

Executive Summary

"A Man Enters the Water and Comes Out Dry"

UNDERSTANDING MASCULINITIES IN TUNISIA

Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey in Tunisia











© 2022 UN Women

Layout design : Angham Abdelmageed, UN Women

Executive Summary

"A Man Enters the Water and Comes Out Dry"

UNDERSTANDING MASCULINITIES IN TUNISIA

Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey in Tunisia

IMAGES Tunisia is a UN Women research project conducted in partnership with Equimundo, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) and Beity, within the framework of the UN Women regional program "Men and Women for Gender Equality", funded by Sweden.

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey "IMAGES" consists of a quantitative study conducted by AIHR and a qualitative study conducted by Beity. Equimundo provided technical assistance to the above-mentioned partners in conducting the qualitative and quantitative parts of the study and also developed the consolidated research report.

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. The entity works to position gender equality as a pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals and a more inclusive world. For more information: www.unwomen.org

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Vi
WHY A STUDY ON MASCULINITIES AND GENDER EQUALITY IN TUNISIA?	1
WHO WAS INCLUDED AND HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?	2
WHAT ARE THE MAIN FINDINGS?	3
1. Attitudes toward Gender, Gender Equality and Masculinities	3
2. Women's Economic Empowerment and Public Leadership	6
3. Gender Equality and the Law	7
4. Childhood and Adolescence	9
5. Gender Dynamics in Households	11
6. Gender-Based Violence	14
WHAT CAN BE DONE?	18

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Coordination team of UN Women:

Begoña Lasagabaster, UN Women Representative, Tunisia-Libya

Rodrigo Montero Cano, Regional Programme Manager, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States

Boutheina Hammami, National Programme Coordinator, UN Women Tunisia

The Beity team:

Sana Ben Achour, President of Beity and Supervisor of Qualitative Research

Meryem Sellami, Social Anthropologist and Scientific Director of Research

Maryam Ben Salem, Professor and Researcher in Political Science

Hazem Chikhaoui, Philosopher and Field Researcher

Khaoula Matri, Social Anthropologist and Field Researcher

Marta Luceño Moreno, Researcher and Project Manager

The Equimundo team:

Brian Heilman, Senior Research Officer

Giovanna Lauro, Vice President of Programs and Research

Taveeshi Gupta, Director of Research, Evaluation and Learning

Deboleena Rakshit, Data and Research Officer

Gary Barker, President and CEO

The AIHR team:

Abdelbasset Ben Hassen, President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights

Hajer Chehbi Habchi, Executive Director of the Arab Institute for Human Rights

Israa Attia, Senior Program Manager of the Arab Institute for Human Rights

Zouheir Ben Jannet, General coordinator of the research team, researcher in sociology

Mohamed Ali Ben Zina, Researcher in demography, expert in quantitative methodology

Hafidha Chekir, Law professor and human rights activist

Asma Nouira, Political science researcher and gender studies expert

Anis Boujaama, Expert engineer in statistics

The following people also contributed to IMAGES Tunisia:

Lemonia Fokaidou (UN Women) and **Shereen El Feki** (Former Senior Researcher at Promundo, now called Equimundo).

WHY A STUDY ON MASCULINITIES AND GENDER EQUALITY IN TUNISIA?

The major advances that Tunisia has seen in women's rights since the country's independence have been remarkable when compared to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Since the enactment of the Personal Status Code (PSC) in 1956, which replaced repudiation with divorce and prohibited polygamy, to the enactment of the comprehensive law to combat violence against women in 2017 and the appointment of a woman to head of government in 2021, Tunisia appears to be at the forefront where gender equality is concerned. However, this rosy vision is immediately confronted with the persistence of legal inequalities, such as the maintenance of inheritance inequality, the attribution of the status of head of family to the husband/father (Article 23 of the PSC) as well as the right to coerce the wife to go through marriage in return for the payment of the dowry (Article 13 of the PSC). Moreover, the entry of women into the labor market has not resulted in equality of resources and employment, as the female employed population represents almost a third of the male employed population as of 2021.

In addition to the above, the general context that Tunisia has been experiencing since 2011 within the so-called democratic transition has greatly affected the status of women and deepened gender differences. Despite the improvement in the indicators of participation in political life in terms of affiliation to political parties and associations and participation in elections and representative councils, this improvement did not reduce the manifestations of violence that women are exposed to in the public sphere and did not significantly change the general scene with regard to assuming leadership positions. Perhaps the doubling of the rates of violence against women during the COVID pandemic is one of the indicators that can indicate the fragility of the gains made by Tunisian women over decades, and the continuing dangers that threaten the most vulnerable women Tunisia.

