



## Full Report

Understanding Masculinities

# INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY – JORDAN





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IMAGES Jordan is a research of UN Women undertaken in partnership with the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies (CSS), Information and Research Center at King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) and Equimundo.

IMAGES Jordan consists of a quantitative component conducted by CSS and a qualitative study carried out by IRCKHF. The consolidated final research report was written jointly by CSS and IRCKHF. Equimundo provided technical assistance to both research partners and also wrote the Executive Summary.

IMAGES Jordan was developed under the framework of the UN Women's regional programme 'Men and Women for Gender Equality', funded by Sweden, with additional funds from the Government of the United Kingdom.

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was created to accelerate progress in meeting their needs everywhere.

**UN Women** supports UN Member States in adopting international standards to achieve gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programs and services needed to ensure that the effective application of these standards and that women and girls everywhere benefit from them. UN Women works globally to make the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and supports women's equitable participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: strengthening women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; integrate women into all aspects of peace and security processes; strengthen the economic empowerment of women; and placing gender equality at the heart of national planning and budgeting processes.

**UN Women** further coordinates and promotes the work of the United Nations system in support of gender equality and within the framework of discussions and agreements relating to the 2030 Agenda. gender equality as a pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals and a more inclusive world. For more information: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

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# ACRONYMS

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>ARDD</b>      | <b>Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development</b>                             |
| <b>CEDAW</b>     | <b>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women</b> |
| <b>CSS</b>       | <b>Center for Strategic Studies</b>   |
| <b>FGD</b>       | <b>Focus group discussion</b>   |
| <b>GEM Scale</b> | <b>Gender Equitable Men Scale</b>   |
| <b>ICRW</b>      | <b>International Center for Research on Women</b>                                 |
| <b>IDI</b>       | <b>In-depth interview</b>   |
| <b>IMAGES</b>    | <b>International Men and Gender Equality Survey</b>                               |
| <b>IMC</b>       | <b>Inter-ministerial Committee on Gender Equality</b>                             |
| <b>IRB</b>       | <b>Institutional Review Board</b>   |
| <b>IRCKHF</b>    | <b>Information and Research Center-King Hussein Foundation</b>                    |
| <b>JNCW</b>      | <b>Jordanian National Commission for Women</b>                                    |
| <b>MENA</b>      | <b>Middle East and North Africa</b>   |
| <b>UNDP</b>      | <b>United Nations Development Programme</b>                                       |
| <b>UNESCWA</b>   | <b>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia</b>             |
| <b>UNFPA</b>     | <b>United Nations Population Fund</b>   |
| <b>UNHCR</b>     | <b>UN Refugee Agency</b>  |
| <b>UNICEF</b>    | <b>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</b>                     |
| <b>WHO</b>       | <b>World Health Organization</b>  |

# KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Men's views on gender roles are still generally framed by gender-inequitable family roles.** While women generally seem to share similar attitudes to men towards gender roles, more educated women hold more progressive ideas on most issues. Men hold largely gender-inequitable views about household roles, with the vast majority asserting that a woman's most important job is to care for her home, and that a man should have the final say on household decisions.
- 2. Gender equality is improving in Jordan, however more work is needed to promote it.** Half of male respondents are resistant to women working outside the home, even as they support the participation of women in certain other public leadership and political roles. **Fifty-one percent** of the total sample believes that gender equality is part of the Jordanian culture. However, only 16 percent of men 34 percent women accept the idea of unmarried women living alone. Moreover, 44 percent of the men surveyed think that the education of male children should be prioritized over that of female children, if resources are scarce.
- 3. Men maintain a dominant role in household decisions, and this is a consistent pattern across generations.** Seventy-three percent of men confirm that they have the final word on decisions in the household, compared to only 40 percent of women who claim the same.
- 4. Males are brought up to believe that their role is in the public sphere and that they are supposed to be the breadwinners, while women's duties are limited to the household and caregiving.** Fathers do show affection to children and participate in their emotional growth, but practical tasks such as changing diapers or giving baths are still perceived as mainly a women's duty. Yet, 75 percent of men and women report being in favour of a law that gives fathers longer paternity leave, with most preferring leave of up to 2 weeks.
- 5. The perception of the paternal role in the upbringing of children is positively changing and men's involvement in childcare is being normalized in Jordanian society.** While women are still seen as those primarily responsible for childcare, the understanding of men's contribution is shifting. The vast majority of Jordanian men and women agree that there is nothing shameful in men's involvement in taking care of children or doing other domestic work. Sixty-three percent of male respondents affirm that they spend too little time with their children and 50 percent of surveyed men also say they wish to spend more time with their children.
- 6. Growing up, men and women experience various forms of violence.** Nine percent of male respondents report experiencing physical violence, like being beaten by an object by their parents, compared to only 3 percent of female respondents, and 26 percent of male respondents stated that they were beaten or physically punished at school by a teacher, compared to just 4 percent of surveyed women. However, quantitative data show that the reality is different and violence is still common in schools as well as in families especially for refugees.

7. **Men and women alike report high prevalence rates of gender-based violence in Jordan. Women suffer frequent violence and control from male members of the family.** According to quantitative data, 20 percent of females affirm suffering from different types of physical violence over their lifetime but only 13 percent of male respondents report committing physically violent acts against their wives. Qualitative analysis shows that violence against women may be even more frequent and is highly underreported. However, quantitative analysis also shows that most respondents disagree with the idea that women deserve to be beaten in certain situations, and 70 percent of both samples affirm that women should not tolerate violence to keep the family together.
8. **Women are still considered responsible for family honour.** While a majority do not agree with practising physical violence against women, more than half of female respondents and 82 percent of male respondents agree that a girl or woman usually deserves punishment from her family (males/ guardians) to protect her honour.
9. **Street sexual harassment is commonly perpetrated by men and frequently experienced by urban women. Women are often blamed and considered responsible for “provoking” harassment.** Although the majority of men and women report not practising or experiencing sexual harassment in its different forms, qualitative data show that the reality on the ground is different and harassment is a common practice. Moreover, 64 percent of the surveyed men and 80 percent of surveyed women agree that women who dress provocatively deserve to be harassed, and 53 percent of all respondents say women like the attention when men harass them.
10. **Men are more engaged in health-related risky behaviour, compared to women. Smoking, for example, is much more prevalent among men than women.** Sixty-five percent of Jordanian men and 54 percent of Syrian men are smokers. By contrast, only 20 percent of Jordanian women and 15 percent of Syrian women reported to be smokers.
11. **Women follow COVID-19 regulations more strictly than men.** Most female respondents state that they always cover their faces with a mask and have followed governmental restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, only a third to half of male respondents say the same.
12. **Men and women alike are concerned about the present and anxious about the future.** Virtually all men and women in Jordan report fearing for their own safety, and more than three-quarters report worrying about their family’s future prospects.

## WHO WAS SURVEYED?

- 2,400 Jordanian men and women aged 18 and over, from 12 governorates across Jordan, completed surveys. In addition, 512 Syrian men and women in the same age range were surveyed in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Mafraq.
- 68 percent of Jordanian male respondents and 64 percent of Jordanian female respondents had completed secondary education or higher (10 years of schooling and over)– the illiteracy rate in Jordan is about 5 percent and the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education for Jordan was 34 percent in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Among the Syrian population, 73 percent of men and 84 percent of women have lower than a secondary education.
- Just over half of the sample (57 percent) of Jordanian male respondents are currently employed, compared with only 13 percent of Jordanian female respondents. The unemployment rate in Jordan is about 25 percent for adults aged 18–65<sup>2</sup>. Among Syrian survey respondents, 52 percent of males are currently employed compared to only 6 percent of females.
- Fifty-six percent of surveyed Jordanian men and 76 percent of Jordanian women are currently married, while the rates among surveyed Syrians are 72 percent for men and 86 percent for women.

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR?locations=JO>

<sup>2</sup> Department of Statistics DOS, 2021. "Unemployment Rate during the Second Quarter of 2021". [http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/uemp\\_q22021/](http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/uemp_q22021/)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 IMAGES in Jordan

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) for the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) is a research project aimed at building an understanding of men's and women's practices related to gender equality.

IMAGES Jordan is research of UN Women, undertaken in partnership with the Information and Research Center-King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF), the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) and Equimundo (previously called Promundo)

The first IMAGES studies in the Arab States region, undertaken in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine in 2016–2017, revealed that gender equality cannot be achieved if it is not first understood. Until gender stereotypes are identified, and what it means 'to be a man' can be understood from the perspective of both men and women, including how this concept applies to the public and private spheres, progress towards equality in the region will be stalled. It is crucial to continue working towards empowering women and advocating for women's rights, but there will be a limit to what can be achieved if the powerful influences of masculinity and patriarchy are not challenged at the same time.

UN Women and IMAGES research partners in Jordan ensured that the research process was inclusive of partners from start to finish, meaning that even though the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies would conduct the quantitative survey, and the King Hussein Foundation's Information and Research Center would carry out the qualitative research, they would work together on the design and analysis throughout the process, so that the quantitative and qualitative research would complement one another using a mixed-methods approach as opposed to simply running in parallel.

## 1.2 Gender equality in Jordan context

While Jordan has made some great achievements in the last few years when it comes to the rights of women at the legislative level, these successes are small when looking at the overall legal framework which in its essence is gender discriminatory. Furthermore, changes at the policy level alone do not create the transformative change needed to impact social norms. Therefore communities, civil society, academic and faith-based institutions, the private sector, the media, as well as government institutions, laws, policies and strategies must all promote gender equality at every level.

Moreover, Jordan has signed and ratified several international conventions that are foundational for women's rights, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, Jordan has made reservations on Articles 9.2 and 16 (1-cd-g) on the ability of women to pass their nationality to a foreign husband and their children, a woman's right to custody and guardianship over children after divorce, and the right to choose a family name, occupation and profession, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/3RP%20Regional%20Needs%20Overview%202022.pdf>  
RSO 12/2020: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/RSO2021.pdf>  
UNHCR (accessed 20/12/2021): <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

The integration of women into the public sphere in Jordan was perceived as an inevitable and essential step in the direction of modernity and progress. Nonetheless, this was not accepted by all. Some groups advocated for the advancement and liberation of women, while others resisted it and believed that the gender-inequitable role of women should be preserved. Consequently, women had to fight for their civic and political rights.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3 IMAGES and Jordan's refugee context

Jordan hosts more than 673,000 registered Syrian refugees, but the actual total is estimated at around 1.3 million when those not registered are taken into account. Over 18,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria were also registered in Jordan. Around 90 percent of the Syrian refugees live outside the camps in urban, peri-urban and rural areas of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa. Around 130,000 Syrian refugees live in Azraq, Emirates Jordanian Camps and Za'atari.<sup>5</sup> Such numbers make Jordan the second-largest per capita refugee-hosting country in the world.<sup>6</sup> Around 80 percent of Syrian refugees outside the camps live below the poverty line. Most Syrian families are relying on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Syrian refugees living outside of camps spent more than two-thirds of their monthly household budget on shelter, leaving few resources for food, health or education.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Jordan hosts close to 90,000 refugees from other countries.<sup>8</sup>

The influx of refugees has impacted host communities, especially in the governorates of Amman, Irbid, Zarqa and Mafraq, which have the highest concentration of refugees.<sup>9</sup>

IMAGES Jordan analysis takes the refugee crisis and its impact on the sociopolitical, cultural and economic conditions of Jordan into high consideration: qualitative and quantitative research include the different communities of refugees that comprise Jordan's population (see methodology section for more details).

### 1.4 IMAGES and the COVID-19 context in Jordan

This is the first IMAGES country study to be conducted since the pandemic began – all others were pre-COVID-19. While gender norms and gender-based violence issues were exacerbated on a global scale, and in Jordan as well, the question arose as to whether IMAGES Jordan should be looking at masculinity in Jordan before the pandemic, to be more relatable to previous IMAGES country studies, or not. While it is too early to analyse the impact of a global pandemic on gender inequality, it is important to take into account the specific context in which the research was conducted as it shaped not only the methodology and research design (see following section) but also people's perception of social dynamics and gender. It is therefore worth reminding that between March 2020 and February 2022 Jordan implemented various policies aimed at limiting the spread of COVID-19. These policies included an initial complete curfew and lockdown, the closing of schools for the whole 2020–2021 academic year, social distancing measures, restrictions on movement and the closure of recreational and commercial activities.

<sup>4</sup> 3rpsyriacrisis (accessed 20/12/2021): [https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/rso\\_up.pdf](https://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/rso_up.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2021. Operational Data Portal: Syria Regional Refugee Response. Accessed 20 December 2021: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>

<sup>6</sup> 3RP. 2020. *Regional Strategic Overview 2021-2022*. December. <https://bit.ly/3F3E4wZ>

<sup>7</sup> European Commission. N.D. "Jordan factsheet." Accessed 22 February 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/jordan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/jordan_en); UNHCR. 3RP Regional needs overview 2022. Accessed 25 November 2021. <https://bit.ly/3s0lcc4>

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR. 2021. Operational Data Portal: Jordan Operational Update (December 2021). <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/90568>

<sup>9</sup> Idris, Iffat. 05/12/2016. "Impact of Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordan's Economy". University of Birmingham:3. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e9d77dce90e07049a97d68a/019\\_Impact\\_of\\_Syrian\\_Refugee\\_Crisis\\_on\\_Jordan\\_Economy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e9d77dce90e07049a97d68a/019_Impact_of_Syrian_Refugee_Crisis_on_Jordan_Economy.pdf)

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Designing and contextualizing the research tools

The IMAGES Jordan survey is a country-specific adaptation of the survey tool previously implemented elsewhere in the Arab Region. However, it is the first survey to be fully implemented through the joint work of local partners in charge of undertaking the qualitative and quantitative work. This required constant coordination between both teams and led to a complex, yet solid, methodology. The quantitative and qualitative partners were involved in both components of the study to ensure that it was as integrated as possible as a mixed-methods study. The collaboration started with joint work to contextualize the surveys to Jordan following the findings and gaps identified in the literature review and consultative meetings with local experts. Accordingly, the study teams agreed on the survey themes and targeted samples.

An in-depth literature review was carried out by both qualitative and quantitative teams in order to provide the survey and research framework with a solid background on the specificity of the Jordanian context in terms of masculinities and gender dynamics. This has also allowed for an analysis of changes and transformations in gender inequalities when comparing previous information with the IMAGES data.

The aim of the quantitative component was to carry out the IMAGES study using a nationally representative sample of Jordanians and Syrians living in host communities, to cover all aspects of masculinities in the study. Meanwhile, the qualitative component used focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth individual interviews (IDIs) to address similar aspects in addition to topics that were considered too sensitive. For example, the qualitative method allowed research participants to discuss sensitive topics in the third person as opposed to having to admit that they are either perpetrators or victims of gender-based violence. The other benefit of the qualitative component was to include vulnerable or marginalized populations that the quantitative methodology could not target. This included people with disabilities, other refugee communities, the children of Jordanian mothers and foreign fathers (because they do not have Jordanian citizenship), and other socially marginalized groups. A more detailed account of this sample breakdown is available in the sample section below. In order for the quantitative findings to better inform what needed to be probed further in the qualitative, many of the qualitative focus group discussions were conducted only after the preliminary analysis of the quantitative research had been conducted.

### 2.2 Training research teams and pilot testing

Following the University of Jordan's Institutional Review Board (IRB)<sup>10</sup> review and approval of the quantitative and qualitative research tools in February 2021, the CSS and IRCKHF proceeded to create respective training manuals for both qualitative and quantitative survey administration. Training of surveyors and other research teams included a theoretical section, focusing on the concepts of gender and masculinities, followed by a practical section and pilot-testing for the quantitative female and male surveys and role-play exercises for the qualitative.

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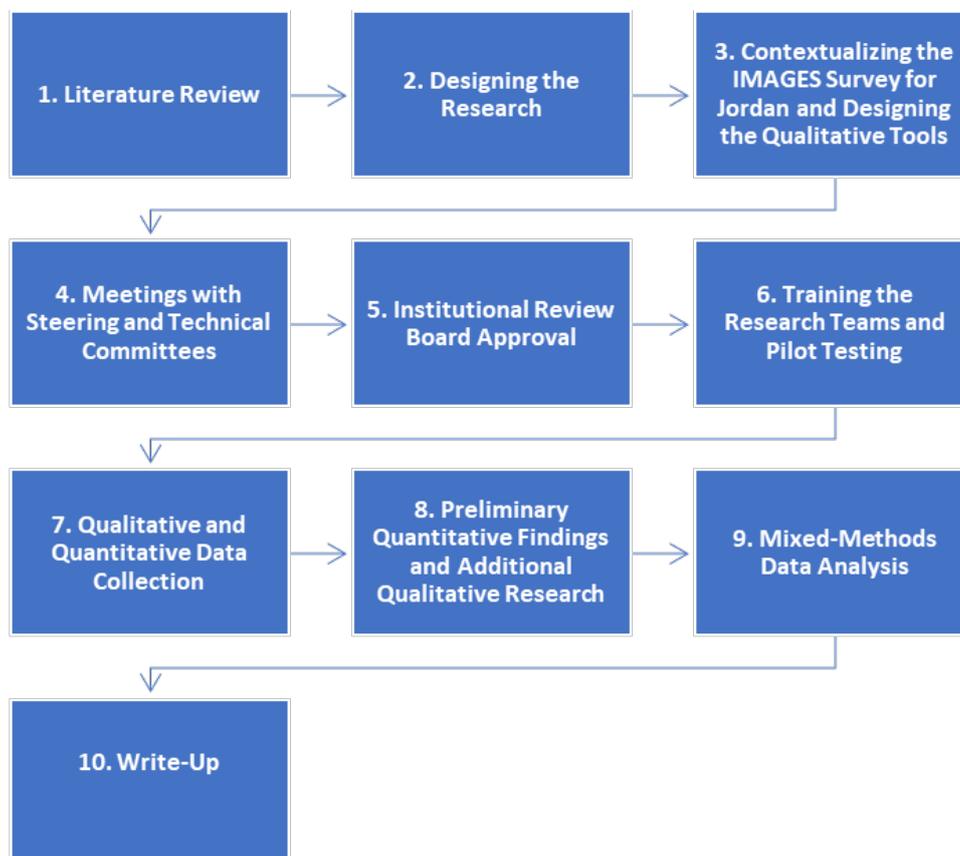
<sup>10</sup> The IRB is an administrative body created to protect the rights, welfare and privacy of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities conducted under the auspices of an institution, its tasks include reviewing all research involving human participants, approve or disapprove, monitor, and require modifications in all research activities that fall within its jurisdiction as specified by both the federal regulations and institutional policy.

## 2.3 Qualitative and quantitative data collection

Quantitative data collection by the CSS was completed in July 2021. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face, using hand-held electronic tablet devices while respecting a strict COVID-19 protocol, and with female and male surveyors interviewing their respective genders in total privacy. The IRCKHF conducted a total of 12 FGDs and 17 IDIs. The study was sectioned into two main phases: a pre-quantitative data-collection phase, where 6 FGDs were conducted with male and female Palestinians, Iraqis and children of Jordanian mothers, in addition to 5 IDIs with Iraqis, men belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups and the elderly. In the second phase, 6 FGDs and 12 IDIs were conducted with Jordanian and Syrian men and women of different ages, including 4 IDIs with people with disabilities.

Post-quantitative data collection was completed after partners from CSS presented the preliminary findings of the quantitative research and agreed with IRCKHF on the ways to best fill any specifics still in need of exploring further. After the quantitative and qualitative findings were shared, an outline for the research was decided upon by all partners. Accordingly, the quantitative and qualitative findings were written up separately. Then, in a series of writing workshops and meetings, these were merged into one report.

Figure 2.1 Research process



### Box 1. Ethical considerations

The IRCKHF and CSS ensured that all ethical considerations that inform data collection, analysis, and dissemination were taken, especially for vulnerable groups. To that end, the research teams committed to respecting the following ethical guidelines:

Participants are treated as autonomous agents

Participants must give consent freely and voluntarily

Informed consent is documented and is an ongoing process

Do no harm policy

Privacy and confidentiality of participants is always protected

Research is inclusive and with stakeholder consultation

Participants are treated fairly and equitably

Specifically for this research:

**Informed consent:** the objective of the research, how the data will be used, and the involvement of the participants was explained to them verbally in a clear way at the beginning of the surveys for FGDs and IDIs.

**Confidentiality:** All data collected were anonymous and cannot be linked back to participants. Only the research team had access to the personal data of the participants, and these data were not shared with anyone outside of the research team. The data were only used for the purposes of this research.

**IRB approval:** The research tools and ethical considerations were submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Jordan.

Since the IMAGES Jordan study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CSS team instructed surveyors on COVID-19 protocols and health measures as they related to the data-collection process.

## 2.4 Limitations and challenges

- Due to the sensitivity of the research, it was agreed by all partners that all research, both quantitative and qualitative, must be conducted face-to-face, as opposed to over the telephone or online, to ensure privacy and no harm to all research respondents. In turn, this also delayed the actual data-collection process until June and July 2021.
- Issues related to COVID-19 prevented some participants from joining the FGDs.

## 3. RESEARCH SAMPLING

### 3.1 Quantitative sampling

For the purpose of this survey, CSS used the Department of Statistics (DOS) national sampling frame collected in the last Census (of 2015) and the updated frame created in 2019. The frame enabled CSS to design a nationally representative sample for the country. The sampling design was developed as follows:

The sampling design utilized “probability proportional to size” methods to provide valid and reliable survey estimates across Jordan. This included rural and urban areas, all 12 governorates, and minority communities concentrated in specific geographic areas. The sample was also designed to ensure reliable estimates at regional levels (north, centre and south). Governorates were grouped into three regions: North (covering Irbid, Jerash and Ajloun), Central (covering Amman, Balqa, Madaba and Zarqa), and South (covering Aqaba, Karak, Ma’an and Tafilah).

Using the 2015 Jordan Population and Housing Census as a sampling frame, 2,400 households (Jordanian sample) were selected using stratified cluster sampling. The frame had a margin of error of  $\pm 2.5$  percent and a confidence level of 95 percent. The country was subdivided into area units called Census blocks, which were then regrouped to form clusters – the primary sampling units for this survey. Stratification was performed on three levels: the classification of governorates into rural and urban areas, administrative divisions within each urban and rural area, and clusters identified and selected within each administrative division. The distribution of the sample among these clusters was done proportional to the relative population size of each stratum.

A household listing operation was conducted within each cluster and a frame of households within each cluster was developed. Collective homes – such as student housing, prisons, nursing homes and factory accommodations – were excluded as they did not fit the definition of a Jordanian household.

Guidelines for the study stipulated that surveyed households be Jordanian and have at least one member aged 18 years or older. Following the identification of the targeted group in each cluster, a sample of eight households was drawn from each by an equal probability systematic selection. The “Kish Table” respondent selection methodology was used to identify the respondent who answers questions.

The research sample was divided as indicated below:

**Table 3.1 Quantitative Jordanian sample characteristics, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|   | Men         |            | Women       |            |
|---|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|   | Number      | Percentage | Number      | Percentage |
| <b>Age group</b>                        |             |            |             |            |
| 18–29                                   | 464         | 38.7       | 280         | 23.3       |
| 30–39                                   | 203         | 16.9       | 321         | 26.7       |
| 40–49                                   | 217         | 18.1       | 272         | 22.6       |
| 50+                                     | 316         | 26.3       | 328         | 27.3       |
| <b>Country of citizenship</b>           |             |            |             |            |
| Jordan                                  | 1174        | 97.9       | 1162        | 96.9       |
| Palestine                               | 26          | 2.1        | 38          | 3.1        |
| <b>Level of education</b>               |             |            |             |            |
| Less than secondary <sup>11</sup>       | 383         | 31.9       | 433         | 36.1       |
| Secondary <sup>12</sup>                 | 475         | 39.6       | 420         | 35.0       |
| More than secondary <sup>13</sup>       | 342         | 28.5       | 347         | 28.9       |
| <b>Employment status</b>                |             |            |             |            |
| Employed                                | 679         | 56.5       | 157         | 13.1       |
| Unemployed (worked before)              | 184         | 15.3       | 36          | 3.0        |
| Unemployed (never worked)               | 248         | 20.7       | 153         | 12.7       |
| Unemployed                              | 90          | 7.5        | 854         | 71.1       |
| <b>Marital status</b>                   |             |            |             |            |
| Never married                           | 495         | 41.2       | 169         | 14.1       |
| Currently married                       | 673         | 56.0       | 907         | 75.6       |
| Previously married, currently unmarried | 33          | 2.7        | 124         | 10.3       |
| <b>Total (N)</b>                        | <b>1200</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>1200</b> | <b>100</b> |

<sup>11</sup> Includes all categories of primary education and below (no schooling, nursery school, primary or preparatory).

<sup>12</sup> Includes secondary education/ High school and vocational/professional schools.

<sup>13</sup> Refers to higher education level and includes diploma, partial or ongoing university, Bachelor's degree, postgraduate diploma and Master's degree or higher.

Table 3.2 Quantitative Syrian sample characteristics, IMAGES Jordan 2022

|   | Men        |            | Women      |            |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Number     | Percentage | Number     | Percentage |
| <b>Age group</b>                        |            |            |            |            |
| 18-29                                   | 93         | 36.3       | 84         | 32.8       |
| 30-39                                   | 56         | 21.9       | 82         | 32.0       |
| 40-49                                   | 53         | 20.7       | 55         | 21.5       |
| 50+                                     | 54         | 21.1       | 35         | 13.7       |
| <b>Country of citizenship</b>           |            |            |            |            |
| Syria                                   | 256        | 100.0      | 256        | 100.0      |
| <b>Level of education</b>               |            |            |            |            |
| Less than secondary                     | 187        | 73.0       | 214        | 83.6       |
| Secondary                               | 46         | 18.0       | 27         | 10.5       |
| More than secondary                     | 23         | 9.0        | 15         | 5.9        |
| <b>Employment status</b>                |            |            |            |            |
| Employed                                | 134        | 52.3       | 16         | 6.3        |
| Unemployed (worked before)              | 0          | 0.0        | 1          | 0.4        |
| Unemployed (never worked)               | 91         | 35.5       | 20         | 7.8        |
| Unemployed                              | 31         | 12.1       | 219        | 85.5       |
| <b>Marital status</b>                   |            |            |            |            |
| Never married                           | 71         | 27.7       | 17         | 6.6        |
| Currently married                       | 184        | 71.9       | 220        | 85.9       |
| Previously married, currently unmarried | 1          | 0.4        | 19         | 7.4        |
| <b>Total (N)</b>                        | <b>256</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>256</b> | <b>100</b> |

## 3.2 Qualitative sampling

The qualitative sample is not meant to be a nationally representative sample. Jordanians were interviewed in three age groups: youth, adults and the elderly. In addition to groups who were sampled in the quantitative portion, such as Jordanians and Syrian refugees, other groups who were not included in the quantitative research were covered by the qualitative sample in particular people belonging to vulnerable marginalized groups such as Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, children of Jordanian mothers, people with disabilities, etc. The research sample was divided as indicated in the table below:

**Table 3.3 Qualitative research sample characteristics, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

| Category  | Pre-quant             | Post-quant             | Total                   | Total no. of participants |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jordanian men 36–65                               | -                     | 1 FGD, 1 IDI           | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 9                         |
| Jordanian women 36–65                             | -                     | 1 FGD, 1 IDI           | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 8                         |
| Jordanian male youth 18–35                        | -                     | 1 FGD, 1 IDI           | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 8                         |
| Jordanian female youth 18–35                      | -                     | 1 FGD, 1 IDI           | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 9                         |
| Elderly men 66–80                                 | 1 IDI                 | 1 IDI                  | 2 IDIs                  | 2                         |
| Elderly women 66–80                               | 2 IDIs                | -                      | 2 IDIs                  | 2                         |
| People with disabilities                          | -                     | 4 IDI                  | 4 IDIs                  | 4                         |
| Syrian refugees – males                           | -                     | 1 FGD, 2 IDI           | 1 FGD, 2 IDI            | 10                        |
| Syrian refugees – females                         | -                     | 1 FGD, 1 IDI           | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 9                         |
| Palestinian refugees – males                      | 1 FGD                 | -                      | 1 FGD                   | 8                         |
| Palestinian refugees – females                    | 1 FGD                 | -                      | 1 FGD                   | 8                         |
| Iraqi refugees – males                            | 1 FGD, 1 IDI          | -                      | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 9                         |
| Iraqi refugees – females                          | 1 FGD, 1 IDI          | -                      | 1 FGD, 1 IDI            | 9                         |
| Children of Jordanian mothers and foreign fathers | 2 FGD                 | -                      | 2 FGD                   | 15                        |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>6 FGDs, 5 IDIs</b> | <b>6 FGDs, 12 IDIs</b> | <b>12 FGDs, 17 IDIs</b> | <b>110</b>                |

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Attitudes towards gender, gender equality and masculinities

#### 4.1.1 Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) scale

In Jordan, various studies have tried to capture perceptions of gender roles and practices for men and women. On the Arab Barometer, Jordan was ranked third out of seven Arab countries<sup>14</sup> in terms of ‘attitudes towards females’ (Arab Barometer, 2018)<sup>15</sup>. On a scale of 0–1 (0 being conservative/traditional and 1 being liberal/egalitarian), Jordan scored an average of 0.584. However, when disaggregated by gender, women were more likely to express modern views on gender roles than men (0.584 and 0.495, respectively). Similar findings were identified in the IMAGES Jordan GEM scale (see Table 4.1).

