than 217,401 NOK – 306,050 NOK	25.00%	40.76%	70.42%
306,051 NOK – 942,400 NOK	50.00%	32.26%	17.25%
942,401 NOK – More than 1,410,751 NOK	25.00%	26.98%	12.32%
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD BASIC ITEMS (E.G.) (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	1.15%	0.33%
Rarely	–	3.02%	3.67%
Sometimes	–	10.92%	9.33%
Often	–	29.74%	28.33%
Always	–	54.17%	57.00%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%

Norway

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD IMPORTANT ITEMS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Never	–	1.29%	0.67%
Rarely	–	3.02%	5.67%
Sometimes	–	12.64%	16.67%
Often	–	31.03%	28.33%
Always	–	51.01%	46.67%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

REGION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Oslo	12.00%	13.51%	12.33%
Rogaland	10.00%	10.78%	6.33%
Møre og Romsdal	5.00%	4.74%	4.00%
Nordlánnda	5.00%	6.47%	3.33%
Østfold	6.00%	6.18%	4.67%
Akershus	12.00%	10.78%	11.00%
Buskerud	5.00%	3.88%	6.00%
Innlandet	5.00%	4.60%	7.00%
Vestfold	5.00%	3.30%	10.67%
Telemark	5.00%	6.32%	3.67%
Agder	6.00%	7.76%	3.00%

Norway

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Vestland	10.00%	8.33%	15.33%
Trøndelag/Tröödelage	10.00%	9.77%	8.67%
Troms - Romsa	3.00%	2.73%	2.67%
Finnmark - Finnmárku	1.00%	0.86%	1.33%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Self-Identifying LGBTQIA+	8.00%	10.74%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Single & looking for a partner	–	40.80%	14.00%
Single & not looking for a partner	–	7.90%	18.33%
In a relationship, but not living together	–	7.33%	13.00%
Living with a partner, not married	–	14.80%	25.00%
Married, living with a partner	–	25.72%	26.33%
In an open marriage / relationship	–	0.43%	1.00%
Separated	–	0.43%	0.33%
Divorced	–	0.57%	1.00%
Widowed	–	1.72%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

EDUCATION (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

None	–	0.43%	0.67%
Primary school	–	2.16%	3.33%

Norway

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Secondary school	–	5.60%	7.67%
Vocational / technical training	–	31.18%	38.00%
Diploma	–	0.00%	0.00%
Bachelor's degree	–	45.40%	35.00%
Honors or postgraduate diploma	–	5.32%	4.00%
Master's degree or higher	–	9.91%	11.33%
ETHNICITY (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET, QUESTION PRESENTED AS SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)			
Norwegian	–	92.67%	90.33%
Norwegian Finns	–	2.87%	0.67%
Sámi	–	0.86%	1.00%
Nordic (excluding Norway)	–	3.16%	0.00%
European (excluding Norwegian)	–	4.31%	4.33%
African / African Descent	–	0.72%	2.00%
Americas, including Latin American descent	–	0.57%	2.33%
Asian / Asian descent	–	3.59%	3.00%
Australian / Australasian / Oceanian Descent	–	0.00%	0.00%
Jewish	–	0.72%	0.33%
Middle East / Middle Eastern Descent	–	0.86%	2.33%
Romer	–	0.29%	0.33%
Romanifolk / Tater	–	0.29%	0.33%

Table 16. *Detailed Sample Characteristics and Quotas – Sweden*

Sweden

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
GENDER (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Women	30.00%	-	30.12%
Men	70.00%	69.88%	–
AGE (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
18–24	20.00%	15.66%	23.67%
25–34	40.00%	40.95%	31.67%
35–45	40.00%	43.39%	44.67%
INCOME (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Less than 999 SEK – 29,999 SEK	25.00%	35.70%	73.57%
30,000 SEK – 59,999 SEK	50.00%	35.56%	16.79%
60,000 SEK – More than 70, 000 SEK	25.00%	28.74%	9.64%
HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD BASIC ITEMS (E.G.) (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)			
Never	–	0.43%	1.33%
Rarely	–	2.73%	1.33%
Sometimes	–	10.49%	7.67%
Often	–	25.29%	24.33%
Always	–	60.78%	64.00%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%

