

Majority Of Men In Middle East Survey Believe A Woman's Place Is In The Home

Study carried out across Middle East and North Africa shows sexist attitudes prevail, with men's views of equality at odds with hopes of young women

Kate Lyons

[The Guardian](#)

Men's views of equality between the sexes are woefully out of sync with the hopes of young women, according to a survey across the Middle East and north Africa.

Male attitudes towards the role of women in the workplace and at home, and of their participation in public life, were stereotypically sexist in the study of views in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine.

Nearly 10,000 people, aged between 18 and 59, were questioned with a majority of the men supporting a range of traditional and inequitable attitudes toward women, including a belief that they are not fit to be leaders, should not work outside the home, and that it is more important to educate boys than girls.

The younger women surveyed showed a consistent desire for greater gender equality, [according to the research](#) undertaken by the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (Images), an advocacy project that has been carrying out extensive household surveys of attitudes to gender issues around the world.

In reply to almost all questions, men had less progressive attitudes towards equality than women. In Egypt, more than 90% of men agreed with the statement that "a man should have the final word about decision in the home". Although a majority – 58.5% – of women also agreed.

More than half of the Egyptian men surveyed agreed that "there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten", compared with less than a third of women. And while 75% of Egyptian women thought married women should have the same rights to work outside the home as their husbands, only 31% of Egyptian men agreed.

Participants were given a ranking on the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale, which ranges from 0 (the least equitable views) to 3 (the most equitable). Survey respondents in Egypt reported the lowest scores on the scale and respondents in Lebanon reported the highest.

For women, age was a factor in their outlook, with younger women reporting more progressive views than older women. However, attitudes did not differ substantially among men of different ages in Morocco, Palestine and Egypt.

In Lebanon, younger men's views on gender were more equitable than those held by older men. But the youngest – and most progressive – group of men in Lebanon, who were aged between 18 and 24, received only a slightly better score on the GEM scale (1.74) than the oldest and least progressive group of women surveyed in the country – women aged 50-59 – who scored 1.73.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/02/majority-of-men-in-middle-east-north-africa-survey-believe-a-womans-place-is-in-the-home>

“There is a long way to go for men to fully accept and support equality for women in the Arab region, as in many parts of the world,” said Gary Barker, co-author of the study and president of equality campaign Promundo. “Across all four countries, we see that one of the biggest disrupters of gender inequality is when men take on more of the activities in the home typically defined as women’s roles.”

The study found the most significant factors in how people viewed equality were their wealth, education level and the example set by their parents. Both men and women were more likely to hold equitable views on gender if their mothers had more education and fathers were more involved in domestic tasks.

The study also looked into men’s fears and mental health, and found a key stress for men was the challenge of finding paid work in times of economic uncertainty, particularly in those countries affected by conflict.

The effects of conflict and unemployment were frequently cited as a factor in causing depression among men. Between one-fifth and half of men reported being ashamed to face their families because of lack of work or income.