



# Libya Status of Women Survey 2013

*A nationwide survey examining the civic, political and economic participation of Libyan women and exploring public attitudes toward women's roles, rights and domestic violence*



Rola Abdul-Latif  
September 2013

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International Foundation for Electoral Systems



Department of Foreign Affairs  
and International Trade

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*Rola Abdul-Latif, Author*

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## Introduction

As Libya transitions out of the 42-year autocratic rule of the Muammar Qaddafi regime, an urgent theme has emerged: the need to safeguard women's participation as Libya codifies human rights in national legislation and establishes government institutions and services.

Major decisions are being made that will impact Libya's future as a democratic State. For instance, women are actively seeking participation in the drafting process of the new constitution and in the formation of government policies across all sectors to advance their concerns. Currently, there is no provision for gender parity or the inclusion of women in the 60-member Constitutional Committee being formed. This omission is concerning, as a gender parity provision was included in the 2012 electoral law.

Following the revolution, many women and girls had restrictions imposed on their movement by family, due in part to growing concerns regarding the security of women and girls throughout the country. These restrictions are tightening as stories of violence against women circulate and uncertainty of centralized authority for the military and police continues to exist. As a result, women and girls are often confined to their homes, especially in the evenings.

There is also much discussion about whether the general population of women – and Libyans more broadly – fully understand their responsibilities as rights holders. For women, the expectation of equality and representation in government may be altogether absent, simply because there is very little precedent. There are also questions about how Islamic Law (Sharia) will play a role in the development of government institutions and policies, and what this could mean for women. In this developing context, many women expressed a desire to learn more about women's rights under Sharia.

Meanwhile – despite the fact that there are as many women as men who are university degree holders in Libya – women who venture into the workplace face tremendous challenges: from glass ceilings to pervasive sexual harassment. Additionally, the conservative cultural practices of family life in Libya often extend into the workplace, and many prominent women leaders express frustration with male counterparts who refuse to acknowledge them, especially in supervisory roles. Class divisions also factor in to women's experiences across Libya, with poor and rural women facing tremendous hurdles to leave their homes to access education and employment opportunities.

Within this context, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) designed and conducted a nationwide household survey of the adult female population in Libya with a subsample of males to collect much-needed data on a variety of issues affecting women, and to inform current debates and efforts aimed at promoting the status of women in the country.

The IFES survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews and aimed to evaluate the status of women in Libya in four main areas:

- Political and civic participation
- Economic participation
- Social autonomy
- Access to healthcare

The survey also aimed to elicit attitudes and opinions towards the following areas:

- Women's rights
- Violence against women
- Role of women in society



## Summary of Key Survey Findings

### Women's Civic and Political Participation

Women in Libya have a high level of interest in matters of politics and government with over 71% saying they are very or somewhat interested in these issues. Similarly, Libyan women voted in high numbers in the General National Congress (GNC) elections in July 2012, with 66% of women surveyed having participated in the election. However, their voter participation rates were 22 percentage points lower than men's. This suggests there is a large gender gap in voter turnout. The data also shows that older women, women with no formal education and women in rural areas tend to have lower-than-average voter turnout. This implies better strategies could be used in voter motivation campaigns to target these segments of society, and may help boost voting levels among women in general and women belonging to these demographic groups.

***Sixty-six percent of women surveyed have participated in the election. However, their voter participation rates were 22 percentage points lower than men's.***

Women who participated in the GNC elections reported voting free of pressure; however, women were more likely to vote in line with their spouse/family's choice, whereas men were more likely to have an independent choice.

Both Libyan women and men share the same views on policy priorities for their country. The top five policy areas mentioned by both sexes as issues that they would like elected officials to focus on are:

- Reinforcing stability and national security
- Fighting corruption
- Improving quality of education
- Creating jobs
- Fighting poverty

When asked about factors that influenced their voting choices, men and women had similar citations; however, many more women (31%) than men (7%) mentioned candidates' stances on issues of importance to women as a factor that influenced their voting choice.

Libyan women's civic engagement is limited both in absolute terms and in comparison to their male counterparts. The Status of Women Survey gauged this type of engagement through a series of questions on taking part in different types of civic activities and through an assessment of membership in different types of organizations. In contrast to their relatively high levels of participation in the elections and their interest in matters of politics and government, data shows that very few women take part in any type of civic activity to express their views on social and political issues, with only 20% of all

women in Libya reporting taking part in such activities in the past 12 months. The data shows that civic engagement increases with educational attainment and drops as women get older. Interestingly, women in the Eastern region of Libya that comprises Benghazi and neighboring areas are the most civically active with 46% reporting taking part in activities to express their views relative to much lower rates among women in other regions.

***Very few women take part in any type of civic activity to express their views on social and political issues, with only 20% of all women in Libya reporting taking part in such activities in the past 12 months.***

In terms of media use, women in Libya are heavy users of TV (both satellite and local channels) as a main source of information on news and developments in the country. Seventy-one percent of women report watching satellite TV on a daily basis. Women also rely on word of mouth daily (47%) to learn about news and developments. Radio is used daily by 29% of Libyan women, while only 19% of women use the Internet daily. This shows that traditional mass media is still the best medium to reach large swathes of Libyan women when conducting nationwide public information or public awareness campaigns.

### **Social Attitudes toward Women’s Roles and Rights**

Majorities of women and men in Libya express support for women in different political roles; however, female survey respondents express higher support than men and more of them “strongly” support rather than just “somewhat” support women in these roles. Over four in five Libyan women (81%) say they strongly (43%) or somewhat (38%) support women becoming involved in politics as candidates for office, compared to 69% of men who would strongly (25%) or somewhat (44%) support women as candidates. Similar proportions of men (65%) and women (77%) would also encourage their daughters to become involved in politics as a candidate for parliamentary elections. At the same time, however, both men and women believe men make better political leaders and better business executives than women.

***Over four in five Libyan women say they strongly or somewhat support women becoming involved in politics as candidates for office.***

On questions related to equality of rights between men and women, such as in terms of their access to education and employment, views were mixed with survey respondents expressing general support for the idea of girls and boys having equal access to education, and men and women having equal access to employment. However, when asked if men should have employment priority over women when jobs are

scarce, majorities of both men (91%) and women (79%) agree with the statement. This suggests both sexes continue to believe men have priority as main breadwinners, and are thus more deserving of work opportunities than women.

Despite generally agreeing on how they perceive gender roles on questions related to leadership, access to education and employment, women and men in Libya are clearly split on the issue of polygamy. While a large majority of men (70%) believe it is acceptable for men to have more than one wife, only one third of women agree with this statement and a 55% majority disagrees. Women are also nearly twice as likely to believe polygamy weakens family unity (63%) than men (32%).

### **Women's Educational and Employment Profiles**

The education profile of women in Libya shows a generally well-educated female population and indicates that while there are significantly more women (14%) than men (3%) who have no formal education or an incomplete primary education, there are almost as many women (32%) as men (33%) who hold a university degree or higher. This shows there is no gender gap in higher education. Data further indicates the incidence of low educational attainment is almost exclusive to older generations of

***There are almost as many women (32%) as men (33%) who hold a university degree or higher.***

women, which indicates the Libyan female population is becoming increasingly educated.

The overwhelming majority (77%) of Libyan women under 25 intend to pursue higher education – either a college/university education or a post-graduate degree – compared to 67% of men. The top fields of study young women would like to pursue are medicine, applied sciences and languages. For young men, the top fields of study are engineering; accounting and economics; and medicine. Young Libyan women would also like to pursue a career: 73% of women under 25 would like to do so versus 70% of men. The top career choices young Libyan women would like to pursue are physician, teacher or lawyer. For men, the top choices are to be an engineer, physician or having their own business.

Women's labor force participation in Libya is significantly lower than men, with 43% of women reporting work for pay in the past week compared to 66% of men. Data shows that women 25-54 are the most economically active and women's employment is higher in urban (44%) than in rural areas (32%). More women in the eastern (45%) and western (43%) regions of Libya work for pay compared with women in the middle or southern regions (both at 30%).

IFES survey data further indicates the gender gap in labor force participation closes for highly-educated women: 66% of women who have a university education or higher report being employed compared to 69% of men with the same educational attainment. This implies higher education is a key driver for increased labor force participation for women. Of women who work, two-thirds are employed in the education industry and 13% in the health industry. Meanwhile, 91% of women are working in the

government or public sector as opposed to the private sector. For men, only 24% work in education, another 24% work in services and 14% work in trade or selling. The government/public sector is also the main employer of men (70%); however, significantly more men (26%) are employed in the private sector than women (7%).

The survey data indicates a large disparity in earned incomes between men and women, even when controlling for educational attainment. For instance, among men and women who work for pay and who hold a university education or higher, 57% of men in this category earn LYD 701 (\$547 USD) or more per month, compared to only 38% of women who fall in this income bracket. In fact, 60% of women who work and hold a university education or higher make less than LYD 700 (\$546 USD) per month. While women seem to be earning less than men, they report having more employment benefits than men, which could be explained by the fact that more women work in the public sector and this sector offers more benefits. However, fewer women (71%) than men (89%) consider themselves completely free in deciding how their earnings are used.

***Sixty percent of women who work and hold a university education or higher make less than LYD 700 (\$546 USD) per month.***

### **Women's Decision-making and Control over Household Resources**

When assessing women's relative autonomy in the household and examining family dynamics in household decision-making, the survey shows a general tendency to share decision-making between husbands and wives. This is particularly true for non-financial family decisions, such as deciding how many children to have and taking a child to the doctor. When asked about the decision of whether or not to use birth control, two in five (40%) women did not report or refused to give an answer, while 46% said the decision is shared between the husband and the wife. When asked about areas that involve financial or economic decision-making, data showed men were more dominant: they either contribute to the decision or are the sole decision-makers. The proportion of women who make these decisions by themselves is very low. Data further indicates women's sole decision-making power (ability to have the final say about family decisions) increases with age, but drops again for women who are 65 or older. There is no consistent trend in education or employment impacting women's sole decision-making power. The data suggests, however, that as education increases, the tendency to share decisions increases. For women who work, the tendency to share the decision with the husband is higher than for those who do not work.

While employment does not necessarily increase a woman's sole decision-making power, it dramatically increases her access to financial savings. Indeed, of women who work, 46% report having access or owning financial savings compared to 24% of women who do not work. Employment also increases a women's perceived ability to obtain bank loans or credit: 45% of women who work for pay say they

would be comfortable obtaining bank loans or credit compared to only 25% of women who do not work for pay.

### **Women's Access to Healthcare**

Libyan women and men do not tend to visit healthcare providers regularly. The majority of both women (58%) and men (52%) say they only visit a healthcare provider when they are very ill or at times of emergency. Only 7% of women and 11% of men visit doctors annually for checkups and preventative care. The data further indicates that large majorities of Libyan women in all regions report that medical services are either not easily available or completely lacking. Medical services appear to be particularly deficient in the southern region of Libya.

***Only 7% of women and 11% of men visit doctors annually for checkups and preventative care.***

Moreover, very few Libyan women and men judge medical services to be good, with the majority of respondents evaluating these services to be average or bad. Of concern is that women do not tend to get feminine healthcare on a regular basis. When asked about their frequency of visiting a gynecologist, 40% of women say they had never visited one and 28% say very rarely. Only 18% of women say they visit a gynecologist once a year and 6% say they do once every two years.