This background explains why women as well as civil society organizations continue to vigilantly push for the promotion of woman's and human right even in this "exceptional" setting. It is furthermore in service to this effort, and to continue removing roadblocks to gender equality in Tunisia, that deeper research and understanding of men's attitudes and beliefs is necessary. IMAGES Tunisia is a publication of UN Women that builds upon the global IMAGES project, which aims to build better understanding of men's and women's practices related to gender equality worldwide and in the MENA region. Originally developed by Equimundo (previously Promundo-US, in partnership with Instituto Promundo) and the International Center for Research on Women, IMAGES is one of the most comprehensive studies ever to explore men's practices and attitudes related to gender equality alongside women's. Using a wide variety of measures, IMAGES questionnaires investigate gender-based violence, health and health-related practices, household division of labor, men's participation in caregiving and as fathers, men's and women's attitudes about gender and gender-related policies, transactional sex, men's reports of criminal behaviour, and quality of life.

WHO WAS INCLUDED AND HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?

The Arab Institute for Human Rights conducted the quantitative study by carrying out a household survey targeting targeted 2,400 households distributed over 120 census districts randomly selected from the entire territory of the Republic and drawn by the National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia. Each province has an average of approximately 80 households allowing for the interviewing of 1/4 of them, i.e. 20 families in each district. The districts sample was divided amongst the governorates according to the demographic weight of the population in each region. The study aimed at interviewing an individual from each household in the sample, which made it possible to obtain 2,400 completed forms (1,200 forms for men and 1,200 forms for women). The interviewed individual was selected based on a random draw made by a pre-set software installed on the electronic tablets containing the forms.

The qualitative sample consists of 34 men and 27 women. Women were interviewed alongside men in order to shed light on how they perceive masculine practices, and help shape - or reject - masculine hegemony, and in which areas in particular. The research team from Beity ensured that the sample was diversified according to the following variables: age, environment (urban, rural and peri-urban), education level and marital status, in order to test a number of hypotheses relating to differences in the practices and representations of individuals. The research team made sure to obtain the free and informed consent of the respondents, and to ensure privacy and confidentiality by protecting the access and dissemination of personal information. The interviews lasted between 1 hour to 3 hours 30 minutes. They were registered and carried out on the premises of partner associations, in meeting rooms rented for the purposes of the survey, and sometimes in cafes.

The research team ensured that all ethical considerations that inform data collection, analysis, and dissemination have been followed to the highest degree, including attaining informed consent before starting any data collection, and ensuring all data was recorded and stored with confidentiality and no way to link back any findings to the participants. Since the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the research team instructed surveyors and interviewers on COVID-19 protocols and health measures as they related to the data collection process. Taking into consideration the sensitive nature of the IMAGES survey questions, and in accordance with IMAGES procedures and regulations, female surveyors interviewed female respondents and male surveyors interviewed male respondents.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN FINDINGS?

1. Attitudes toward Gender, Gender Equality and Masculinities

Study participants hold a diversity of views, with some directly in support of patriarchy, some directly opposed to patriarchy, and many bearing views "in the middle" – bearing elements of proequality and pro-patriarchy ideas combined. In the table below, with only one exception, men hold more restrictive views than women for these gender attitude statements. Nearly 68 percent of men agreed that "A man should have the final word about decisions in his home," for instance, compared to about 48 percent of women. This discrepancy is not limited to items about men's roles. A greater proportion of men – 40 percent – agreed that "A woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family," than women (30 percent). These data clearly suggest that restrictive views about gender roles are alive in the minds of Tunisian respondents, though much more so among men than women.

Attitudes Toward Gender Equality

Percentage of respondents who agreed with selected statements about gender roles and decision-making, violence, and perceptions of masculinity and femininity, IMAGES Tunisia 2022

		Men (%)	Women (%)
Atti	tudes toward gender roles and decision-making		
1	A woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family.	41.7	29.3
2	A man should have the final word about decisions in the home.	70.1	48.1
3	Changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be the mother's responsibility.	40.7	30.7
4	A married woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband.	83.3	95.1
Atti	tudes toward violence		
5	There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.	16.1	8.2
6	A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.	16.0	1.7



Perc	eption of masculinity and femininity					
7	To be a man, you need to be tough.	59.7	29.8			
8	If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters.	13.6	6.9			
9	It's a man's duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives.	77.8	49.3			
10	Boys are responsible for the behavior of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters.	76.1	47.2			
11	Unmarried women should have the same right to live on their own as unmarried men.	43.6	52.8			
Attit	Attitudes toward relationships, sexuality and reproduction					
12	It is the woman's responsibility to avoid becoming pregnant.	29.5	30.4			
13	If a man doesn't want to have sex, it is normal and doesn't make him less of a man.	87.8	89.7			

Gender attitudes vary in meaningful ways among demographic groups, and the youngest men in particular stand out as holding the most restrictive attitudes. All thirteen statements from the previous table comprise the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale as adapted for IMAGES Tunisia. Using this scale, it is possible to calculate a score from o to 3 for each respondent based on their average response to all thirteen statements, where o is the most inequitable and 3 is the most equitable overall. First, with an overall score of 1.94 compared to men's 1.65, we see clearly that women hold more equitable attitudes on average. Other important patterns emerge as well. While men's attitudes do not vary significantly across age groups, it is nonetheless observable that the youngest age group holds the least equitable views. By contrast, it is the youngest women who hold the most equitable views. This suggests turmoil and contested gender roles among youth in Tunisia based on gender. For both men and women, those with higher educational attainment also show more equitable scores. Employed women hold more equitable views than unemployed women, while men's attitudes do not vary much based on employment status. Currently married men hold the most equitable views among men, while never married women hold the most equitable views among women. Respondents in urban settings held more equitable views than respondents in nonurban settings.