Sweden

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

HOW OFTEN CAN YOU AFFORD IMPORTANT ITEMS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Never	–	0.14%	1.00%
Rarely	–	3.30%	4.33%
Sometimes	–	13.65%	12.00%
Often	–	29.02%	28.67%
Always	–	53.59%	52.00%
Don't know	–	0.00%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

REGION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Uppland	25.00%	27.30%	11.67%
Småland	27.00%*	7.90%	7.33%
Öland	27.00%*	4.31%	0.67%
Södermanland	5.00%	3.16%	11.33%
Östergötland	5.00%	4.45%	8.33%
Närke	5.00%	5.89%	1.00%
Västmanland	27.00%*	3.16%	4.00%
Dalarna	27.00%*	2.44%	3.33%
Skåne	7.00%	5.46%	13.00%
Halland	5.00%	7.18%	2.00%
Västergötaland	9.00%	6.61%	16.33%

Sweden

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Värmland	3.00%	2.73%	4.67%
Gästrikland	27.00%*	3.16%	0.67%
Häslingland	27.00%*	1.29%	0.33%
Medelpad	27.00%*	1.29%	2.33%
Ångermanland	27.00%*	1.15%	1.67%
Västerbotten	3.00%	3.74%	3.67%
Norrbotten	3.00%	2.59%	2.67%
Jämtland	27.00%*	0.29%	1.33%
Gotland	27.00%*	2.87%	1.00%
Blekinge	27.00%*	2.01%	2.33%
Bohuslän	27.00%*	0.72%	0.00%
Lappland	27.00%*	0.29%	0.33%

**For geographic regions and territories within countries with smaller population sizes, sample quotas were combined.*

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Self-Identifying LGBTQIA+	8.00%	13.65%

RELATIONSHIP STATUS (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

Single & looking for a partner	–	41.38%	12.33%
Single & not looking for a partner	–	10.49%	19.00%
In a relationship, but not living together	–	6.47%	12.00%
Living with a partner, not married	–	13.94%	27.00%

Sweden

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Married, living with a partner	–	25.29%	25.00%
In an open marriage / relationship	–	0.43%	0.00%
Separated	–	0.86%	0.67%
Divorced	–	0.43%	2.00%
Widowed	–	0.29%	0.00%
Prefer not to say	–	0.00%	0.00%

EDUCATION (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET)

None	–	0.29%	0.33%
Primary school	–	2.87%	5.33%
Secondary school	–	32.61%	46.00%
Vocational / technical training	–	10.63%	15.67%
Diploma	–	4.02%	0.33%
Bachelor's degree	–	34.77%	14.67%
Honors or postgraduate diploma	–	8.76%	11.00%
Master's degree or higher	–	6.03%	6.67%

ETHNICITY (NO DEMOGRAPHIC QUOTA SET, QUESTION PRESENTED AS SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Swedish	–	91.52%	91.67%
Sámi	–	1.29%	1.33%
Nordic (excluding Sweden)	–	4.89%	6.33%
African / African Descent	–	1.29%	2.33%
Americas, including Latin American Descent	–	1.29%	0.67%

Sweden

	Target Percent	Actual Percent of Men (of the Final Sample)	Actual Percent of Women (of the Final Sample)
Asian / Asian Descent	–	1.15%	4.00%
Australian / Australisian / Oceanian Descent	–	0.86%	0.33%
Middle East / Middle Eastern	–	3.02%	4.67%
Other	–	1.72%	4.67%
Prefer not to say	–	0.14%	0.00%

KEY TOPIC AREAS

The survey content covered the following key topic areas:

- **Gender attitudes and masculinity**: Beliefs about gender roles, adherence to traditional masculine norms, and support for gender equality
- **Purpose, social connection, and support**: Measures of social isolation, relationship quality, and community engagement
- **Work and economic security**: Employment status, financial stress, and career aspirations
- **Mental health and well-being**: Depression symptoms, life satisfaction, and purpose
- **Political and social views**: Trust in institutions, political engagement, and social attitudes
- **Online behavior**: Internet use patterns, social media engagement, and digital relationships
- **Romantic and sexual relationships**: Partnership status, dating experiences, and relationship satisfaction