### **Freedom of Movement and Freedom from Harassment and Violence**

Women in Libya tend to be relatively restricted in their abilities to move around and express themselves freely: at least one in five female respondents felt somewhat or completely restricted in associating with persons of her own choosing (24%), moving about in public areas without fear or pressure (29%), and expressing her views on critical issues to family, neighbors and friends (34%). Most concerning is that a 57% majority of women say that they feel completely (37%) or somewhat (20%) restricted in leaving their houses without permission. This shows the extent to which women in Libya face to remain home-bound in their daily activities and could partially explain why their levels of civic engagement are low especially when it comes to activities that require them leaving their houses.

***A 57% majority of women say that they feel completely (37%) or somewhat (20%) restricted in leaving their houses without permission.***

The survey also shows that there are high levels of acceptance and justification of domestic violence in Libyan society, and this trend is higher among male respondents. Indeed, twice as many men (22%) as women (11%) would consider it acceptable for a man to beat his wife in certain situations (without specifying the type of situation). When providing respondents with specific scenarios and asked if it is justified for a man to beat his wife in these situations, the share of both women and men who believe

domestic violence is always or sometimes justified increases significantly. Over half of men (52%) and 41% of women would justify a man beating his wife if she went out without telling him, which again highlights the limits to a women's freedom of movement in Libya. Only 34% of women would reject domestic violence in any of the listed scenarios versus 30% of men.

### **Outlook for Women's Status in the Future and Role of Islamic Law (Sharia)**

Vast majorities of Libyans would like Sharia to be adopted as a source of governance in Libya. A full 58% of women and 50% of men in Libya are in favor of having Sharia be the main source of governance but not the only one and an additional 31% of women and 40% of men would like it to be the sole source of governance.

Most Libyans do not seem to have concerns about the impact of the adoption of Sharia as a sole source or main source of governance on women's rights. Indeed 54% of women and 68% of men believe that the adoption of Sharia would improve women's rights. It is noteworthy, however, that significantly more men believe Sharia Law would improve women's rights than women and that twice as many women (14%) as men (7%) believe that the adoption of Sharia would worsen women's rights. This suggests that a minority of women in Libya are wary of the implications of Sharia Law on women's freedoms and their roles vis-à-vis men.

***Fifty-four percent of women and 68% of men believe that the adoption of Sharia would improve women's rights.***

Overall, despite challenges that may impede progress in women's issues, Libyans are generally optimistic in how they evaluate women's status in Libya now and their expectations about the future. Nearly two-thirds of women and men believe that women's status is at least somewhat good. In terms of their outlook for the future, 65% of women and 74% of men believe that following the revolution, women's rights in Libya will improve.

***Sixty-five percent of women and 74% of men believe that following the revolution, women's rights in Libya will improve.***

## Survey Methodology

### Sample Specifications

- The **survey sample** was designed to be nationally representative, covering Libya's 22 administrative regions using multi-stage probability proportionate to size sampling techniques. A total of 204 primary sampling units consisting of the *Mahalla* (neighborhood) were selected.
- The **total sample size** of the survey is 1,982 respondents (adults 18 year or older), of which 1,489 women and 493 men. The larger sample of women aims to allow for robust demographic breakdowns within women, such as by key demographic characteristics. The smaller sample of men is meant to allow disaggregation of data by gender to compare women as a whole with men as a whole.
- The **margin of error** is  $\pm 2.54\%$  for the women's sample and  $\pm 4.41\%$  for the men's sample.
- A **weight factor** was introduced to bring the realized sample in line with population parameters in terms of age.
- **Sample sizes** for key demographic segments are as follows unless specific filters are used, in which case, the sample sizes will be indicated for the relevant charts in the report:
  - **Gender for the total sample**
    - Male = 493
    - Female = 1,489
  - **Age groups for the women sample**
    - 18-24 = 290
    - 25-34 = 434
    - 35-44 = 424
    - 45-54 = 208
    - 55-64 = 72
    - 65 or older = 61
  - **Respondents under 25 years old for the total sample**
    - Women under 25 = 290
    - Men under 25 = 88
  - **Education groups for the women sample**
    - No formal education/incomplete primary = 175
    - Complete primary/incomplete intermediate = 132
    - Complete intermediate/incomplete secondary = 422
    - Complete secondary/incomplete university = 279
    - University or higher = 471
  - **Household income levels for the women sample**
    - LYD 700 (\$546 USD) or less = 361
    - LYD 701-1,100 (\$547-\$858 USD) = 421
    - LYD 1,101-2,000 (\$850-\$1,561 USD) = 451
    - LYD 2,001 or more (\$1,562 USD) = 111

- **Marital status for the women sample**
  - Single/never married = 672
  - Married = 689
  - Widowed = 87
  - Divorced/separated = 41
- **Employment status for the total sample**
  - Women who work for pay = 700
  - Men who work for pay = 346
- **Residential density for the women sample**
  - Urban = 1,272
  - Rural = 217
- **Regional groups for the women sample<sup>1</sup>**
  - Eastern region includes the districts of Benghazi, Tobruq, Darna, Jabal al Akhdar and Al-Marj= 367
  - Middle region includes the districts of Wahat, Kufra, Serte and Jufra = 111
  - Western region includes the districts of Tripoli, Misrata, Murqub, Jafara, Zawiya, Zuwarah, Gharyan and Nalut = 910
  - Southern region includes the districts of Sebha, Murzuq, Ubari and Ghat = 101

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<sup>1</sup> In the survey analysis, data is often broken down by the following regional groups: western region, eastern region, middle region and southern region. These regions are not official administrative divisions in Libya; they are used, however, to facilitate comparison in trends between the main geographic divisions of Libya while ensuring sample sizes are sufficient to draw statistically significant results. The sample size for this survey is not large enough to allow for smaller geographic breakdowns of the data, such as by district or city/village.



## Survey, Questionnaire and Report Specifications

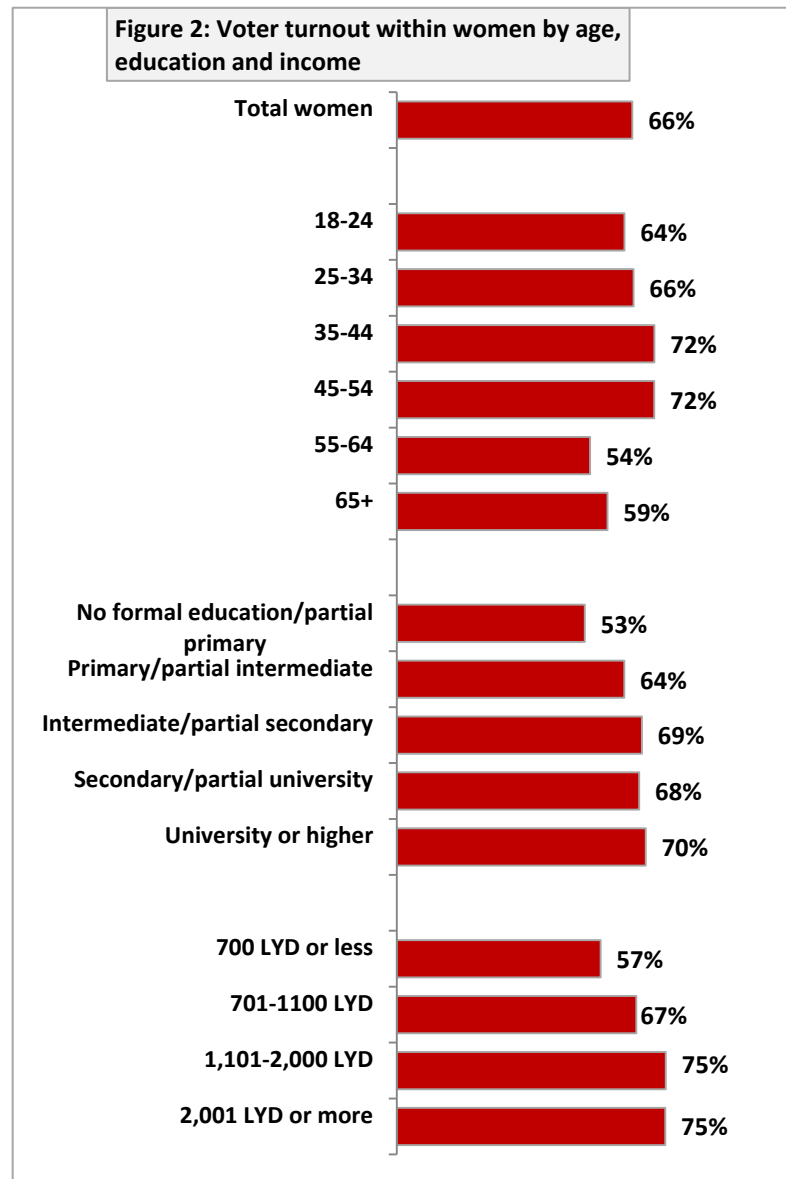
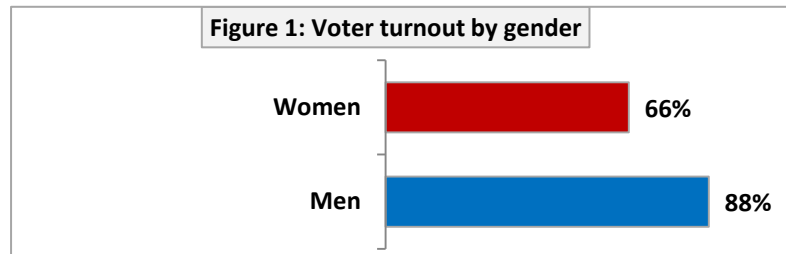
- The **survey questionnaire** is composed of 68 content questions plus questions to derive demographics.
- **Fieldwork dates** were from December 30, 2012, to January 26, 2013.
- **Survey implementation:** IFES contracted the Tripoli-based research firm Diwan through a competitive bidding process to implement the survey. The IFES Applied Research Center (ARC) designed the survey methodology and provided field oversight for setup and pretesting of the survey.
- **Charts:** There may be slight variations between numbers presented in the analysis and the data figures or tables due to rounding. This occurs in only a few cases and the difference is never greater than 1 percent.
- **Feedback:** This analytical report was developed by ARC. For any feedback or questions about data analysis or methodology, please contact ARC Research Manager Rola Abdul-Latif at [rabdullatif@ifes.org](mailto:rabdullatif@ifes.org). For any questions about IFES programming in Libya, please contact Libya Program Manager Samer Elchahabi at [selchahabi@ifes.org](mailto:selchahabi@ifes.org).