Tunisian men and women survey respondents seem to fundamentally disagree with one another about whether gender equality is a worthy and essential pursuit in Tunisia. Far greater proportions of women than men agreed that "We as Tunisians need to do more work to promote the equality of men and women," and men were much more likely to hold the skeptical view that "More rights for women mean that men lose out." In both of these cases, women are by and large expressing the view that gender equality is lacking in Tunisia, and would benefit all. At the same time, however, the majority of women and men felt that "The idea that men and women are equal is not a part of our traditions and culture in Tunisia," a concerning sign. Qualitative interviewee Faycel, who lives in Zarzis in the south of Tunisia, is 40 years old. With an argument characteristic of the "defenders of patriarchy," Faycel considers that women have more rights than men in general and argues:

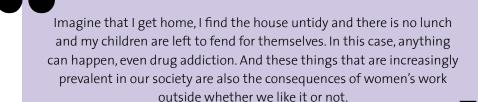


When you watch TV programs, radio, the media, we talk about women's rights all the time. Have we ever talked about men's rights? As a result of this situation, women have more rights than men and this has been the case for at least 40 years.

2. Women's Economic Empowerment and Public Leadership

Women's access to the labor market as well as their working conditions remain subject to a sexual division of social labor. This division is based on two fundamental principles: the principle of separation (there are men's jobs and women's jobs) and the hierarchical principle (a man's job is "worth" more than a woman's job). However, several sectors traditionally reserved for men are gradually becoming more feminine, thanks to the increased academic attainment and achievement of girls and women. As such, there is a growing gap between social perceptions of work and the reality of the labor market, despite the difficulties encountered by women in accessing employment and working conditions that remain largely marked by inequality and insecurity.

Men and women seem unsure and conflicted about women's economic roles in a changing world. A small minority of women – only 24 percent – agreed that "It is more important for a woman to marry than for her to have a career". But at the same time, the majority of women still felt that "When work opportunities are scarce, men should have access to jobs before women." And as presented earlier, on the more encouraging side, the great majority of all respondents agreed about equal rights to work for husbands and wives. This mix of attitudes suggests a society in transition, or complex worldviews which may hold some elements of equality and inequality side by side. Further confirmation that the institutional confusion that has characterized the transitional context since 2011, the succession of political crises and the dominance of religious discourse during the early years of the revolution are all factors that contributed to the overlapping of intellectual references among Tunisians. Qualitative interviewee Alif, a 35-year-old craftsman from Nefta in southern Tunisia, spent five years at university and will be married in a few months. When asked why he wanted his fiancée to stop working when they are married, he replied:



This view sits in contrast with qualitative interviewee and "opponent of patriarchy" Hakim, who demonstrates a more equitable view about women's and men's capabilities, drawing comparisons with childhood education.

At school, we had the same education, and the same work, didn't we? We didn't receive one education solely for men, and another for women? You can do medicine, architecture or whatever else regardless of your gender. Boys and girls, we sit in the same classroom. We obtain the same degree from the same school. It's the same, isn't it? So we are equal.

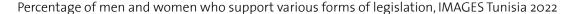
Danièle Kergoat, «Division sexuelle du travail et rapports sociaux de sexe», in: Jeanne Bisilliat, and Christine

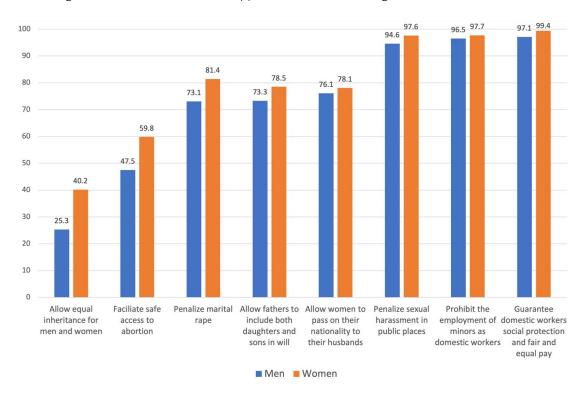
Verschuur (Dir.), Genre et économie : un premier éclairage, Geneva, Graduate Institute Publications, 2001, p. 78.

3. Gender Equality and the Law

We see great divergence – indeed a picture of extremes – when it comes to support for new legal protections for gender equality. Only a minority of men and women alike, 25 percent and 40 percent respectively, support a law to "allow equal inheritance for men and women," a sign of entrenched economic inequality in many respondents' mindsets. On the other hand, over 95 percent of men and women supported penalizing sexual harassment and providing certain legal protections to domestic workers.² Abortion remains the most evenly divided issue where roughly half of men and 3 in 5 women support a legal protection for safe access to abortion. These survey data are borne out by qualitative testimony such as those above, where there are no simplistic ideas or solutions when it comes to gender equality in law.