**Men’s views on gender roles are still generally framed by gender-inequitable family roles.** While women often share similar attitudes to men regarding their gender roles, educated women hold more progressive ideas on most issues. As seen in Table 4.1, men hold largely gender-inequitable views about household roles, with the vast majority asserting that a woman’s most important job is to care of household and that a man should have the final say on household decisions. Level of education and age do not make a significant difference in male responses. A majority of male respondents also agree that taking care of children at home is a woman’s task (see more in section 4.5).

Stereotypical beliefs within Jordanian society on gender-specific roles, responsibilities and fundamental freedoms affect opinions on education, work and independent life. Forty-four percent of male respondents agree that “If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters” (see more in section 4.4.1 on gender discrimination towards children). Only 16 percent of men, compared to 33 percent of women, accept the idea of unmarried women living alone. Furthermore, only half of male respondents accept that a woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband.

Although most Jordanians do not see being “tough” as necessarily a male attribute, they still agree on giving men in the family “controlling” powers, such as exercising guardianship and control over female relatives, even if they are older. While a majority of respondents say they do not agree with practising physical violence against women, more than half of female respondents and 82 percent of men agree that a girl or woman usually deserves punishment from her family (males/ guardians) to protect her honour. When it comes to sexual activities, the majority agree that “If a man doesn’t want to have sex, it is normal and doesn’t make him less of a man.” The decision-making power in the sexual life of a married couple, such as the use of contraception, is still considered to belong to men (see section 4.5.4 on decision- making power).

<sup>14</sup> Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria.

<sup>15</sup> Robbins, Michael, and Kathrin Thomas. 2018. “Women in the Middle East and North Africa: A Divide between Rights and Roles.” [https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/AB\\_WomenFinal-version05122018.pdf](https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/AB_WomenFinal-version05122018.pdf).

**Table 4.1 Percentage of respondents who agree with selected statements about gender roles and decision-making, violence, and perceptions of masculinity and femininity, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|   | Men (%) | Women (%) |
|---|---------|-----------|
| <b>Attitudes towards gender roles and decision-making</b>   |         |           |
| A woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family.                          | 87%     | 52%       |
| A man should have the final word about decisions in the home.   | 73%     | 40%       |
| Changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be the mother's responsibility. | 65%     | 56%       |
| A married woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband.                        | 50%     | 84%       |
| <b>Attitudes towards violence</b>   |         |           |
| There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.   | 26%     | 19%       |
| A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.   | 28%     | 28%       |
| The girl or woman usually deserves punishment from her family to protect their honour.                      | 82%     | 54%       |
| <b>Perception of masculinity and femininity</b>   |         |           |
| To be a man, you need to be tough.  | 15%     | 11%       |
| If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters.                               | 44%     | 21%       |
| It is a man's duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives.                                      | 74%     | 53%       |
| Boys are responsible for the behaviour of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters.       | 87%     | 67%       |
| Unmarried women should have the same right to live on their own as unmarried men.                           | 16%     | 34%       |
| <b>Attitudes towards relationships, sexuality and reproduction</b>  |         |           |
| In order to avoid pregnancy, women should take contraceptives rather than men using condoms.                | 48%     | 59%       |
| If a man doesn't want to have sex, it is normal and doesn't make him less of a man.                         | 77%     | 66%       |

**Table 4.2 GEM scale scores for men and women, by selected background characteristics, IMAGES Jordan 2022<sup>16</sup>**

|                    |                                      | Men | Women |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Education          | Less than secondary                  | 2.0 | 2.4   |
|                    | Secondary                            | 2.2 | 2.6   |
|                    | More than secondary                  | 2.3 | 2.7   |
| Mothers' education | Less than secondary                  | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | Secondary                            | 2.2 | 2.6   |
|                    | More than secondary                  | 2.3 | 2.6   |
| Fathers' education | Less than secondary                  | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | Secondary                            | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | More than secondary                  | 2.3 | 2.7   |
| Marriage           | Never married                        | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | Married                              | 2.2 | 2.6   |
|                    | Other (separated, divorced, widowed) | 2.3 | 2.5   |
| Urban/ Rural       | Urban                                | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | Rural                                | 2.1 | 2.5   |
| Age                | 18–29                                | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | 30–39                                | 2.2 | 2.6   |
|                    | 40–49                                | 2.2 | 2.5   |
|                    | 50+                                  | 2.2 | 2.5   |

These attitudes towards gender equality were assessed using the GEM scale, an internationally recognized and validated composite measure of attitudes towards men's and women's roles and rights. On a scale in which "0" represents a complete rejection of gender equality and "4" represents full acceptance, men's average score was 2.2, while women's was about 2.5 (Table 4.2). There was almost no variation in men's views by age, although urban men and those with higher education held slightly more equitable views. More educated women scored higher on the scale since women's education clearly drives support for equality. Men, and particularly women, with higher education, as well as those whose mothers had higher education, scored higher on the GEM scale.

### What constitutes feeling like a 'man' or a 'woman'?

**According to respondents, womanhood mainly comes through marriage or motherhood but can be earned through more responsibility. Manhood relates to responsibility and financial support.** The majority of married females say that the first time they felt like they were women was when they either got married or had their firstborn and became mothers. On the other hand, unmarried

<sup>16</sup> GEM scale scores range from 0 to 4.0, with 0 being the most inequitable and 4.0 being the most equitable.

females say that they felt they were women, either when they started menstruation, because of the attitudes of others towards that phase and what it actually means being conveyed to them by their female relatives, or when they started certain phases in their lives like going to university or taking on more responsibilities as a result of a life event or situation facing the family.

Qualitative interviews reveal that some unmarried women equate womanhood with marriage and motherhood, despite their age, but feel like they have grown into or earned the title of being a woman through taking on more responsibilities and being able to handle it and prove themselves.

Meanwhile, men are more likely to say that they first felt they were men when they started working, regardless of the age, or when they started taking on the monetary responsibility for their family. Boys also seem to understand at a young age that they are breadwinners and that it starts with their nuclear family and extends to relatives and their own families in the future.

“I felt more responsible than my older brothers. The proof is that I did not let my six sisters need a thing, which made me look for any kind of job for a quick income.”

—58-year-old Jordanian man

“Back then, I felt responsible, since I am a member of a family that does not have an income and I am a man, so my family depends on me. I should aspire for the future, especially since I want to get married and start a family of my own. My family’s condition made me feel more responsible.”

—43-year-old Jordanian man

As for the elderly, several respondents note that men and women used to take on more responsibility at a much younger age. They also emphasize that there were strict gender roles, but at the same time there was more respect and trust between spouses, parents and families.

**Manhood is seen in positive terms, but its pressures are also emphasized and create a burden on men.** Qualitative interviews reveal that both men and women associate masculinity with “strength”, “responsibility” and “respectability”. Religion is also important to several men and women in defining what makes a “real man”. Some participants describe Islam as a religion of equality and say that a pious man who truly fears God would not mistreat women, and the same thing applies to women, but there is more emphasis on men in that regard.

As to what challenges or pressures society and these stereotypical views of gender roles and masculinity versus femininity impose on its members, males seem to be burdened by living up to the “masculine expectations” of them, which include being the provider, the protector, the strong, steady man. When it comes to financial responsibility towards the household, nearly all female and male participants agree that the financial responsibility lies with the husband, but some say that the responsibility is shared only when the husband cannot provide fully.

“There’s a huge pressure to always be the conservative man who protects his family. Being the provider, being married, being a father is a huge pressure and the older I get the more I feel it. ...When we talk about livelihood, the conversation is always led by a man, always trying to keep the image that he has it all under control, but at the same time ... you can feel that they’re actually saying: ‘please help me’. You can feel it.”

—29-year-old Jordanian man

According to these expectations, respondents say a man should not cry, he should not be sensitive or vulnerable. Moreover, a man should not talk about his feelings or act in a feminine way. A man should always be serious and knowledgeable, he should be a provider by all means, and that expectation is also passed on through generations.

**Men need to be strong and tough; boys must be raised accordingly.** Male participants agree that a man or young man should be tough; leniency has no place in the world of men. It is perceived that society will be cruel and judge boys who display “feminine traits”, such as being sensitive, showing emotion, being soft, working in certain professions, in addition to many other stereotypically feminine attributes. For this reason, participants say parents should protect their children and should not encourage such ‘behaviours’.

“A young man must be proud of himself, study and work hard, otherwise he will fail...”

—Syrian man

“He must be a man raised by a man; his father.”

—Jordanian man

However, more females say they would be more understanding of boys with such traits – that they would be supportive and that they did not think a boy displaying “feminine traits” should be dealt with in a strict way. These women say the boy will “outgrow that phase”, which nevertheless reveals that women also think that men should not have strong feminine traits when they grow up.

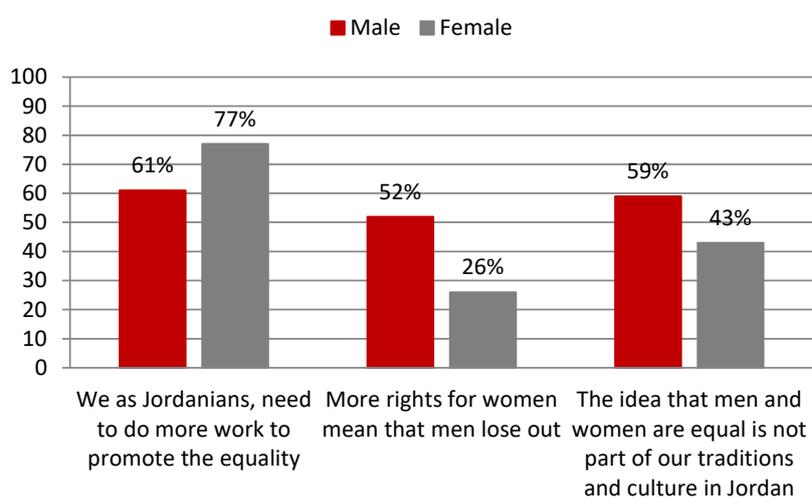
“His behaviour is acceptable; this [playing music] is his hobby since childhood; his father should not destroy his son’s hobby. Yes, it would be problematic if the guy grew up to be soft ... it is wrong to treat him this way! Just like a guy who loves to play with kitchen toys. They’d tell him ‘You are a man! The kitchen is for girls!’ Imagine if he grew up to be a chef! We should not destroy kids’ hobbies. Society will say that he is soft! In the end, he will become a man who loves music. There is nothing wrong with that.”

—Jordanian woman

## 4.1.2 Equality in society

There is clear agreement between men and women that **gender equality has not yet been achieved in Jordan and that more work is needed to promote it**. Statistical breakdowns of the Syrian community in Jordan show even higher agreement with that statement, especially among women (Figure 4-1). Despite agreeing that equality is yet to be achieved, over one third of respondents believe that guaranteeing more rights for women means that men lose out. This suggests that a large section of Jordanian society sees **women's rights as a threat to men's rights**. Similarly, almost half of the total sample believes that the idea that **men and women are equal is not part of Jordanian culture**. Unsurprisingly, it is mostly male respondents who agree with both of these statements.

**Figure 4.1 Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about gender equality, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

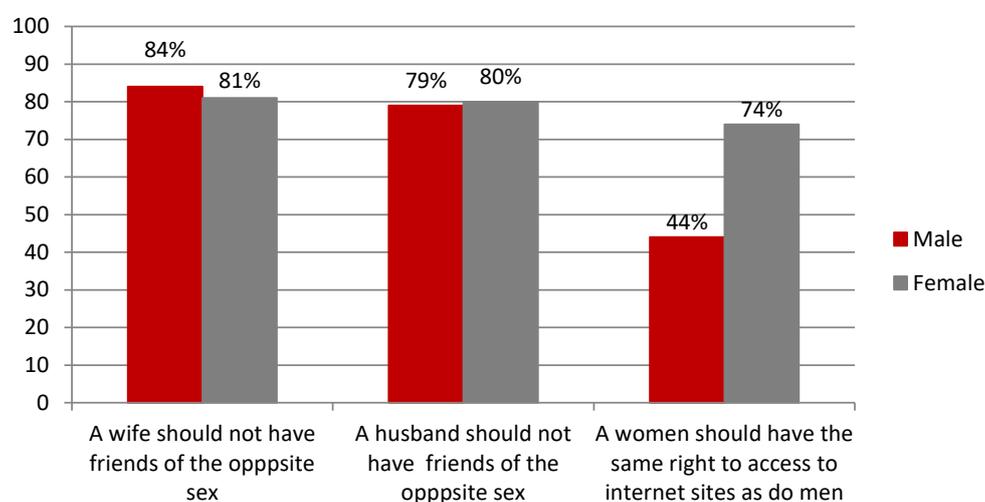


While many Jordanians consider gender equality a necessary goal, which all the society should work towards, a gender-inequitable patriarchal understanding of rights and roles remains embedded within society, resulting in varying acceptance of women's rights and freedoms. Surveyed women, and men in particular, are unlikely to accept that **unmarried women should have the same right as men to live alone**. The majority also affirm that married couples should not have friends of the opposite sex – with men more likely to agree that wives should not have male friends. In alignment with this trend, When it comes to women having the same rights as men to access websites and navigate the Internet, only 44 percent of men agreeing that women should have the same rights to access and navigate the internet compared to 74 percent of women (Figure 4.2).

“In terms of mobile phone use, people do not worry about young men the way they worry about young women. Young men's mistakes are considered less harmful than young women's mistakes because of the reputation.”

—40-year-old Iraqi man

**Figure 4.2 Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about women's personal freedoms, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



### 4.1.3 Access to work

Gender inequality is one of the major issues hindering Jordan's advancement as a country.<sup>17</sup> Although women are highly educated, they have one of the lowest labour force participation rates globally.<sup>18</sup> In 2021, only 13.8 percent of women were economically active in Jordan.<sup>19</sup> Women in Jordan face many challenges that hinder their participation in the labour force, including structural barriers, or gender based discriminatory practices in the workplace and persisting social norms that create pervasive stereotypes about women and men, whereby women are expected to be the caregivers and men are expected to be the breadwinners and final decision-makers in households. Additionally, social norms play a critical role in women's mobility in terms of transportation, working hours, type and sector of employment and working environment. Moreover, the lack of childcare support and safe transportation and the persistence of sexual harassment are among the main reasons for women not participating in the labour force.

**Businesses and jobs are gendered.** Work in Jordan is strongly marked by horizontal occupational segregation, meaning that there are jobs and professions that are classified as masculine and that the presence of female labourers in those fields is frowned upon. Working women tend to be concentrated in the public sector<sup>20</sup> (44 percent), particularly in education (38 percent), health and social work (12 percent),<sup>21</sup> while employees in business, engineering and IT sectors remain predominantly males. Some limitations related to women's work are based on the jurisprudence of Islamic scholars, such as modesty and segregation between the sexes. However, other limitations are mainly based on existing customs and beliefs in society, such as requiring the approval of the husband to pursue employment and returning home early that is supported by regulation.

<sup>17</sup> Information and Research Center – King Hussein Foundation (IRCKHF) and UN Women. 2019. Gender Discrimination in Jordan 2019. <https://bit.ly/3MN7OsN>

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). N.D. Labour force participation rate: Jordan. Human Development Reports database. <https://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/48706f>

<sup>19</sup> Department of Statistics. "Jordan Women Statistics": <https://bit.ly/3xgpmOy>

<sup>20</sup> This preference is based on the fact that "public sector jobs are secure, there are fewer working hours and many benefits, among them health insurance, maternity leave and social security." (Abaneh, Sarah. 2020. Jordan Gender Barometer: Survey Report. CSS, Hivos, JNCW. p. 48. [http://haqqi.info/check\\_1.php?t=research\\_paper&f=user\\_325408983](http://haqqi.info/check_1.php?t=research_paper&f=user_325408983)).

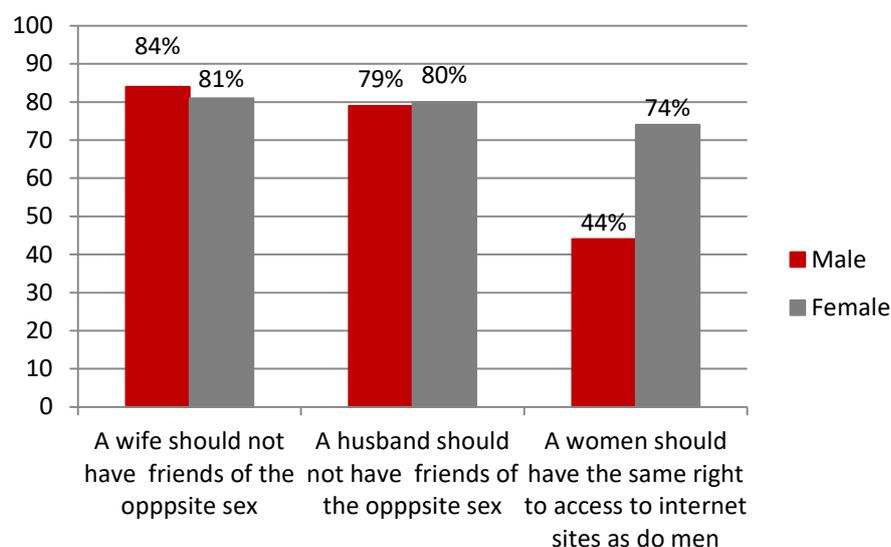
<sup>21</sup> Essaid, Aida, Sajdi, Jude and Abu Taleb. 2019. "Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan," Washington: World Bank; IRCKHF. 2019. Gender Discrimination in Jordan. <http://haqqi.info/en/haqqi/research/gender-discrimination-jordan>.

“Women are lucky in many things. They say that they are oppressed in religion, society and demand equality. Equality wouldn’t work, equity is what needs to be applied; it gives women their full rights. Women have much more rights than men. The prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, asked us to treat women right. However, women are not aware of their rights. They say we want equality, then go work in the dirty and difficult jobs like men. Is that the equality you want? Many men complete their education and search for a job, but cannot find one, why? Because women take these jobs. I am not saying they should not work. There are many jobs the society requires women to work in, not the jobs that only suit men. [Women] have many roles: teachers, dentists or doctors. These jobs are required to treat other women and girls.”

—22-year-old Syrian male

On the other hand, the quantitative findings show that men are more accepting of giving equal rights to women, especially if providing these rights does not affect their own. A significant number (71 percent) of the sample support allowing men and women equal access to all types of work. Additionally, both men and women affirm that employers should be required to offer equal insurance benefits to men and women and that men should be allowed to access the social security benefits and pensions of their deceased wives (Figure 4-3). According to social security law,<sup>22</sup> the benefits of a deceased wife cannot be accessed by her widower unless proof is given that she was the head/main breadwinner of the household, thus automatically relegating women to a second tier in their role as head of the family.

Figure 4.3 Percentage of men and women who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about working women legislation, IMAGES Jordan 2022



<sup>22</sup> Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 2014. Article (81) of “Law No. (1) for 2014 Social Security Law”. 29 January.

However, conditions on the ground are still unfavourable to women's integration in the job market. A UN Women study conducted in 2020 shows that only 80 of the 299 married women included in the analysis were employed, while the remaining women reported that they were unemployed<sup>23</sup>. Additionally, 200 among the 219 unemployed women reported that they have never been employed, despite the fact that half of them declared to have completed at least secondary education. In Jordan, a large number of educated unemployed women cannot provide financial assistance to their household.<sup>24</sup> The gender pay gap in the public and private sectors varies in Jordan. According to a report published by the Department of Statistics in 2020, the gender pay gap in the public sector reached 13%, while in the private sector it reached 18% – with males in the public sector earning JOD 659 a month on average, compared to JOD 572 for females.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, it was found that the wage gap narrows among entry-level positions. As women progress to higher positions, they do not feel it is their right to ask for benefits, such as maternity leave. Consequently, the gender pay gap grows as women progress in their career. Moreover, the largest gender wage gaps are found to be in senior positions that require highly skilled workers.<sup>26</sup> With regard to the financial situation of women in Jordan, it has been found that widows and divorced women have the lowest income. One study revealed that 64 percent of divorced women and 56 percent of widows have a monthly income of less than JD 150, compared to 19 percent of married women.<sup>27</sup>

**In the IMAGES Jordan quantitative study, 8 in 10 male respondents agree that women should privilege marriage over their career.** Older male (up to 83 percent) and female respondents are more opposed than younger generations to women pursuing a career versus staying at home and taking care of her family. Women with higher levels of education are, however, more supportive of women's freedom of choice. By majority, male respondents maintain that **married women should not have the right to work outside the home on the same terms as men** (Figure 4-4). Within the Syrian community, this attitude is more widespread.

More than half of female respondents and 85 percent of male respondents agree that **if work opportunities are scarce, men should have access to jobs before women**. Due to limitations related to their refugee status or existing discrimination in the job market, a greater number of Syrian men and women also agree with the statement, although male agreement is still higher than female. This seems to suggest that a gendered understanding of access to work – privileging men over women – still dominates across communities in Jordan.

IMAGES Jordan quantitative data show that 66 percent of the survey's female respondents are housewives. This economic and workforce marginalization not only increases the pressure on men to provide but also often leaves women in a dependent and insecure situation.

<sup>23</sup> UN Women. 2020. Meta-analysis on Women's Participation in the Labour Force in Jordan. <https://bit.ly/3ysVhVd>

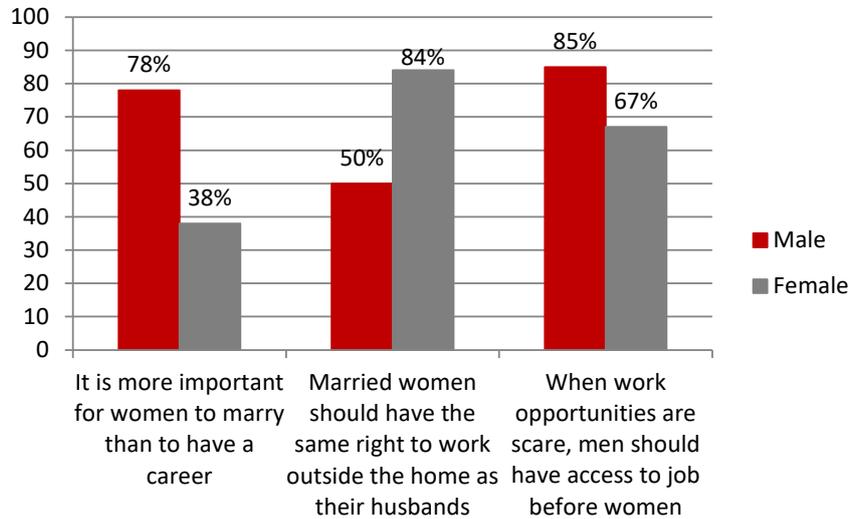
<sup>24</sup> Arab Renaissance for Democracy Development. 2021. Women's Financial Vulnerability: Challenges Women Face with Debt and Loans. <https://bit.ly/38zr8Tv>

<sup>25</sup> Department of Statistics. 2020. Yearbook 2020. <https://bit.ly/3s5pvnn>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Arab Renaissance for Democracy Development. 2021. Women's Financial Vulnerability: Challenges Women Face with Debt and Loans. <https://bit.ly/39iTv8M>.

**Figure 4-4. Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about women's access to work, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



**Men and women think that paid work is an option for women but a necessity for men.** The qualitative research shows that gender roles dictate that the male has the sole financial responsibility in a household. The idea of a “stay-at-home mom” is totally acceptable, while the idea of a “stay-at-home dad” is outrageous and not supposed to happen. Many respondents acknowledge that a lot of males have lost their jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for them a male must always find ways to get back to work. A wife should not be the sole breadwinner, and if she makes money the money can be hers, while the husband’s money is for the family. One male respondent said that parents might lend their son money, rather than see him in such a shameful situation where his wife is the breadwinner.

“I am sure that in our Jordanian society, the parents would not be satisfied if their son remains at home while his wife works. They would consider him a failure. This is how people view the situation.” — Jordanian male engaged in an FGD for males between the ages of 36–65  
 “People do not understand that I cannot find a job and that the job is temporary. People think that the job is permanent.”

—Jordanian male engaged in a FGD for males between the ages of 36–65

The Jordan Gender Barometer also found that even if both male and female respondents believe that they have to work to provide the family with financial stability, 57.6 percent of men believe it is their right to decide whether their wives work or not.<sup>28</sup>

As for Syrian refugees, research has looked into the impact of displacement on gender norms among Syrian refugees in Jordan and other neighbouring countries. Reports show that the Syrian crisis and consequent displacement has resulted in refugee women and men having to redefine

<sup>28</sup> Based on a survey with 2,400 households – 50.2% women, 49.8% men (Abaneh, Sarah. 2020. Jordan Gender Barometer: Survey Report. CSS, Hivos, JNCW. p. 48. [http://haqqi.info/check\\_1.php?t=research\\_paper&f=user\\_325408983](http://haqqi.info/check_1.php?t=research_paper&f=user_325408983)).

their roles and the core aspects of their identities. As a consequence of the crisis and displacement, many Syrian refugee women have become the main income-earners of their family. For some, this has increased their sense of empowerment.<sup>29</sup> For others, it has had negative repercussions in their well-being, as they have to carry a double burden of being the caregiver and the main financial provider for the family.<sup>30</sup>

“One stays at home and the other works, there is no problem. He can look after the kids... there are also men who take care of their children even if their wives are working. For some it’s normal to work in the house, it’s in their nature. Some men wait for the glass of water to be served to them; they won’t move an inch. Other men help. Jordanians help their wives in washing, even some Syrian men help their wives, and they don’t have to be employed nor have young children. The one who helps has chivalry, he can see his wife needs help. His mind is not submissive. Some would say he is “not a man” or that he is ‘controlled by his wife’. That’s annoying...What shall we do?”