## Women’s Civic and Political Participation

### Voting in the GNC elections reveals large gender gap in voter turnout

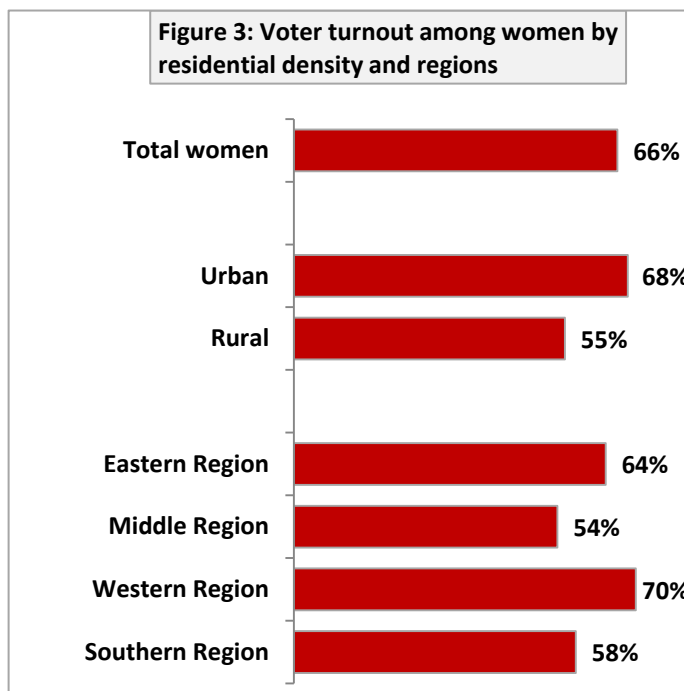
One of the main objectives of the IFES Status of Women Survey in Libya is to assess the level of women’s engagement in civic and political activities. Survey respondents were asked about their participation in several types of such activities, including voting in the Libyan General National Congress (GNC) election, which took place on July 7, 2012. This was the first election held after the end of Muammar Gaddafi’s 42-year authoritarian rule.

- Survey results show that while a relatively high share of women – nearly two-thirds (66%) – say they voted in the GNC election, there is a sizable gender gap of 22 percentage points in voter turnout with significantly more men (88%) reporting they voted in this election than women.<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1)



<sup>2</sup> The official voter turnout figures for the GNC election (53% for women and 69% for men) are lower than figures reported in the IFES survey. This is most likely due to the “social desirability effect” whereby certain survey respondents who have not voted say they voted, as they tend to view voting as a positive activity which reflects that they are being responsible and good citizens. Despite this discrepancy in voter turnout, there is also a sizable gender gap in voting in official figures.

- When examining voting rates among women by age groups, data finds the 35-54 age cohort had the highest voter turnout with 72% compared to a much lower turnout of 57% among women who are 55 years or older. It must be noted that even among older women, the share of those who voted is never less than a majority. (Figure 2)
- The survey indicates women with a complete primary education or higher are more likely to vote than women who have an incomplete primary education or less.
- When looking at voter turnout among women by income levels, the data shows women in upper-middle income groups or high-income groups voted in higher numbers in the GNC election than those in lower income groups.
- In terms of women's voting by residential density, i.e. comparing urban to rural areas, the data shows women in urban areas voted in larger proportions than women in rural areas by a 13-point differential.
- Higher turnout is also seen among women in the eastern (Benghazi) and western (Tripoli) regions than in the middle and southern regions. (Figure 3)



### Reasons for Not Voting Differ Between Women and Men

Survey respondents who did not cast a vote in the July 2012 GNC election were asked to provide the main reason for not voting. Results show the top reasons for not voting cited by women differ significantly from those cited by men.

- Among women, the most frequently cited reason for not voting is not being registered to vote (mentioned by 19% of women); this ranks as the third most cited reason among men (mentioned by 12% of men). Many women (16%) mention not being interested in elections or politics as their main reason for not voting: this comes in second place for women and in fifth place for men. The third most frequently cited reason by women is being sick; this comes in seventh place for men (8%). Among men, the most frequently cited reason for not voting is being busy; this comes in fourth place for women.

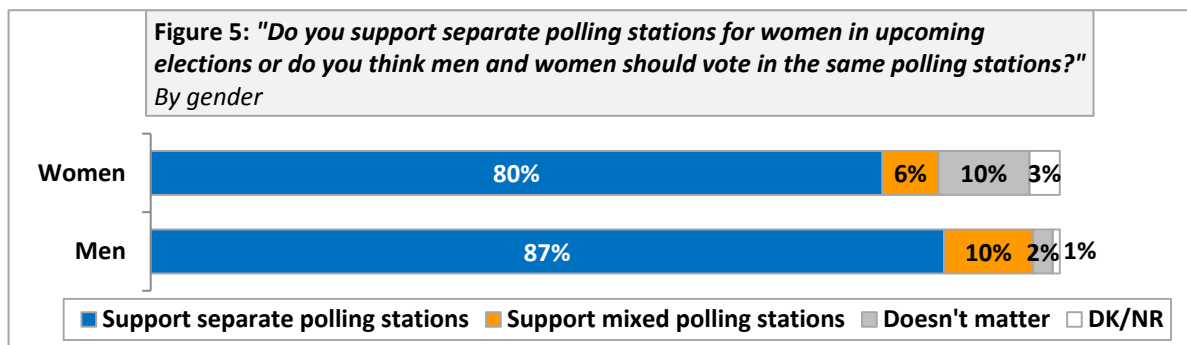
- A much higher proportion of women than men ascribe not casting a vote to their lack of interest in elections and politics. (Figure 4)

Figure 4: Why did you not cast a vote in the July 2012 GNC election? % out of respondents who reported not voting; ranked from highest to lowest according to citations by female respondents	Women (n=473)	Men (n=56)	
1) Was not registered to vote/was not on the voter list	19%	12%	(3)
2) Not interested in elections/politics	16%	9%	(5)
3) Was sick	14%	8%	(7)
4) Was busy	14%	19%	(1)
5) Was out of town/country when elections happened	9%	15%	(2)
6) Did not support any candidate/party	5%	11%	(4)
7) Was not allowed to vote	5%	5%	(9)
8) Was not eligible to vote	5%	6%	(8)
9) My vote would not have made a difference	4%	8%	(6)
10) Can't recall	4%	0%	(12)

Shows ranks according to citations by men

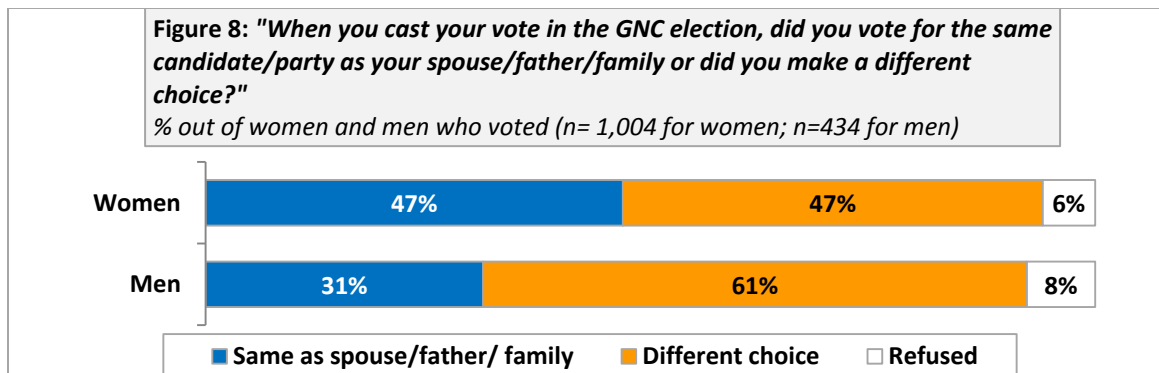
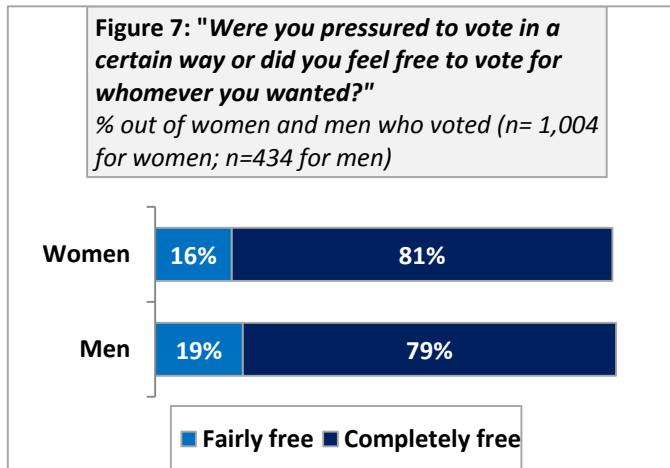
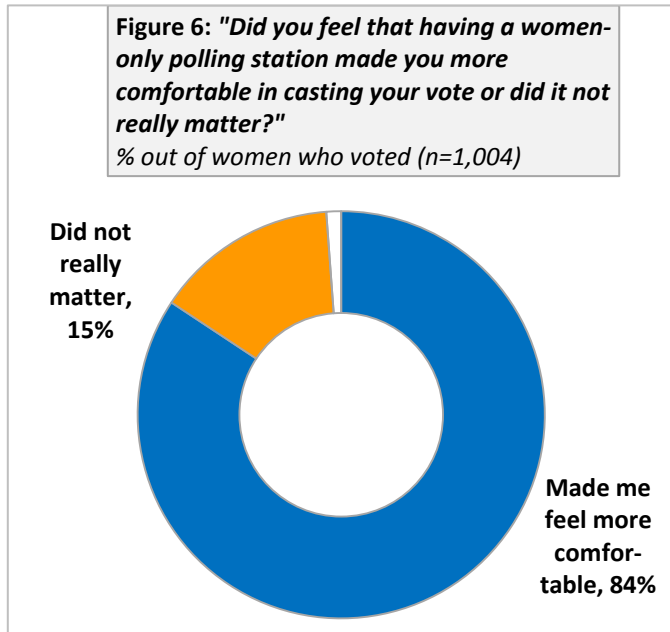
### Women Reported Voting Free of Pressure on Election Day

During the GNC election, women voted in separate polling stations from men, as it was believed that having both men and women vote in the same polling stations might deter some women from voting or moving comfortably on Election Day. These concerns stemmed from the conservative nature of Libyan society that does not usually encourage mixing of the sexes in public spaces. The IFES survey posed a series of questions that aimed to assess the extent to which men and women supported the separation of polling stations and whether women felt free in making their voting choice and if they felt more comfortable voting in a separate polling station.



- Survey results indicate both women and men overwhelmingly support the separation of polling stations (80% of women and 87% of men, respectively) versus only 6% of women and 10% of men who believe that women and men should vote in the same polling stations. (Figure 5)
- Women voters were specifically asked if the separate polling stations made them feel more comfortable in casting their vote or whether it did not really matter. The overwhelming majority of women (84%) said it made them more comfortable and only 15% said it did not really matter. (Figure 6)

- The data also shows large majorities of both women and men voters felt completely free to vote for whomever they wanted on Election Day. Indeed, 81% of women say they felt completely free and 16% felt fairly free to vote for whomever they wanted. This compares to 79% of men who say they were completely free and 19% saying they were fairly free to vote for whomever they wanted. (Figure 7)
- Interestingly, the data shows that while a large majority of women report feeling completely free to vote for whomever they wanted, women’s voting choice was more in line with their spouse, father or family’s choice than men’s vote. When women were asked if they voted for the same candidate/party as their spouse/father/family or if they made a different choice, responses were split, with 47% of women saying they voted for the same candidate as their spouse/father/family and an equal share of 47% saying they made a different choice. Men’s votes were more independent than women’s votes, with over six in 10 men (61%) saying they made a different choice than their spouse, father or family. (Figure 8)



## Libyan Women and Men Prioritize Similar Policy Issues

In order to gauge priority policy areas for Libyan women voters, respondents were presented with a list of issues and were asked which of these issues they believe should be given priority by elected officials. Respondents were asked to select up to three issue areas.