Support for Legislation





² In fact, domestic workers are now subject to a new law that recognizes the right of domestic workers to decent work without discrimination and guarantees respect for human dignity (Law No. 37 of 2021 dated July 16, 2021 regarding the regulation of domestic work); this law was passed during the data collection period of this study.

Qualitative participants hold divergent and nuanced views about women's protections by law as well. 37-year-old Lilia, a qualitative interviewee living in Sousse, considers the law to be in women's favor primarily due to the fact that she was successful in filing a complaint for violence and receiving alimony after her abusive husband left the home and family. Lilia shared:



Whenever it comes to verbal, physical or any other type of violence, the law is on the woman's side [...] when I went to the police station to file a complaint, the station chief and my lawyer told me that even if there is no obvious traces, the simple fact of raising his hand to slap you means a day in prison [...] the fact that I have a child, a baby, means the judge will automatically be on my side, the minimum is alimony and housing and the fact is the judge ruled in my favor for alimony.

Other respondents take an overall more pessimistic view of legal protections for gender equality in the law. Baya, a 39-year-old lawyer in Djerba, feels that egalitarian laws can only be minimally effective within a society that continues to be patriarchal. Perhaps due to her profession and her marital and family experiences (her parents divorced when she was 12 years old because her father was abusive to her mother), Baya maintains a critical outlook on Tunisian law and society:



The law is pretty egalitarian overall, but it is only one tool among others. What matters most are mentalities. There are countries that don't even have a constitution and are democratic; in Tunisia, it is true that the law even favors women, we have Law 58, but have we succeeded in eradicating violence or even reducing it? No! Because those who are supposed to apply the law have a chauvinistic mentality.

4. Childhood and Adolescence

Ramy: My mother is close, my father is far! That's my childhood.

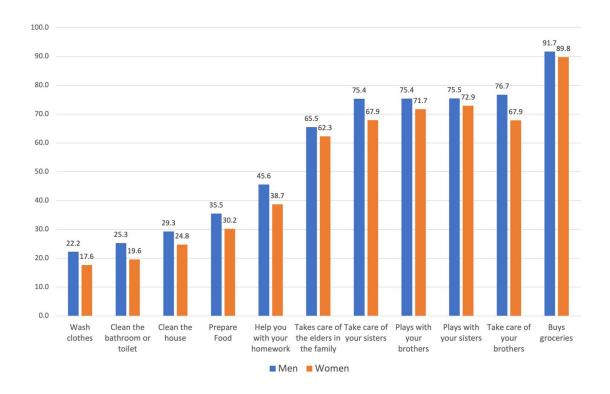
Interviewer: What does that mean?

Ramy: That is to say that life, life lessons, education and whatever else, it is my mother who taught me 90 per cent of it and my father maybe 10 per cent--or not even; I think the 10 per cent is what society taught me, society has educated me more than my own father.

The exchange above, where qualitative participant Ramy reflects on how "far" he felt from his father as a child, speaks to the lasting influence – whether positive, negative or in-between – parents have on their children. One focus area is fathers' involvement in domestic and care work. Research demonstrates that children who grow up with a more involved father are more likely to have more egalitarian adult relationships themselves.

Fathers' Involvement in Domestic and Care Work

Percentage of currently adult men and women who reported that their father was ever involved in various care and domestic tasks while the respondents were children, IMAGES Tunisia 2022



As the figure shows, a low minority of respondents, both male and female, recall their fathers ever washing clothes, cleaning the bathroom, cleaning the house, preparing food, and even helping with homework. Respondents were most likely to recall their fathers buying groceries, which maps with patriarchal advantage because it involves mobility outside the home and control of money. The remaining tasks for which the majority of men and women recall their fathers' involvement relate to play time or general care for others in the home. It is significant that so few respondents grew up seeing their fathers heavily involved in the tough daily work of caring for the home – washing, cleaning, and cooking. These tasks are mandatory for the health and well-being of the home, yet respondents' fathers left them to others. On top of all the figures shown above, this finding demonstrates that the current generations of Tunisian men and women grew up in an environment of patriarchy in the home.

The survey takes on the difficult topic of adverse childhood experiences, including experiences of violence at home, in school, and in the community. A great many respondents – men and women alike – reported these experiences. This includes 78 percent of men and 61 percent of women saying they were ever spanked by their parents, and 68 percent of men and 54 percent of women saying they were beaten or physically punished at school by a teacher. It is furthermore alarming that 45 percent of men and 23 percent of women were beaten at home with a belt, stick, whip, or other hard object. These are all very high rates of childhood experiences of violence, which are sure to have lasting influence in respondents' lives. These experiences can instill in people negative feelings in two directions. First, they teach children that violence is a normal tactic for discipline or for resolving problems, which sets a troubling precedent for their adult lives where they too will need to resolve problems or discipline children. But second, in a different way, they also instill fear and distance between children and their parents, teachers, or other disciplinarians. The people who are meant to be their source of love, support, and stability, instead become their source of fear and even injury. Our children deserve better.