—Syrian refugee woman involved in a FGD in Mafraq

**Women are able to take on responsibility during hard times.** Some of the interviewed women say they need to work out of financial necessity, as the sole breadwinners for the family, or if the head of the household’s income is insufficient to support the family on their own.

“Regarding society’s perception, the situation in cities is different from villages. In villages, they control women’s movements, especially divorced or separated women. Syrian women here face challenges because they are the head of the household and sometimes cannot provide for their children. Many women, not only me, came here without their husbands and they were not offered any help. Also, men do face challenges, such as unemployment and day labour. If they do not work for one day, it affects them. Men face pressure, depression and many more”.

—45-year-old Syrian female, IDI

**Women are more aware of the importance of a wife’s contribution to household income and the important dual role they play inside and outside the house.** 72% of men agree that working wives should contribute to household income, compared to 88 percent of women. Acceptance of such a situation is, however, limited by a woman’s household responsibilities: 93 percent of men and 77 percent of women agree that if a woman’s paid work impinges on her household responsibilities, the household needs should come first. Older and less educated women are more likely to side with this statement. (Figure 4.5).

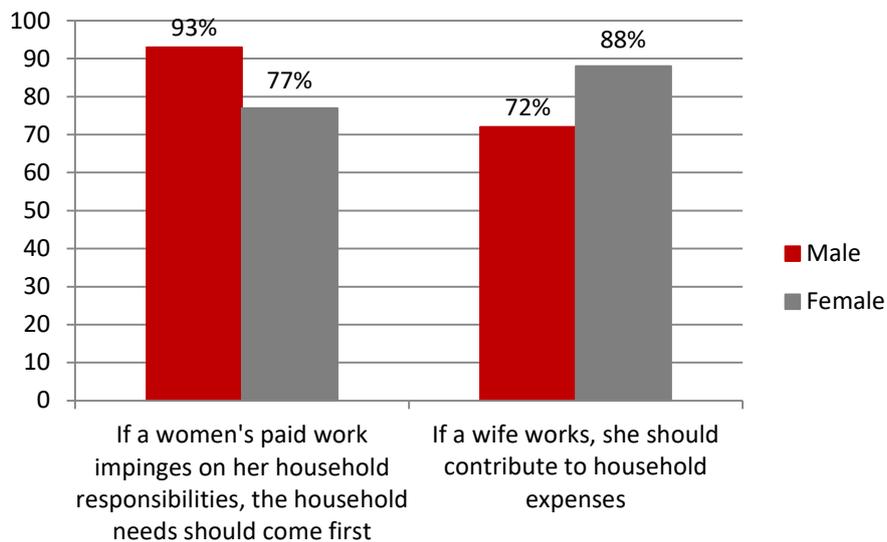
<sup>29</sup> El-Masri, Roula, Claire Harvey and Rosa Garwood. 2013. Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon. ABAAD-Resource Centre for Gender Equality & Oxford.

<sup>30</sup> International Rescue Committee. 2019. Shifting social norms: a gender analysis of time poverty, paid work and masculinity in Jordan.

**Women do most of the unpaid work.** Qualitative research shows that women are under particular stress having to juggle homeschooling, cooking, cleaning and other household activities in addition to working the expected hours in their paid jobs from home. These additional tasks and hours of unpaid work have fallen on women due to pre-existing gender inequalities.

**Men strongly support the idea that they should be the primary breadwinners.** Qualitative research also shows that some men describe women’s work outside the home as a destabilizing force within the family, supplanting the husband’s “natural” role as a provider. Others worry about a woman’s career drawing her away from her supposedly primary role as caregiver, putting children at risk. Some women are also concerned about the risk of male backlash against demands for economic empowerment.

**Figure 4.5 Percentage of men and women who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about working women, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



## 4.2 Attitudes about women’s leadership (political and organizational)

### 4.2.1 Political leadership aspects

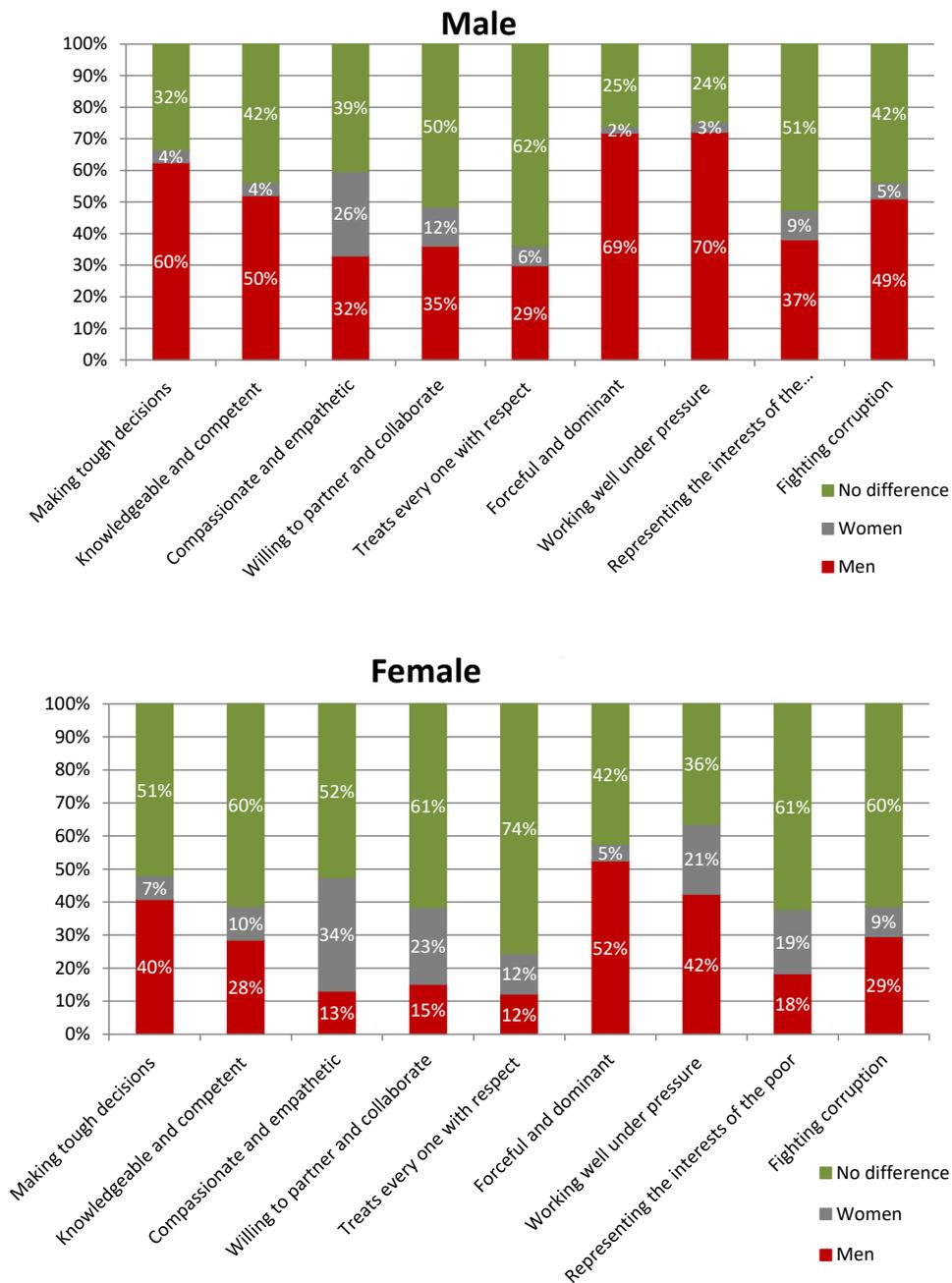
**Men do not recognize women’s ability to lead, but generally support their participation in public and political life.** Even though Jordanian women don’t currently face legal barriers to exercise their full rights to political participation, their representation at the national level, in local assemblies, and in other institutions is still limited.

Although the majority of respondents accept that women can be political leaders, many Jordanians still seem to believe that men are better leaders than women. When asked a series of questions about important characteristics for Jordanian political leaders, men and especially women state that there is no difference between the genders regarding most listed characteristics. (Figure 4.6).

Characteristics that generate disagreement are those traditionally considered masculine, such as the ability to “make tough decisions”, being “forceful and dominant”, and being able to

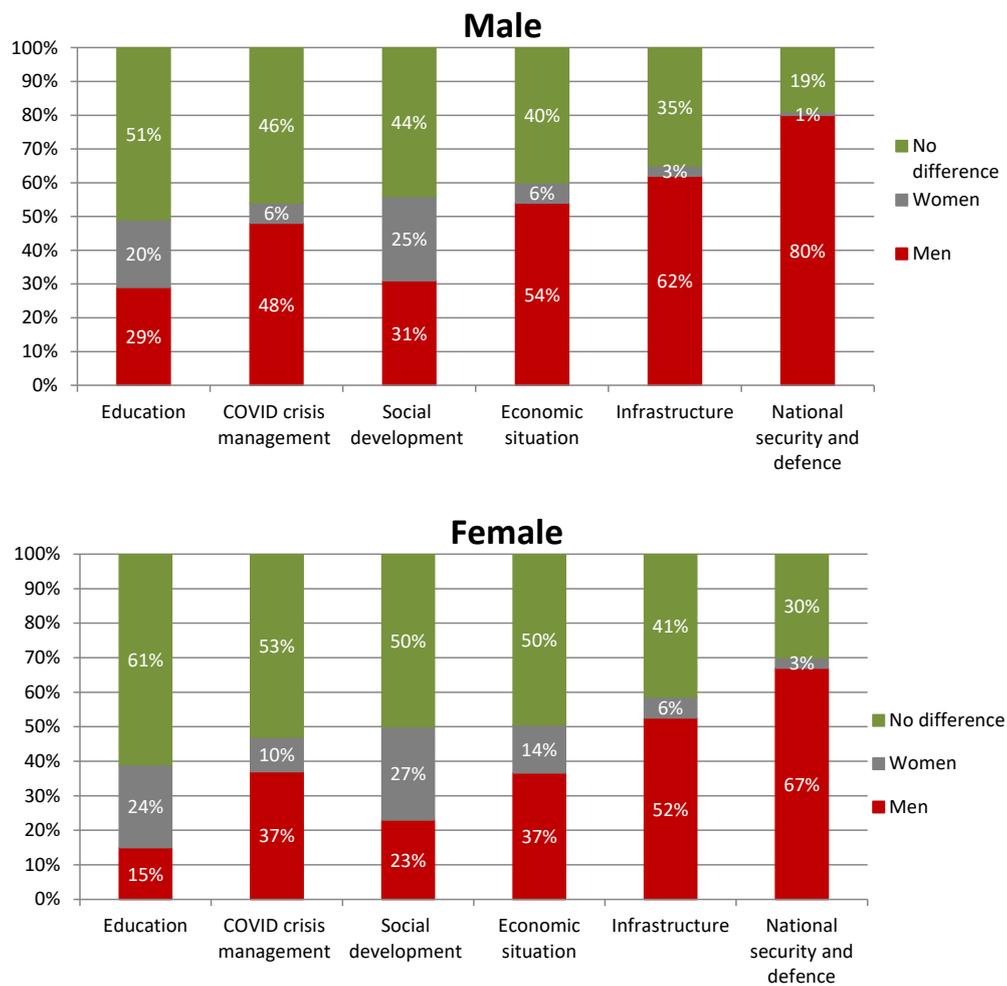
“work well under pressure.” The only trait where women are seen as superior to men is in being “compassionate and empathetic.” Jordanian men and women seem more or less to share the same female stereotypes about emotionality and traditionally feminine traits while men are considered more connected with cerebral and traditionally masculine attributes.

**Figure 4.6 Percentage of men and women who perceive a list of features of political leaders as either better fit to describe a male or female political leader, or see no difference, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



A similar trend is visible regarding perceptions of men and women in high political office. Similar to the other leadership attributes, men are perceived by both sexes as better fit to make key decisions on “national security” and “infrastructure” while women are stereotypically assessed as possibly able to lead on “education” and “social development” (Figure 4-7). Male respondents are also very enthusiastic about their ability to manage the “economic situation” and “health crisis”.

**Figure 4.7 Percentage of men and women who perceive a list of policy areas as better managed in high political office by males or females, or see no difference, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

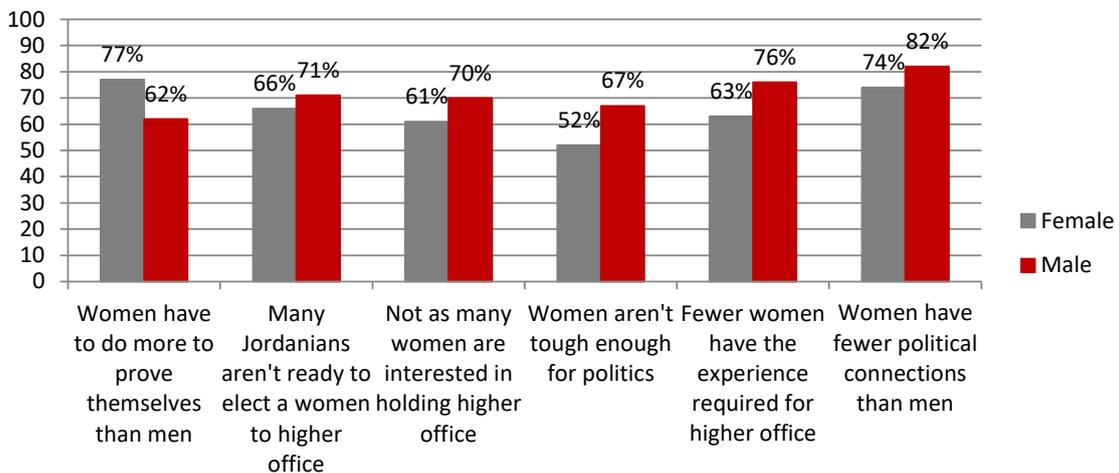


## 4.2.2 Women in public life

**Many Jordanians are not ready to elect a woman for higher office and agree that women need to do more to prove themselves in the political life.** Roughly two-thirds of men agree with the idea that women are not interested in holding higher office, not tough enough for policy or decision-making positions, and do not have the required experience or necessary political connections to run for high office (Figure 4.8).

Female respondents are more conscious than men of the challenges facing women in political life. Levels of awareness about these challenges rise along with age and life experience, for both men and women.

**Figure 4.8 Percentage of men and women who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about women’s participation in politics and leadership positions, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



In the qualitative analysis, emphasis is made on the glass ceiling that limits the advancement of women in leadership – such as the practices and beliefs associated with the culture of society, and the extent of its ability to provide material and moral support to women – which is alive and well rooted in society for both Jordanians and Syrians. The findings also highlight the fact that society and culture play a major role in consolidating the differences between men and women, where values taught by the family, in school, and/or by media and social networks are perpetuating these negative beliefs.

“After Tawjihi, I felt responsible for my own decisions and future. I wanted to study Journalism, but my brother refused because he thought that it was dangerous for me and because it involves travelling. After that, I felt that I should make my own decisions. I studied to graduate with an Arabic Diploma. I started consulting my mother and father first. My mom is wise. Educated people know to trust women as long as they are educated and can make their own decisions!”

—Syrian woman

**In the quantitative analysis, both men and women are generally supportive of women’s participation in public leadership.** Although men are consistently less supportive than women across all 13 statements (Table 4-3), there is growing acceptance of the idea of women working in traditionally male-dominant workspaces, such as government offices, Parliament, trade unions, local governance entities, the judiciary and the police.

Women receive less support, particularly from men, for work in some positions in the military or for taking part in political protests, confirming that some fields and activities are still regarded as unsuitable for women. Educated women are more accepting of participation in political protests.

Regarding women’s participation in key leadership positions such as prime minister, religious leader, governor, or head of police, it is less likely for women to receive support, especially from men. The existence of gender biases in different public sectors and high offices limits women’s access to equal career opportunities in political and leadership roles. The sharia judicial system and ecclesiastical courts in Jordan are also not open for women.

**Table 4.3 Percentage of men and women who approved of women’s participation in particular public positions, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|   | Men (%) | Women (%) |
|---|---------|-----------|
| <b>Attitudes towards gender roles and decision-making</b>       |         |           |
| Women as Members of Parliament/assemblies                       | 60%     | 84%       |
| Women as Minister of Interior                                   | 40%     | 70%       |
| Women as Minister of Health                                     | 61%     | 82%       |
| Women as Prime Minister   | 37%     | 67%       |
| Women as Governor   | 41%     | 69%       |
| Women as Mayor  | 48%     | 73%       |
| Women as demonstrators in political protests                    | 29%     | 51%       |
| Women as police officers  | 51%     | 71%       |
| Women as the Head of Police                                     | 33%     | 66%       |
| Women as leaders of trade unions                                | 55%     | 74%       |
| Women as judges   | 55%     | 70%       |
| Women as soldiers or combatants in the military or armed forces | 37%     | 60%       |
| Women as religious leaders                                      | 32%     | 51%       |

Once more, in the qualitative section, women’s lack of participation in decision-making roles is found to be the result of cultural considerations shaped by a set of practices and beliefs that are well rooted in Jordanian society. It starts with simple concepts – such as implying that women

are not fit to drive or travel alone – and transcends into larger beliefs related to gender roles and how they affect and define women’s positions in public and private life. Additionally, respondents voice that the lack of empowerment methods or tools – such as providing information, granting powers, encouragement, rewards, self-development and training – and the absence of supporting legislation and laws, have had a negative impact on women’s participation in policymaking and leadership positions.

“In our society, girls are not allowed to go to Amman alone, but my father did not think this way and gave me all the freedom I needed to depend on myself. I also used to volunteer when I was in university. When I was 20, I co-established an association. Also in my village, they invite me whenever a seminar is held. They depend on me and trust me with everything. They even started calling me the future Member of Parliament. Children also see me as a role model. This is a huge responsibility.”

—57-year-old Jordanian woman

“For women, it is oppression. They want to be independent but feel that they are not allowed to do anything. I face some of these challenges now. For example, when I established my association, I had to move a lot, but people kept telling me that I shouldn’t and that my father wouldn’t allow it and kept telling me to get married. For me, as long as my father was good with what I am doing, no one has a say in it. Men do not face similar challenges at all, they do whatever they want, good or bad, and want to marry a good woman too! Men are extremely lucky. They are allowed to do anything. Even if they do wrong things, people say ‘he’s a man, he can do whatever he wishes.’”

—25-year-old Jordanian woman

## 4.3 Attitudes about gender equality and laws

### 4.3.1 Equality in law

When it comes to the legal guardianship of children, fathers (or the next in line, grandfathers) can be given the exclusive right to the “Wilaya”<sup>31</sup> and with it, full decision-making power over a child’s education, access to health, right to travel abroad and marriage. However, an overwhelming majority of Jordanians agree that parents should be granted equal guardianship rights over their children (Figure 4-9). Another 89 percent of Jordanians and 79 percent of Syrians agree with “holding guardians whose children drop out of school (before age 16) accountable” as this protects children, particularly girls, from dropping out of school early for marriage or due to other deeply rooted cultural and social norms that discriminate against women.

<sup>31</sup> Article 223 of the Personal Status Law establishes that the Wali is the child’s father. The automatic granting of Wilaya – legal authority over the child – to a child’s father will not be removed even if the father acts in violation of the child’s best interests.

“Women face many challenges in education, and when searching for a job. Also, some families decide to take their daughters out of school when they turn 12. There are some bad traditions.”

—45-year-old Syrian woman

Males, on the other hand, are brought up to believe that the financial responsibility of the family and its welfare is their sole responsibility, and so children might work in addition to going to school or instead of going to school to fulfil their role as providers for the family.

“I dropped out of school. I had to work. I left school in the seventh grade. My father told me ‘you have to work’, and I did. I mean, here I felt that it was my responsibility to leave school, I couldn’t continue studying. The real reason was the economic situation of the family. It was hard, we were in a bad situation, and we were four girls and four boys.”

—46-year-old Iraqi man

Findings show that there are also many socioeconomic factors leading to early school dropout, such as the high cost of education or parents not interested in educating their children as they would rather have them work and earn a living, especially for boys, or get married (even at an early age) for girls (see more in section 2.1).

“I dropped out of school when I was in the seventh grade because I couldn’t comprehend everything and because of my family’s bad economic situation. We were a big family. So, my father asked me to get a job to help our family.”

—Iraqi man

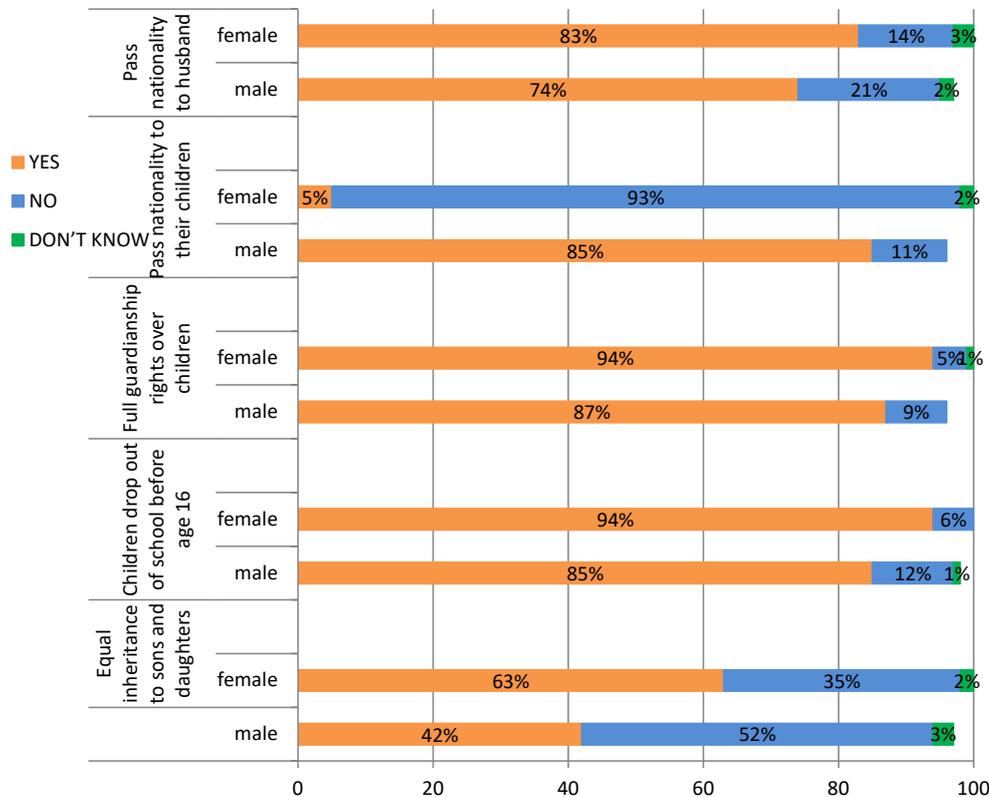
Jordanian law grants Jordanian fathers the right to pass their nationality on to family members. However, Jordanian women whose children are from non-Jordanian fathers are not permitted to pass on their citizenship to their children. Up to 87 percent of men and women agree that women should be allowed to pass nationality to their children and 80 percent agree that women should be able to pass their nationality to their husbands.

When laws are strongly related to Islamic Shari’a, as is the case with inheritance rights, support for reform lessens among men and women. Less than half of Jordanian male respondents favour new legislation granting equal inheritance to sons and daughters, compared to 63 percent of women, particularly those with secondary education or higher, who support the idea. Within the Syrian community, approval is even higher, as up to 72 percent of Syrian women agree compared to 52 percent for Syrian men.

“There were bad traditions in the society. Women did not have rights in Syria due to traditions and the law. This included denying them the right of inheritance. Concerning women who wish to get divorced, a husband would his wife, first to give up her rights, so he would approve to divorce her”

—Syrian woman from an FGD

Figure 4.9 Percentage of men and women who approve or disapprove of new legislation to allow more gender equality in law, IMAGES Jordan 2022



## 4.4. Childhood and adolescence

### 4.4.1 Gender discrimination towards children

**Gender discrimination towards children is changing in Jordan.** While previous studies have highlighted that a traditional, gendered understanding dominates parental attitudes towards children,<sup>32</sup> there seems to be a positive change in the ways that gender and the rights of sons and daughters are perceived. When asked if having a son is more important than having a daughter, an overwhelming majority – 86 percent of male and 80 percent of female respondents – disagree. The majority also disagree with the statement “If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters.” However, it should be noted that the percentage of male respondents

<sup>32</sup> IRCKHF. 2012. “To be a Girl in Jordan”.

who disagree drops to 55 percent, indicating that fathers remain inclined to prioritize their sons' education over that of their daughters. In contrast, 84 percent of female respondents disagree with the statement, suggesting that Jordanian mothers have a less gendered approach towards the education of their children, even when resources are scarce.

It is interesting to note that Syrian respondents reverse the trends of their Jordanian counterparts, with 62 percent of Syrian males supporting a less discriminatory approach to children's education, while the percentage of Syrian women who disagree with the statement is 70 percent.

Qualitative fieldwork, however, shows a different reality in different areas of the Kingdom. From focus group discussions, especially in rural areas that are poorer and often densely populated of the country, it emerges that, **despite what is stated by respondents in the structured survey, giving birth to males is still an obsession that haunts many families and the failure to do so even constitutes a reason to end marriage.** The prevailing community culture that prefers to have boys to girls still exists and is justified by many respondents. Many men still prefer to have boys and often continue to seek pregnancies.

Some respondents note that the failure of a wife to produce male children may be sufficient reason to destroy the family and end the marriage in order to search for another woman who will give birth to a male son, even if the man may have reproductive health issues that reduce the chances of pregnancy.

“My daughter-in-law’s husband left her here in Amman when she was still young. He told her that he was leaving her because she could not give birth to any children, whether boys or girls. He returned to Iraq and married an older woman. The husband and his new wife tried [in vitro fertilization] IVF, but it didn’t work for them. This is something we see in real life.”

—Iraqi refugee man, in an FGD

**Gender inequality starts early in the lives of most Jordanian and refugee men and women.** Both male and female respondents say that growing up, they had different expectations placed on them depending on their respective sex. Females are, for example, expected to dress “appropriately” and help with household chores or childcare, while males are expected to behave “appropriately” and earn money at some point. “Appropriately” pertains to keeping up with gender norms and expectations, where men are strong figures who control and provide while women are nurturing caregivers who obey and do household duties.

Nearly all females mention physical appearance, and how it is always ingrained in their upbringing to hide body parts, and that a woman’s body should be guarded. A few of them also mention not understanding why they were required to wear the hijab as an example. While interactions between children from different sexes is controlled by society, the younger generation seems to be more critical of these views, while saying that they have not changed or have even gotten worse in some areas of the country.