- Survey results indicate that nearly three-quarters of women consider reinforcing stability and national security as their top policy concern they would like elected officials to address while in office, followed by fighting corruption (cited by 53% of women) and improving quality of education (42%). Other issues they would like elected officials to prioritize include creating jobs (30%) and fighting poverty (24%).
- The top five priority policy areas mentioned by women are the same as those mentioned by men. This shows both genders are focused on the same general issue areas. Nevertheless, women tend to give the issue of improving access to healthcare slightly more priority than men do: it is ranked sixth among citations by women and eighth among citations by men. (Figure 9)
- When breaking down women’s responses by age groups, there were not any significant differences in priority policy areas as younger and older women tend to prioritize the same issues in a similar order.

Figure 9: Which issues should elected officials prioritize while in office? <i>% out of total; ranked from highest to lowest according to citations by female respondents</i>		Women	Men	
1)	Reinforcing stability/ national security	74%	78%	(1)
2)	Fighting corruption	53%	61%	(2)
3)	Improving quality of education	42%	40%	(3)
4)	Creating jobs	30%	28%	(4)
5)	Fighting poverty	24%	24%	(5)
6)	Improving access to healthcare	19%	16%	(8)
7)	Improving the economy in general	17%	17%	(7)
8)	Developing local infrastructure	16%	20%	(6)

Shows ranks according to citations by men

Respondents were also asked to name the most important factors that influenced their choices when voting in the GNC election. For men and women, the top four factors are the same and in the same order.

- The top factor mentioned by women and men as influencing their voting choice is “candidates who are not corrupt,” which is mentioned by over half of women (54%) and nearly two-thirds of men (64%). This is followed by “candidates’ platform,” cited by 50% of women and 62% of men, and “candidates’ personality and charisma” (47% and 53%, respectively). Respondents also placed significant importance to the factor relating to “services that candidates provide to their area” mentioned by 43% of women and 50% of men, respectively.

- Nearly a third of women (31%) mentioned “candidates’ stance on issues of importance to women” as one of the key factors influencing their vote; this was only cited by 7% of men. This shows only few women and very few men place importance on issues concerning women in the country. This could merit more intensive awareness campaigns to bring attention to women’s concerns and get men’s buy-in to pursue an improvement of women’s status in the country.
- The data does not reveal significant differences by age groups, as women from all ages cited similar factors that influence their voting choices. (Figure 10)

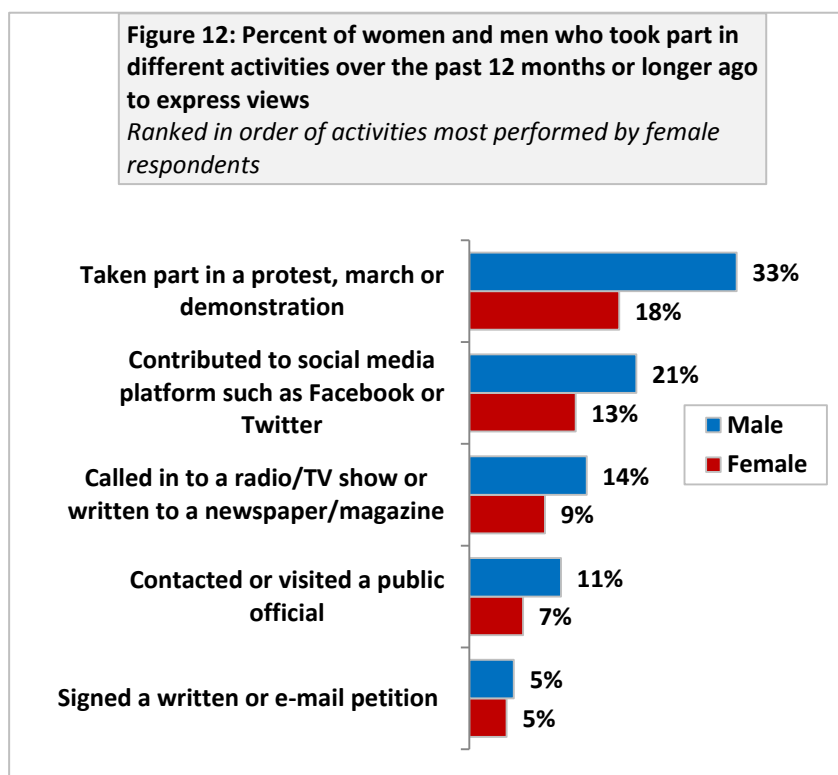
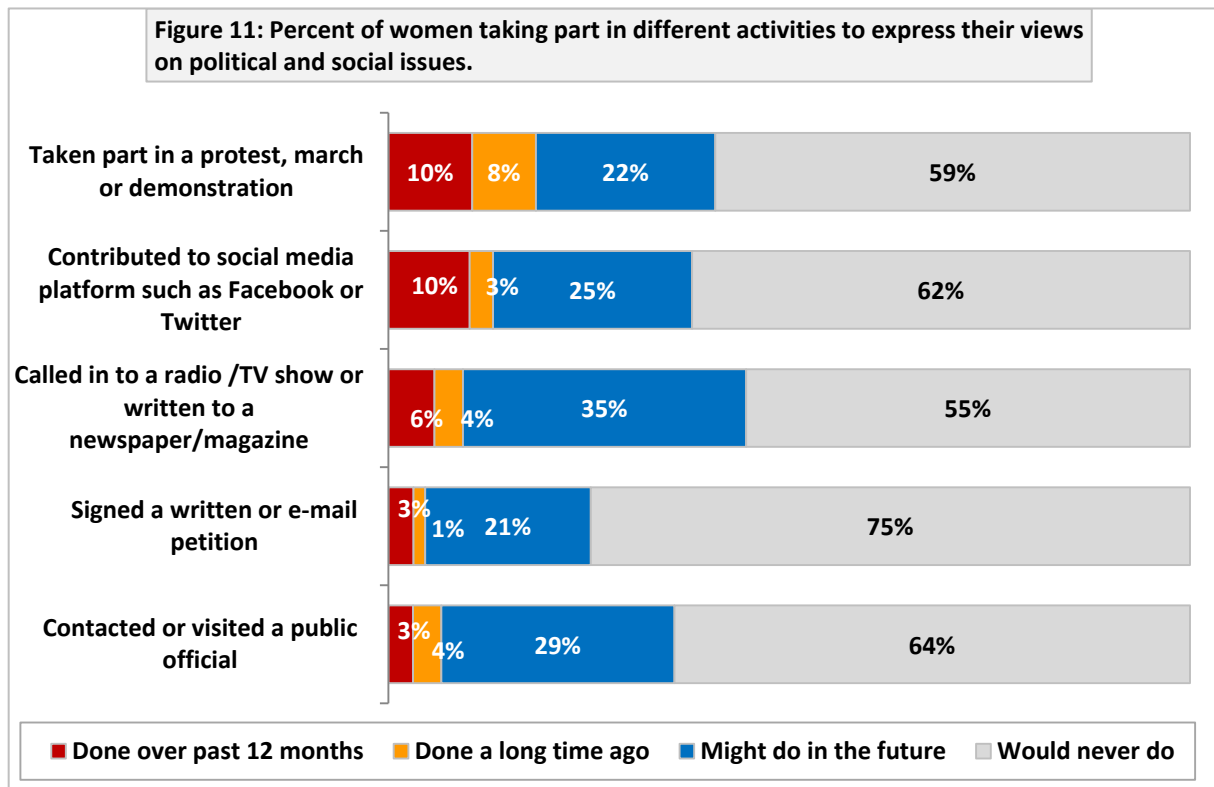
Figure 10: “When voting in the 2012 GNC elections, which of the following are the most important factors that influenced your choice?” <i>% out of total; ranked from highest to lowest according to citations by female respondents</i>	Women	Men	Shows ranks according to citations by men
1) Candidates who are not corrupt	54%	64%	(1)
2) Candidates’ platform	50%	62%	(2)
3) Candidates’ personality/charisma	47%	53%	(3)
4) Services candidates provide to our area	43%	50%	(4)
5) Candidates’ stance on issues of importance to women	31%	7%	(6)
6) Candidates’ previous performance	20%	22%	(5)

### Civic Participation Limited, Highest for Young Educated Women, Women in the East

To examine the extent of Libyan women’s civic engagement, respondents were asked about their participation in different activities to express their opinions on political and social issues. Respondents were presented with a list of activities and asked if they had taken part in such activities in the past 12 months or longer ago. For respondents who say they have not, they were next asked if they might partake in the specific activity in the future or would never do so.

- The results show very few Libyan women engage in different types of activities to express their views on political and social issues, which is in stark contrast to the 71% of women surveyed who expressed interest in matters of politics and government. Only 10% have taken part in a protest, march or demonstration in the past 12 months, and 8% have done so over a year ago. Also, 10% of women have contributed to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter and 3% have done so over a year ago. In terms of civic activities that may require a more involved type of engagement, such as contacting or visiting a public official to express their views or try to address social or political issues, only 3% of women reported doing so in the past 12 months.