SURVEY DESIGN

The survey design recognises that when every item on a scale is worded in the same direction, scores can be inflated by acquiescence bias, i.e. the tendency to agree regardless of what an item says. We took this into account in two ways. First, several scales include items worded in the opposite direction. One of the sixteen Man Box items is reverse-worded (item 14). So are four of the twenty-two Gender Threat items (for example, "It should be a national law that women and men with the same qualifications in the same jobs get paid equally") and three of the thirteen Economic Precarity items. These were reverse coded before the composites were built. Respondents who agree with every item regardless of direction therefore do not get inflated scores, and the reversed items act as an internal check on whether respondents are reading each item. Second, RepData's ReDem quality module screened responses during and after fieldwork using click patterns and question-level timing. This removes much of the low-effort, uniform responding that produces acquiescence in online panels. Internal consistency was acceptable with the reverse-coded items included, which suggests respondents answered the reversed items in the expected direction rather than agreeing with everything. We did not reverse-word items more extensively. Research shows that heavy use of reversed items creates its own problems. Reversed items often confuse respondents, especially when the wording relies on negations (Swain, Weathers & Niedrich, 2008; Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012). These risks are greater in a survey translated into five languages.

Equimundo's surveys typically use a 4-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree), with no neutral midpoint and no "don't know" option, as most of our surveys are asking about attitudes and norms. These are views that can be uncomfortable to admit, such as misogynistic and homophobic beliefs, gender threat, public trust, and acceptance of technology-facilitated violence. When a neutral or "don't know" option is offered on items like these, respondents tend to use it to avoid revealing a view they think is socially undesirable, rather than because they truly have no view. Survey research also finds that "no opinion" options rarely improve data quality. More often they invite satisficing, where respondents choose the least-effort answer instead of reporting an attitude they do hold (Krosnick, 1991; Krosnick et al., 2002). This risk is greater in self-completed online surveys, where no interviewer is present to encourage a considered answer like the ones we are using. A forced choice asks respondents to say which way they lean, and that direction is what the study is designed to measure. We make an exception to this for more sensitive questions, including demographic questions, as well as questions relating to voting choices in previous elections.

DATA ANALYSIS

All data analysis used STATA 17.0. First, raw survey data were downloaded from RepData's portal as an SPSS file and imported into Stata. The sample was restricted to respondents who identified as men or women and age was grouped into three categories (18–24, 25–34 and 35+). The script then reverse-coded negatively worded items in the Man Box, Gender Threat and Economic Precarity scales, recoded yes/no and Likert items into 0/1 indicators, and built the control variables: gender, LGBTQIA+ identity, and income tertiles. Income tertiles were calculated within each country because each country's income question used a different scale, and the "no regular income" response was set to missing first.

All estimates are unweighted. Data collection used quotas as mentioned above within each country, so the achieved sample already matches each country's population on those characteristics as closely as possible. We thus assumed that post-stratification weights on the same variables would be close to 1 and change the estimates very little. Weighting can also lower the effective sample size, widens confidence intervals, and at times inflate standard errors. Given we did not want to have individual answers drive the results, we made a statistical call that the precision lost by weighting would outweigh the small reduction in bias.

We did not run a factor analysis. Showing that each scale measures the exact same outcomes in all five Nordic countries would be a separate study in its own right. Instead, items were grouped into scales according to how the same measures have been used and validated in earlier studies in other countries, and each Nordic scale was then checked for internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Alpha was calculated for the pooled sample, men only and women only (men only for Modern Manhood/Misogyny, which women did not answer). It was run for twelve scales: Man Box, positive and negative Social Connection, Purpose in Life, Gender Threat, Online Misogyny, Optimism, Self-Esteem, Anxiety, Economic Precarity, Safety, and Anti-Democratic Backsliding. Each composite was the respondent's mean across the items in that scale, with reverse-coded items included. Man Box, Purpose in Life and Anti-Democratic Backsliding were also split into yes/no versions: respondents scoring above the pooled sample mean were coded 1 and the rest 0.