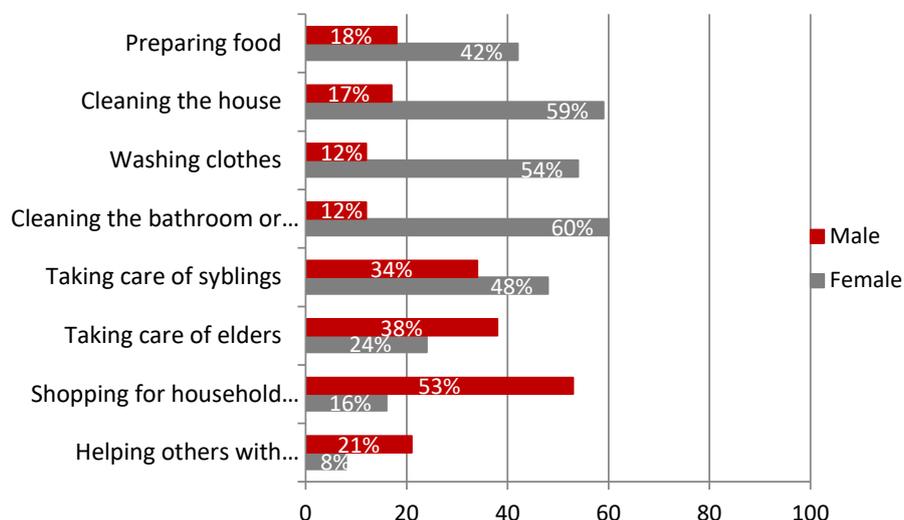
“...wearing the hijab, I guess when you are in third or fourth grade you must wear it. You are a girl and must dress like that. No, not in my house but the world around you, from neighbours and uncles. We have a rule that for a girl, once she hits puberty, it is done; she has to wear the hijab. It is forbidden to play with others... For example, I now see girls as young as second or first grade are forbidden to play with the opposite sex because they are girls. I am against that because if a girl does not mix with the opposite sex within certain boundaries, she becomes afraid of them and will not know what their intentions are. When you are young, you can learn about them, what they think, and how they behave, so that you could take care in the future”

—42-year-old Jordanian woman

#### 4.4.2 Rights and responsibilities of sons and daughters

Jordanian youth are raised with a deeply gendered understanding of their rights and responsibilities. When asked about involvement in household chores during their adolescence, sharp differences emerge between male and female respondents, suggesting that a traditional domestic education, based on stereotyped gender divisions, prevails in Jordanian society. As shown in Figure 4-10, the majority of female respondents report participating in household chores between the ages of 13 and 18. Male informants, on the other hand, are far less likely to report participating in any traditionally feminine household tasks as adolescents, with especially low rates of participation in chores such as preparing food, cleaning the house, washing clothes and cleaning the bathroom or toilet. The highest rate of male participation in housework is in “shopping for household items,” a task that requires leaving the house and is, therefore, traditionally considered more appropriate for men than women (see Figure 4.2.2a). Tasks based on responsibilities for other members of the family (elders and siblings) also see higher rates of involvement from men.

**Figure 4.10 Percentage of male and female respondents aged 18 to 59 who report participating in selected domestic tasks when they were 13 to 18 years old, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Rates of participation in household chores for Syrian men are similar to those of men in the host community, although participation in shopping for household items is 6 percent lower for the Syrian sample. Syrian women also report higher rates of participation in domestic work than their Jordanian counterparts. Syrian women report taking care of siblings at rates 22 points higher than Jordanian women, 12 points higher for cleaning the house, and 9 points higher for preparing food, cleaning the bathroom, and washing clothes.

“The first time I felt responsible when I started working, I was in the sixth or seventh grade. Since I was little, I had more potential and freedom than my other siblings, my family even treated me as a grown-up. I have three older siblings. None of my siblings were allowed to move around as freely as I was.”

—Syrian man

This division of labour from a young age also highlights the roles that a woman and a man must fulfil in the future, with girls becoming wives and mothers while boys become providers or breadwinners.

“Even if you have a doll, you have to consider yourself as ‘her’ mother, I mean, this is the femininity in the matter; it is spontaneous. But since childhood, I remember that I used to work at home, work in the kitchen, and sometimes even with my little sister we used to play mother and daughter with each other. This feeling does not become true until you get married and give birth though.”

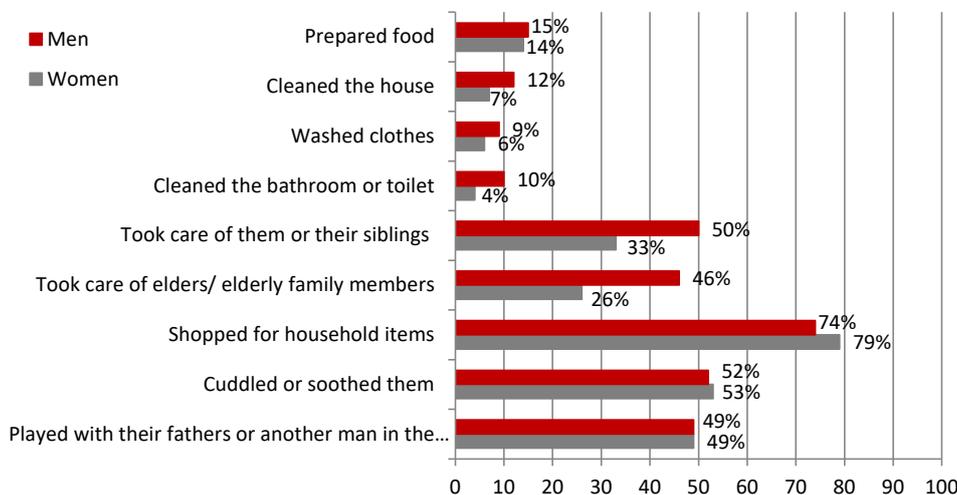
—32-year-old Jordanian woman

**IMAGES data show that the unbalanced division of household tasks and responsibilities is perpetuated through generations.** As Figure 4-11 shows, the majority of respondents do not recall their fathers participating in chores or other kinds of housework traditionally considered part of women’s duties. Chores outside the household, such as buying food, are more commonly taken care of by men and generally understood as part of their duties. Female respondents are more likely to affirm that their fathers never or very rarely helped with chores: 73 percent report that they never saw their father or another man cleaning at home, compared to 54 percent of the male sample. While the majority of both male and female respondents do not recall their fathers participating in chores, they do recall fathers’ care and affection for children and most report that their father played and spent time with them even if he did not assist them with schoolwork. This suggests that fathers consider play and physical attention to be important aspects of fatherhood. However, commitment to more consistent attention, such as educational support, appears to still be considered part of a mother’s responsibility. These data confirm findings from previous studies that have pointed out how gender roles are internalized during childhood, especially the gender-inequitable division of work that children witness.<sup>33</sup> Children’s early interactions with their direct environment, through family, caregivers, nursery, school and day-care, affect their development and how they understand or respond to gender roles.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ababneh, Sara. 2020. Jordan Gender Barometer. Center for Strategic Studies. Amman, Jordan.

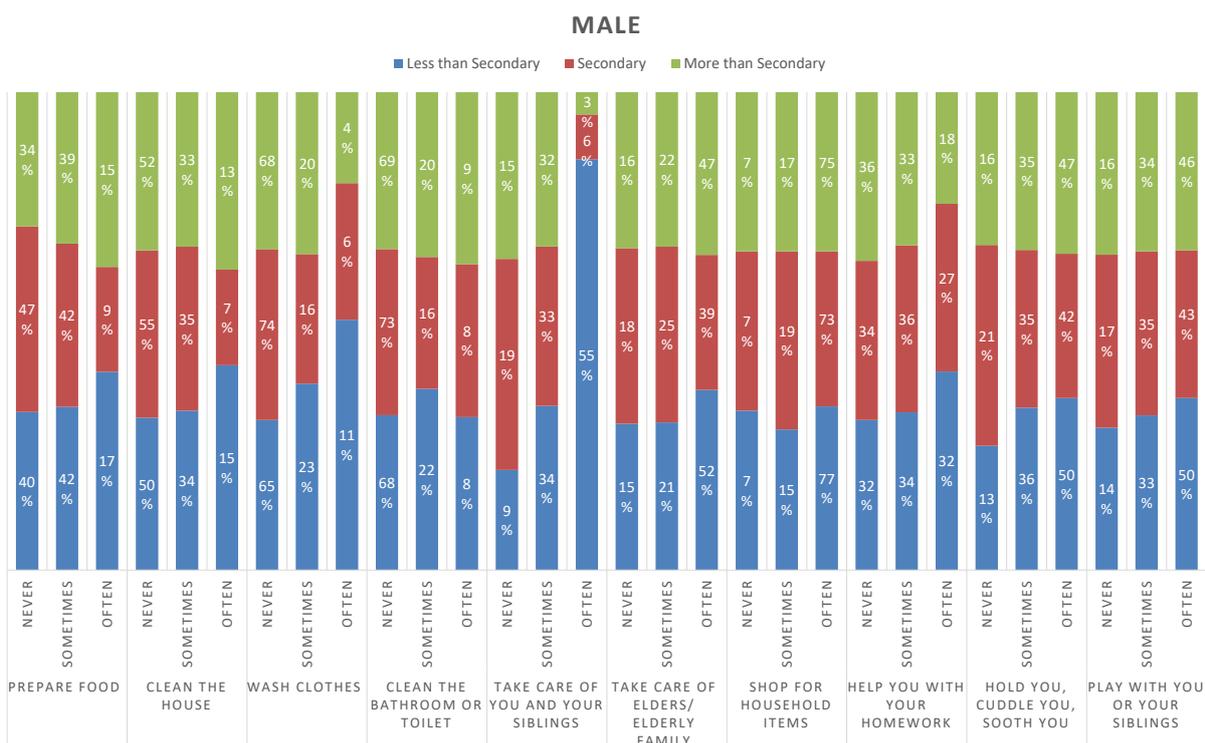
<sup>34</sup> Witt, Susan D. 2020. “Parental Influence on Children’s Socialization to Gender Roles.” *Adolescence*. 32 (126) pp. 253–60. <https://bit.ly/3kpRPNf>

**Figure 4.11 Percentage of male and female respondents aged 18 to 59 reporting that their father or any other man (excluding male domestic workers) ever performed childcare tasks, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



According to Figure 4.12, the level of involvement of the father in household and in childcare chores is influenced by the level of education of both fathers and mothers. Families with less-educated parents seem to rely more on a more gender-inequitable division of work, with fathers rarely helping with domestic tasks. Conversely, families with a higher level of education see fathers' participation in household chores increase.

**Figure 4.12 Percentage of male and female respondents aged 18 to 59 reporting that their father ever performed childcare tasks at home according to the fathers' educational level, IMAGES Jordan 2022**





“The division, I never thought about it! It’s striking. But what I have thought about was that my mother was working before she had me, and she never went back to work. This has bothered me, but my parents are smart and aware of their choices, so she knew that it could work like this.”

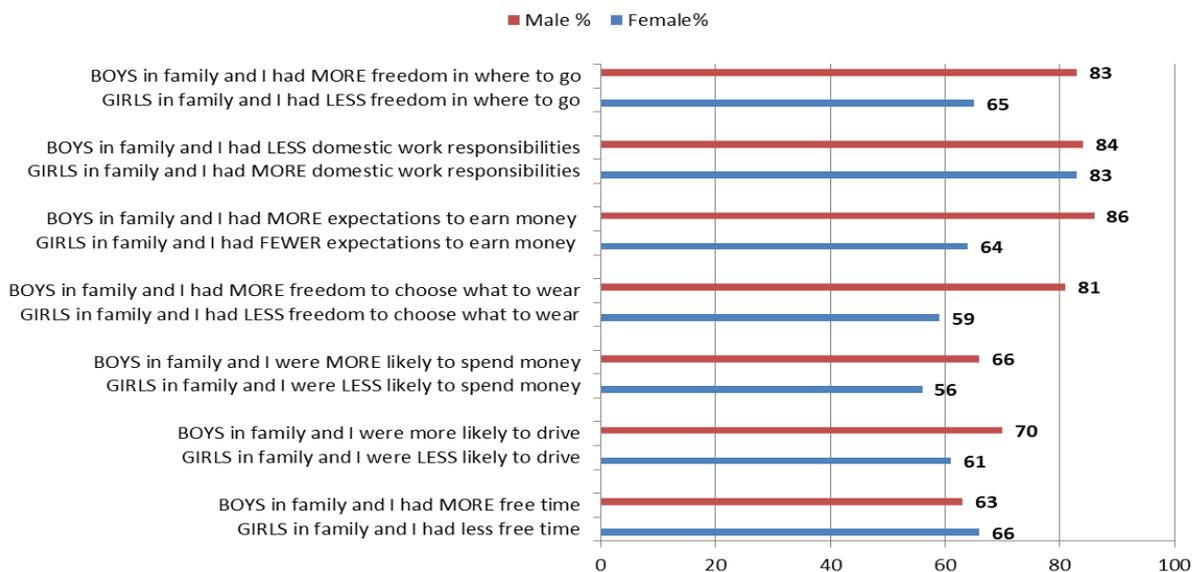
—22-year-old Jordanian man

“When I was girl, I was responsible of everything in our house. I felt that I was able to take care of everything and everyone around me. My brothers were responsible for certain things, but I was, for instance, responsible for teaching my sister, cleaning the house and welcoming guests.”

—57-year-old Jordanian woman

The ways responsibilities are understood within the family clearly shape the way rights and freedoms are granted to boys and girls in their childhood and adolescence. Figure 4.13 shows general agreement that boys enjoy more freedom than girls in Jordanian society. The overwhelming majority of male respondents say that growing up they had more freedom than girls in choosing where to go, what to wear, and that they experienced less pressure or expectations for domestic work responsibilities. In contrast, 83 percent of female respondents report that their families expected them and their sisters to take on household chores. This dynamic is also reflected in the disparity between the amount of free time enjoyed by female respondents relative to their male siblings. Overall, data confirm an inequitable gendered division of rights and freedoms within Jordanian families, which limits women more than men. According to this division, men still feel pressure from societal expectations, such as to earn more than women. However, their rights and freedoms are far less regulated.

**Figure 4.13 Percentage of men and women aged 18 to 59 who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about their experiences as children, compared with those of their opposite-sex siblings, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Data in the IMAGES survey suggest that Syrian female respondents experience more restrictive practices in childhood and adolescence. At least 66 percent of Syrian women report having less freedom to choose what to wear compared to their male siblings; 70 percent report having more restrictions on where they could go; and 59 percent report lower expectations from their family to earn money.

Gender roles are also reinforced by a widespread understanding of relations between male and female siblings. These relations are based on an unequal power dynamic, where brothers are responsible for their sisters and female siblings are expected to wait on and serve their brothers. This understanding is shared by both male and female respondents in Jordan. When asked if they agree with the statement that “girls in the family are expected to wait on the boys and men,” 86 percent of men and 81 percent of women respond affirmatively. Notably, the percentages of both male and female participants who agree with the statement decreases with lower respondent levels of education.

The majority of male and female respondents also agree with the statement: “Boys are responsible for the behaviour of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters.” In fact, 87 percent of male respondents agree with this statement, a rate that is 20 points higher than that of female respondents (67 percent). The attitude that boys are the protectors and guardians of female siblings is also confirmed by widespread support for the statement: “It’s a man’s duty to exercise guardianship over his family and relatives.” While both male and female respondents agree with the statement, 74 percent of male respondents affirm male guardianship compared to only 53 percent of female respondents affirming the same. It should also be pointed out that support for male guardianship over their female siblings is widespread across the male sample regardless of respondents’ level of education. Education levels do, however, make a difference with female respondents. While 63 percent of female participants with less than secondary education agree with male guardianship over females, only 44 percent of women with more than secondary education express support for the statement.

Qualitative research shows that **stereotypes still prevail over the upbringing and lifestyle of girls and boys**. Many male and female respondents, especially the elderly, note that they live the same lifestyle as their families, and that the relationship between male sons with their father is always stronger than with their mother, and girls have a stronger relationship with their mother than with their father and brothers.

Many female respondents also state that, since childhood, girls had specific toys to play with, and that a girl should not go out and play in the street or play with her male peers because this would affect her reputation and that of her family. Some women even indicate that they were beaten by their mothers for such behaviours. Some also state that they were prevented from going on school trips by their father or brother for fear of being hurt or because they were girls (who are forbidden to move around at their convenience).

“I didn’t like any game other than soccer. I used to play soccer with the boys. I used to see girls cycling in Jerusalem. I wanted to ride a bicycle like them, but I was told it was a shame to do so and that I am not allowed to ride a bicycle because bicycles are for boys only. So, I started to question the girls who rode bicycles. [...] When I played with the boys, my mother used to beat me.”

—67-year-old Jordanian woman

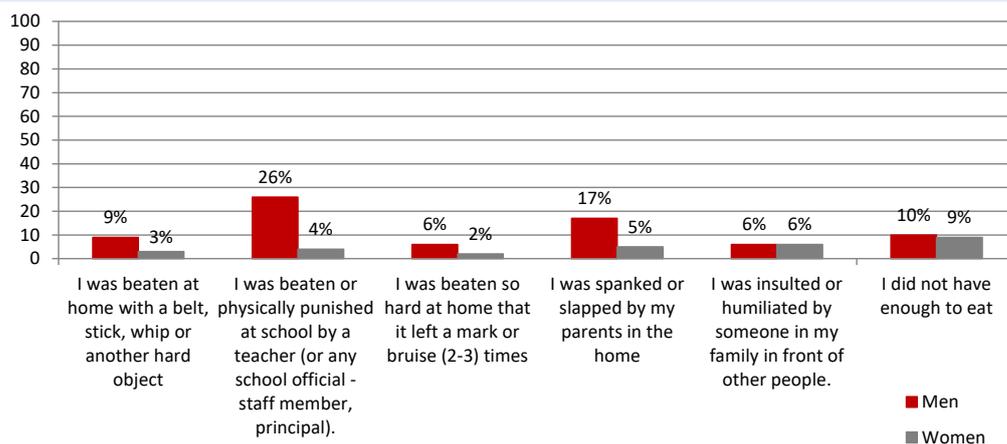
“Every girl likes to play with her friends. We were not allowed to play with boys as it is shameful in our culture, [starting at a young age]. Even now, we are married and we have daughters who say that they want to play with boys but we prevent them from doing so. We have inherited these thoughts from our mothers and fathers. The custom has grown with us.”

—42-year-old Jordanian woman

### 4.4.3 Adverse childhood experiences

Children may experience different types of violence (verbal, physical or emotional) in the different environments they interact with (home, school or their neighbourhood). By and large, IMAGES survey responses would suggest that most male and female respondents do not experience violence at home, school or in their neighbourhoods during childhood. Of the respondents who do admit to “adverse experiences” before the age of 18, the majority are male. Male respondents are particularly vulnerable to physical violence: 9 percent admit that they were beaten with an object by their parents (compared to 3 percent of women who reported the same) and 26 percent say they were beaten or physically punished at school by a teacher (compared to 4 percent of surveyed women) (Figure 4-14). On the other hand, the IMAGES survey shows no significant difference in the percentage of male and female respondents who experience emotional violence at home. A noteworthy 74 percent of male participants and 78 percent of female participants say they’ve never been humiliated by someone in the family in front of other people before the age of 18.

**Figure 4.14 Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who say they experienced selected adverse events at home and at school before the age of 18, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



However, qualitative analysis indicates that **violence at home and bullying in schools is experienced by children living in Jordan more than statistical data may show**. More male respondents mention physical violence towards them at home, in comparison to females. Meanwhile, females speak more of moral violence or control. Most say that it is a way of raising children, that some parents lack the tools for proper parenting and that is why they resort to violence.

“I was once exposed to violence by my brother. He started growing up and thinking he became a man, but I stopped him. I was also exposed to psychological violence by my father; he used to control my life decisions. And when I started making my own decisions, he wanted me out of the house. So, I left our home, and we stopped talking to each other. Until now, I discover about new traumas he caused me when I was a child.  
‘You should be the smartest and the best.’”

— 26-year-old Jordanian woman

Other respondents add that violence rates have increased recently due to more financial and social pressures on parents. Many say that the COVID-19 pandemic aggravated violence, given the economic adversity and physical restrictions people were facing.

“In the past, people were not violent. But nowadays, people have become more violent because of stress and changes. COVID-19 has nothing to do with it; however, the lockdown caused some issues. Women started hitting their children because they were stressed.” a  
60-year-old Jordanian man

“I was hit when I was little, but I don’t believe that it affected me. I am certainly against it. The reason I forgave my family is that this was all they knew. My mother used to hit me less than my father because she had other ways or tools to deal with me, but my father didn’t. My parents got married young. The issue is that men are not supposed to show weakness and should not play with their children or befriend them.”

—34-year-old Jordanian man

Syrian and Jordanian males also report that with the COVID-19 pandemic everyone got more tense and parents started beating their children sometimes, because everyone had to stay inside all the time and that was very hard, particularly in very small or crowded living spaces (see section 4 on gender-based violence).

Syrian youth and parents indicate that they’ve witnessed violence in the form of bullying in schools or neighbourhoods.

“Sometimes in schools there is violence. I mean, we have Syrian children who are subjected to bullying in schools. We heard that it was only because they are Syrians, and we heard this with our ears. But we have to keep silent. We can’t talk ... I mean, for example, my son came to me. He was upset with his friend. I mean they are children. His friend told him “Soori, Nouri”, which means Syrian, not raised properly. I told him: Mama, we are Syrians, but we are polite and clever. So, I gave him some confidence back.”

—45-year-old Syrian woman

These testimonies confirm that violence is experienced in childhood, which complements existing literature on the matter. Previous studies have shown that boys are subjected to physical violence from parents and teachers more than girls before reaching the age of 18.<sup>36</sup> According to a study by Gender & Adolescence Global Evidence in 2019, 63 percent of boys and 26 percent of girls are being exposed to violence by their teachers.<sup>37</sup>

## 4.5 Gender dynamics in households

### 4.5.1 Division of household roles between spouses

**IMAGES Jordan results show a continuing gender-based division of household responsibilities in Jordanian society with women performing most domestic tasks.** According to the Gender Barometer, in Jordan “women do most of the household and child-rearing and husbands work, provide financially, and make repairs”.<sup>38</sup> Table 4-4 confirms that respondents conform to this gendered division of household roles.

Tasks that are traditionally considered feminine, such as cleaning, washing clothes and preparing food are performed almost exclusively by women. Between 84 and 89 percent of female respondents affirm that they take on the responsibility for domestic work. Only a small percentage of male respondents participated in any of these chores. Ever-married men’s participation in household affairs is higher in traditionally masculine roles such as paying bills and making household repairs. There is almost identical participation of ever-married men and women in buying food and making weekly budgets.

Levels of education for male respondents do not significantly impact participation in domestic work, which remain minimal across the sample. As for female respondents, cross-tabulation shows that the more educated the woman, the more likely she is to perform tasks like cleaning and washing clothes. Women who affirm that they oversee household budgets tend to have completed secondary education.

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF. 2021. “Changing Norms and Behaviours to End Physical Violence Against Children in Jordan.” p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, Nicola, and others. 2019. “Adolescent Experiences Of School Violence In Jordan: Insights From GAGE Jordan Qualitative Researchers.” Gender & Adolescence Global Evidence (GAGE): Amman. <https://bit.ly/3OOQ9Km>

<sup>38</sup> Ababneh, Sara. 2020. *Gender Barometer*. CSS: Amman. p. 59.

Changes to working time and space due to COVID-19 have had no impact on the division of housework. When asked to what extent the division of household labour has been affected by the COVID pandemic,

76% of men affirm that the division of household chores has remained the same, and 54 percent of women agree there have been no significant changes in the organization of housework. However, 40 percent of female respondents do affirm that they have undertaken more domestic tasks, compared to only 14 percent of their male counterparts who state the same. Twenty-four percent of Syrian men say they have taken on more household responsibilities during the pandemic and 41 percent of Syrian women say that their domestic workloads have also increased.

A gendered division of roles in Jordanian society is confirmed by a general understanding that “The most important role for women is to take care of the home and cook.” An overwhelming majority (90 percent) of male respondents agree that women’s responsibilities are mainly related to cooking and cleaning. While the percentage of female respondents who share this attitude is much lower than the male sample, 52 percent of Jordanian and 67 percent of Syrian women still agree with the statement.

With two-thirds of respondents reporting satisfaction with their current division of responsibility, there seems to be little interest in changing the gendered household dynamics. Table 4.5.1a shows that the overwhelming majority of both men and women agree that it is exclusively the woman who undertakes all housework. Only 12 percent of women and 2 percent of men express dissatisfaction with this status quo. There is also general agreement that current arrangements make the spouse happy. This seems to confirm that there are few popular efforts to challenge inequitable gendered household dynamics.

**Table 4.4 Percentage of ever-married respondents who do the most household work, and respondents and spouses’ reported satisfaction with the division of household labour, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|  | Men (%) | Women (%) |
|--|---------|-----------|
| <b>Who does the most household work</b>                                |         |           |
| Respondent   | 4       | 83        |
| Spouse   | 89      | 4         |
| Respondent and spouse equally  | 3       | 6         |
| <b>Respondents’ satisfaction with the division of household labour</b> |         |           |
| Very satisfied   | 78      | 58        |
| Satisfied  | 17      | 27        |
| Unsatisfied  | 2       | 12        |

|  | Men (%)    | Women (%)    |
|--|------------|--------------|
| <b>Spouse's perceived satisfaction with division of household work</b> |            |              |
| Very satisfied   | 78         | 66           |
| Satisfied  | 17         | 20           |
| Unsatisfied  | 1          | 4            |
| <b>Total number of ever-married respondents</b>                        | <b>705</b> | <b>1,040</b> |

#### 4.5.2 Spousal relations (marriage)

**There are contradicting trends in the perception of marriage** among Jordanians. There is general agreement that the legal age of marriage should be increased to 18 years of age, for both male and female spouses.<sup>39</sup> Ninety percent of female respondents and 88 percent of male respondents expressed support for raising the age of marriage, indicating widespread support for change.

**However, according to qualitative data, early marriage remains a common practice, especially in rural areas and is the result of socioeconomic as well as family pressures.** Some respondents say some parents believe early marriage leads to higher fertility rates and increases the likelihood of the child being a girl.

“I married at 18. I became responsible and lived with my husband’s family. I became pregnant because I was so young and I had a child.”

—42-year-old Jordanian woman

<sup>39</sup> According to Personal Status Law Article 10/A, both males and females are required to be 18 years old in order to get the approval of the Chief Judge for their marriage; however, the same article, section B states that in certain special cases, the Chief Judge may approve the marriage at the age of 15. (Supreme Judges Department. 2010. Personal Status Law, Article 10. Accessed 3 March 2022. <https://sjd.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.o/SystemAssets/PDFs/AR/AppliedLegislations/a7walsha5seye.pdf>)

## Polygamy

The IMAGES survey exposes contradictions in the way Jordanians view and approach polygamy. The majority of female respondents (85 percent of Jordanians and 94 percent of Syrians) agree that they would not allow their daughters to marry a married man. While up to 50 percent of female respondents do not agree with a new polygamy law allowing women to have a say in the husband's decision to have additional wives, almost all respondents say that they would not accept a polygamous marriage for their daughters. When it comes to men, even though 66 percent of Jordanian and 72 percent of Syrian men say they would refuse to allow their daughters to marry a polygamous man, most still express disapproval with allowing women to attach stipulations to prevent additional marriages in their marriage contracts.

As a matter of fact, when asked if they would agree with a law that allows women to stipulate in their (Muslim) marriage contract that their husband is not allowed to marry additional wives, 78 percent of male respondents disagreed. This reveals that many men in Jordan support the maintenance of the status quo and their right to polygamy without giving women a say. Half of the Jordanian women surveyed also reject the idea of allowing a woman to legally prevent her husband from marrying additional wives. Forty-three percent of Syrian women also say they would oppose such a law. While women in Jordan are more likely than men to question and challenge polygamous rights, it appears that they are still willing to preserve gender-inequitable marriage norms.

