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News release

Moroccans want family-code reforms to be based on Islamic law, Afrobarometer survey shows

A large majority of Moroccans say any reforms of the family code to promote gender equality in the country should be based on Islamic law, or sharia, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

While this preference is widespread across key demographic groups, it is particularly strong among men, rural residents, older citizens, and those with less education. If there are any reforms to the family code, citizens want them to prioritise issues related to divorce, reconciliation, and alimony proceedings; sex outside marriage; and marriage of minors.

Nearly two decades after the adoption of the Moroccan family code to increase the rights of women in the family, women's-right activists and human-rights organisations have expressed concerns about persisting gender gaps and are calling for reform of the code. During his speech on the 23rd anniversary of Throne Day, King Mohammed VI noted imbalances and obstacles in the implementation of the family code.

Key findings

- Almost eight in 10 Moroccans (78%) say any reforms of the family code to promote gender equality should be based on Islamic law, or sharia (Figure 1).
 - Fully half (51%) “strongly agree” with this view.
 - Only two in 10 (20%) want reforms to be based only on international agreements signed by the Kingdom of Morocco.
 - Support for basing reforms to the family code on Islamic law increases with respondents' age (ranging from 73% among those aged 18-35 to 85% among those aged 56 and above), and decreases with one's level of education (88% among those with no formal education vs. 65% among those with post-secondary education) (Figure 2).
 - Men (80%), rural residents (82%), and economically disadvantaged citizens (81%) are also more in favour of this view than women (74%), urban residents (74%), and economically well-off citizens (76%).
- The top three issues that Moroccans want prioritised in reforms of the family code are divorce, reconciliation, and alimony proceedings (cited by 32%); sex outside marriage (25%); and marriage of minors (22%) (Figure 3).
- While women cite marriages of minors as their second priority (27%), the same proportion of men would prioritise issues concerning sex outside marriage (Figure 4).

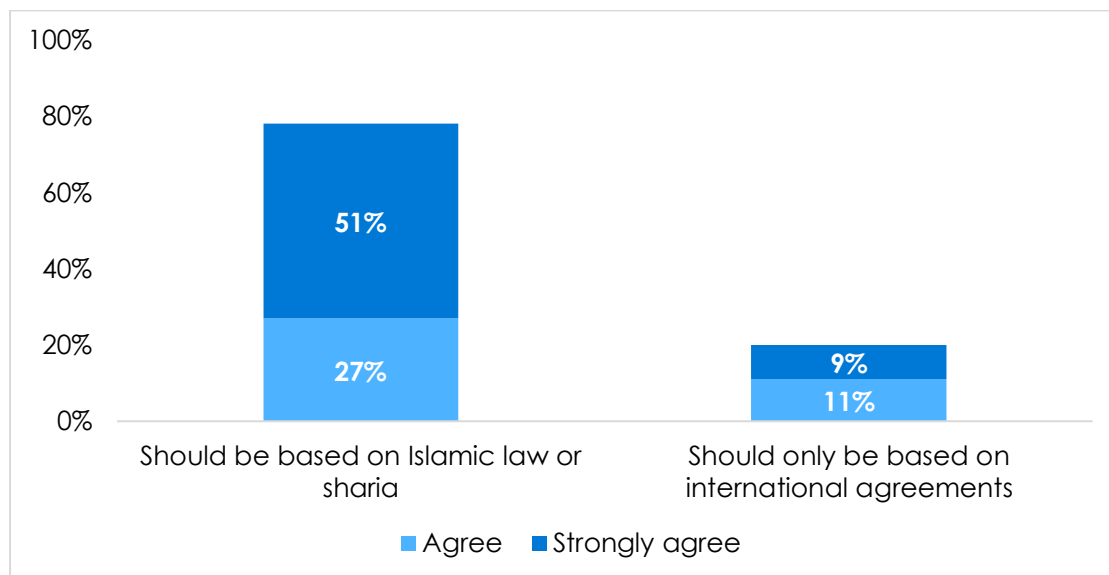
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Morocco, led by Global for Survey and Consulting (GSC), interviewed 1,200 adult Moroccans between 31 August and 19 September 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous Afrobarometer surveys were conducted in Morocco in 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2021.