This is true not only because of the traumatic impacts in childhood, but also because violence witnessed or experienced in the childhood home is a powerful risk factor for using or experiencing violence in one's adult homes as well. What data show is that too many children in Tunisia are "brought up on violence." By this concept, we mean the recognition of violence as an educational method for males and females, which is practiced especially by men against children of both sexes, to then become a socially acceptable behavior and reproduced across generations. This phenomenon can explain violence that is generally practiced by men against women in public as well as private spaces.

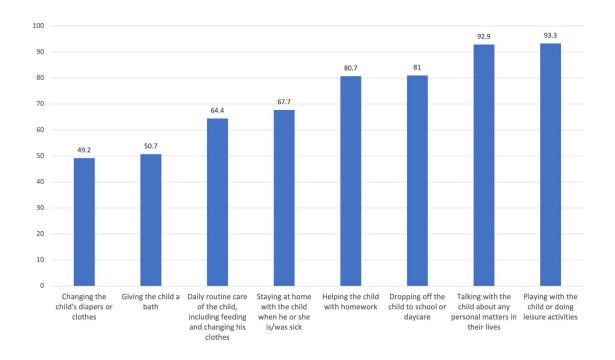
5. Gender Dynamics in Households

Studies have shown that involving men/fathers in health care of the child and mother even before birth sets the stage for deeper lifelong involvement and more equal roles once the baby arrives. Unfortunately, only a minority of men (according to both men and women) in Tunisia attended all antenatal care visits during the most recent pregnancy (although many attended "some or one" visit). That too, it was the minority of men who joined the visit with the healthcare provider, didn't just sit in the lobby or drop off the mother.

This is an important area for healthcare providers to play a role in advancing gender equality, by doing better to recruit and retain fathers in antenatal care centers. Clinics and hospitals can be sure to make the spaces feel welcoming to men, to ask after the men's attendance, and treat it as completely normal that a father would want to be involved in his child's and wife's health throughout pregnancy and childbirth. The survey also asked men whether they would wish to have the right to take paid parental leave after the birth of their child. Fully 68.6 per cent of men said yes, they would like the right to take paid parental/paternity leave. About half of these men said they'd want to take leave of three weeks or greater. Studies from elsewhere in the region and world have shown that when fathers take leave to be more involved in care work with a new baby, they feel a closer bond with the child and stay involved in care work to a greater degree than otherwise.

Fathers and Childcare

Percentage of men with children who report ever participation in various care work tasks while the relevant child was living at home, IMAGES Tunisia 2022



As in their childhood homes, adult men in the survey are often leaving the care work to women – including cooking, cleaning, bathing – and getting involved themselves only in less onerous elements. As the figure shows, only 49 percent and 51 percent of fathers, respectively, said that they ever changed a diaper or gave the child a bath. This sits in contrast with the 93 percent of men who said they had played with their children or talked to them about a personal matter (when the child is a sufficient age to do so). It is important that men play a more involved role in all aspects of childcare, not just play and conversation. It is encouraging, though, that men's rates of participation in childcare are in most cases higher than the rates they reported witnessing by their own fathers. So there may be a slow generational change taking place. Many male qualitative participants, however, asserted that they do not want to reproduce the same inequitable patterns of domestic work that they witnessed from their parents, sharing that they are more involved in their children's lives. 48-year-old Anouar, a lawyer and father of three living in Tunis, said that when he was a child, his father only spoke with him about studies and schooling. He claims that his relationship with his children is different and that he is more involved in their upbringing:

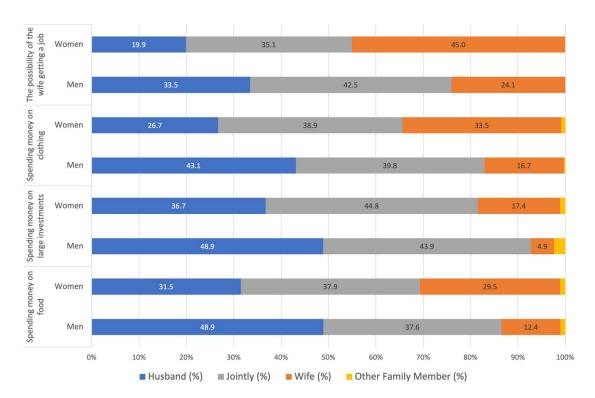
Anouar: As soon as I finish work, I go straight home to take care of the house.

Interviewer: What do you do to take care of the house?

Anouar: I go to see the kids and ask them if they need yogurt, nutella, oranges, bananas, I go and buy whatever is missing and sometimes I take one or two of them with me to go grocery shopping.