Item-level frequencies were produced using the matrix command in STATA. Matrix command reduces human error as it directly produces excel files. The STATA code used the items directly as they were worded in the survey, not the reverse-coded versions, so the tables match the questionnaire. For each item in the survey sections (Modern Manhood, Purpose and Connection, Online Lives, Gender Threat, Mental Health and Optimism, Violence, and Political Ideology), the code calculated the percentage of respondents choosing each answer. Percentages are among valid (non-missing) answers and were calculated for the full sample, then separately by gender, by age group and by country. Mean scores and percentages for key items and composites were then broken down by country X gender (men and women in each of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden).

Table 17. *Predictor variables used in the analysis*

Variable name	Construction / Description
Adhere to Man Box ideas	Dichotomous. Built from the mean of 16 Man Box items (items 1–15 and 17; item 14 reverse coded). Respondents scoring above the pooled sample mean are classified as adhering to the Man Box; all others are not.
Gender threat	Continuous, 1–4. Mean score across 22 items capturing perceived zero-sum gender competition and threat to men's status (items 4, 5, 9 and 20 reverse coded). Higher scores indicate greater perceived gender threat
Economic precarity	Continuous, 1–4. Mean score across 13 items capturing anxiety about long-term financial stability (items 1, 2 and 15 reverse coded). Higher scores indicate greater perceived precarity. Also added as a control in a second set of models.
Feeling of safety	Continuous. Mean of three items on feeling safe. Higher scores indicate more feelings of safety.
Time spent online per day (non-work)	Ordinal, entered as continuous (ON_onlinehrs1). Each coefficient is the change associated with moving up one response category of daily hours online.
Social connection (negative / positive)	Continuous. Two separate composites: negative connection (mean of 3 items) and positive connection (mean of 5 items).
Perspectives on offline relationships	Continuous. Mean of 7 items on views about romantic relationships. Models restricted to respondents with relationship status that indicated they are partnered.
Wish I was more masculine	Dichotomous (1 = yes, 0 = no). Asked for men only.
Purpose in life	Dichotomous. Mean of 7 items; above the pooled sample mean = 1.
Optimism	Continuous. Mean of 8 items on expectations that life domains will be better in 10 years.
Reasons for being online	Each reason (7 items) entered as a separate predictor, plus a composite that combined 'advice' items.
Witnessed violence	Dichotomous (1 = witnessed violence, 0 = neither witnessed nor experienced).
Misogynistic beliefs	Continuous. Mean of 17 items (e.g., "Divorce courts are biased against fathers"). Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement.

Table 18. *Outcome variables used in the analysis*

Variable name	Construction / Description
Suicidality	Dichotomous. Anyone who responded that they had any thoughts of suicidality/self harm in the last two weeks were coded as 1.
Purpose in life	Dichotomous (above vs. at/below the pooled mean), as described above.
Self-esteem	Continuous. Mean of 3 items. High scores indicated higher self-esteem.
Anxiety	Continuous. Mean of 3 items. High scores indicated higher anxiety.
Social connection (negative / positive)	Continuous composites, as described above.
Health seeking	Continuous. Mean of 4 items on seeking help when unwell.
Sought help for mental health	Dichotomous (1 = yes, 0 = no).
Bystander intervention	Dichotomous. Where one intervened directly = 1; all other responses = 0.
Online dating	Dichotomous (1 = uses online dating, 0 = does not).
Weapon ownership	Dichotomous (1 = owns a weapon, 0 = does not).
Trust in public institutions	Eleven separate dichotomous outcomes, one per institution: 4–5 = 1 (trusts); 1–3 = 0.
Anti-democratic backsliding	Dichotomous. Mean of 5 political-views items; above the pooled mean =1.
Gender threat	Continuous, as described above (also modelled as an outcome).
Adhere to Man Box ideas	Dichotomous, as described above (also modelled as an outcome).
Wish I was more masculine	Dichotomous, men only (also modelled as an outcome).
"No one cares whether men are OK these days"	Dichotomous. Strongly Agree or Agree (3–4) = 1; Strongly Disagree/Disagree (1–2) = 0.
Misogynistic beliefs	Continuous, as described above (also modelled as an outcome).

Predictor and outcome variables were identified based on theoretical and evidence-based associations from studies in the field.