Charts

Figure 1: Should reforms to promote gender equality be based on Islamic law or international agreements? | Morocco | 2022

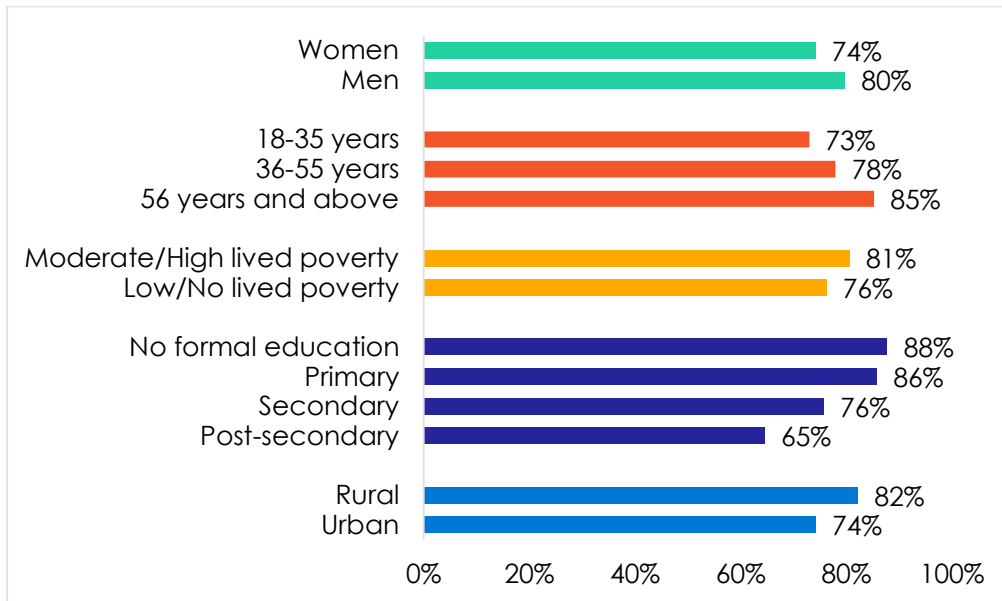


Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: Any reforms of the family code to promote equality between women and men should be based on the Islamic law or, sharia.

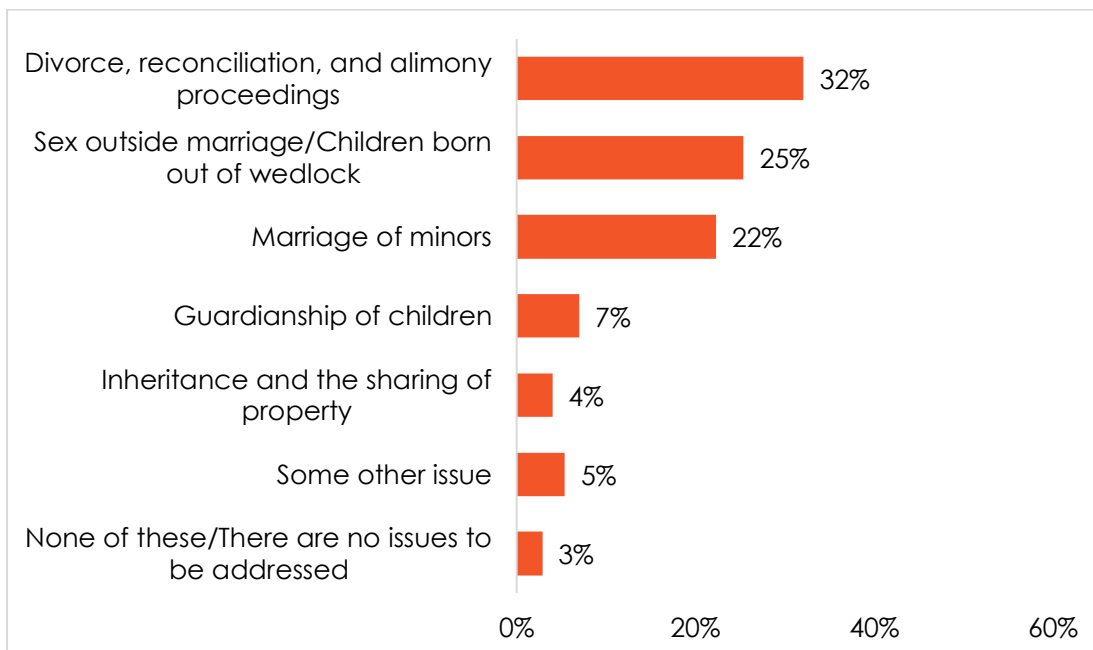
Statement 2: Reforms of the family code should be based only on international agreements signed by the Kingdom of Morocco.