Cross-tabulation of data shows that it is mainly older men who oppose their daughter's marriage with a polygamous man. Seventy-four percent of male respondents aged 50+ disagree with the statement compared to only 61 percent of respondents in their twenties, suggesting that younger generations have even more conservative attitudes towards marriage. Female respondents across the age spectrum are strongly opposed to polygamous marriages, with 84 percent of respondents in their twenties and 83 percent of respondents above the age of 50 expressing disapproval. Women in their forties have the lowest rate of disapproval, at 74 percent.

When asked if they would allow their sons to marry additional wives, half of male respondents agree. The percentage of male respondents who disagree with their son marrying more than one wife also increases with age. Fifty-three percent of men in the 50+ age-range oppose their son marrying additional wives, while only 32 percent of men in their twenties disagree with such an arrangement. This response is in line with the number of male respondents who favour preserving men's rights to polygamy and suggests that younger generations are more likely to support maintaining the status quo.

Disapproval is much higher among women. Eighty-two percent of Jordanian female respondents and 88 percent of their Syrian counterparts disagree with their sons having more than one wife. This view is consistent across all ages. Women in their forties have disapproval rates of 76 percent, with disapproval even higher in other age ranges – 83 percent among women aged 50+ and 85 percent for those in their twenties and thirties. Women in Jordan clearly do not support polygamous arrangements. However, they do not appear to approve of legislative action on the subject and are instead willing to preserve gender-inequitable marital arrangements.

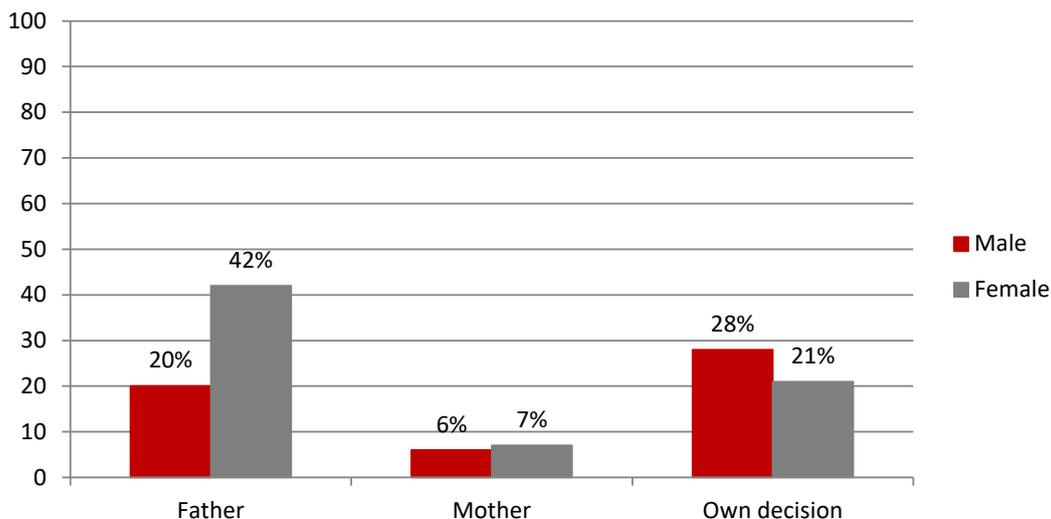
While the majority of both male and female **respondents disagree with their children marrying persons with disabilities**, male respondents are more open to the idea than women. Forty percent of men agree with the idea compared to just 19 percent of women. The levels of education of respondents do not appear to create major differences regarding opinions around their children marrying people with disabilities.

“I was subjected to violence from my husband and his family. I was insulted and beaten. I had to endure a lot, but when I had enough, I got out of the house. His family used to throw a couple of words at him regarding my health situation. They were putting pressure on him, and he would come home and hit me ... His family used to tell him bad things about me because of my medical and eye conditions.”

—A 42-year-old Jordanian woman with a disability

**Fathers have the decision-making power concerning the marriages of their children.** As shown in Figure 4.15, 42 percent of female respondents say their father decided on their marriage. This percentage is more than twice that of male respondents who affirm the same, which suggests that women have less freedom of choice in marriage than men. Only 21 percent of women report making their marriage decisions independently. Less than a third of men report making their decision independently as well, indicating that fathers continue to exercise significant control over their children’s marriages.

**Figure 4.15 Percentage of ever-married respondents identifying the decision-making power over their marriage, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



There are differences of perception between brothers and sisters regarding the brother's decision-making power in marriage. More than one-third of women say that their brothers made decisions about their marriage independently, compared to a much smaller percentage of male respondents who say that their brother took the decision without their parents' involvement. The majority of men say their fathers made the decisions regarding their marriages (Figure 4.16). There seems to be a different perception of fathers' primary involvement in the decision-making regarding male siblings, with male respondents insisting on the central role of the father, and female respondents reporting in higher numbers that parents decided jointly over their brother's marriage.

As shown in Figure 4.16, when asked who had the decision-making power regarding their brothers' marriage, women agreed that it was mostly the father (33 percent), a similarly high percentage was mentioned by men regarding the decision-making power regarding their sisters' marriage (42 percent). However, women were more positive that their brothers had some freedom to make that decision on their own (35 percent), while for sisters' marriage decision-making power, only 8 percent of men thought it was the sister's decision. This widespread agreement indicates that fathers maintain a controlling role regarding their children's marriages, particularly when it comes to their daughters.

Qualitative research found that **despite the increase in the number of divorce cases in Jordan, it is still considered a taboo and better to be prevented at any cost.** Many women mentioned having had to endure violence for the sake of preventing a divorce. They say that even though the relationship is harmful, a divorce is worse. Women suffer while feeling pressure from their parents to endure the violence in order not to bring shame to the family through divorce.

“My neighbour's family cut ties with her because she got divorced. She got divorced because her husband hit her, tortured her, and there was blood all over her face. And in the end, her family cut ties with her because they refuse to let their daughters get divorced. What are they waiting for? Are they waiting for her to die? No one wishes to destroy their family, but mistreatment forces you to. Women's families are stricter than men's families. Sometimes, women want to leave their husbands but need to have a resort. However, their families do not accept them and treat them more violently.”

—Palestinian woman living in East Amman

While facing violence and pressure from family, women also feel pressured by friends or society in general to keep the marriage together, in addition to their fear of losing their children.

### 4.5.3 Spousal life and affection

Qualitative research shows that **marriage is viewed as a sacred and necessary institution by many males and females in Jordan.** Respondents cite a number of different qualities that pertain to a good marriage or spousal relationship, like being respectful, responsible, honest and kind. Some say being true believers who are religiously devoted is also a determining factor. A few refugees mention that Jordanian women seem to have more rights in comparison to Syrian women, such as marital or ownership rights.

“I feel that in Jordan, people are more happily married than in Syria. Because in Syria, husbands don’t care about their wives, or about giving them their rights. On the contrary, here, women own cars and their husbands listen to them. I believe that there are exceptional cases where husbands mistreat their wives.”

—45-year-old Syrian woman

As to the quantitative data, **there is general agreement that men and women show affection to their spouses.** According to IMAGES Jordan data, 92 percent of Jordanian men say they frequently show their spouses affection and 93 percent affirm that they wish to receive more affection from their wives. Conversely, 78 percent of female respondents say they show affection to their husbands and 77 percent also affirm that they would like to receive more affection from their husbands. While these responses indicate that expressions of affection in marital relationships are important for both men and women, the data also suggest that it is not always given as frequently as perceived, or received as frequently as desired. A majority of men (54 percent) say they remind their wives that they could marry another woman. Thirty-eight percent of female respondents confirm that they are reminded that they may not be the last/only wife their husbands have. While men overwhelmingly self-report expressing affection frequently, many nevertheless admit to threatening their wives with the possibility of having additional wives.

#### 4.5.4 Decision-making power

**The idea that men should be the decision-makers of the household is still pervasive within Jordanian society.** According to IMAGES Jordan, 56 percent of all surveyed Jordanians agree that men should have the most decision-making power in the household. These results are in line with previous studies showing that Jordanians believe that the husband should have the final say in family decisions.<sup>40</sup> However, upon closer inspection, a large gender gap appears in the Jordan IMAGES responses, with 73 percent of male respondents versus only 40 percent of female respondents agreeing with that statement. While the Arab Barometer suggests that the more educated respondents are, the less they hold such a view, IMAGES cross-tabulation does not show any significant difference in male responses when broken down by age or level of education. When looking at women’s responses, however, we find that 69 percent of more educated women believe men should not have the final say in family decisions in comparison to 46 percent of women who have less than secondary education. Older women are also more inclined to accept men’s central role in decision-making.

However, according to IMAGES Jordan data and other studies, there is an **increasing involvement of wives in the family’s economic life.** Figure 4.17 shows that nearly half of both men and women affirm that decisions regarding investments, clothing purchases and food are made jointly. Male respondents tend to view men’s role as more decisive, with a third saying it is up to the husband alone to make decisions.<sup>41</sup> There appears to be widespread agreement among both genders, however,

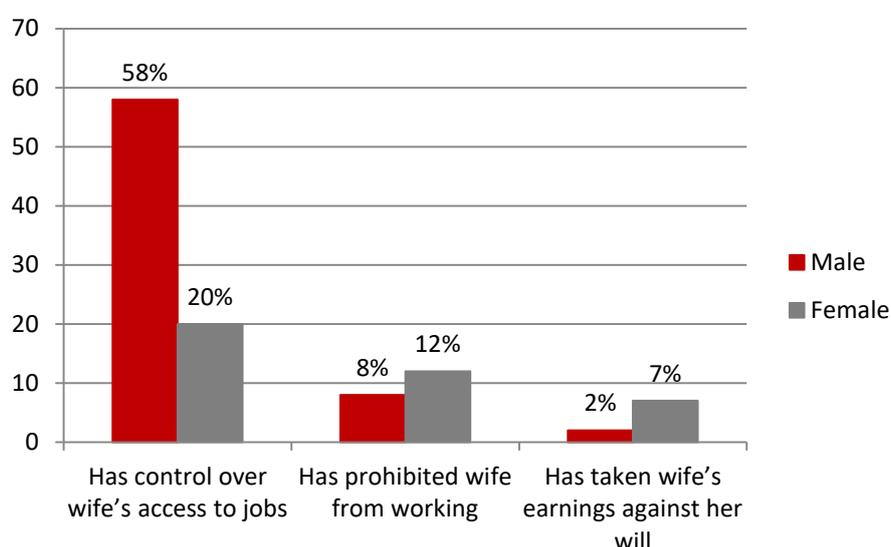
<sup>40</sup> The Arab Barometer reported that 57% of Jordanian did not oppose the statement that “the husband should have the final say in family decisions”, with 66% of men and 49% of women agreeing with the statement. (Robbins, Michael and Kathrin Thomas. 2018. “Figure 17: Final Say in Family Decisions by Gender and Education” in *Arab Barometer Wave IV: Women in the Middle East and North Africa: a Divide between Rights and Roles*. Princeton University, p. 14.)

<sup>41</sup> Similar findings were presented in the Jordan Gender Barometer, which reported that for “35% of respondents, it was mainly men who made these [economic] decisions”.

that Jordanian men hold the position of the head of household and main breadwinner of the family, while remaining the core decision-makers in all family decisions, including economic ones. These results confirm previous studies that have highlighted a promising shift in the management of domestic affairs that sees more active participation of women in household decisions.<sup>42</sup> Recent analyses also report a significant decline in the percentage of household's expenses managed solely by men.<sup>43</sup>

Figure 4.16 shows that while husbands have limited influence on how their wife manages her own earnings, they do control and have the final say on her access to jobs.<sup>44</sup> Fifty-eight percent of male respondents affirm that they have the power to decide whether their wife works or not. Twenty percent of the female sample confirms the same.

**Figure 4.16 Percentage of ever-married men reporting decision-making power over wife's financial independence, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



While 84 percent of female respondents believe that women should have the same right as men to work outside the home, only 50 percent of male respondents affirm the same. The other half of male respondents reject the idea of women working outside on an equal basis to men. The percentage of Syrian respondents agreeing with the statement is slightly lower than that of Jordanians. Seventy-two percent of female respondents and 43 percent of men support a woman's right to work outside the home.

When asked if their husband controls access to their bank account, the majority of women found the question inapplicable. Only 10 percent affirm that their husband can exercise control over their bank account. Conversely, 24 percent of Jordanian men and 14 percent of Syrian men say they have control over their wives' access to bank accounts. The Jordan Population and Family Health Survey

<sup>42</sup> Al Badayneh, Diab M. 2012. "Violence against Women in Jordan." *Journal of Family Violence*. 27 (5): pp. 369–79. The study reports that 68% of the sample affirmed that the husband and wife take decisions together.

<sup>43</sup> Another report points out that in 2018, 31% of decisions in the household are taken solely by the father, compared to 44% in 2017. (National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA). 2018. *Jordan Family National Report*. NCFA: Amman).

<sup>44</sup> In the 2018 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey, 78% of women said they decided jointly with their husbands how to use their own earnings, while 15% said they made those decisions alone. (Department of Statistics (DOS) and ICF International. 2019. *Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey 2017-18: Key Indicators*. DOS and ICF: Amman and Rockville).

reveals that only 21 percent of Jordanian women actually have and use a bank account (compared to 40 percent of men), with urban women having more access than rural women and banking being even more limited for less-educated women.<sup>45</sup> At a national level, data from Jordan's Central Bank also demonstrate men's disproportionate control over access to money.<sup>46</sup> This indicates the very limited inclusion of women in the banking system and consequently their limited access to money and financial services in general.

Jordanian society, and women in particular, seem increasingly aware of the need for women's economic empowerment. However, men maintain control and power over many financial dynamics and are still hesitant to accept the idea of equal access to work and earning for their partners.

**Qualitative findings confirm that women's access to and control over resources are still limited.**

When it comes to financial responsibility towards the household, and control over or access to financial resources, nearly all female and male participants agree that the financial responsibility lies with the husband. Only a few say that the responsibility is shared, and only when the husband cannot provide fully.

Moreover, several respondents say that in Jordanian society parents would be ashamed if their son is a “**stay-at-home dad**” and his wife is the breadwinner. They say parents might even lend their son money, rather than see him in such a situation.

“I am certain that in our Jordanian society, parents [would] refuse to let their son stay at home and for his wife to work. They'd think that he is a failure. This is how people perceive this. They don't understand that it is temporary.”

—Jordanian man participating in an FGD

Although a few respondents assert that when a woman works her income is hers; the idea that ‘when a man works his income is for his family’ is widely shared among participants.

**Men's dominance over women extends to their movement and other freedoms.** While there is a tendency among respondents to report equal sharing of important decision at home, IMAGES Jordan data suggest that women's agency in decisions related to movement and time spent outside the house is still limited. These findings are similar to those of the Gender Barometer, which previously identified a lack of personal choice for women when it comes to simple decisions, such as visiting their parents or relatives.<sup>47</sup>

Figure 4.17 shows that over a third of both male and female respondents say decisions about whether the wife (or the husband) spends time with family or friends or goes outside the home is taken jointly. However, a husband's power to decide how his wife spends her time is much higher than the influence of women over their husband's decisions to visit relatives or friends. Moreover, women have very little individual choice about visiting family and friends, as only a quarter of the sample affirm being able to take this decision alone, while husbands largely control women's decision to go outside the home.

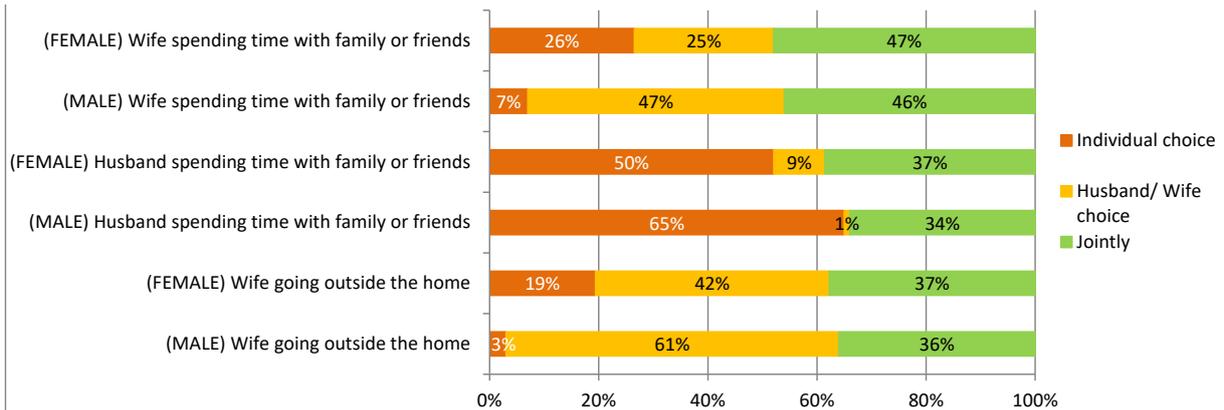
<sup>45</sup> DOS and ICF. 2019. Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey 2017-18: Key Indicators. DOS and ICF: Amman and Rockville.

<sup>46</sup> OECD. 2018. Women's Political Participation in Jordan: Barriers, Opportunities and Gender Sensitivity of Select Political Institutions.

<sup>47</sup> Ababneh, Sara. 2020. Jordan Gender Barometer.

Cross-tabulation analysis indicates that the level of education does affect decision-making dynamics in the family. The more educated male and female respondents are, the more they take decisions jointly with their partner.

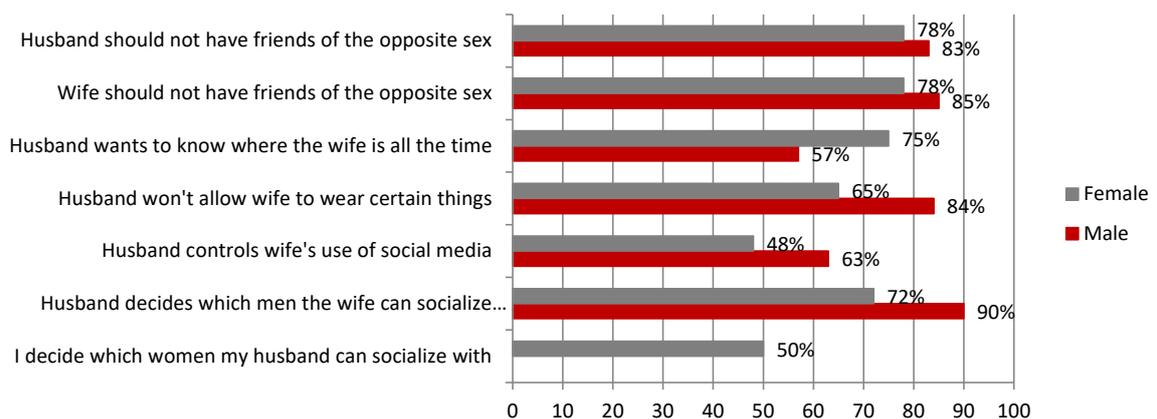
**Figure 4.17 Percentage of ever-married respondents who have the final say on freedom of movement in their marriage, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



An analysis of the Syrian sample presents the same trend, with men exercising significant control over their wives' movement. The data show that male respondents have significant power to decide whether their wife gets to spend time with her family and friends. Thirty-six percent of male respondents affirm taking a leading role in such decisions. Fifty-eight percent of female respondents also say that the decision on whether they can see their family and friends is taken by their husband. In comparison, women have little to say when it comes to the time their husband spends with his family and friends, with only 7 percent affirming that they have a say in it, and just 28 percent stating that they take the decision jointly with their husband.

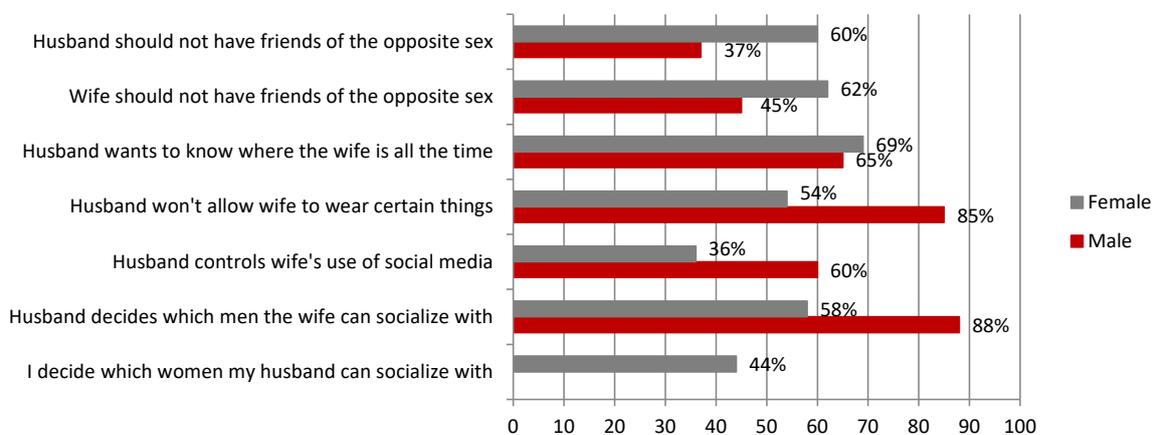
Figure 4.18 shows that a husband's control over his wife's freedom is common practice and widely acknowledged among Syrian respondents. Men have the final say over what their wives wear, how they use social media and who they get to socialize with.

**Figure 4.18 Percentage of ever-married Syrians who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about personal freedoms in their relationship with their spouse, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Jordanian women's freedom is similarly limited by their husbands. Figure 4.19 shows that more than one third of female respondents affirm that their husband controls their access to social media. Half of the female sample confirms that their husband has decision-making power over their social life and over what they wear. Male respondents are even more likely to affirm their control over various aspects of their wife's life. Cross-tabulation analysis indicates no differences by age or level of education among respondents who agree with the selected statements. However, women with higher education are less likely to indicate that their husbands have control over their social media. Similarly, more educated women are less likely to report they decide which women their husband can socialize with.

**Figure 4.19 Percentage of ever-married who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about personal freedoms in their relationship with their spouse, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



According to qualitative research, men's dominance revolves around controlling a woman's movement and what she wears, but can also extend to life-altering decisions like what she studies, who she marries, and where she lives. This puts huge pressure on women and creates a sense of loss of autonomy over their own lives.

“Now there are many who say I am the man of the house, and I am responsible for it, and I can do whatever I want. This exists, it is a reality we as Jordanians face. As for Syrians, you feel like they have the same attitudes as Palestinians and Jordanians – the same mentality. The problems are the same.”

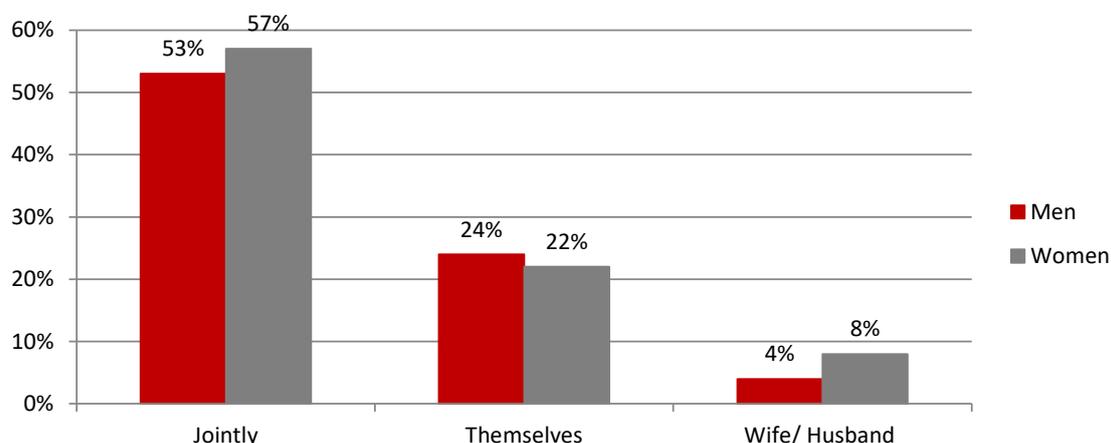
—Jordanian woman in and FGD for women aged 36–60

**Among Jordanian couples, decision-making regarding their sex life is controlled by men.** Eighty-two percent of male respondents say they expect their wives to agree when they ask for intimate relations and 72 percent of female respondents also affirm that they are expected to agree when asked to have sex by their husbands.

While sexual life is controlled by men, contraception is often considered a woman's responsibility. Fifty-nine percent of female respondents affirm that women, rather than men, should use contraceptives. Almost half of male respondents (48 percent) also agree with the statement. One third of the sample, 34 percent of men and 30 percent of women, disagree with the idea that contraceptives should be solely the woman's responsibility.

Figure 4.20 illustrates that the majority of ever-married respondents from both genders affirm that the decision to use contraception should be made jointly. **Cross-tabulation indicates that older men support joint decision-making the most out of any other male demographic.** Among women, those in their thirties, forties, and those with higher levels of education support the statement in higher numbers.

**Figure 4.20 Percentage of ever-married respondents on who has decision-making authority over the use contraception, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



#### 4.5.5 Involvement of men in childcare

##### *Antenatal childcare and birth involvement*

**Men are partially involved in the antenatal care of their children.** The majority of women in Jordan are now benefiting from maternity care in health services,<sup>48</sup> including antenatal and postnatal care. The father's involvement during pregnancy is still questionable, as one third of surveyed women say they were never accompanied by the father of their child to an antenatal care visit, while another 42 percent say they were accompanied to some or only one visit. Conversely, only 9 percent of men recognize that they have never attended antenatal care visits, against 44 percent who say they were present at all of them (see Table 4-5).

One third of male respondents report that they joined the mother of their child for the whole duration of the visits with health-providers, while 50 percent say they only stayed in the waiting room, and 18 percent say they dropped off the mother and waited outside the clinic or left, with female responses largely reflecting those of males (see Table 4-5). For the Syrian sample, data show that only a quarter of men report joining the mother inside the echography room with the health-providers, while the majority say they stayed in the waiting room or outside the clinic.

<sup>48</sup> Maternity care in Jordan is generally of a high standard. The majority (94%) of Jordanian women have had at least four antenatal visits and about 98% of mothers deliver at a health institution providing skilled care at birth. (Khader, Y., and others. 2018. "Evaluation of maternal and newborn health services in Jordan," *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*. 11. pp. 439—456.)

**Most men who do not accompany their wives to monthly visits cite work-related impediments.** Eighty-three percent of male and female respondents say they (fathers) or the father of their child were absent for some or all their antenatal care visits due to work (or the need to look for work), with men being more likely to use this excuse than women (Table 4.5).

Survey data confirm that age and education levels impact rates of paternal participation in the early phases of childcare. The youngest population represents the largest age group to confirm high involvement of the father during antenatal care visits, even from within the echography room. Educated men and women (with secondary education or higher) are also more likely to confirm that the father of their child was regularly present during pregnancy medical visits.