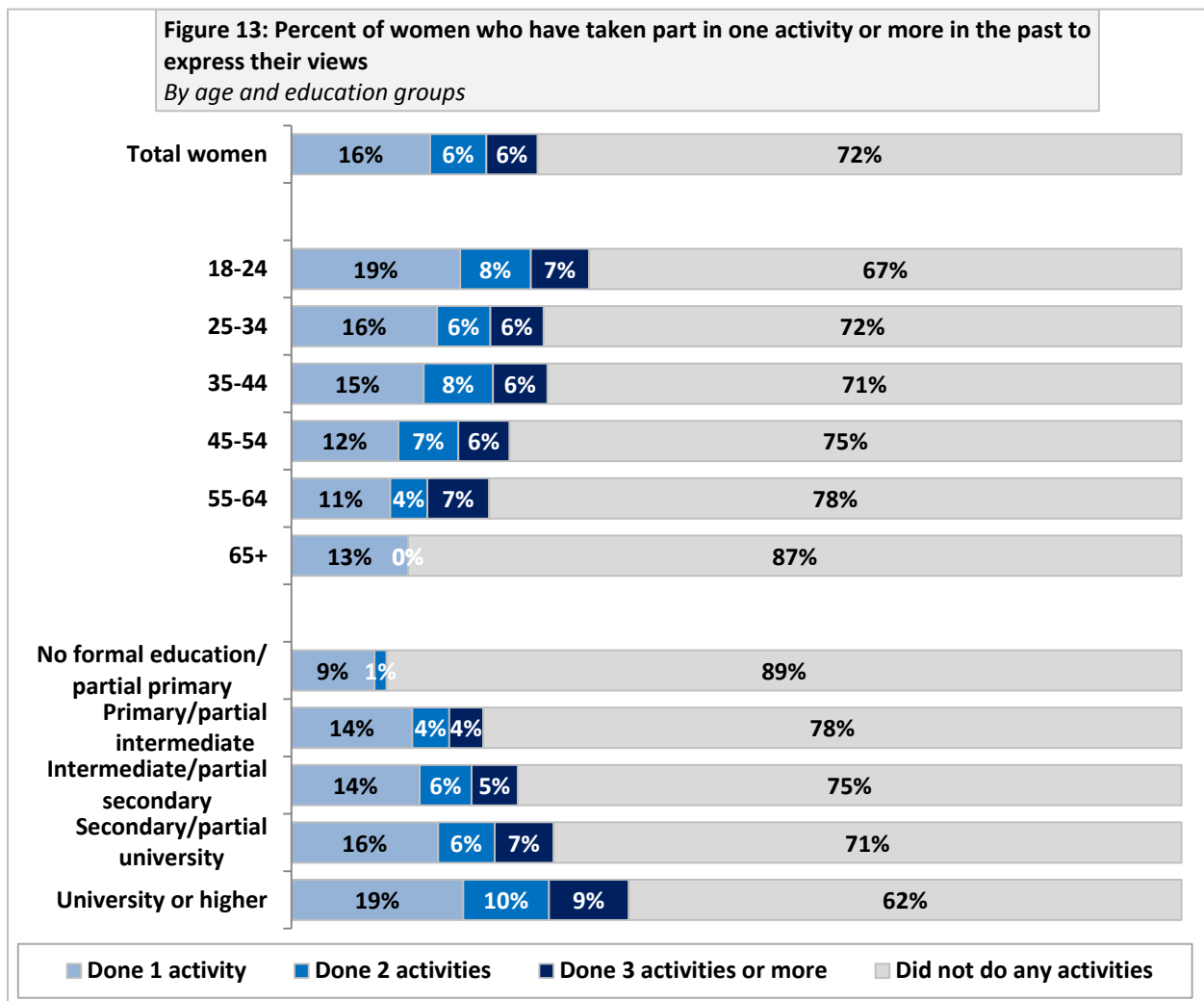
- Only a very few women intend to engage in these activities in the future. Over half of women surveyed say they would never partake in such activities in the future to express their views on social and political issues. For instance, a full 64% of women say they would never contact or visit a public official to express their views or try to address an issue, 75% say they would never sign a petition and 62% say they would never contribute to social media. (Figure 11)



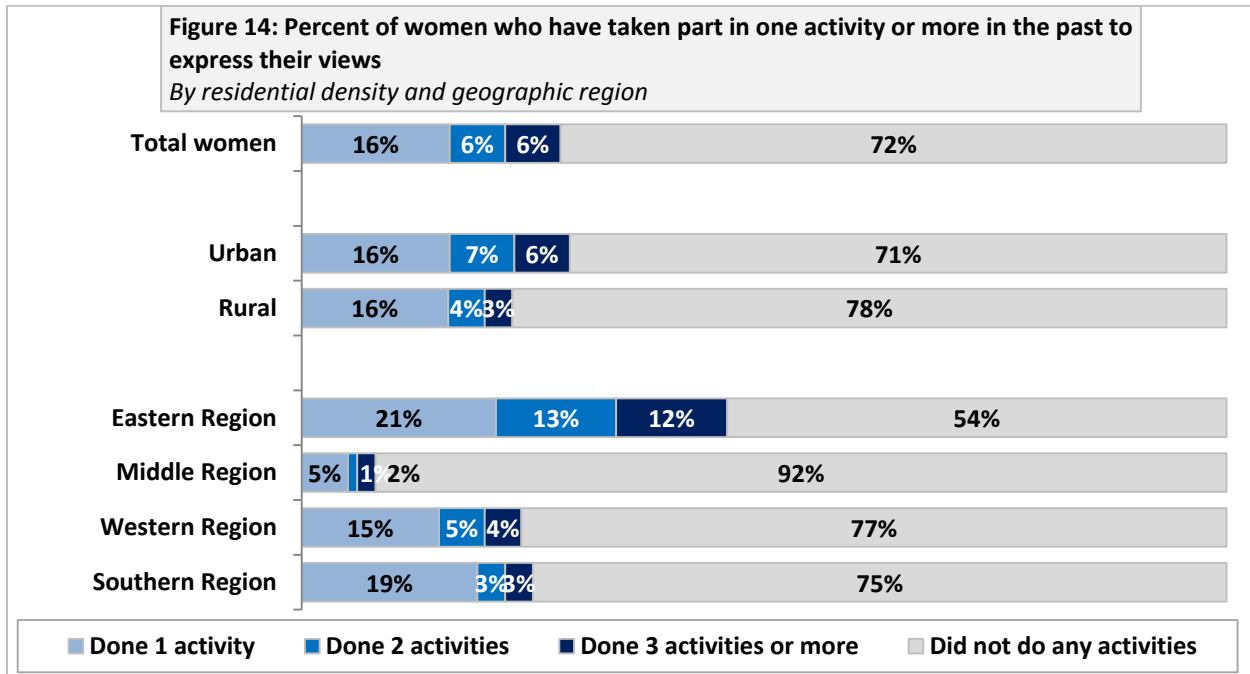


When comparing women’s engagement in civic activities to men’s engagement, data shows significantly more men tend to take part in protests or demonstrations than women: 33% of men have done so in the past compared to 18% of women. More men have contributed to social media platforms to express their views than women (21% vs. 13%, respectively).

- Men reported taking part in more activities listed in the survey than women, such as calling a radio or TV show and writing to a newspaper to express their views, or contacting a public official, however, the data shows that civic activism for both men and women is limited for these types of activities. (Figure 12)
- While women’s civic engagement is relatively low across the board with 72% of women not taking part in any activities in the past, data indicates that certain groups of women tend to be more civically active than others. In particular, highly-educated women (those with a university education or higher) and younger women (18-24) are more likely to have taken part in activities to express their views in the past than older women or women who are less educated. In fact, the data suggests that as education levels increase, women’s tendency to take part in civic activities increases as well and as women get older, they are less likely to take part in civic activities. (Figure 13)

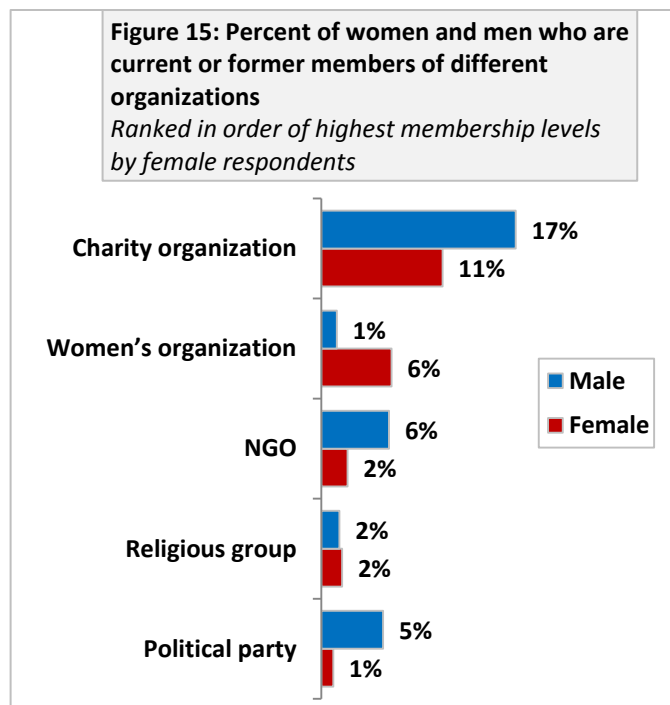


- Further, the data shows women’s civic engagement varies significantly by region. Women in the eastern region tend to be much more active (many more have reported taking part in activities) than women in the middle, western or southern regions. Women in the middle region are the least active; nearly 92% say they have not taken part in any of the listed activities in the past versus only 8% who have taken part in activities. In contrast, 46% of women in the eastern region have taken part in activities in the past: 21% took part in one activity, 13% in two activities and 12% in three activities or more. Overall, women in urban areas tend to be more civically active than women in rural areas. (Figure 14)



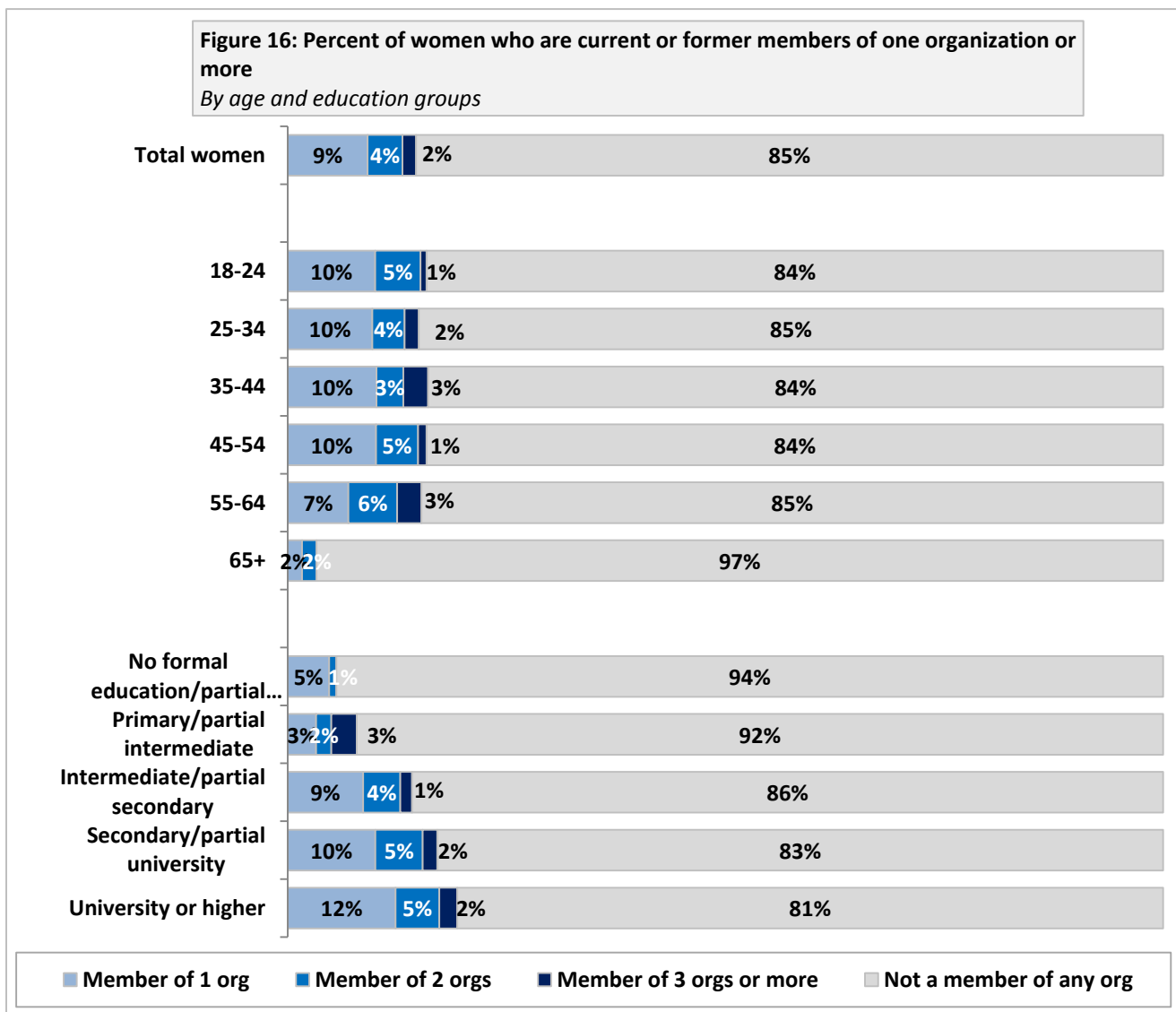
Another way of gauging women’s civic participation is through examining whether Libyan women are involved in different types of organizations, such as political parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charity organizations, women’s organizations or religious organizations.