Analysis took place in two stages, and both used the same set of covariates:

- Country (Denmark as reference)
- Age group (18–24 as reference)
- LGBTQIA+ identity
- Income tertile, calculated within each country (lowest as reference)
- Self-reported political ideology (lowest category as reference)

All covariates were entered as categorical indicators. The first stage was a set of conditional models. Each survey item and composite was regressed on the covariates alone, to find out which demographic groups differ on an outcome when the other characteristics are held constant. Each conditional model was run three times. In the pooled sample, gender was added as a covariate, with women as the reference group. The model was then run separately for men and for women. Binary outcomes were modelled with logistic regression and continuous outcomes and Likert items with ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression.

The second stage was a set of multivariable models. These tested hypotheses about how the key predictors in Table 17 relate to the outcomes in Table 18, controlling for the same covariates. Since this was a study about men, the models were run separately for each gender rather than including gender as a covariate. The exceptions are the "wish I was more masculine" models, which cover men only because women were not asked that question. As we conducted the analysis, more lines of enquiry came up and thus, several models were also re-run with economic precarity added as a control, to check whether the relationship between Man Box adherence or gender threat and the outcomes held once financial insecurity was accounted for. The reasons-for-being-online models also controlled for positive and negative social connection. Models of trust in institutions and anti-democratic backsliding entered gender threat, Man Box adherence, economic precarity and weapon ownership together in order to account for these theoretical variances in the outcomes. Separately, two-way ANOVAs with a gender X age-group interaction were run for four outcomes, without covariates: hours online, positive social connection, negative social connection, and "I don't think anyone could fall in love with me."

To interpret logistic regressions, we used the odds ratios (ORs), calculated as the exponent of the logit coefficient (e^β). An OR above 1 means the predictor is linked to higher odds of the outcome, and an OR below 1 means lower odds.

OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

Respondents were asked a small number of open questions. Notably, participants were asked to describe what 'the ideal man' means to them, by either naming a person (celebrity or person in their life) or describing key traits. The research team translated the responses from the original local language responses into English and cleaned these data by filtering out filler words. For the purposes of the analysis, the research team used the analytical software R to extract the top 200 responses. These top 200 responses were then used to generate the word cloud image in the report (Figure 1).

LIMITATIONS

One of the biggest cautions to note when using online panels is that the exclusive use of online data collection may underrepresent some groups of individuals and overrepresent others. Hence, this is a quota-based, non-probability sample which cannot be generalized to the entire population. Online recruitment also leaves out people who are not online and favours those who are more connected, more urban and more educated, to a degree that likely varies by country. Panel members also chose to take part and may differ from non-members in ways quotas cannot correct. As a result, some of the differences between countries, including the variation in economic hardship, precarity, and relationship status, may reflect panel coverage and self-selection rather than true national differences. That said, an online design suits a study centred on men's digital lives, including online socialization and polarization, and anonymous self-completion is likely to reduce social desirability bias on sensitive topics. Views expressed in surveys may also not be reflective of participants' everyday practices. As a cross-sectional study capturing a single point in time, the survey design limits our ability to make causal inferences about the relationships observed. While the deliberate oversampling of men strengthens our analysis of male subgroups, it requires careful interpretation when making overall population estimates or about gender differences. On the analysis side, composite scales were drawn from earlier research and checked for internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha, but we did not formally test whether each scale can be interpreted the same way in all five countries. Finally, all measures rely on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias, particularly for sensitive topics such as mental health, relationship quality, and adherence to traditional gender norms. To mitigate these limitations to the extent possible, the study team triangulated the data through discussions with experts and existing research and highlighted in the report where discrepancies may lie.

ENDNOTES

[Cover] *Photo of Danish road sign with texture filter applied. Image source: harry_nl, "Traffic Sign in Danish," 2019. Accessed via https://www.flickr.com/photos/harry_nl/33425732588. CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.*

Photo of Finnish tram route sign with texture filter applied. Image source: Tapio Haaja, "green and yellow city tram," 2019. Accessed via https://unsplash.com/photos/green-and-yellow-city-tram-I9SWvZ9sO2U. Unsplash License.

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[13] These figures are based on self-reported survey questions asking participants the extent to which they may have experienced negative mental health symptoms over the last two weeks, ranging from rarely or never, to some of the time (one to four days over the last two weeks), a moderate amount of time (five to nine days over the last two weeks), or most days (10+ days over the last two weeks). The question pertaining to thoughts of suicide or self-harm is limited to disclosures of ideation, not attempts.