**Table 4.5 Percentage of ever-married men and women who agree with selected statements on their/the child's father's involvement in antenatal care visits during their latest pregnancy, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|   | Men % | Women % |
|---|-------|---------|
| <b>Frequency of father's attendance of antenatal care visits</b>  |       |         |
| Every visit   | 44    | 27      |
| Some or one visit   | 46    | 42      |
| Never   | 9     | 30      |
| <b>Father's presence during antenatal care visits</b>             |       |         |
| Stays at the entrance or waits outside                            | 18    | 17      |
| In the waiting room   | 49    | 44      |
| In the echography room for some or the whole visit                | 33    | 39      |
| <b>Reasons for the father to not attend antenatal care visits</b> |       |         |
| Being at work or looking for work                                 | 62    | 71      |
| Didn't want to  | 32    | 12      |
| Had to care for other children                                    | 4     | 6       |

When it comes to the birth, 72 percent of surveyed men and 79 percent of women affirm that the father was at the hospital/clinic at the time of the child's birth. However, roughly two-thirds of male and female respondents say they do not prefer to be (or have the father be) present in the delivery room, even if given the option.<sup>49</sup>

### *Postnatal childcare and parental leave*

**Extended families in Jordan provide a certain amount of postnatal care for mothers.** While only a quarter of surveyed parents say the mother and child had to move to another family house for a limited time to receive childcare support, about two-thirds say they received childcare support from members of their extended family who temporarily moved into the respondent's house. Younger

<sup>49</sup> Not all hospitals permit the husband to be present in the delivery room.

parents are more likely to receive this kind of support or help shortly after childbirth, allowing both parents to be present and take part in their newborn’s childcare. About one third of respondents of both genders also state that they used to drop off the infant at their relatives’ houses for childcare support. The extended family also provides a certain amount of continued assistance with childcare for children under the age of 18. More than one third (37 percent) of men and nearly half (47 percent) of women state that they often receive childcare support from their extended family members.

More than half of men surveyed didn’t take time off work (from their annual leave) in the first six months after the birth of their youngest child to help care with childcare. Twenty-eight percent say they didn’t but they wanted to, while a similar percentage say they simply didn’t want to be more involved. Men who were unemployed during the birth of their child were similarly not eager to take time off from their job-hunting to help with caring for the infant. Both men and women, however, highly agreed with the option of giving the father paid time off of work after the birth of their children (64 percent for men and 71 percent for women). While half of those surveyed agreed, on average, with just under two weeks of paid time off for the father, about one third of both genders were content with something between the actual three days and one week.

According to Jordanian Labour Law, women working in the private sector are entitled to 70 paid calendar days off, while in the public sector they are entitled to 90 paid days<sup>50</sup> including rest before and after delivery. In 2014, male public sector employees in Jordan became entitled to a two-day paternity leave in line with Jordan’s Civil Service Regulation. This leave increased to three days following an amendment to the regulation in 2020<sup>51</sup>. However, this three-day paid paternity leave is intended primarily for the father to carry out administrative tasks, such as birth registration, leading to more dependence on the help provided by extended family members and less parental responsibility-sharing. In general, the majority of surveyed Jordanians (more than 75 percent) are in favour of extending the duration of paid paternity leave, with most preferring a leave of up to two weeks.

**Table 4.6 Percentage of respondents who took or would like to take paid time off at the birth of their child, and desired duration of leave, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|   | Men % | Women % |
|---|-------|---------|
| You/your husband took time off work within the six months after the birth of your youngest child to help with childcare*                                      | 32    | 32      |
| You/your husband took time off of looking for work, or working informally within the six months after the birth of your youngest child to help with childcare | 46    | 50      |
| Total number of respondents with one or more biological children  | 637   | 951     |
| Percentage of respondents who would like to have the option of paid parental leave for fathers  | 64    | 71      |
| Percentage of respondents who agree with a paid paternity leave for fathers of longer duration than the existing three-day paternity leave                    | 76    | 74      |

<sup>50</sup> According to Jordanian Civil Service Regulation (2020), Article 106-C.

<sup>51</sup> Article 106-C of the Jordanian Civil Service Regulation (2020): An employee is entitled to three working of paid paternity leave upon confinement of his wife, pursuant to a medical report attested by a medical doctor or midwife.

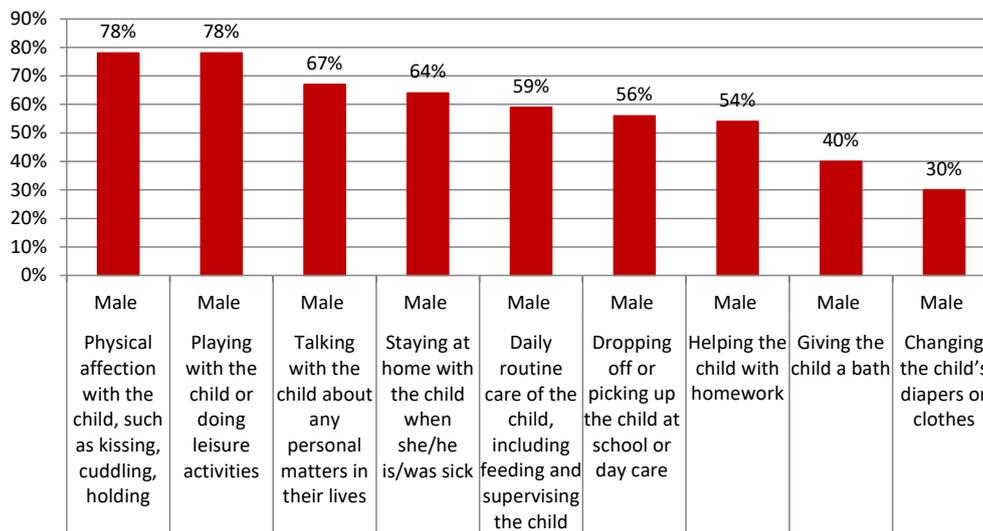
| Desired duration of leave |    |    |
|---------------------------|----|----|
| Less than one week        | 28 | 33 |
| One or two weeks          | 52 | 49 |
| Three or more weeks       | 11 | 12 |
| More than six weeks       | 8  | 6  |

\*Women were asked about husband’s use of parental leave.

### Childcare and child discipline

**Women are those who primarily carry out childcare responsibilities.** When it comes to childcare responsibilities and the division of tasks between parents, women assert (at very high rates between 82 and 96 percent) that they handle all childcare responsibilities, except for dropping-off and picking up the child from school/nursery (65 percent). Men, on the other hand, say they mainly play with the child or give physical affection (78 percent), talk to them about personal matters in their lives (67 percent), stay home when the child is sick (64 percent), perform daily routine care (59 percent), drop them off or pick them up from school (56 percent) or help with homework (54 percent). Less than half of the fathers in the sample say they have bathed their child (percent) or changed diapers/clothes (30 percent).

**Figure 4.21 Percentage of ever-married men who say they performed childcare tasks related to their youngest child (under age 18) while that child was living at home, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Regarding the frequency of their childcare responsibilities, women largely affirm that it is always placed on them, while men are more likely to report that they carry them out, ‘usually’. The male sample also reaffirm their spouse’s usual participation, while a very limited number of the female sample report their spouses participate usually, except for dropping-off and picking-up from school or playing with the child/ leisure activities, and none of them report the father is responsible of a specific childcare task.

**Jordanians and Syrians alike agree that it is a mother's responsibility to care for children.** More than half of all female respondents (56 percent) and 65 percent of male respondents affirm that changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be the mother's responsibility. Fathers, instead, are more likely to interact with children in the context of talking about personal matters, playing and showing affection.

**Sixty-seven percent of Jordanian men and almost 24 percent of surveyed women believe that they spent too little time with their children due to their job or time spent looking for one.** Women with secondary or higher education are more likely to believe this. Moreover, two thirds of women (62 percent) state that their spouse spent too little time with their children due to their job/job-hunting. More than two thirds of Syrian men agree that they spent too little time with their children, with the same percentage saying they wished they could have spent more time with their children.

**The vast majority of Jordanian respondents agree that there is nothing shameful in men's involvement in caring for children or doing other domestic work.** Ninety-seven percent of Jordanian men and women think it is normal and acceptable for men to cuddle, hold and play with toddlers. On the other hand, the Syrian sample data show that despite 93 percent of male respondents affirming that there is no shame involved in childcare or affection, only 51 percent of the Syrian men think it is normal for men to hold, cuddle or play with babies.

Qualitative research shows that **perspectives seem to be shifting when it comes to male involvement in childcare. Moreover, it seems to be more acceptable if it is not publicized.** Most female and male participants agree that there are set gender roles in the household, but that these duties can be also shared. Some participants say everything can be shared, including childcare, while others specify certain household chores that cannot be shared, like changing diapers. Men are more distant from parenting and childcare, due to their role as the only breadwinners, but even when women are breadwinners as well, these responsibilities are still seen to lie with them. Some respondents note that this is particularly common in certain sectors, like agriculture, where men and women both work but women are still responsible for the household chores all the same.

**The division of childcare tasks remained largely the same during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Sixty percent of Jordanian male respondents and 53 percent of Jordanian female respondents say that the distribution of childcare responsibilities did not change during the pandemic. However, the usual workload may have increased. Thirty-eight percent of women feel that they did more work than usual and one fifth of male respondents feel the same. Meanwhile, 31 percent of Syrian men and 34 percent of Syrian women felt that they contributed more during the pandemic.

**Mothers report using physical discipline with their children more than fathers.** As seen in Figure 4-24 below, mothers are more involved in child discipline than fathers, even when it comes to using violence. According to the 2020 Gender Barometer, 28 percent of mothers said they disciplined their children by means of physical punishments.<sup>52</sup> Also, boys generally appear to receive more punishments than girls. This is in line with other studies, such as a UNICEF study, which found that social norms define a mothers' responsibility for taking care of children, including their education, with less interference from the father.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the study noted: "Mothers are more likely to punish their kids than fathers, and boys are more likely to be physically punished than girls".<sup>54</sup>

Many respondents state that parents, especially the father, have a great role in educating children to give up harmful habits, such as smoking. Many male respondents indicate that their children imitate the bad behaviours of their friends, and they must therefore constantly raise their children's awareness for fear of deviance.

<sup>52</sup> Ababneh, Sara. 2020. Jordan Gender Barometer. CSS, p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> UNICEF, NCFA. 2018. *Changing Norms and Behaviours, To End Physical Violence Against Children in Jordan*. p. 21.

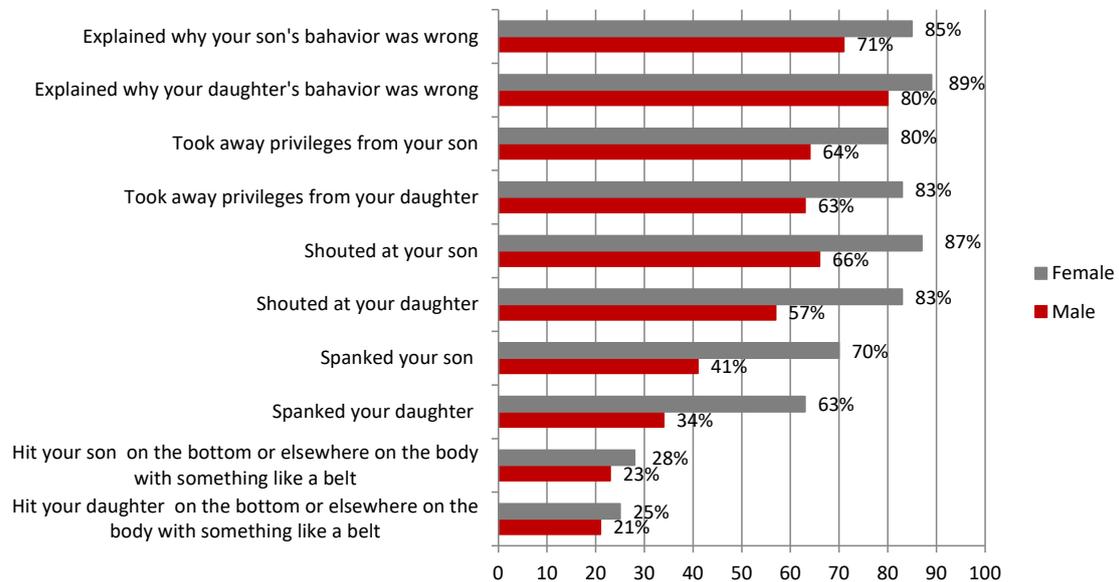
<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 18, 21.

“When I was 13 years old, my father said to me: ‘Hey Ali! I want to give you some advice. I want to tell you about three things. Do not smoke because those who smoke are bad people; do not go to the cinema; and do not play cards at the coffeeshop for money.’ I did not engage in any of these three activities. I did not smoke; I did not go to the cinema, and I did not play cards for money.

—50-year-old Jordanian man

Analysis of the responses reveals that fathers’ level of education does not make a difference in how they discipline their children or in their level of involvement therein. Mothers, however, display greater variation in accordance with education. More educated women tend to be less violent and more communicative. There are also slight differences in the types of discipline preferred by Syrian versus Jordanian mothers. For example, seventy-four percent of Syrian women agree with taking privileges away from girls, compared to 80 percent of Jordanian women.

**Figure 4.22 Percentage of respondents with children aged 3 to 14 who have used selected child disciplinary methods in the previous month, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



When it comes to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parenting and child discipline, 37 percent of male respondents and 46 percent of female respondents believe that they had to use more discipline with their children than before. Almost half of male respondents and over one third of female respondents affirm that child discipline methods stayed the same as before the pandemic.

## 4.6 Gender-based violence

### 4.6.1 Domestic violence

**Most Jordanians and Syrians express opinions against acts of domestic violence and highly approve of criminalizing these acts.** Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed disagree that there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten. The level of disagreement is especially high among women (see Figure 4.23). However, the level of disagreement is slightly lower among Syrian women (62 percent, as opposed to 72 percent of Syrian men). More than 70 percent of both genders surveyed also believe that women should not tolerate violence to keep their family together. High percentages of Jordanians and Syrians also agree with the need to criminalize domestic violence.<sup>55</sup> Eighty-nine percent of Jordanians, men and women, and 84 percent of Syrians voice support for criminalizing such acts.

Jordan has made progress on introducing frameworks and services to support and respond to domestic violence.<sup>56</sup> However, previous studies suggest that Jordan's existing social structure<sup>57</sup> is a barrier as it requires a woman to obey her husband<sup>58</sup> and protect family privacy.<sup>59</sup> This creates a real handicap vis-à-vis the denunciation and/or refusal of acts of violence in the family. The nature of the abuse is also a key driver to cases being underreported.

The Jordan Population and Family Health Survey (2017–2018) confirmed that 26 percent of women between the ages of 15–49 years experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from their husbands.<sup>60</sup> According to another study by Al-Badayneh,<sup>61</sup> almost all the interviewed women (98 percent) were subjected to at least one type of violence (physical, sexual, emotional, social, economic abuse or sexual desertion). The IMAGES Jordan study asked similar questions but found that most cases are being underreported, either by the perpetrator or the victim, or both.

<sup>55</sup> Chapter 7 of the Penal Code only criminalizes rape and harassment.

<sup>56</sup> Jordan has made progress on introducing frameworks and services to support and respond to domestic violence.

<sup>57</sup> IRCKHF. 2019. Gender Discrimination in Jordan. IRCKHF and UN Women.

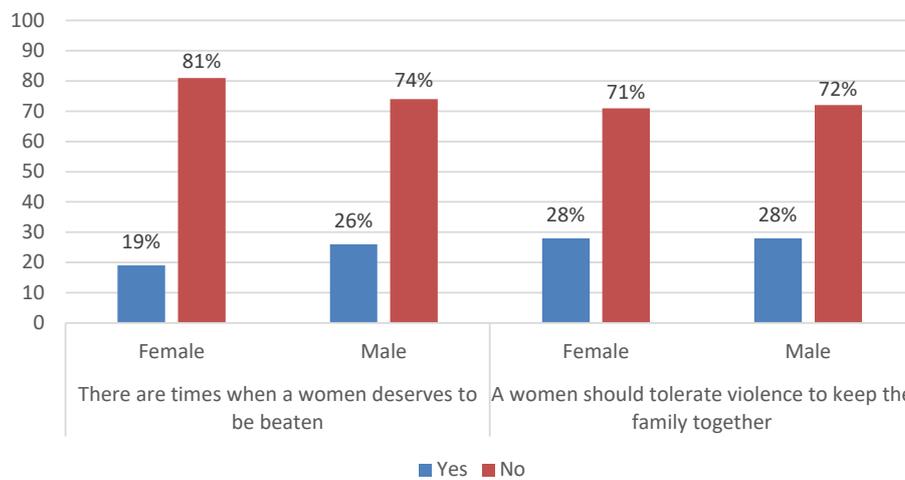
<sup>58</sup> Of a sample of 1,854 randomly chosen Jordanian women, one study found that some women tend to hold cultural beliefs that they are obliged to accept violence and even internalize it, with 50 percent of the sample justifying the “[physical] hurt and [sexual] desert” as punishment for the ‘rebellious wife’. (Al Badayneh, Diab M. 2012. “Violence against Women in Jordan.” *Journal of Family Violence*. 27 (5). p. 374.)

<sup>59</sup> According to the Al-Badayneh study, 48 percent of the married women surveyed saw it as the husband's right to punish his wife, while 9 percent saw that using violence during a family dispute as his right. (Ibid.)

<sup>60</sup> DOS. 2018. Jordan Population & Family Health Survey 2017–18. DOS: Amman.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Badayneh. 2012. p. 374.

**FIGURE 4.23** Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who disagree or strongly disagree with selected statements about domestic violence, IMAGES Jordan 2022



**In the qualitative analysis, Jordanian and refugee female respondents all agree that intimate partner violence and assault are atrocious but also provide explanations for it.** All female respondents agree that there is something ‘deeply wrong’ with a man who resorts to interpersonal violence but that “poverty”, “unemployment” or “drugs”, as well as “being far from religion” could be the main drivers. At the same time, they all agree that there is “no excuse for such behaviour”.

“I was exposed to violence by my husband. He used to humiliate and hit me. I was under so much pressure, but I exploded in the end and left the house. We would be on good terms, but once he visits his family, they speak ill about me in front of him because of my medical condition ... When he wanted to hit me, I used to tell him: “You are my husband and can hit me, but please tell me: ‘What did I do wrong?’!” He used to hit me all the time, sometimes as soon as he came home.”

— A 42-year-old Jordanian women.

Regarding their childhood experiences, study participants were also asked whether they had seen or heard their mothers being humiliated or physically hurt by their fathers or another male relative before they reached the age of 18 (Table 4.7). Twenty-two percent of men and 30 percent of women recall these adverse events taking place “once too often” (often being more than 10 times). Syrian women are slightly more likely to recall such violent acts happening to their mothers (36 percent).

**Table 4.7 Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who experience selected adverse domestic violence events against their mothers before the age of 18 in both host and Syrian communities, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|                                   | Host community    |                 | Syrians          |                |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
|                                   | Female<br>(N=354) | Male<br>(N=267) | Female<br>(N=92) | Male<br>(N=57) |
| Once too often (10 times or more) | 30%               | 22%             | 36%              | 22%            |

*N: represents the total number of ever-married respondents*

**Women report experiencing domestic violence more often than men admit perpetuating it.** Almost 40 percent of men say they have been emotionally violent towards their wives at some point in their lives, and a similar percentage of women say they have experienced such violence from their husbands. The percentages are nearly identical within the Syrian sample. Although emotional violence is the most common type of violence reported among married couples (42percent) one third of ever-married women say they are subject to one or more acts of economic violence (33 percent), including being expelled from matrimonial home(13 percent) or leaving the house voluntarily (24 percent) (respectively). Men, however, are less likely to report such practices, with only 8 percent acknowledging that they have ever prevented their wives from working for wage or profit (see section 1 on access to work). Acts of physical violence are reported less by both men and women, although it follows the same trend of higher reporting rates from victims than from perpetrators. Twenty percent of women say they have been physically assaulted by their husbands compared to only 13 percent of men who admit committing such acts (see Table 4.6.1c).

One question was asked regarding sexual violence within a married couple. However, marital rape is not yet criminalized or defined in Jordanian law.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, forced sexual intercourse against one’s own wife is not well understood or recognized as an act of rape by most of society. Only 9 percent of ever-married women and less than 5 percent of ever-married men say such a form of violence has ever happened in their relationship.

Across different types of domestic violence, there is a general tendency for Syrian women to report abuses at similar rates as their Jordanian counterpart, if not slightly higher, while Syrian men generally relate even fewer occurrences than do Jordanian men (Table 4.8).

<sup>62</sup> Article 292 of the Penal Code (Law No. 16 of 1960) criminalizes rape, but only when it does not involve a spouse. Any person who has sexual intercourse with a female other than his wife, without her consent, whether by coercion or threat or deception, shall be sentenced to at least 15 years’ imprisonment.

**Table 4.8 Percentage of ever-married respondents reporting acts of violence perpetrated by men and experienced by women, lifetime and 12-month rates, IMAGES Jordan 2022\***

|   | Men          |               | Women        |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | Lifetime (%) | 12-months (%) | Lifetime (%) | 12-months (%) |
| Emotional violence  | 39           | 26            | 42           | 23            |
| Insulted (his wife/her) or deliberately made her feel bad about herself   | 31           | 19            | 36           | 19            |
| Belittled or humiliated (his wife/her) in front of other people   | 6            | 4             | 21           | 11            |
| Scared or intimidated (his wife/her) on purpose for example, by the way he looked at her, by yelling and smashing things                                  | 22           | 15            | 24           | 14            |
| Threatened to hurt (his wife/her)   | 5            | 3             | 13           | 6             |
| Hurt people (his wife/she) cares about as a way of hurting her, or damaged things of importance to her  | 3            | 2             | 8            | 4             |
| Economic violence   | 13           | 5             | 33           | 13            |
| Prevented (his wife/her) from getting a job, going to work, trading or earning money  | 8            | 3             | 12           | 5             |
| Took (his wife's/her) earnings against her will   | 2            | 1             | 7            | 3             |
| Kept money from earnings for personal use when the respondent knew (his wife/she) was finding it hard to pay for her personal expenses or household needs | 2            | 1             | 5            | 3             |
| Threw (his wife/her) out of the house   | 5            | 2             | 13           | 5             |
| Chosen to leave the house chosen because of husband's (last one) behavior with her (women only)   | -            | -             | 24           | 9             |
| Physical violence   | 13           | 6             | 20           | 10            |
| Slapped (his wife/her) or threw something at her that could hurt her  | 9            | 3             | 15           | 8             |
| Pushed or shoved (his wife/her)   | 9            | 4             | 15           | 7             |
| Hit (his wife/her) with his fist or with something else that could hurt her   | 7            | 2             | 14           | 6             |
| Kicked, dragged, beat, choked or burned (his wife/ her)   | 2            | 0.1           | 7            | 4             |
| Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against (his wife/her)  | 1            | 0.2           | 2            | 1             |

|   | Men        |           | Women       |           |
|---|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|   | Lifetime   | 12-months | Lifetime    | 12-months |
|   | (%)        | (%)       | (%)         | (%)       |
| Sexual violence   | 4          | 1.4       | 9           | 5         |
| Forced (his wife/her) to have sex with him when she did not want to | 4          | 1.4       | 9           | 5         |
| <b>Total number of ever-married respondents</b>                     | <b>705</b> |           | <b>1040</b> |           |

\*Wife/husband refers to the current wife/husband for currently married respondents and the most recent wife/husband for divorced, separated, or widowed respondents.

\*\* the 12 month percentage is calculated based on those respondents who have experienced violence over their lifetime, while the 'lifetime' percentage is calculated across the entire survey sample.

Due to the IMAGES Jordan survey coinciding with the first year of the pandemic, any acts that took place in the 12 months preceding the survey (between June 2020 and June 2021) are therefore strongly impacted by it. **IMAGES Jordan study concludes that COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased the number of cases of gender-based violence, especially within households.** The continuous lockdowns and the social and economic stress that the pandemic created has led to more tensions and unprecedented levels of domestic violence. The annual report of the Family and Juvenile Protection Department for 2020 indicates an increase in the number of reported domestic violence cases compared to the previous year,<sup>63</sup> and that 58.7 percent of 2020 cases involved physical violence. Between March and May 2020 alone, Jordan recorded a 33 percent increase in reports of domestic violence compared with the same period in 2019.<sup>64</sup> Pre-pandemic studies also note that 88 percent of the reported gender-based violence cases in the country are perpetrated by husbands.<sup>65</sup> The Jordan's Gender Barometer study conducted in April 2020, by the CSS, concludes that during the mandatory curfew in response to the coronavirus crisis, a total of 35 percent of Jordanians were subject to at least one form of domestic abuse, 58 percent of which were perpetuated by a male family member.<sup>66</sup> The most prevalent forms of domestic violence reported during quarantine include: verbal violence (48 percent), psychological (26 percent), neglect (17 percent) and physical abuse (9 percent).<sup>67</sup>

Most respondents involved in the qualitative research, males and females, state that violence has increased recently due to the deteriorating economic conditions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some respondents indicate that physical violence against women could be caused by a mental problem suffered by men or due to witnessing domestic violence acts in their childhood. Moreover, all women and men agree that there is no excuse for violence.

<sup>63</sup> 54,743 cases in 2020, compared to 41,221 cases in 2018.

<sup>64</sup> According to the Family and Juvenile Protection Department of the Jordanian Police.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). 2020. "Sexual and reproductive health and rights in time of crisis: Jordan brief". April.

<sup>66</sup> CSS. 2020. "Jordan Barometer - Coronavirus Lockdown Exacerbating Domestic Violence in Jordan". <https://bit.ly/3RRCbsJ>, May 2020.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

“There was no violence in the past. These days, however, violence has appeared with more changes and pressures, especially with the COVID-19 crisis. Having to stay at home has caused arguments to take place mostly against women and children because of pressure. Men beat their children to relieve themselves from stress.”

—60-year-old Jordanian man

**Emotional violence is the most common type of domestic violence reported over the previous year.** According to men who admit to having perpetrated domestic violence, one in two cases of emotional violence and economic or physical violence took place within a married couple occurred in the last 12 months preceding the study. Women are more likely to say that the various forms of abuses they suffered from took place during the pandemic, especially when it comes to economic and physical violence.<sup>68</sup> According to research, few gender-based violence abuses in households were nevertheless reported, due to proximity with the perpetrator, limited knowledge of available services or hotline numbers, and inability to access private cell phones or women’s organizations and protection centres.<sup>69</sup>

With over 80 percent of Syrian refugees living outside of camps in Jordan,<sup>70</sup> most are reportedly staying in densely populated and overcrowded areas and relying on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. COVID-19-related restrictions on movement only increased their suffering and distress. Over half of the assessed diverse domestic abuse cases reportedly took place during the year preceding the survey. Syrian men were more likely to report practising some kind of economic violence against their spouse, while women were more likely to report experiencing emotional and physical spousal violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

**Table 4.9 Percentage of ever-married respondents reporting acts of violence perpetrated by men and experienced by women, in both host and Syrian communities, lifetime and 12-month rates, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|                    |                | Men          |               | Women        |               |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                    |                | Lifetime (%) | 12 months (%) | Lifetime (%) | 12 months (%) |
| Emotional violence | Host community | 39           | 26            | 42           | 23            |
|                    | Syrians        | 36           | 22            | 42           | 27            |
| Economic violence  | Host community | 13           | 5             | 33           | 13            |
|                    | Syrians        | 9            | 6             | 34           | 16            |
| Physical violence  | Host community | 13           | 6             | 20           | 10            |
|                    | Syrians        | 12           | 5             | 24           | 14            |

<sup>68</sup> The 12 months preceding the study covers the period from June 2020 to July 2021. Although starting in April 2020 there was a nationwide lockdown with strict curfew that started on 18 March, Jordan was still applying strict curfew hours and occasional lockdowns for the rest of the year (see COVID-19 related introduction).

<sup>69</sup> GBV IMS Taskforce Jordan. 2020. “Preliminary Analysis of Gender-Based Violence trends during COVID-19”, 14 April.