- The results show few Libyan women and men are members or have been members of different types of organizations. Women tend to be slightly less involved than men in different organizations; however, membership levels are relatively low across the board. Less than 11% of

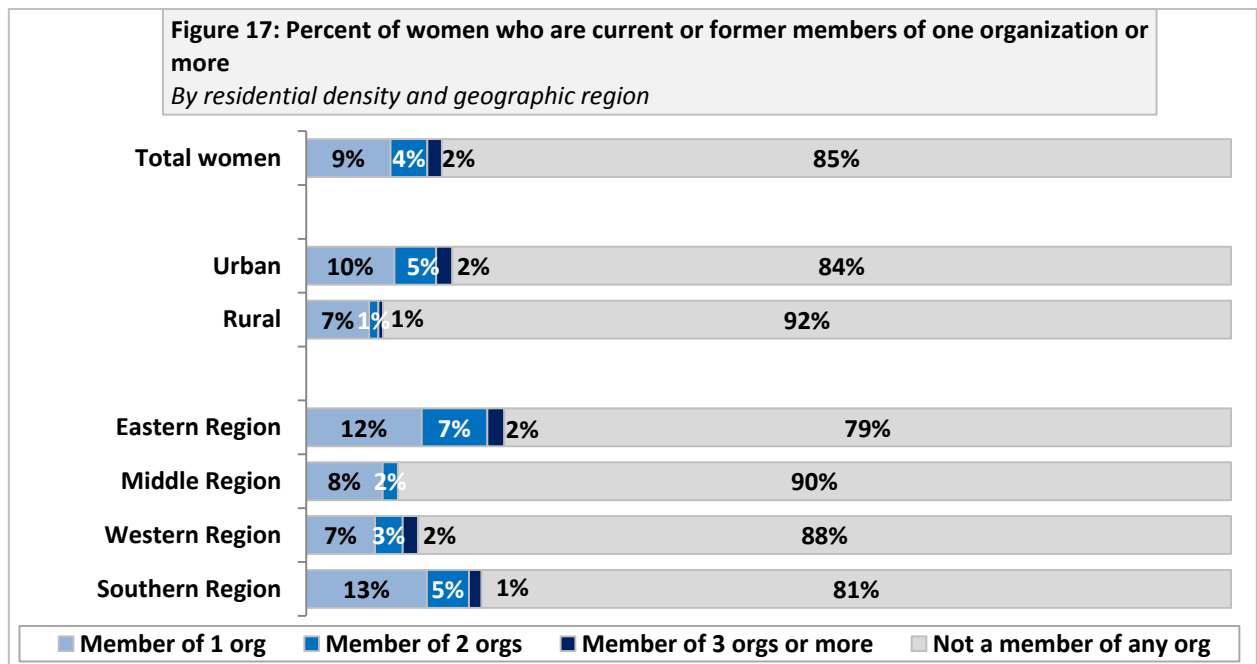


women reported being a current (6%) or former (5%) member of a charity organization compared to 17% of men. Only 6% of women report being members of women’s organizations compared to 1% of men. In terms of membership to NGOs, only 2% of surveyed women say they are current or former members of these organizations, versus 6% of men.

- Involvement in political parties is also limited, with only 1% of women who say they are current or former members of political parties, compared to 5% of men. (Figure 15)
- When looking at membership levels by age, there are not significant differences in women’s tendency to be members of different organizations according to age groups. In fact, all women under the age of 65 tend to have similar membership levels, which tend to be low with an average of 85% of women not belonging to any organization. Among women older than 65, the likelihood of being a member of any organization is less than 4%. (Figure 16)
- When looking at women’s memberships in organizations by education, data shows that as education levels increase, the likelihood of being a member of an organization increases as well, but it remains low, even for women who have a university education or higher: only 19% of highly-educated women are current or former members of organizations and the remaining 81% are not.



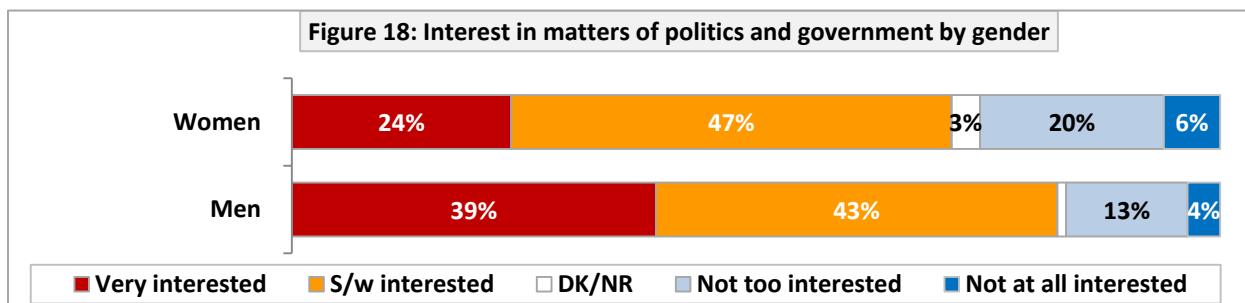
- When looking at women’s memberships in organizations by region, data shows that slightly more women in urban areas tend to be members of organizations than women in rural areas. The data also shows that more women in the eastern and southern regions of Libya tend to be members in organizations than women in the western and middle regions. In line with their low tendency to take part in civic activities, women in the middle region also have the lowest rates of participation as members in organizations. (Figure 17)



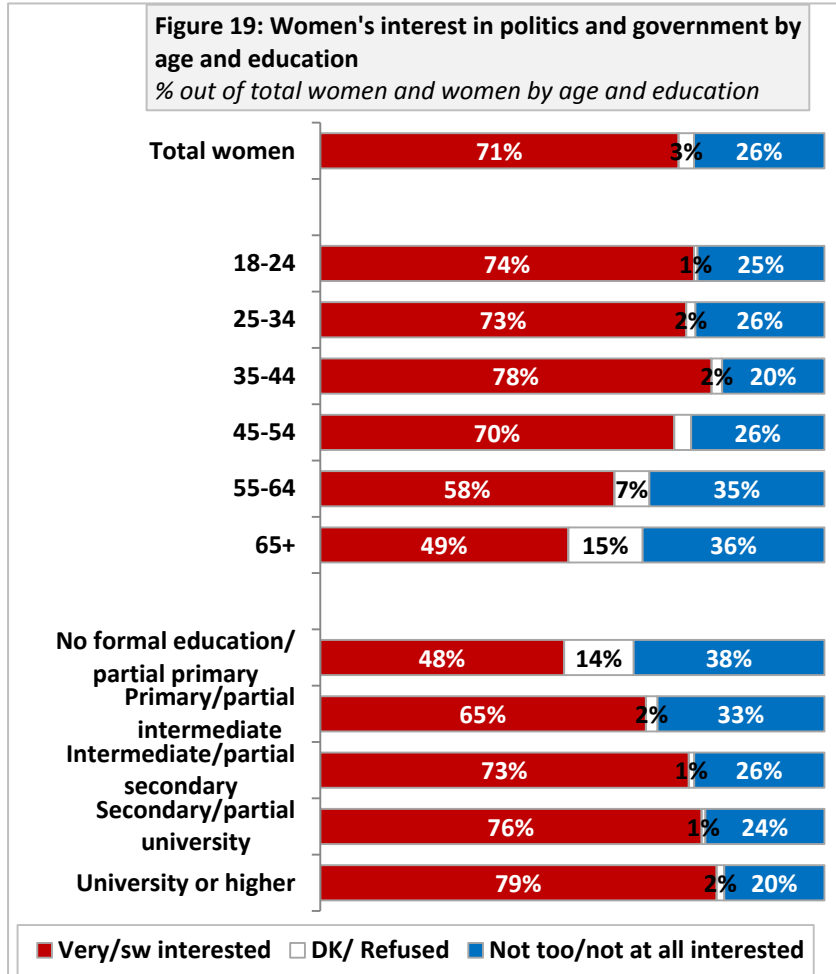
### Majority of Women Express Interest in Politics, Use TV as Main source of Information

In addition to measuring women’s engagement in civic activities and different organizations, survey respondents were also asked about their level of interest in politics and government and their use of different media and information sources to learn about news and developments in Libya.

- The results indicate that while Libyan women tend to show slightly less interest in politics and government than men, a majority of both women and men are at least somewhat interested in these issues. In fact, 71% of women are very or somewhat interested in matters of politics and government versus 82% of men. The share of men who are “very interested” in these matters (39%) is 15 percentage points higher than the share of women who are very interested (24%). (Figure 18)



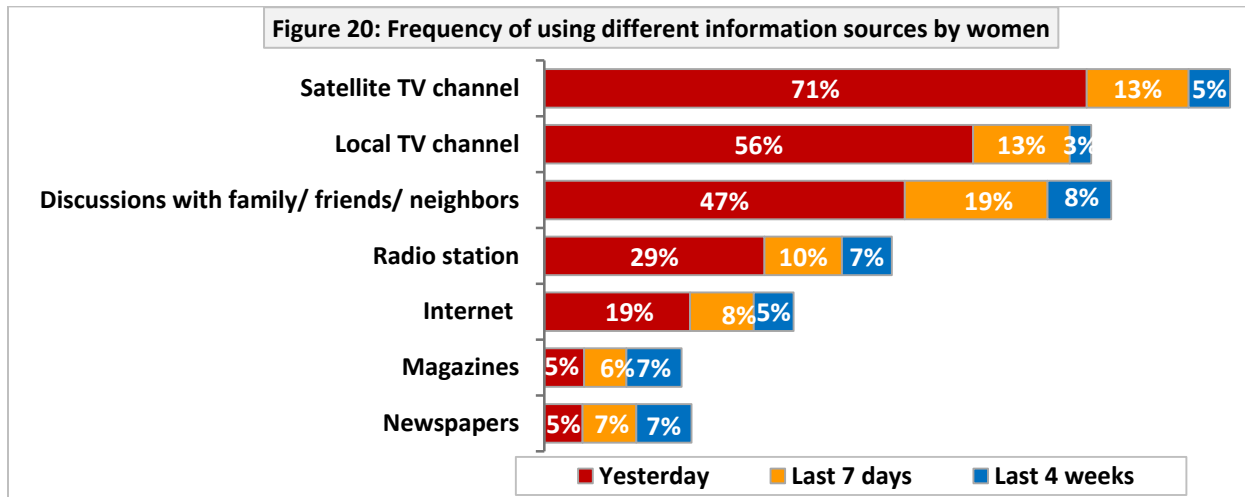
- When looking at women’s interest in politics and government by age group, women who are 35-44 tend to show the highest levels of interest, with nearly 78% saying they are very or somewhat interested. Women who are older than 55 show lower levels of interest than women in younger age groups.
- When looking at women’s interest in politics and government by level of education, the findings show interest levels increase with education. Even among women with no formal education or a partial primary education, nearly half of them (48%) are very or somewhat



interested in matters of politics and government and 38% are not too interested or not at all interested. Interest levels peak for women who have a university education or higher with nearly eight in 10 women being very or somewhat interested in these matters. (Figure 19)

