

MYTH

ARAB WOMEN ARE EXCLUDED FROM PUBLIC LIFE

FACT

END OF "ARAB MARRIAGES"

- Families in the Arab world are undergoing major changes as new patterns of marriage and family formation emerge across the region.
- Marriage is no longer a sacred obligation: Celibacy is soaring for men and women, and is often permanent after a certain age.

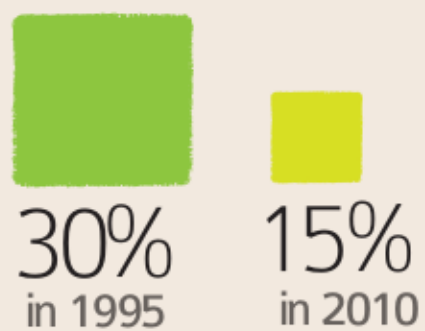
**WOMEN CELIBACY IN MOROCCO
30-34 YEARS OLD, 1960s AND 2010**



In 2010, 42% of Moroccan men aged 30-34 were **single**

- Society, tribe and extended family no longer have the power to compel children to marry and reproduce.
- Cousin marriage in order to strengthen the clan, is increasingly forgotten. Exogamy promotes openness and population mix.

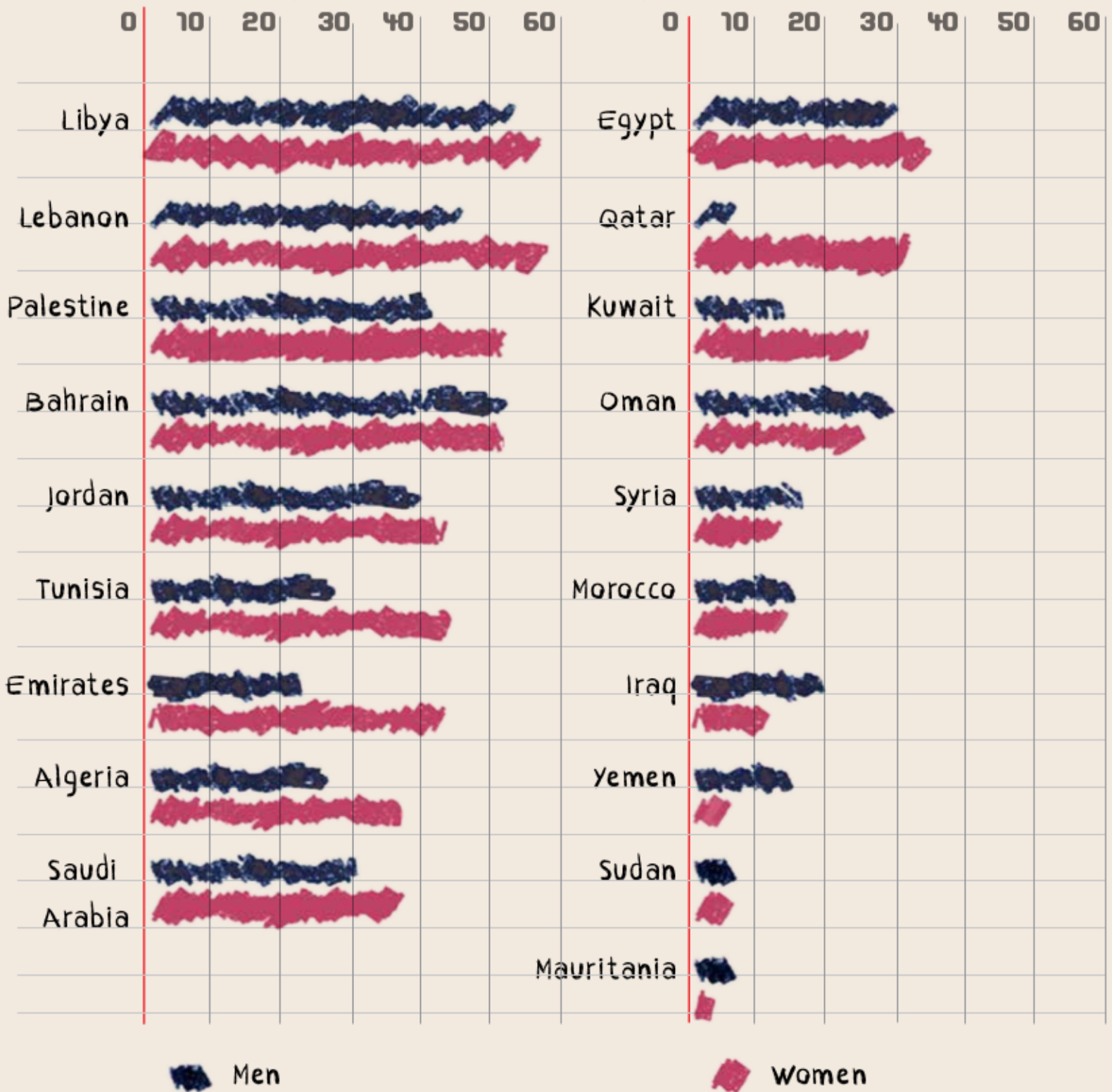
COUSIN MARRIAGE IN MOROCCO



WOMEN ARE CONQUERING UNIVERSITIES

- **Strong presence** of women in universities.
- **Female university enrollment rates exceed male enrollment rates**, in almost all Arab countries.

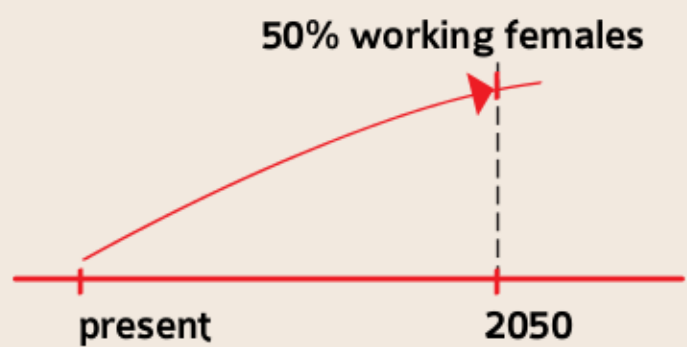
Percent of 18 to 24 years old enrolled in university, BY GENDER



Source: Youssef Courbage and Emmanuel Todd, *A Convergence of Civilisations - The Transformation of Muslim Societies Around the World*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2011.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE IS STILL LOW BUT IS LIKELY TO INCREASE

- The **current demographic bonus** (decrease of fertility rates and increases in the working-age population) **will require the recruitment of more women into the workforce.**
- According to the ILO, **by 2050**, an increase of **at least 50%** in female participation rate is anticipated.



ARAB WOMEN ARE EMERGING IN PUBLIC LIFE

- Women access to education combined with demographic factors (choice of spouse, age at marriage, access to contraception etc.) led to their emergence from the family sphere and entry to the **political sphere**, where they are **increasingly playing major roles.**
- Arab women have yet been at the forefront of protests in Tunisia, but also in Egypt and even in Yemen.

In **Tunisia** women hold **28.11% of seats at the National Constituent Assembly.** Tunisia's new Constitution is a breakthrough for women's rights.

28.11% seats



* Research Director of the Institute National d'Etudes Demographiques (INED) in Paris. Expert in the field of relationship between demography and politics, principally in Arab and Muslim countries. Courbage was Scientific Director of the French Institute of the Near East in Beirut and is author of around three hundred and fifty publications, books, articles, reports and teaching material. Together with Emmanuel Todd he added a new dimension to the ongoing debate over the clash of civilizations through predicting the modernization of the Islamic World in their book 'Le rendez-vous des civilisations'