Figure 2: Reforms to promote gender equality should be based on Islamic law
 | by demographic group | Morocco | 2022



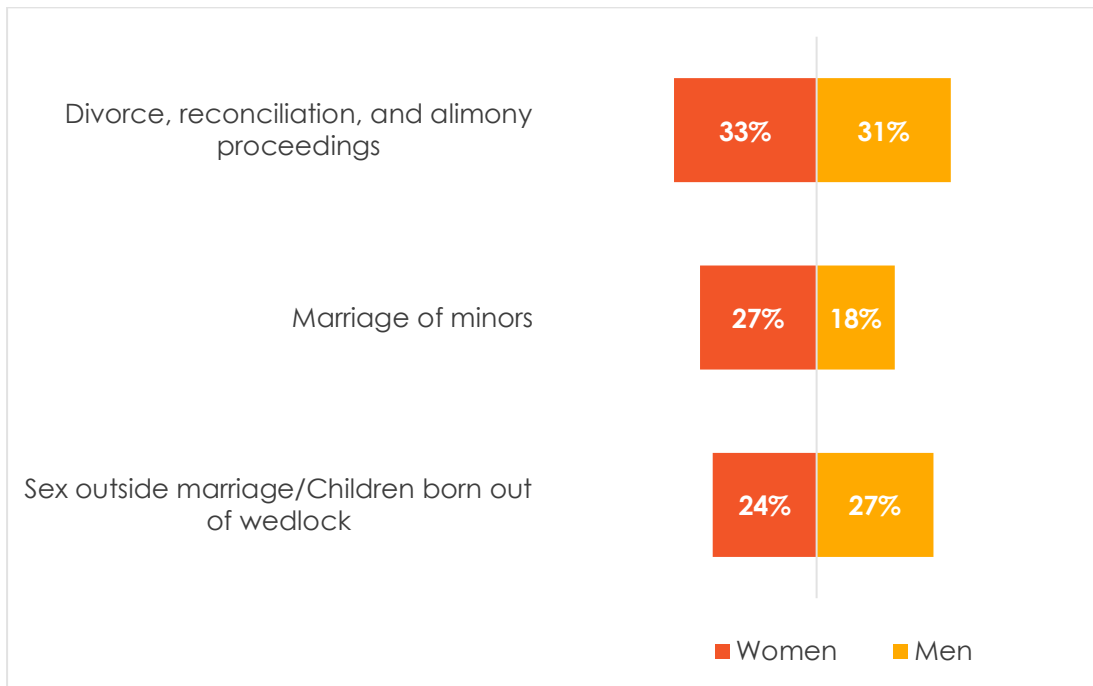
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?
 Statement 1: Any reforms of the family code to promote equality between women and men should be based on the Islamic law or sharia.
 Statement 2: Reforms of the family code should be based only on international agreements signed by the Kingdom of Morocco.
 (% who “agree” or “strongly agree” with Statement 1)

Figure 3: Most important issues to be prioritised in reforms to the family code
 | Morocco | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, which of the following issues would you say should be prioritised in any reforms to the family code in Morocco?

Figure 4: Most important issues to be prioritised in reforms to the family code
 | by gender | Morocco | 2022



Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, which of the following issues would you say should be prioritised in any reforms to the family code in Morocco?*

For more information, please contact:

Mhammed Abderebbi
 Global for Survey and Consulting
 Telephone: 0661991774
 Email: globalconsulting.gsc@gmail.com

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