<sup>70</sup> UNHCR. 2022. “Syrian Regional Refugee Response – Jordan”. 22 February. Accessed 17 March 2022. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/36>.

|                 |                | Men          |               | Women        |               |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|                 |                | Lifetime (%) | 12 months (%) | Lifetime (%) | 12 months (%) |
| Sexual violence | Host community | 4            | 1.4           | 9            | 5             |
|                 | Syrians        | 4            | 3             | 8            | 4             |

**Over one third of spousal domestic violence acts takes place in front of children.** Up to 38 percent of the 1,040 ever-married women in the survey who reported being a victim of one or more types of domestic violence in their lifetime say that the violence happened in front of their children. Twenty-seven percent say it happened during their pregnancy. These numbers are almost double those self-reported by male perpetrators (Figure 4-26). Both men and women report acts of physical violence as the most common forms of abuse to occur in front of children or during pregnancy.

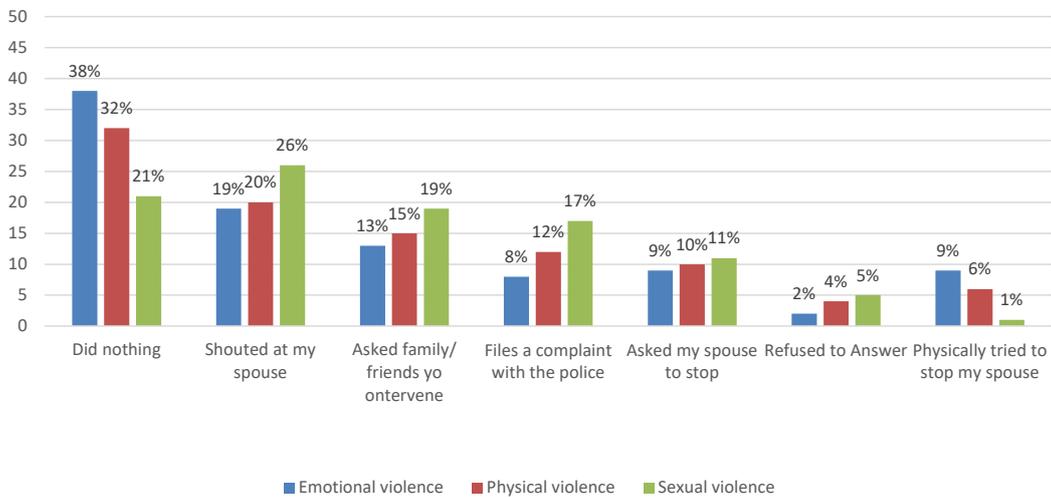
In the qualitative analysis, discussions suggested the possibility that males and females witnessing domestic violence in their childhood are affected by these incidents throughout their adulthood. Some say they will be affected negatively, since sons can grow up to imitate their father's behaviours, while daughters might resent men and fear them. On the other hand, some suggest it might also have a positive effect, whereby sons might be affected by their mother's suffering and consequently develop an opposite reaction, showing more respect to women in their life.

**Table 4.10 Percentage of ever-married respondents agreeing that domestic violence acts perpetrated by men and experienced by women took place during pregnancy or in front of children, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

| Men (%)  |                              | Emotional violence |         | Physical violence |         |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
|  |                              | Women (%)          | Men (%) | Women (%)         | Men (%) |
| Did any of these acts take place in front of children? | No                           | 75                 | 42      | 67                | 33      |
|  | Yes                          | 21                 | 42      | 28                | 49      |
|  | Had no children at the time  | 3                  | 8       | 4                 | 9       |
|  | Don't know/Don't remember    | 1                  | 8       | 1                 | 9       |
| Did any of these acts occur when you were pregnant?    | No                           | 76                 | 57      | 79                | 48      |
|  | Yes                          | 14                 | 29      | 12                | 37      |
|  | Wife has never been pregnant | 6                  | 5       | 7                 | 5       |
|  | Don't know/Don't remember    | 3                  | 10      | 2                 | 10      |

Generally, when female victims of emotional or physical violence are asked how they responded/reacted to such an act the last time it happened, the majority (38 percent) say they did nothing. Twenty percent say they asked the abuser to stop or shouted at them. Only 9 percent asked family or friends to intervene and 3 percent filed a complaint with the police (Figure 4.24). These results show a clear tendency to avoid any reaction or to keep family problems between close family members. Data disaggregated by type of domestic violence show that for all types of violence (either emotional, physical or sexual), women tend to do nothing about it and reporting remains very scarce.

**Figure 4.24 Percentage of ever-married female respondents' selected statements of their responses to domestic violence, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Qualitative research shows that **women still justify the violence inflicted on them**. During the female FGDs, it was striking that some women gave justifications for being beaten by their partners. Some blamed themselves, saying they had “sinned” against their husbands, and therefore deserved to be beaten.

“A wife does not have the right to refuse sexual intercourse. This is shameful, and the husband shall be allowed to beat her for it just because he wants to have sexual intercourse with her, and she refused to allow it. She does not have the right to reveal her husband’s secret. They [the husband’s family] do not want to treat her well because she revealed their son’s secret. It is her fault.”

—67-year-old Jordanian woman

“If she makes a lot of mistakes, her husband has the right to hit her. It is okay for him to beat her; she is his wife after all.”

—Jordanian woman in an FGD

“No, sometimes, for example, if she is wrong, she has to be beaten because once she crosses her limits, frankly she must be beaten.”

—Jordanian woman in an FGD

**Women tend to use violence or reciprocate as a self-defence mechanism.** Eighty-eight percent of ever-married women affirm having “never” insulted or belittled their spouse and 97 percent say they have also “never” threatened to hurt or actually hurt their spouse. Out of the very few cases

of stated physical violence perpetrated by a wife against her spouse, 78 percent are reportedly as a response to violence or aggression by the husband.

**Physical violence within a married couple is rarely subject to external interference.** In addition to not tending to denounce their spouse for physical or sexual abuse, most of the Jordanian population also tends to not interfere or denounce family members or neighbours committing physical violence acts against their spouse. Over half of those surveyed say they “did nothing” to stop spousal physical violence occurring in their immediate environment. About one third say they “directly intervened or asked the man’s family to intervene”.

According to the qualitative study findings, **female respondents agree that most women would not report interpersonal violence, especially without family support, as women are always conditioned to endure in order to keep the family intact.** This is perceived as one of the most important roles of a ‘good wife’; ‘a good woman’. Respondents also say that even if the assault or violence is intense, women would have to think a great deal before reporting the incident. In many cases, women refuse to speak out about their victimization because they fear that doing so will lead nowhere, or possibly to more violence.<sup>71</sup>

“It is very realistic. It happens a lot, even in Jordan. Our society always gives excuses to men and believe that women need to endure. As women, we got used to it. Whatever happens to us, we endure to keep our families intact. We became more aware, but still, whatever women face, they prefer to keep their families intact.”

—Palestinian woman, East Amman

“Often the beatings are not due to financial burdens. It is due to psychological reasons, meaning mental illness. But this does not mean that the woman shall be separated from her husband because he beats her. She can stand by his side and help him in his plight. The best way to deal with this issue is for the man to visit to a social worker or a psychiatrist. He might have a mental disorder and beat his wife as a result of this disorder.”

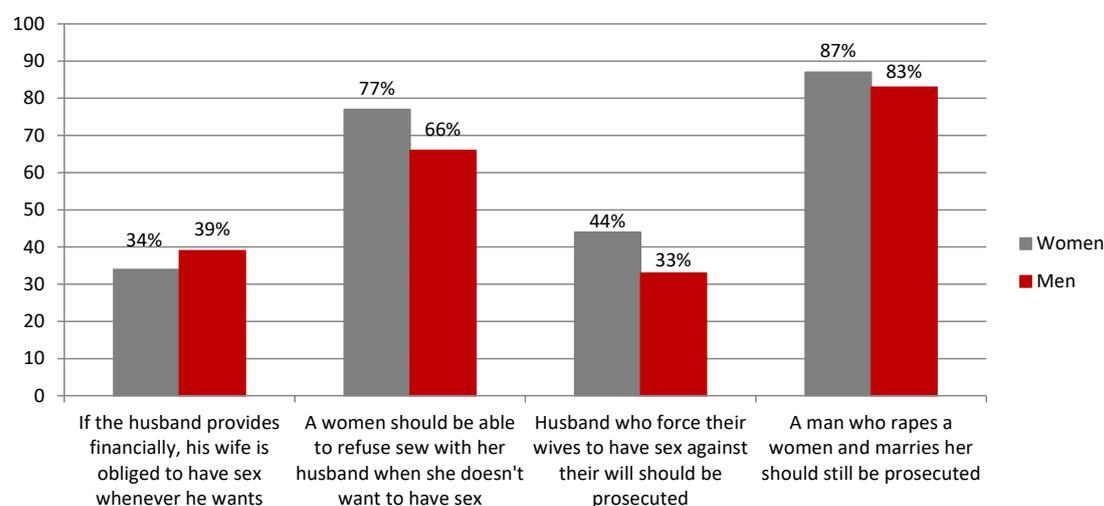
—adult son to a Jordanian mother and foreign father, in an FGD

**Marital rape is not a familiar concept in the minds of most men and women living in Jordan.** Most of the qualitative study respondents say that sex should not be forced at all, even by a husband. Many talk about the importance of ‘respect’, ‘fondness’ and ‘kindness’ between spouses. However, a few respondents mention that if there is no legitimate reason (such as menstruation or sickness) then a woman must have sex with her husband, as it is part of the duties of a wife towards her husband granted by God “in all religions”. Some say that it is simply part of being a wife, being a woman, and that a wife has to be ready for sex “whenever her husband needs it”.

Moreover, there were arguments between participants in the FGDs about the definition of marital rape, where some argued that if two people are married then it cannot be called rape. However, most male participants agree that a woman can’t be forced to have sex with her husband, as it is not decent behaviour and there is no pleasure in it.

<sup>71</sup> Euro-Med Monitor. 2020. Women in Jordan - Continuing Violence and Absent Protection. <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/women-jordan-continuing-violence-and-absent-protection-august-2020>.

**Figure 4.25 Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about sexual violence, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Over one third of men and women still believe that a woman is obliged to have sex whenever her husband wants because he is the breadwinner of the family. Seventy-seven percent of women and 66 percent of men, however, do recognize that wives have the right to refuse sex. This suggests that there is a growing understanding of women as active members in the sexual life of the couple and not just as subjects to a will of their husband (Figure 4.25). Nevertheless, both genders still don't see the need to prosecute the husband for forcing his wife to have sex; marital rape often remains a taboo subject and is not defined or recognized by society (see section on sexual violence). However, there is general agreement that rapists should be prosecuted even if they marry their victims (Figure 4.25).

Younger women with a secondary level of education or higher are more likely to agree with the right of women to refuse sex from husband and the importance of prosecuting rapists even within a married couple. Although younger educated men also tend to agree with the importance of consent before a sexual act within married couples (66 percent of men and 81 percent for women with higher education), they are less likely to agree with prosecution and legal punishment for marital rape.

Syrian numbers are similar those of Jordanians, with 7 out of 10 men agreeing that women should be able to refuse sex when they do not want it. However, over one-third still believed that if a man provides financially for his family, he should be able to have sex with his wife whenever he wants.

#### 4.6.2 Sexual harassment and street harassment

**Street harassment is a common practice among men in Jordan, most frequently against women and girls in urban settings.** IMAGES Jordan results indicate that 48 percent of women respondents have been exposed to sexual harassment in their lifetime. Ogling is by far the most common type of reported harassment in public spaces, but one-third of women also report being subject to catcalls/sexual comments (Table 4.11). Twenty-three percent report being stalked or followed. In general, most women say they have never experienced street harassment, even if the ratios vary depending on the type of harassment mentioned. Men, on the other hand, mainly deny committing any forms of sexual harassment, including ogling, stalking, showing body's parts, or commenting on women. However, the percentage of women affirming that they have never been harassed remains lower than that of men affirming that they've never practised harassment.

There is no clear definition of the act of sexual harassment in the Jordanian Penal Code, creating a void in the understanding and legal interpretation of such behaviours. Furthermore, when it comes to cyberbullying or cyber harassment, the Cybercrimes Act (2015) only protects underaged victims.<sup>72</sup>

A large number of surveyed women also refused to answer when the incidents were too recent. Twenty-three percent of women refused to answer when asked if a man attempted to show them his genitals in the last 12 months. Seventy-two percent did not answer when asked if they were forced to have sex in public spaces in the last 12 months. This seems to indicate that some women avoid answering questions on recent harassment, either because of the sensitivity of the event or due to the prevailing culture of silence and stigmatization which often places the blame on female victims. (Table 4.11).

According to a 2017 study by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) on 'Sexual Harassment in Jordan', nearly 9 in 10 female respondents<sup>73</sup> had experienced one or more forms of nonverbal sexual harassment, such as suggestive gesturing. The same study revealed other alarming numbers of respondents experiencing: (88 percent), cyber-harassment (81 percent), physical harassment (69 percent) and psychological harassment (52 percent). Overall, eighty-six percent of all victims of harassment were women compared to only 14 percent who were men.<sup>74</sup>

**Table 4.11. Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about sexual harassment and street harassment disaggregated by sex and frequency, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|  | Men (Perpetrated) |                        | Women (Experienced) |                        |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
|  | Lifetime (%)      | Previous 12 months (%) | Lifetime (%)        | Previous 12 months (%) |
| <b>Types of sexual harassment/assault</b>            |                   |                        |                     |                        |
| Ogling   | 40                | 25                     | 40                  | 18                     |
| Catcalls or sexual comments                          | 12                | 8                      | 32                  | 13                     |
| Stalking or following                                | 8                 | 3                      | 23                  | 9                      |
| Obscene phone calls or text messages                 | 3                 | 2                      | 9                   | 4                      |
| Online harassment                                    | 7                 | 3                      | 9                   | 5                      |
| Touching intimate parts of your body without consent | 2                 | 1                      | 3                   | 1                      |
| Exposing his private parts                           | 2                 | 1.5                    | 4                   | 1                      |
| Forcing a woman/you to have sex                      | 1                 | 0.5                    | 1                   | 1                      |
| Any of the above acts of sexual harassment/assault   | 43                | 27                     | 48                  | 23                     |

<sup>72</sup> “[C]urrent regulations include articles punishing online abusers of children, but none pertaining to the abuse of women, who are victims of nearly 80 percent of cybercrimes.” (Al Emam, Dana. 2015. “Law must be updated to fight cybercrime, intensify punishment, experts say,” Jordan Times. 4 October. Accessed 13 March 2022. <https://bit.ly/3s5UP5E>).

<sup>73</sup> Out of a sample of 1,366 males and females. (JNCW. 2017. Sexual Harassment in Jordan)

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Almost 23 percent of women report having experienced one or more forms of harassment in the previous 12 months and close to one third of men report engaging in these acts in the same period of time. Ogling and sexual comments remain the most common in the 12 months preceding the survey. One-third of female harassment victims say the frequency of such acts has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and 20 percent of men say they've engaged in these acts more often than usual.

**Most verbal and non-verbal sexual harassment takes place in the streets (40 percent).** Only 4 percent of female victims report that such actions took place at their university, compared to 7 percent of males, who say they engaged in one or more of these acts on a university campus. Very few cases of sexual harassment in public spaces are reported to have taken place at workplaces, schools, shopping malls or on public transportation. However, a 2018 study conducted by Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) found that although many sexual harassment behaviours happen in workplaces – to both Jordanian and Syrian women in Jordan (informally reported) – survey results tend to show much lower reporting. According to the same study, only 15.8 percent of Jordanian women and 5 percent of Syrian refugee women reported having experienced workplace sexual harassment.<sup>75</sup> Women who were interviewed were often reluctant to talk about it, mainly out of fear of the consequences<sup>76</sup> and lack of protection. This could also be the case with the low rates collected by IMAGES Jordan, which are not consistent with data presented in previous studies. The 2017 JNCW study found that “the most common places for perpetrating physical and psychological harassment are educational institutions and workplaces (40.2%) and (44.2%) respectively”.<sup>77</sup> Another 2018 study by the SADAQA organization on “Gender in public transportation”<sup>78</sup> found that one of the top five safety and security concerns of working women in Jordan was harassment in public transportation while commuting to work. Forty-seven percent of women reported turning down job opportunities due to the current state of public transportation.<sup>79</sup>

Women are not the only ones subjected to sexual harassment. Thirteen surveyed men also reported having experienced sexual or street harassment in a public space, with 90 percent of them saying it was by a woman. However, women are still four times more likely to experience harassment over their lifetime than men.

**As for the qualitative study, sexual and street harassment is found to be experienced by both males and females living in Jordan, with more emphasis on all females.** Most female respondents say that sexual harassment affects females more than males. Some women suggest that the causes of such behaviours may be related to the increase in unemployment rates or delayed marriage.

As shown in Figure 4.26, victim-blaming is common when it comes to identifying reasons behind sexual harassment, with both men and women generally agreeing on the different survey statements. Men are more likely to say that “Women like the attention when men harass them,” while women tend to blame a woman’s choice of outfit (80 percent compared to 64 percent of men) or to being out at night (64 percent compared to 53 percent of men) as the main drivers for women being subject to male harassment and indecent actions. There is, however, less agreement on women going out alone as being a reason for sexual harassment. The JNCW 2017 report also shows that one third of perpetrators blame the victims, with most explanations concerning

<sup>75</sup> ARDD. 2018. Silent Women: An ARDD report on harassment in the workplace. <https://bit.ly/37RBcr8>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

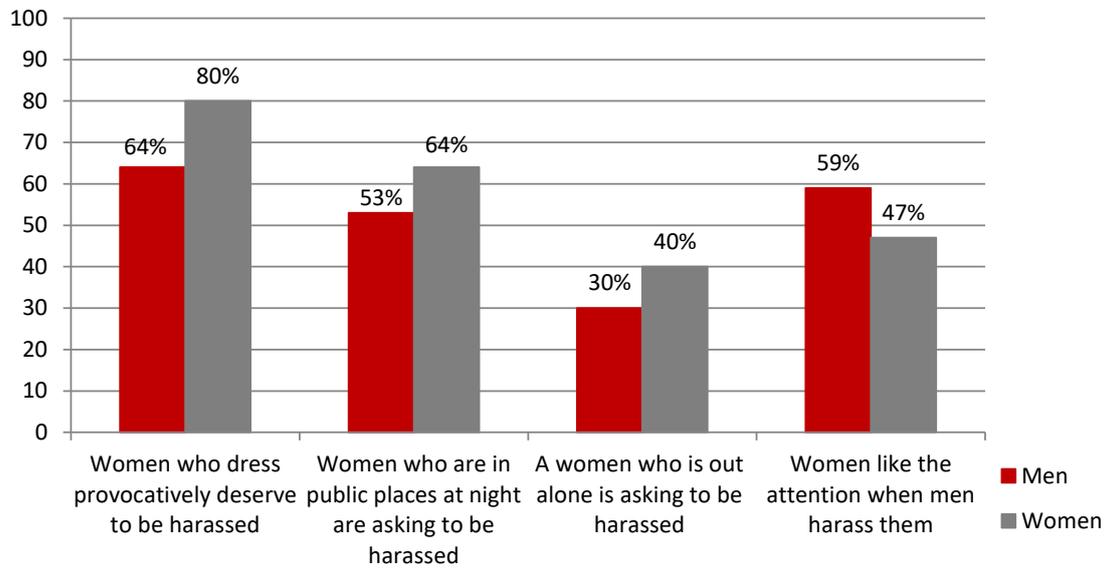
<sup>77</sup> JNCW. 2017. Sexual Harassment in Jordan. p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> SADAQA. 2018. Gender in public transportation: a perspective of women users of public transportation. <https://bit.ly/3kpUPJv>.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

women's clothes and body.<sup>80</sup> Men looking effeminate was also perceived by both Jordanian men and women as a reason for harassment, with 94 percent agreeing with the statement.

**Figure 4.26 Percentage of respondents who agree to strongly agree with selected statement about attitudes towards sexual harassment/assault, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



Responsibility for harassment is often placed on the female victim rather than on the harasser. The answers provided by female respondents seem to suggest that women, even more so than men, believe that their behaviour (the way they dress, the time they go out) justifies harassment. However, men respond in higher rates that harassment can be explained as a response to a women's need for attention. It seems here that men conceptualize harassment more as a response to a women's appearance or lifestyle

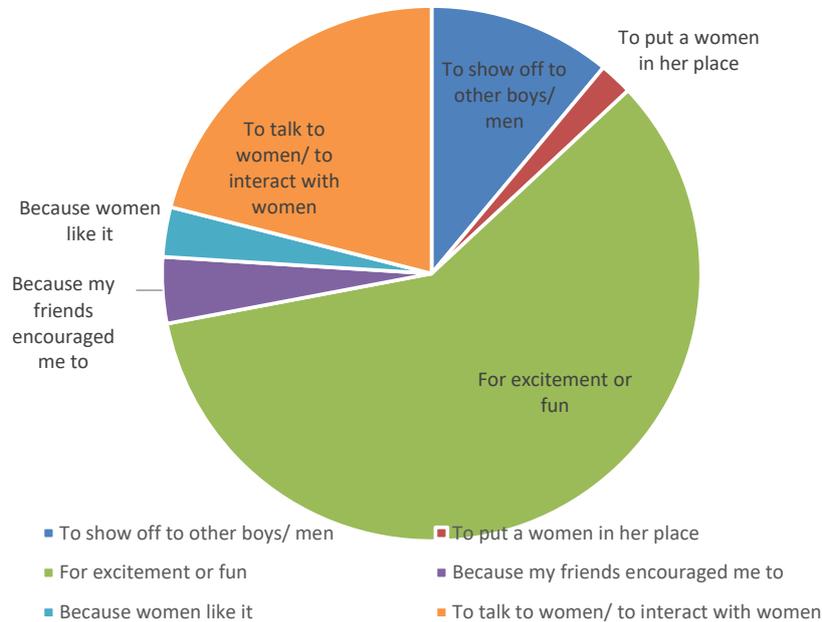
Older men are more inclined than younger ones to put the blame for harassment on women's behaviour. Some results also suggest that education has an impact on women's perception of harassment. More educated women are significantly less likely to put the blame on women for being harassed.

**Harassers often engage in such actions for simple excitement or fun.** More than half of male harassers say they sexually harass women in public spaces for the fun of it. Only 2 in 10 respondents say their actions are to approach or interact with women (Figure 4.27). Both motivations seem to indicate/suggest a serious lack of awareness from Jordanian men about the consequences of their actions, either on women in public spaces or the legal repercussions<sup>81</sup> that could fall upon them, depending on the seriousness of the acts.

<sup>80</sup> JNCW. 2017. Sexual Harassment in Jordan. p. 9.

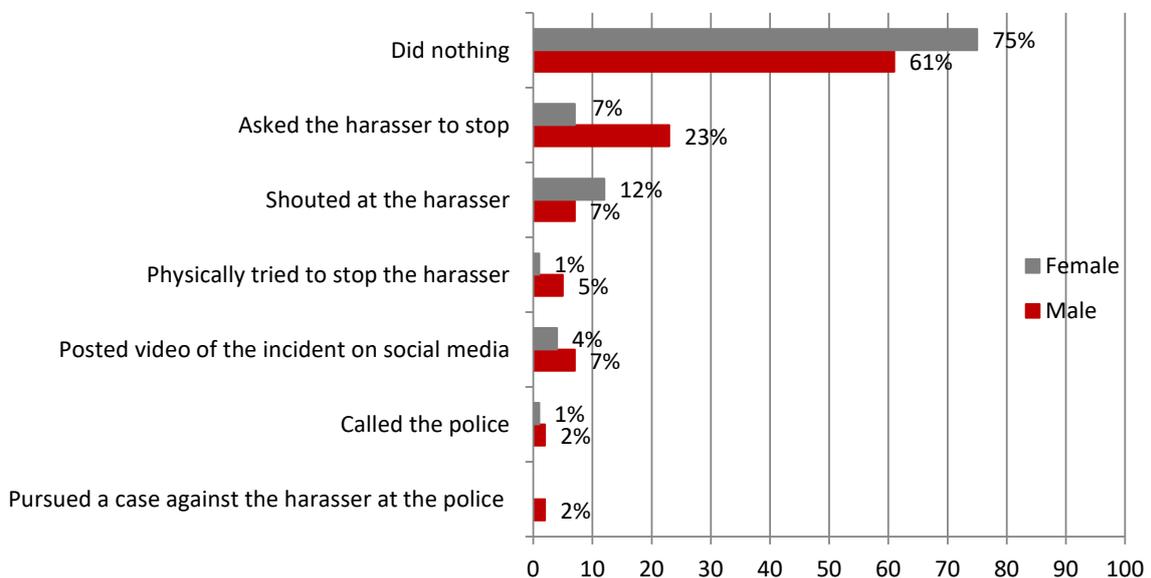
<sup>81</sup> Law No. (27) of 2017, "A Law Amending the Jordanian Penal Code". Article 306.

**Figure 4.27 Percentage of agreement of male perpetrators with selected statements on possible reasons behind acts of sexual harassment/assault in public spaces, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



**Most sexual harassment victims do nothing.** In 7 out of 10 cases of sexual harassment in public spaces, victims do not react, regardless of their gender. Only a quarter of males say they asked the harasser to stop while no more than 12 percent of the female victims took action, such as shouting at the harasser (shouting was the most common reaction among surveyed women). Confirming what has been previously mentioned about the fear of social stigma and the ambiguity of the laws and procedures regarding the acts of sexual harassment, victims seldom refer to the police or pursue harassers (Figure 4.28).

**Figure 4.28 Percentage of agreement with selected statements on attitudes towards sexual harassment/ assault in public spaces, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



“I was in Tawjihi when I first got harassed. I was on my way to a private class and took the service taxi when someone touched me against my will. I got scared and didn’t know if I should tell my family because they would prevent me from going out alone, and it was the first time this happened. So, I didn’t share this with anyone, but I started feeling that the reason might be the way I look or dress. That’s when I felt that I should pay attention to my body because I grew up... I was scared and felt unsafe. At the same time, I was afraid that I would lose my ability to go out alone. So, I took the responsibility for this situation myself without sharing it with my family. I was really mad back then; mad because of what happened and at myself for not doing anything... I kept thinking about what I would do if it happened again. I changed the way I dressed, didn’t use service taxis that much, and started using regular taxis, I also lost trust in my male friends. I developed a stereotype that all males think in a sexual way..”

—26-year-old Jordanian woman

### 4.6.3 Attitudes and practices towards gender-based violence

**Although research recognizes that so-called “honour killing” as a form of gender-based violence, the quantitative survey findings show that the vast majority of Jordanian male respondents consider it their duty to protect the “honour” of women and girls in their family and nearly 8 in 10 support “honour killing” in some circumstances.** More than 80 percent of men believe that a man’s “honour” is directly contingent on their female relatives’ way of dressing and behaving. While 70 percent of women agree, young and educated women show more opposition to such a statement.