[14] Other studies that may be of interest on suicidality in the Nordic countries include Konieczna, A., Larsen, C. P., Jakobsen, S. G., Okuda, T., Moriyama, K., Mere, W.S., & Christiansen, E. (2023). Suicide trends in Denmark–An ecological study exploring suicide methods from 1995 to 2019," PLoS One 18(12); S. Raittila, S., Kouvonen, A., Koskinen, A., & Väänänen, A. (2023). Occupational class differences in male suicide risk in Finland from 1970 to 2019. European Journal of Public Health, 33(6), 1014–19; Hlynsson, J. I., Jónsdóttir, E. K., Ásgeirsdóttir, B. B., Kristjánsson, T., & Sigurvinsdottir, R. (2026). Prevalence and predictors of suicidal ideation, self-harm, and suicide attempts in Iceland," Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 10.1111/sjop.70129. Advance online publication.; Stene-Larsen, K., Øien-Ødegaard, C., Lindsay Straiton, M., Reneflot, A., Zahl, P. H., Myklestad, I., &Hauge, L. J. (2023). Suicide in Norway," Public Health Report, Norwegian Institute of Public Health. Retrieved 2026, August 24 from: https://www.fhi.no/en/he/fr/hin/mental-health/suicide/; National Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention of Mental Ill-Health. (2025). Suicides in Sweden. Retrieved 2026, August 24 from: https://ki.se/en/nasp/statistics/suicide-in-sweden; and Nordic Council of Ministers. (2024). Prevention of suicide and suicide attempts in the Nordic countries - A situation analysis. Retrieved 2026, August 24 from: https://pub.norden.org/temanord2024-509/

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[17] There is no current comparative data on civilian firearms ownership in the Nordic countries, but the most recent comprehensive data, from 2017, shows major differences per country, with high per capita levels of ownership in Finland and Iceland, and low levels in Denmark. In 2017, there were an estimated 9.9 civilian firearms per 100 persons in Denmark, 32.4 in Finland, 31.7 in Iceland, 28.8 in Norway, and 23.1 in Sweden, with men being the majority of firearms owners and users. Small Arms Survey. (2017). Civilian firearms holdings, Geneva: Small Arms Survey. Retrieved 2026, August 24 from: https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-BP-Civilian-held-firearms-annexe.pdf

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[32] In the survey, respondents were asked to self-identify along a political spectrum spanning "far/extreme left" and "far right." The survey did not define these categories, nor did it attach political parties to them.

[33] While the data is not directly comparable due to different methodologies, the figure is roughly in line with the average level of 40 percent of trust in national governments in OECD member and accession candidate countries, OECD. (2026). OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions 2026 Results., Retrieved 2026, August 24 from: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-survey-on-drivers-of-trust-in-public-institutions-2026-results_9eb63fec-en/full-report.html

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*[35] **This survey item was formulated as follows:***

Danish: "Dette land ville være et bedre sted med en stærk leder i spidsen, som ikke gider folketinget eller valg;"

Finnish: "Tämä maa olisi parempi paikka, jos johdossa olisi vahva johtaja, joka ei välittäisi kansanedustuslaitoksesta tai vaaleista;"

Icelandic:"Þetta land væri betra staður með sterkum leiðtoga við völd sem þarf ekki að hafa áhyggjur af þingi eða kosningum;"

Norwegian: "Dette landet ville vært et bedre sted med en sterk leder ved makten som ikke bryr seg om Stortinget eller valg;"

Swedish: "Det här landet skulle vara en bättre plats med en stark ledare vid makten som inte bryr sig om riksdagen eller val."

*[36] **This survey item was formulated as follows:***

Danish: "En regering, der brænder det hele ned, er den eneste vej frem;"

Finnish: "Onnistunut hallitus on sellainen, joka romuttaa kaiken tieltään;"

Icelandic: "Ríkisstjórn sem brennir það allt til grunna er eina leiðin áfram;"

Norwegian: "En regjering som brenner alt ned, er den eneste veien videre;"

Swedish: "En regering som bränner ner allt är enda vägen framåt."

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