Decision Making Power on Financial Matters

Percentage of partnered men and women based on who they said had the "final say" with regard to various financial decisions within their families, IMAGES Tunisia 2022.



Women and men have important disagreements about how decision-making power is held within their relationships. For every topic shown, men claim more authority for themselves, and women likewise claim more authority for themselves, than either are willing to give each other. On the issue of spending money on clothing, for example, 43 percent of men say they control this decision, compared to 27 percent of women saying men control the decision. In a flip-flop way, 34 percent of women say they control this decision, compared to only 17 percent of men who say women control this decision. Despite these disagreements, we can still see clear trends. First, yes, many respondents describe relationships where these decisions are made jointly. This is a positive sign. But at the same time, toward the bottom of the figure when the topic shifts to spending money on food and spending money on large investments, the share of male-dominated decision making rises higher and higher. While many families have shared decision making power (gray), it is still far more likely for men to wield individual power (blue) than for women to hold this power (orange).

6. Gender-Based Violence

Intimate partner violence is never an isolated act and, as outlined by the figure below, consists of physical violence as well as psychological, economic, and sexual forms of violence. The rates of violence presented here are a useful addition to research on intimate partner violence in Tunisia as they mark the first instance in which men's reports of perpetrating violence sit alongside women's reports of experiencing violence. What is remarkable is that a greater proportion of men report using violence than women reporting experiencing this violence. For various reasons, we must always interpret survey data on intimate partner violence as underreporting the true scope and nature of this violence, but it is nonetheless remarkable that fully 47 percent of men in the study reported ever using one of these actions against a partner in their lifetime.

Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence of Violence according to Male and Female Respondents

Percentage of ever-married respondents by acts of violence perpetrated by men and experienced by women, lifetime and 12-month rates, IMAGES Tunisia 2022

	Men		Wo	omen
	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)
Types and Acts of Intimate Partner Violence	41.4	20.3	41.1	20.7
Insulted (his wife/her) or deliberately made her feel bad about herself	25.6	11.3	31.1	14.8
Belittled or humiliated (his wife/her) in front of other people	7.2	3.6	14.1	7.5
Scared or intimidated (his wife/her) on purpose for example, by the way he looked at her, by yelling and smashing things	31.6	14.8	28.7	14.3
Threatened to hurt (his wife/her)	11.2	5.0	13.1	5.2
Hurt people (his wife/she) cares about as a way of hurting her, or damaged things of importance to her	2.6	0.7	7.0	3.3
Economic violence	13.6	5.2	19.2	8.3
Prevented (his wife/her) from working for wages or profit	8.1	4.4	12.1	6.6
Took (his wife's/her) earnings against her will	0.5	0.3	4.1	2.5
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	0.7	0.5	3.9	2.7
Threw (his wife/her) out of the house	6.8	0.9	9.5	3.6



	Men		Wo	omen
	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)
Types and Acts of Intimate Partner Violence	41.4	20.3	41.1	20.7
Physical violence	18.8	5.5	22.2	6.8
Slapped (his wife/her) or threw something at her that could hurt her	15.7	4.0	19.1	6.1
Pushed or shoved (his wife/her)	10.4	2.8	15.0	6.5
Hit (his wife/her) with his fist or with something else that could hurt her	5.0	1.4	10.2	4.1
Kicked, dragged, beat, choked or burned (his wife/ her)	0.6	0.0	5.2	2.4
Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against (his wife/her)	0.0	0.0	3-3	1.4
Forced (his wife/her) to have sex with him when she did not want to	1.9	0.8	4.1	1.6
Any of the above forms of IPV	47.2	24.3	45.8	22.7
Total number of respondents	604		875	

The IMAGES survey also presents respondents with a list of actions that they may have done (in the case of men) or experienced (in the case of women) in a public place. This includes various forms of harassment ranging from ogling all the way to rape ("forcing to have sex"). The figure shows the results. It is notable that men's rates of reporting using these actions and women's rates of experiencing these actions almost perfectly match at 59 percent. Men admit and women agree that sexual harassment is something that most men do and most women experience. That too, about 1 in 4 respondents who said this had ever happened also said that it had happened recently – within the past year. The act of ogling, meaning long leering stares by strangers on the street, was the most predominant form of harassment reported, followed by catcalling or sexual comments.

Types of Sexual Harassment and Assault

Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statement about sexual harassment and street harassment, IMAGES Tunisia 2022.

	Men (perpetrated)		Women (experienced)	
	Lifetime (%)	Previous 12 months (%)	Lifetime (%)	Previous 12 months (%)
Types of sexual harassment and assault				
Ogling	55.6	27.9	52.7	22.9
Catcalls or sexual comments	27.7	13.9	33.3	15.4
Stalking or following	19.9	7.3	25.0	10.4
Obscene phone calls or text messages	10.5	5.1	15.8	6.8
Online harassment, such as sending obscene pictures	9.1	4.6	20.3	11.3
Touching on intimate parts of the body when didn't want	2.4	1.0	5.2	1.2
Exposing his private parts	0.5	0.1	5.2	1.3
Forcing to have sex	0.6	0.2	1.2	0.4
Any of the above acts of sexual harassment/assault	61.2	33.1	59.7	29.7

Meet the "Outsiders" - Tunisian men who stand up to patriarchy

Asser and Ramy are two of several men and women in the qualitative research who stood out for their strong resistance to patriarchy and gender inequality. We raise their voices here as a very small sampling of the energy toward improving gender relations we uncovered in the study.