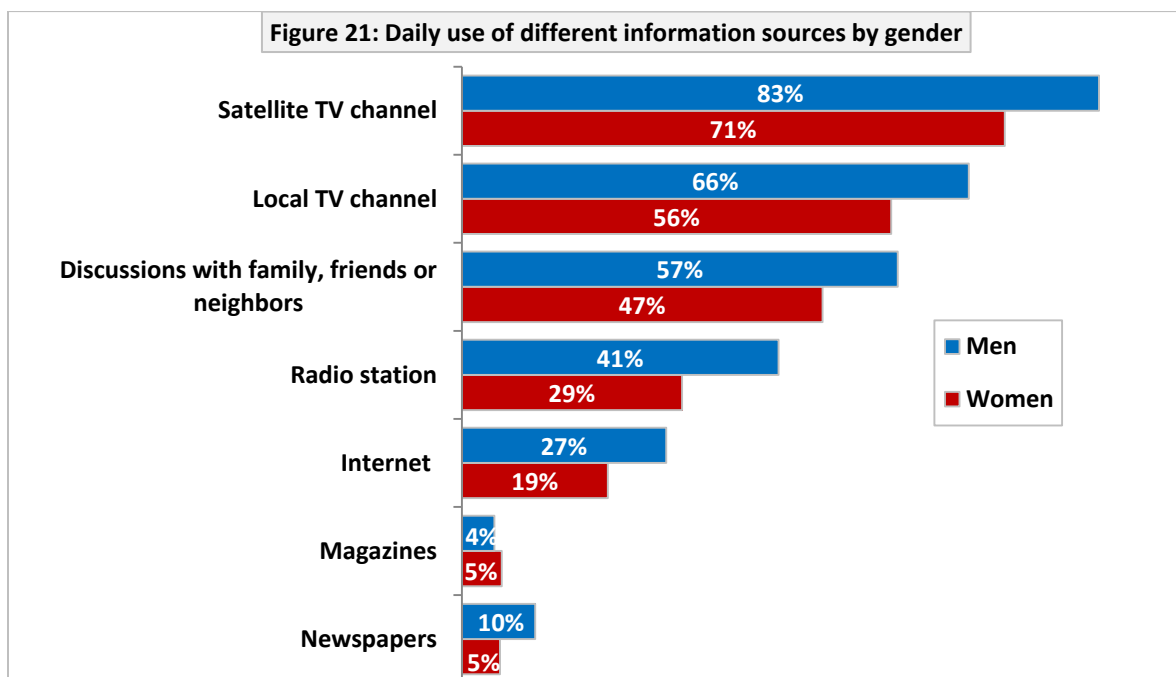
- There is a large gap between expressed interest in matters of politics and government and actual engagement in different activities to express views on social and political issues. For instance, while 71% of women express interest politics and government, only 28% have taken part in activities in the past to express their views. For men, while 82% express interest in these matters, only 44% have taken part in activities to express their views. The differential between interest levels and actual engagement is 43 percentage points for women and 38 percentage points for men.
- In terms of media use, survey results indicate that Libyan women rely primarily on TV to learn about news and developments in their country. Satellite TV channels are the most frequently used information sources with over seven in 10 women (71%) reporting watching satellite channels on a daily basis. Local TV is also used frequently with 56% of women saying they watch it on a daily basis. Radio stations are used daily by 29% of women and weekly by 10% of women.
- A large proportion of Libyan women resort to word of mouth (discussions with family, friends, neighbors) to learn about national developments: 47% say they engage in such discussions daily

and 19% do so on a weekly basis. Meanwhile, 19% of women use the Internet on a daily basis and 8% use it on a weekly basis to learn about news and developments. Newspaper and magazine readership is very low, with only 5% of women saying they read these print media on a daily basis to obtain news and information. (Figure 20)



- When comparing the daily use of different information sources by gender, data shows that men tend to use different information sources more than women by a margin of approximately 10 percentage points. For instance, 83% of men watch satellite TV and 66% watch local TV on a daily basis, compared to 71% and 56% of women, respectively.

- Despite higher use of various information sources by men (except for magazines), the gap in media consumption between men and women is not large. Women are also heavy users of both local and satellite TV. This shows women of different backgrounds and ages can effectively be reached through mass media. The Internet might be a good medium to reach younger women, as 30% of younger women (18-24) reported using the internet on a daily basis. (Figure 21)



### Women's Civic and Political Participation Conclusion

Comparative data on voter turnout between women and men and within women's different demographic groups shows achieving higher voter turnout among Libyan women may require more effective voter motivation campaigns aimed at encouraging more women to vote. Such efforts must include better targeting strategies, particularly for poor and less educated women in rural areas of Libya who may not venture far beyond their household walls in rural areas of Libya, as well as women in the middle and southern regions of the country. This will help ensure all women are equally encouraged to vote, and that they can become as involved and motivated as their male counterparts in deciding on the future of their country.

The low civic engagement of Libyan women in contrast to their high levels of interest in politics and government indicate ordinary Libyan women may be finding obstacles in taking part in activities to voice their views and concerns or in finding avenues that can help them do so. Consequently, there is a need to promote civic participation among women that addresses these obstacles and raises awareness of ways they can become more engaged as active citizens in their democracy. Outreach to women should also consider awareness raising strategies that include their families and communities as well.

Informational and motivational campaigns could potentially reach large swathes of Libyan women by relying on mass media, since the survey shows the frequency of using TV is very high for women. The

Internet may be a good medium to reach younger women. Additionally, activities that engage women and their families who make decisions together could also increase opportunities for women's civic and political engagement.

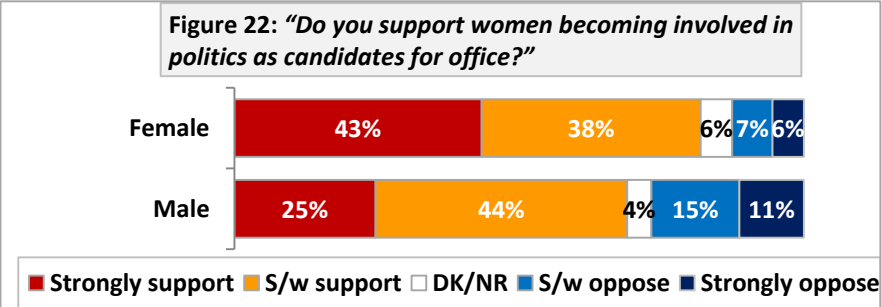


## Social Attitudes toward Women’s Roles and Rights

### Majority Encourages Women to Engage in Politics, yet Men Express Less Support

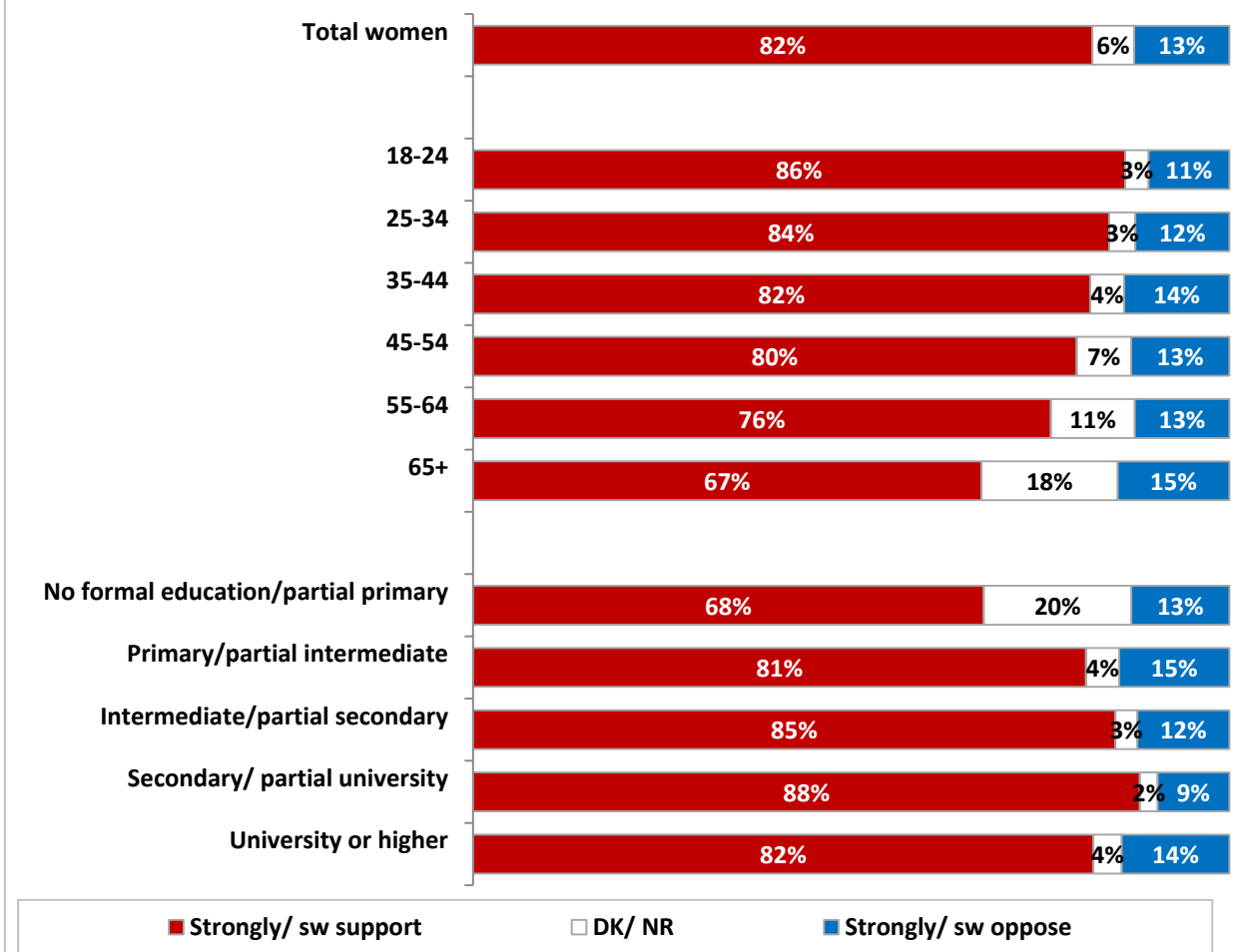
Before the launch of the IFES Status of Women Survey, a smaller survey was conducted with 12 Libyan women’s organizations in November 2012. This survey revealed cultural beliefs, social attitudes and the dominance of a patriarchal mentality as main obstacles preventing the advancement of the status of women in Libya. Consequently, this survey aimed to closely examine prevailing social attitudes and opinions toward women’s engagement in politics and gender equality in various areas.