Acts of violence against ones’ female relatives that are perceived to bring “dishonour” to one’s family are often defined as “honour crimes” or “honour” killings (when leading to the murder of relatives). These crimes are often justified as an act to defend or protect the honour of the family.<sup>82</sup> According to Jordanian civil society actors, more than 18 women and girls fell victim to these crimes in 2020.<sup>83</sup>

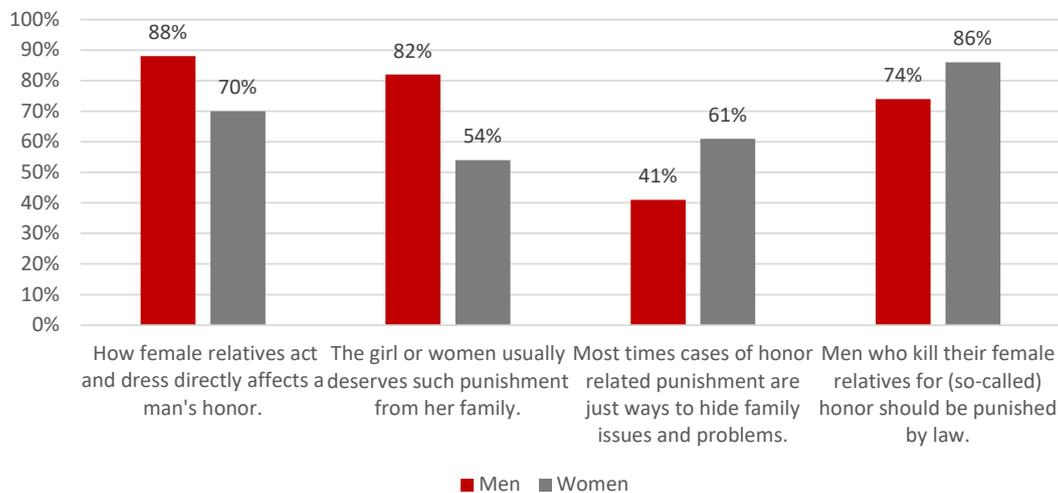
Nearly a quarter of both men and women recall hearing of so-called “family honour” crimes in their neighbourhood or local community in the previous year. However, the vast majority of men (especially younger ones and regardless of levels of education) believe that the victim usually deserves such punishment. Older and less educated women are more likely to agree. Most surveyed women agree with the statement that “Most times, cases of honour-related punishments are just ways to hide family issues and problems,” while fewer than half of men feel the same, as Figure 4.29 shows. Women – especially more educated ones – agree more with the statement, while men and women over the age of 50 are less likely to agree.

Jordanian law does not recognize “honour” killing as a special category, and this hard line is reflected in attitudes towards it. More than 80 percent of both men and women state that “men who kill their female relations for so-called ‘honour’ should be punished by law”. Older women and less educated ones are less likely to agree with the statement.

<sup>82</sup> Reduced penalties are possible when a crime has been committed in rage or out of the need to uphold the family’s honour following an ‘unjustifiable and dangerous act’ committed by the victim (honour crime) (Penal Code, 1960: Article 98).

<sup>83</sup> There are no official numbers on the occurrence of these acts in Jordan being published by authorities. Civil society actors and some media are the only sources available for such data. Often, the names of victims or perpetrators or court’s decisions/judgements are hidden from public opinion.

**Figure 4.29 Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who agree or strongly agree with selected statements about so-called honour crimes/killings, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



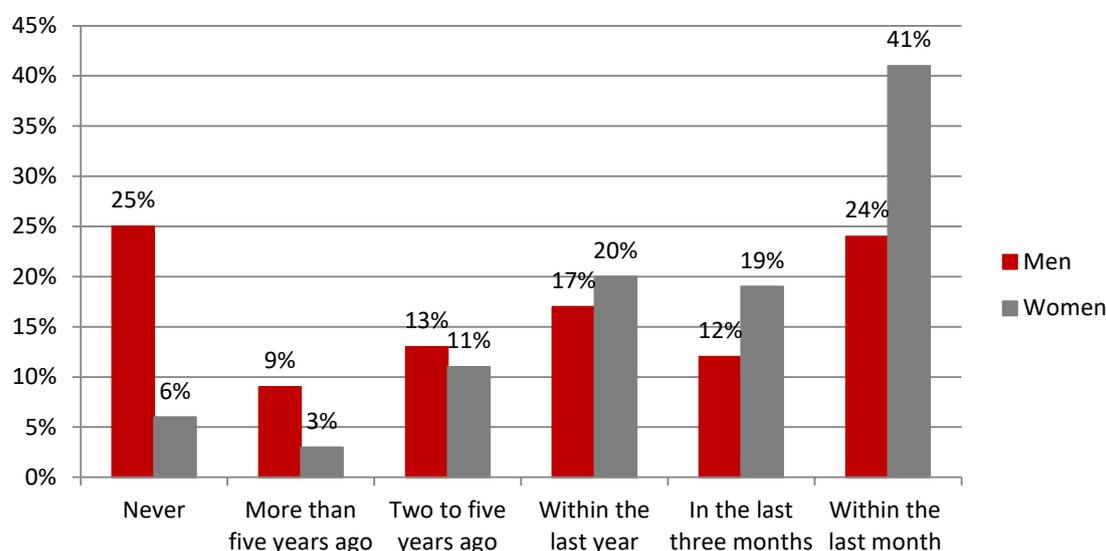
## 4.7. Health and quality of life

### 4.7.1 Physical health

#### *Seeking health services*

**Women in Jordan tend to seek health services more often than men.** The majority of both men and women report having sought out health services in the past five years. However, Jordanian men report using health services at much lower rates, with 34 percent of male respondents either never having sought health assistance or not having accessed such services in more than five years, versus only 9 percent of Jordanian women who answered the same (Figure 4.30). In contrast, Syrian men report the same. Fewer than 50 percent of Jordanians and one-third of Syrians who did access health services tend to use these services for general check-ups rather than because of specific concerns. When asked, 95 percent of Jordanians who did not utilize medial services within the past five years state that they felt they were in good health and therefore had no need to access care. Similarly, 85 percent of Syrians gave the same reason, although 10 percent added that lack of health insurance was also a factor. Furthermore, the percentage of Jordanian women who sought health assistance in the past month was much higher than that of Jordanian men (41 percent to 24 percent respectively), while 24 percent of Syrian men and 38 percent of Syrian women answered the same, suggesting that women pay more attention to their health and seek health services more often.

**Figure 4.30 Percentage of Jordanians who sought out health services at health-care institutions, by frequency, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



## Health and lifestyle

### Smoking

**Smoking is much more prevalent among men than women.** Jordan has one of the highest smoking rates in the world.<sup>84</sup> According to a 2019 survey by the World Health Organization and Jordan's Ministry of Health, 42 percent of Jordanians and 32 percent of Syrians living in Jordan are smokers.<sup>85</sup> IMAGES Jordan data confirm this trend, showing that 43 percent of Jordanians and 35 percent of Syrians are smokers. Moreover, data show that the percentage of Jordanian male respondents who smoke is three times higher than the rate of female smokers (Table 4.12). This mirrors the findings of the Gender Barometer, which concluded that "smoking is a highly gendered practice" in Jordan<sup>86</sup> and suggested that women may feel less comfortable admitting that they smoke, due to the fear of being stigmatized as smokers.<sup>87</sup>

The majority of men and a slightly smaller percentage of women who smoke say they have experienced smoking-related health problems. While many acknowledge the dangers of smoking, a significant number do not believe that smoking has caused them any health issues personally – an attitude that may contribute to respondents' low rates of utilizing medical care. Broken down by gender, a lower percentage 54 percent of Syrian men and 15 percent of Syrian women admitted to smoking. Syrians, especially women, were also keener to quit smoking. 85 percent of Syrian women smokers and 82 percent of men expressed a desire to stop smoking, this indicates that Syrian men and women are similarly willing to stop smoking and maintaining a better health.

<sup>84</sup> Safi, M. and J. al-Tahat. 2020. "Jordan Smoking Rates Highest in World amid Claims of Big Tobacco Interference." The Guardian. 23 June. Accessed 27 February 2022. <https://bit.ly/3kwxvc>.

<sup>85</sup> Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO). 2020. "Jordan National Stepwise Survey (STEPS) for Noncommunicable Diseases Risk Factors 2019", p. 14. Accessed 27 February 2022. <https://bit.ly/38EiJoW>, Accessed on: February 27, 2022.

<sup>86</sup> The Gender Barometer also found that the overwhelming majority of respondents who admitted to smoking daily were men, (Ababneh, Sarah. 2020. «Jordan Gender Barometer.» Center for Strategic Studies. Amman p. 43).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p. 6; MOH and WHO 2020.

**Table 4.12 Percentage of Jordanian respondents who smoke, according to self-declared health status and smoking behaviour, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

|   | Men (%) | Women (%) |
|---|---------|-----------|
| Respondent affirms to smoke                                 | 65      | 20        |
| Respondent feels he/she smokes too much                     | 69      | 34        |
| Respondent has ever had a health problem related to smoking | 25      | 19        |
| Respondent would like to stop smoking                       | 76      | 56        |

### [COVID-19 regulations](#)

As noted, the IMAGES Jordan study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that causes mild to moderate respiratory illness.<sup>88</sup> Respondents were asked about their level of commitment to certain COVID-19 regulations in the previous week, such as wearing masks in public and following government restrictions related to COVID-19. Respondents were also asked about changes in their social and personal behaviours during the pandemic.

**Women appear to follow COVID-19 regulations more strictly than men.** Thirty-two percent of Jordanian men and 58 percent of Jordanian women say that they always covered their faces with a mask, when required, while 41 percent of Syrian men and 56 percent of Syrian women also say they always do so. Additionally, 37 percent of Jordanian men and 58 percent of Jordanian women state that they always followed governmental restrictions while 54 percent of Syrian men and 60 percent of Syrian women gave the same answer.

Data presented in this section seem to suggest that men are generally less aware or alert to health risks and pay less attention to their health compared to women. Men do fewer check-ups/medical visits, they smoke more and do less to control their smoking habits, and are less likely to follow COVID-19 regulations.

### [COVID-19 behaviours](#)

An overwhelming majority of both men and women affirm that their social interactions were impacted by COVID-19. Respondents say that practices such as shaking hands, kissing for greetings, attending mass gatherings and smoking shisha outside all decreased, with some going so far as to say that they stopped using their hands to eat Mansaf. For example 40 percent of Syrian men and 34 percent of Syrian women decreasing their consumption of Mansaf with their hands, while 24 percent of men and 10 percent of women say this eating behaviour (Table 4.13) shows the changes among Jordanian respondents and it suggests that there was a radical decrease in many usual social practices during the pandemic.

<sup>88</sup> WHO. N.D. "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)." Accessed 24 February 2022. [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1).

**Table 4.13. Percentage change in Jordanian respondents' social-personal behaviours and practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

| Social-personal behaviours    | Men (%)   |                 | Women (%) |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|
|                               | Decreased | Stayed the same | Decreased | Stayed the same |
| Shaking hands when greeting   | 82        | 14              | 79        | 16              |
| Kissing and greeting          | 87        | 10              | 82        | 13              |
| Attending a mass gathering    | 86        | 9               | 82        | 12              |
| Eating Mansaf with your hands | 41        | 47              | 41        | 18              |
| Smoking shisha in a café      | 50        | 4               | 25        | 8               |

## 4.7.2 Sexual and reproductive health

### *Problems and seeking medical advice*

An overwhelming majority of both men and women say they have never experienced a sexual or reproductive health-related problem. Women have higher rates of reported problems (15 percent versus only 6 percent for men). For the very few men and women who report having reproductive health problems, most consulted a medical professional (84 percent). Fourteen percent of Jordanian men and 12 percent of Jordanian women say they did not seek help, while 4 percent of Jordanian women declined to answer. Of the Jordanians that say they declined to seek help, the main reasons provided are that the problem resolved itself or that it didn't bother them. Only 5 percent of respondents say they self-medicated and or did not want to seek help because of the quality of services in the reproductive health system. However, it is worth noting that a fairly large number of Jordanian women (19 percent) declined to answer.

While Syrians appear similarly reluctant to admit to suffering from any sexual or reproductive health problems, a slightly larger number of both genders also say that they did seek medical care when needed (92 percent). Seven percent of Syrian men say they did not consult a health-care professional for a reproductive or sexual health problem, with all of them proclaiming that their problem resolved itself on its own, whereas out of the 8 percent of Syrian women who did not seek medical help, two thirds justified failing to seek help by saying that it did not bother them, while the remaining third refused to answer.

It seems that when it comes to sexual and reproductive health and the sensitivity of this medical condition, both genders from both communities try not to divulge this, especially men, who are also more likely to avoid professional medical assistance and wait for problems to resolve themselves.

## 4.7.3 Mental health

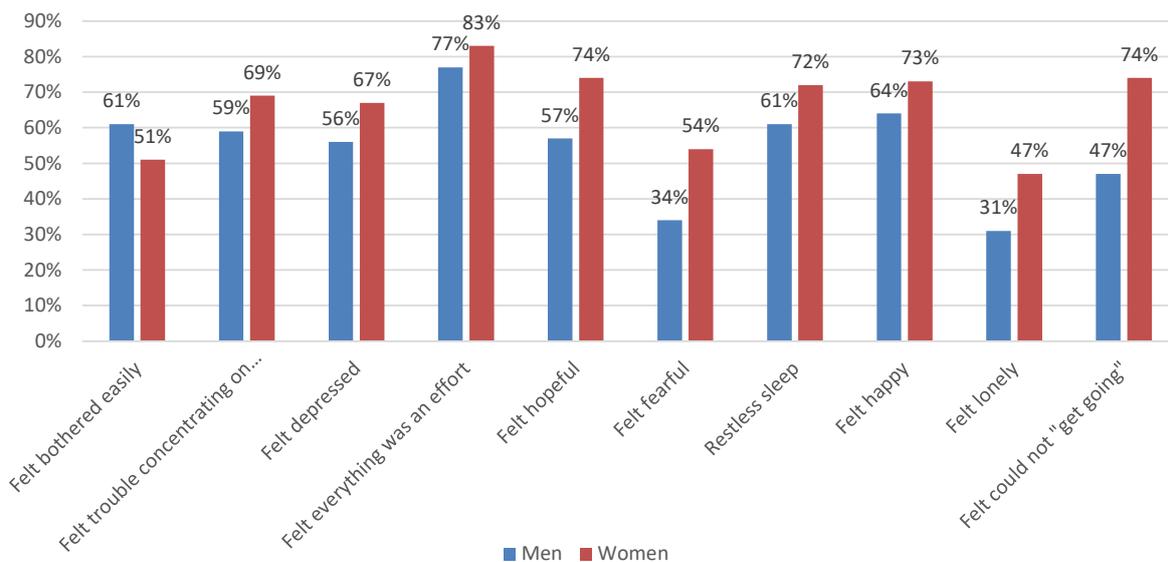
### *Emotional well-being*

**Jordanian and Syrian women reported a higher tendency to experience both negative and positive emotions than men.** Except for "being bothered easily", Jordanian women generally report a higher

frequency of mood swings than men (Figure 4.31). Syrians also report high rates of mixed feelings during the week preceding the survey; however, this is especially recurrent within the female population (Figure 4.32). This tends to correlate with the findings of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Gender Equality (IMC)’s 2017 report on mental health and psychological needs, which found that 26 percent of Jordanians and 35 percent of Syrian refugees who live in the host community exhibit high levels of distress.<sup>89</sup>

IMAGES Jordan quantitative data also show that a large percentage of men affirm that they have never or rarely had any thoughts/feelings that could be associated with mental conditions, such as being depressed, feeling lonely, being unable to sleep, and only a small minority confirm having these feelings constantly. Similarly, the Gender Barometer showed that female respondents were more likely to say that they felt sad or angry than male respondents.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, a recent study by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Jordan shows that male and female respondents feel higher levels of “stress” and “anxiety” due to the pandemic, especially adult Jordanian women (78 percent compared to 71 percent of men), while Syrian refugees reported a much higher rate of “anxiety” and “worry” overall – around 10 percent higher.<sup>91</sup>

**Figure 4.31. Percentage of Jordanian respondents who reported experiencing selected feelings in the previous week, IMAGES Jordan 2022**

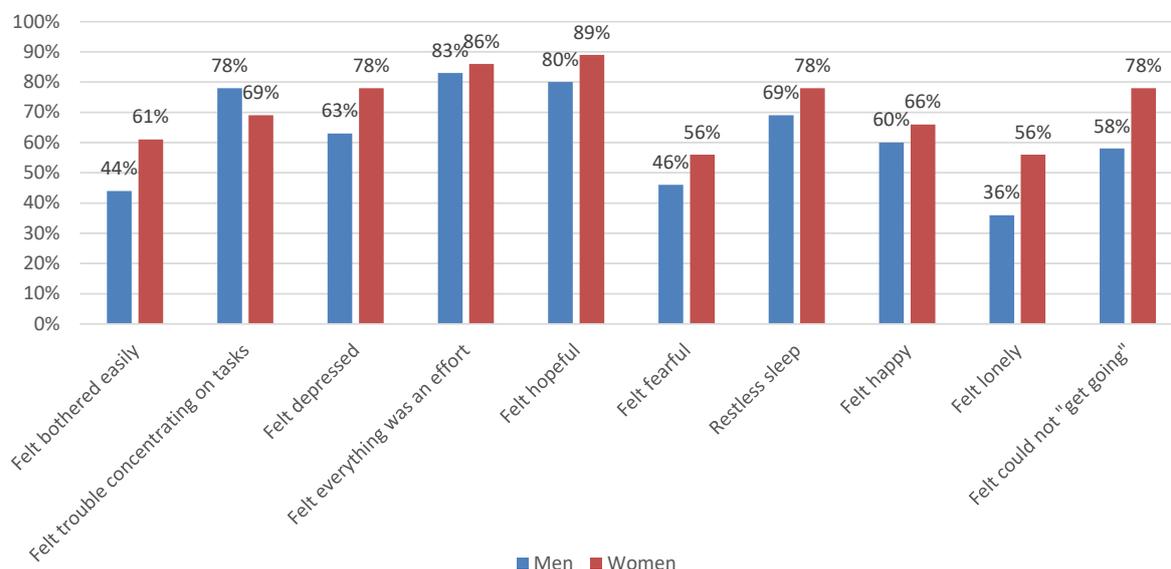


<sup>89</sup> IMC. 2017. Understanding the Mental Health and Psychosocial Needs, and Service Utilization of Syrian Refugees and Jordanian Nationals: A Qualitative & Quantitative Analysis in the Kingdom of Jordan. p. 16.

<sup>90</sup> Ababneh 2020, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> K. Anderson. 2020. Daring to Ask, Listen, and Act: A Snapshot of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Women and Girls’ rights and sexual and reproductive health. UNFPA Jordan. April/May.

**Figure 4.32. Percentage of Syrian respondents who reported experiencing selected feelings in the previous week, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



### *Suicidal thoughts and their frequency*

More than 93 percent of men and 95 percent of women report that they had not thought about ending their lives. Of those who do admit to considered ending their lives, most had not thought about it within the past month. A slightly higher percentage of men (45 percent) than women (40 percent) admitted to considering the possibility recently. As in all countries, open discussions about suicide and suicidal thoughts are stigmatized, so a complete understanding of the issue is challenging to obtain. According to recent numbers shared by the Department of Statistics, 186 suicide cases were recorded in 2021, which represents a 10 percent increase compared to the previous year (169 in 2020), and the highest number since 2017.

### *Seeking mental health support*

Sixty-nine percent of men and 54 percent of women report that they do not seek help from others when they feel sad, disappointed or frustrated. Those who do seek help generally say they talk to relatives or friends. Women are more likely to speak with a female friend, and men are more likely to speak with a male friend. Sixty-five percent of Syrian men state that they do not seek help from others, compared to 51 percent of Syrian women. Just under half of Syrians who do seek help turn to their relatives, with a quarter saying that they talk to their spouse. Only 1 percent of Jordanian or Syrian women report seeking professional counselling, compared to none of the Jordanian or Syrian male respondents.

Ninety-five percent of men and women say they have never sought out treatment for mental health issues such as stress, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts or substance abuse. Of those who have sought help, approximately 81 percent turn to a regular health clinic/doctor or to a mental health counsellor. Jordanian men are just as likely to see either, whereas Jordanian women are more likely to seek help from a regular doctor. Jordanian men are more likely than women to seek prescribed medications to treat mental health conditions (10 percent compared to 3 percent). Syrian respondents demonstrate similar tendencies, with 8 percent of Syrians who suffer mental health

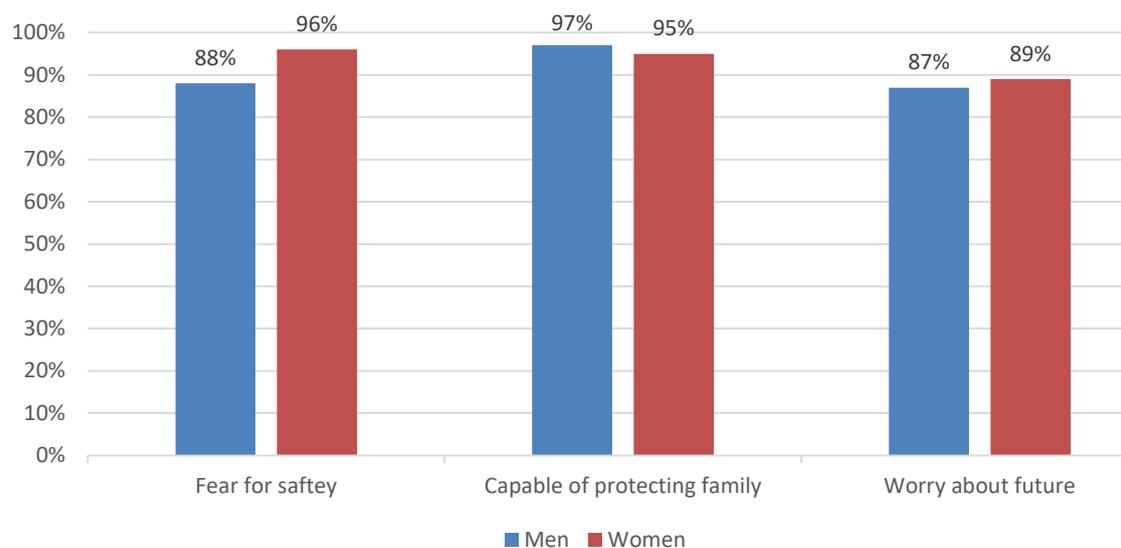
issues stating that they sought non-prescribed medications. Of this group, men are more likely to seek help from a regular doctor while women are more likely to go to a mental health counsellor. Those who do not seek help state that they had either never suffered from any condition, that the condition resolved itself, or that they handled it on their own. There seems to be a general tendency for women to affirm that health problems – whether mental, reproductive and sexual health – resolved themselves in explaining why they did not seek help.

### *Feelings of safety and security*

**Jordanian men and women report low levels of harassment and robbery outside the home.** An overwhelming majority of men and women (85 and 94 percent, respectively) affirm that they have not been robbed recently or within the past year. Similarly, only a few respondents report having experienced harassment at the hands of police or security forces. However, those who had experienced harassment were much more likely to be men than women (25 percent compared to 3 percent). While only 1 percent of Syrian women report harassment by police, a rate similar to that of Jordanian women, 87 percent of Syrian men affirm that they have been harassed by police or security forces in Jordan. Ninety percent of Syrian men also state that they have been robbed in the past 12 months, while 6 percent of Syrian women report the same.

**A significant number of respondents report fearing for their safety and worrying about their future.** However, a high number of both genders maintain that they are capable of protecting their families, suggesting that Jordanians may not fear for their immediate security but are instead more concerned about future challenges (Figure 4.33). Moreover, the Syrian sample shows similar dynamics; the overwhelming majority of male and female respondents do not feel safe in general (90 and 96 percent, respectively). Nevertheless, 93 percent of Syrian men and 89 percent of Syrian women state that they feel confident that they can protect their families. Meanwhile, 91 percent of Syrian men and 96 percent of Syrian women are highly worried about their future.

**Figure 4.33 Percentage of Jordanian respondents with selected concerns about personal and family security, IMAGES Jordan 2022**



### *Involvement in violence*

While a majority of men and women report no involvement in violence, men are significantly more likely than women to have experienced some sort of violence. Eight percent of male respondents say they have been in a fight once and 47 percent have been involved in a fight “two to four or more times.” However, only 8 percent of women report ever being involved in a fight. Most of these fights appear to be low/ mildly violent with only 12 percent of men reporting that their fights involved a gun, knife or other weapon. Almost no women report fights involving weapons.

“I believe that people became more violent and less understanding. In Al-Khalidya, people come from different tribes. People used to love each other. If a man saw another person in danger, he used to help them. But now things have changed.”

—46-year-old Syrian man

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the IMAGES study in Jordan demonstrate that, while new approaches towards gender equality are slowly emerging, patriarchy is still dominant in public and private life. Generally, both men and women hold inequitable attitudes about the rights and responsibilities of women. However, women appear more aware of the importance of changing social dynamics, legislation and laws in order to guarantee women's empowerment and equality, whereas men are more resistant to such changes. Data show that the age of male respondents and their level of education do not significantly influence how they view women's rights. The traditional division of gender roles that characterizes Jordanian society is still considered suitable by many men. COVID-19, its economic effects and accompanying social restrictions have additionally slowed down process towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

However, IMAGES Jordan also identifies more positive attitudes towards women's legal rights, such as support for passing a mother's nationality to children. A more conservative approach prevails regarding new legislation on matters addressed in the Shari'a (such as allowing women to have the same inheritance rights as men). There seems to be a positive attitude shift towards women's roles in public sphere and leadership positions. However, women's main responsibility and duty is still seen as being in the private sphere, at home, or as caregivers, while men's role is understood to belong in the public sphere.

In spite of recent positive trends, men seem to resist women's empowerment and equal participation in many spheres of life. Men also still exercise control over women's movement, access to jobs and over decision-making related to marriage. Gender dynamics in the household remain based on gender-inequitable divisions between men and women. As other IMAGES studies have showed, history repeats itself: new generations of men and women in Jordan understand their role in the family and society according to their childhood experiences and the way gender divisions or empowerment were practised in their families and communities. Even among younger male respondents, the majority favour a traditional division of roles based on women's almost exclusive engagement in household duties. Often times, when men do perform domestic work, they also tend to hide it, perhaps out of fear that it might threaten their public masculine persona. IMAGES Jordan shows that men take fatherhood very seriously, involving themselves to varying degrees in their children's birth and participating in the emotional upbringing of their children. Fathers also widely express that they would like to have more time with their kids. However, men do not consistently engage in any more practical caregiving duties, leaving those responsibilities to mothers. These dynamics characterize different groups that compose Jordanian society, with Syrian refugees reporting the same kind of approaches and understanding of gender roles.

The findings also point to high levels of stress and mental health concerns among men. The study shows a significant proportion of men under enormous pressure, particularly due to smoking, with little recourse to formal health care and mental health services. There is obvious need for more accessible and affordable health-care services tailored to men's needs.



IMAGES Jordan has also shown that violence and gender-based violence remain a reality and major concern. While both men and women experience violence during childhood, with men reporting being victims of violence at home as well as at school at a higher rate than women. Gender-based violence is still perpetrated, but hidden, with many women seemingly willing to deny the existence of violence in order to protect their families. This is a reality that seems hard to change, especially if the wider network of relatives and the community are not supportive of victims of violence and marginalizes them for speaking out. Similarly, other forms of harassment, such as street harassment, including against women and girls and more vulnerable populations, are still common in Jordan. There seems to be, however, a growing understanding of the need to punish perpetrators of violence, especially among younger respondents.

Being the first IMAGES study conducted since the pandemic, the study in Jordan has also highlighted the strong impact of COVID-19 restrictions, the corresponding increase in domestic violence, and the pandemic's effects on the economy and social conditions. Men and women in Jordan are decidedly concerned about the present and anxious about the future.

All told, the findings of the IMAGES Jordan study provide valuable insights in order to understand where changes are needed and what progress is being made towards a more gender-equitable society.