Asser

Asser, 32, has a master's in design and works in an NGO in Tozeur. He discovered the issue of gender because he is left-wing and was a member of the student union. He calls himself an anarchist. His mother was a pharmacist and his father is a biologist. He has two brothers. His mother brought only him up, and entrusted the other two children to her two sisters; as a result of her work, she could not take care of three children, especially since her husband did not contribute to household chores. He lived alone with his parents until his brothers returned eight years later. The image he has of his mother is that of a woman who faces a double exploitation, at work and at home:

"My mother would get up at four o'clock in the morning to prepare breakfast and lunch, would go to work at seven o'clock, return home at noon, set the table, do the dishes and then take a little nap; at three o'clock she would go back to work. She would come home at night exhausted, prepare dinner and do the dishes. She never let us help her do the dishes because we were boys and it wasn't acceptable".

His family's particular circumstances, the fact that he was separated from his two brothers because his mother could not reconcile her work with her family responsibilities, have certainly contributed to Asser's critical perception of the gender order and the functioning of society as a whole.

Ramy

Ramy is a 23-year-old law student in Sfax. He lives with his parents and two older sisters. His mother is a homemaker, his father is a merchant. He calls himself a feminist. He chose to pursue law studies in order to "change society". In the beginning of the interview, he denounced "institutional" violence against women. He criticizes the notion of "bina" which is the obligation for a woman to have sex when the husband pays a dowry. He denounces the inequality of remuneration between women and men in agriculture. He denounces the misogyny of police officers, and judges (men and women), and the difficulty of applying article 58. He wants to take parental authority away from fathers. For Ramy, whoever earns money should cover the household expenses. He considers the law of inheritance to be a "backwards" law that goes against the Constitution and international conventions ratified by Tunisia, such as the CEDAW. Speaking of his mother, he said that she worked a little as a foreman in a factory before getting married. She told Ramy: "When I got married, I was extinguished". He tells us, "I realize that I've never asked my mother what it was that extinguished her? Was it the wedding? Was it us, her children? I have no idea!"

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The findings of IMAGES Tunisia illustrate how patriarchy is still dominant – though contested – in public and private life. Even as men want to be seen as more progressive than their fathers and more supportive of their partners, many men's in-depth attitudes and behaviors don't always match. The story is not entirely negative, however, with significant support for some legislative changes to protect women's rights. There also seems to be a positive attitude shift taking place toward women's role in certain public spaces and leadership positions. Even as women's main responsibility and duty is still seen in the private sphere as caregivers, there seems to be more and more support, if not follow-through, for men taking on deeper roles as fathers and caregivers as well.

These and other IMAGES findings can be used to strengthen policies, programs, and campaigns in Tunisia in numerous ways. The overarching goal of IMAGES is to build an understanding of men's and women's practices and attitudes about gender equality to inform, drive, and monitor efforts to promote gender equality, particularly at the public decision-making level. With these incredibly rich new data on hand, movements to prevent violence against women, promote the full realization of women's rights, achieve equality in care work, and shift social norms now have a powerful new tool to inform all their efforts. Anyone wishing to draw upon these data to advance rapid, powerful change in Tunisian society would do well to:

1. Build on past legislative advances driven by women's rights advocates

Every major legislative advance to protect women's rights has been the result of pressure from civil society and women's movements in particular. These movements should lead the way to demolishing ALL discriminatory laws against women, especially with regard to inheritance. Equality in inheritance can establish a fair sharing of wealth between the sexes, help achieve economic autonomy for women, and can change Tunisians' attitudes about gender discrimination. Expanded paternity leave for new or adoptive fathers is also an important policy step to encourage men's increased involvement in care work.

2. Finish the journey to women's full political participation in tunisia

We must push political parties to further dedicate themselves gender equality in political work and to provide more opportunities for women and youth in political participation, especially at the level of assuming authority responsibilities. For example this can include setting up mechanisms related to internal management and structuring in the parties law that allow more women and youth to reach decision-making positions.

3. Harness the power of education

Schools are a vital location for the socialization of our young people, including related to gender roles and norms. We must work to review educational programs in schools at various levels to support gender equality. This includes setting up training programs for teachers and school staff on the idea

of gender equality on the one hand and aiming to address the phenomenon of violence (physical and symbolic) in schools as one of the institutions of socialization. This should also include adoption of sexual education within school programs to enable the child and adolescent with cognitive and cultural mechanisms that protect them from sexual violence and harassment. It is also essential to train various educational cadres on the culture of non-violence and developing their own programs to spread the culture of human rights, equality, active citizenship, non-discrimination, and the right to differ.

4. Look to local feminist, women's rights, lgbt rights, and violence-prevention movements and voices for guidance on what messages to prioritize and how

None of the issues addressed in this study are new or entirely surprising to the brave groups of activists already working for generations in Tunisia to bring about a more just and equal society. Any effort to advance on these findings at policy, program, campaign, or educational level must be brought into alignment with the objectives and ongoing efforts of these activists.

5. Use images data to identify the highest priority, most harmful, or most widely held attitudes to address

IMAGES Tunisia data have uncovered a tremendous amount of richness in understanding the landscape of gender related attitudes in the country. All of this richness must now inform future campaign and program efforts. As earlier sections have, Tunisian respondents did not demonstrate widespread opposition to women's right to work outside the home or pursue economic opportunity. That is not to say that these attitudes don't exist in Tunisia, but rather they did not emerge as the absolute top priority according to IMAGES responses. By contrast, the rates at which respondents (a) hold victim-blaming views of sexual harassment, (b) approved of women's forced marriages to their rapists, and (c) granted decision-making power and "guardianship" disproportionately to men all stand out as particularly high. Deeper analysis of these and other findings will provide a helpful prioritization exercise for gender equality movements in Tunisia.

6. Draw upon positive attitudes that are widely held to demonstrate that there is public support for certain aspects of equality

The inverse of the previous strategy is also true: where respondents already seem to hold positive attitudes in favor of gender equality, campaigners would do well to amplify this and establish these ideas as social norms. Some examples may include the fact that significant majorities of men and women supported prosecution of those who perpetrate sexual harassment, or that very few respondents supported giving boys educational priority over girls even when resources are restricted. There are many other examples.

7. Draw upon the support for various policies that is expressed in the survey responses

Similarly, many respondents – in some cases the vast majority of men and women – already support policies or legislative ideas that could bring about greater equality in Tunisia. One particularly notable example is the widespread support expressed by men and women alike for protections for domestic workers and also for women's right to pass her nationality to her husband. These findings can demonstrate to elected officials that many pro-social policies are actually popular.

8. Advocate for preventative measures - don't focus only on response

This study revealed notable rates of childhood experiences of violence as well as adult experiences of intimate partner violence and street harassment. It is tempting, when looking at these findings, to call for more and better legislation to punish the perpetrators of these acts of violence. This kind of legislation is an important element of the effort to end violence, but it should not be the only element. IMAGES Tunisia also showed the strong linkages between childhood exposure to violence and using the same violence in adulthood; furthermore, attitudes that justify violence were common. Against these realities, it is arguably more essential to focus on *preventing* violence before it happens, as opposed to solely a focus on punishing those who use violence after they have done so. Preventative measures can take many forms, from community-wide campaigns to challenge social norms supporting violence, to curricula for youth where they can learn healthier relationship and anger-management practices, to healthier and better expressions of non-violent masculinity in popular media, and beyond.

9. Explore ways to share nuance in addition to just numbers

The qualitative research participants in this study generously opened their hearts and told their personal stories to help deepen the study's understanding of the gender dynamics at play in Tunisia. The fullest and best use of the research results would not sideline these testimonies, but rather draw upon them to tell complex and specific stories about gender inequality in the country. The quantitative statistics in this report are very powerful indeed, in all the ways expressed above. But by definition they can only speak to broad trends, not the specific lived reality of any one person in Tunisia.

Unmet needs

The 2021 State of the World's Fathers report, which is informed by and features IMAGES data, takes an exclusively structural focus on the issue of equality in care work. Inequalities in care at home are influenced by many structural inequalities in our societies, including in Tunisia, which are driven by government inaction or insufficient support programs. As such, the advocacy targets of this recent report resonate in Tunisia as well:

- 1. Put in place **national care policies** and campaigns that recognize, reduce, and redistribute care work equally between men and women.
- 2. Provide equal, job-protected, fully **paid parental leave** for all parents as a national policy.
- 3. Design and expand **social protection programs** to redistribute care work equally between women and men, while keeping a focus on the needs and rights of women and girls.
- 4. Transform **health sector institutions** to promote fathers' involvement from the prenatal period through birth and childhood and men's involvement as caregivers.
- 5. Promote an **ethic of male care** in schools, media, and other key institutions in which social norms are created and reinforced.
- 6. Change **workplace conditions**, culture, and policies to support workers' caregiving and mandate those changes in national legislation.
- 7. Hold **male political leaders** accountable for their support of care policies, while advocating for women's equality in political leadership.

The findings of the IMAGES MENA Tunisia study provide valuable insights in order to understand where changes are needed and what progress is being made towards a more gender-equitable society. A much deeper presentation of the findings in all seven themes addressed here is included in the full version of the report. The authors thank you sincerely for your interest and invite you to visit http://www.menandgendersurvey.com and http://www.imagesmena.org to learn more about IMAGES locally, regionally, and globally.