- Survey results indicate majority support for women becoming involved in politics as candidates. This support is expressed by both women (81%) and

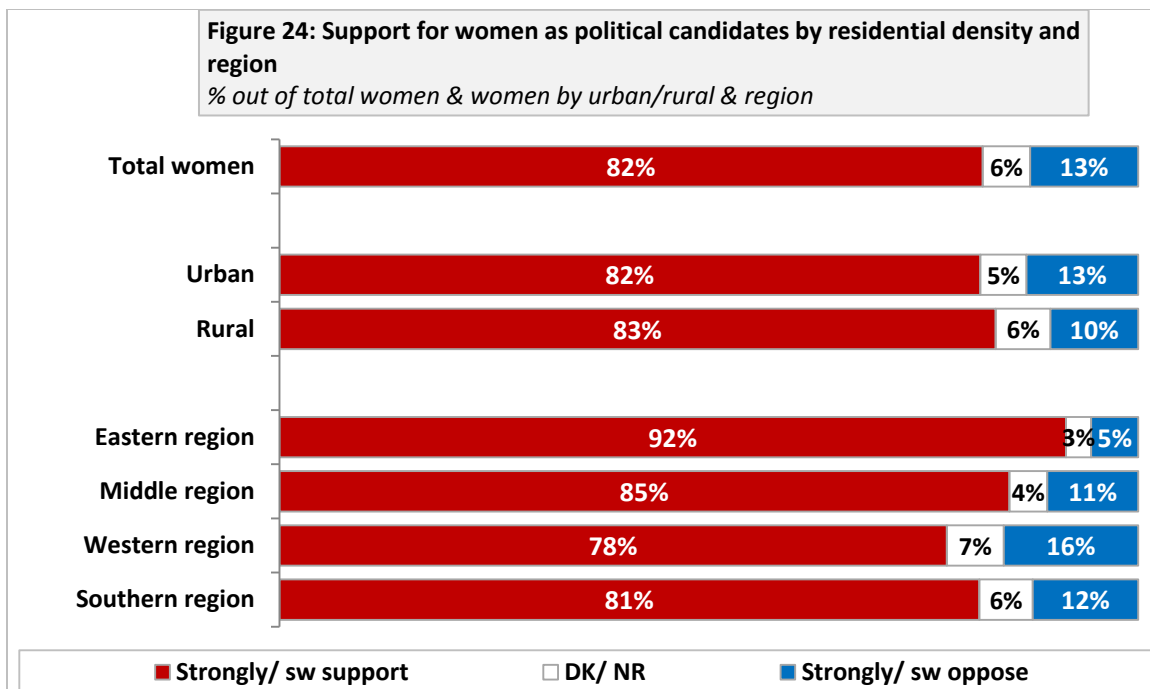


- and men (69%); however, the intensity of support varies between genders with significantly more women saying they would strongly support the involvement of women as political candidates, (43%) while only a quarter of men would strongly support women becoming involved in politics as candidates. (Figure 22)
- When looking at support levels within women by age groups, younger women aged 18-44 tend to be more supportive for women getting involved in politics as candidates than older women. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that even among women 65 or older, at least two-thirds of them express support for women as political candidates. (Figure 23)

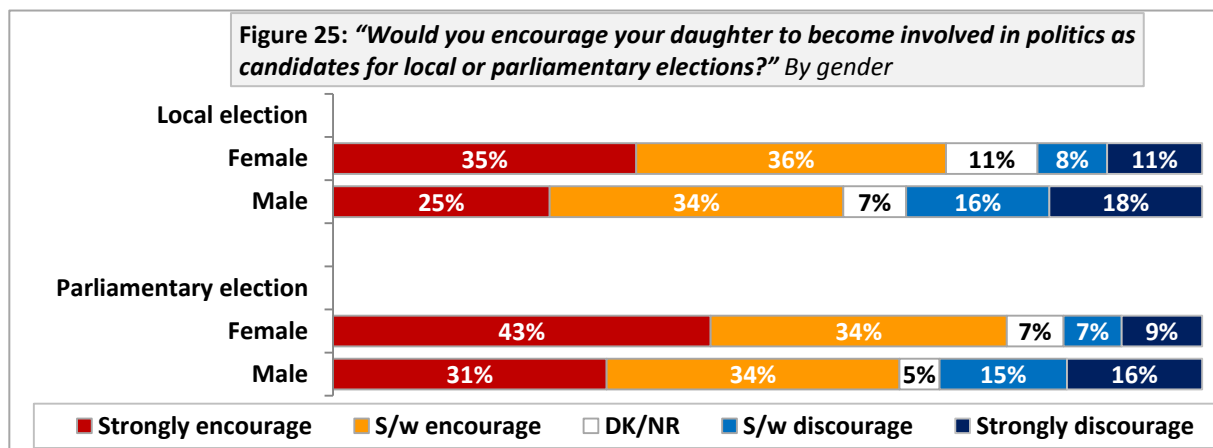
**Figure 23: Support for women as political candidates by age and education**  
 % out of total women & women by age and education



- The level of support for women in politics as candidates does not differ between women living in urban and rural areas. In terms of support levels by regional divisions, data shows support levels are highest among women in the eastern region, with over 92% saying they strongly or somewhat support women as political candidates. Lowest support levels are recorded in the western region (78%). High support levels for women as political candidates in the eastern region are consistent with higher levels of women’s civic activism in the East, as reported in the previous section of this analysis. (Figure 24)



- On the question of whether respondents would encourage their own daughters to run as candidates in a parliamentary or local council elections, results are similar, showing majority support on behalf of both men (59%) and women (71%) for women running in local elections and 65% of men and 77% of women for women running in parliamentary elections. However, women show higher support in general and a higher intensity of support as reflected in those who “strongly support” rather than “somewhat support” their daughters to become involved in politics as candidates.



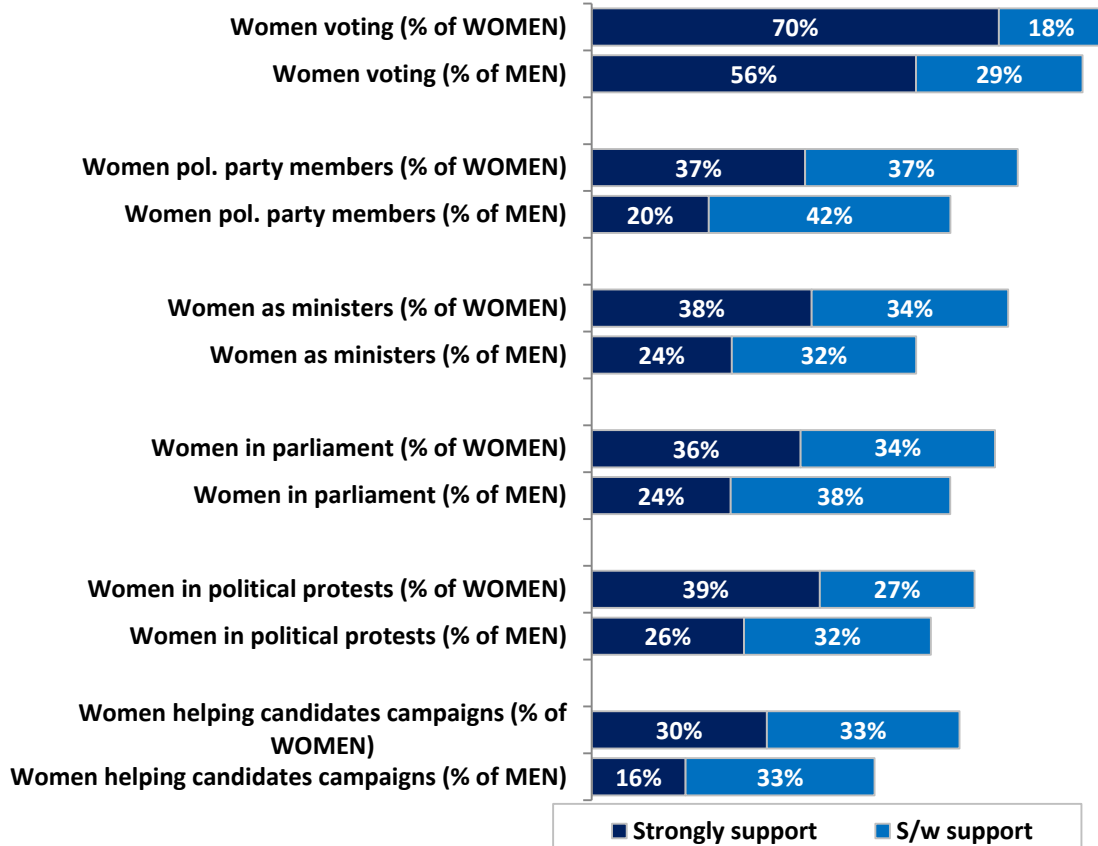
- The data shows women are more likely to support their daughters to run in parliamentary election than in local council elections. The level of expressed support for women being involved in politics in general does not differ much from the level of support for their own daughters' involvement in politics. (Figure 25)
- Men and women who say they would discourage their daughters from becoming involved in politics as a candidate were asked to cite the reasons why they would do so. On top of both women and men's list are "social and traditional reasons" mentioned by 21% of women and 25% of men. The second most-cited reasons by women and men relate to "women's lack of competence," mentioned by 21% of women and 23% of men. Also high on respondents' list are reasons related to "problems related to political activities," mentioned by 18% of women and 13% of men. Further, 7% of women cite security reasons (mentioned by 4% of men), followed by religious reasons mentioned by 5% of women and 10% of men. (Figure 26)

<b>Figure 26: "Why would you discourage your daughter to become involved in politics as a candidate?"</b> <i>% out of men and women who oppose their daughters' involvement in politics; ranked from highest to lowest according to citations by female respondents</i>		<b>Women</b> n=306	<b>Men</b> n=175	
<b>1)</b>	Social and traditional reasons	21%	25%	<b>(1)</b>
<b>2)</b>	Lack of women's competence	21%	23%	<b>(2)</b>
<b>3)</b>	Problems related to political activities	18%	13%	<b>(3)</b>
<b>4)</b>	Security reasons/ fear for daughter	7%	4%	<b>(5)</b>
<b>5)</b>	Religious reasons	5%	10%	<b>(4)</b>

Shows ranks according to citations by men

- The survey further investigated support or opposition for women getting involved in various political roles from voting in an election to serving as ministers. Survey respondents were presented with a list of different political roles or actions and asked if they support women serving in these roles. Survey results showed that while the majority of both female and male respondents support women in all listed roles, women consistently showed higher support for women's involvement than men.
- The highest level of support was recorded for women voting in an election (88% of women and 85% of men supported this) and for women serving as political party members (74% of women and 62% of men). Men showed the lowest level of support for women working on other candidates' campaigns, with only 49% supporting and 44% opposing.
- Overall, the data also shows that, with the exception of their support for women voting, few men "strongly supported" women in any of the listed political roles. For instance, while 38% of women strongly supported women serving as ministers, only 24% of men strongly supported women in that role. (Figure 27)

**Figure 27: Support for women in various political roles**  
By gender

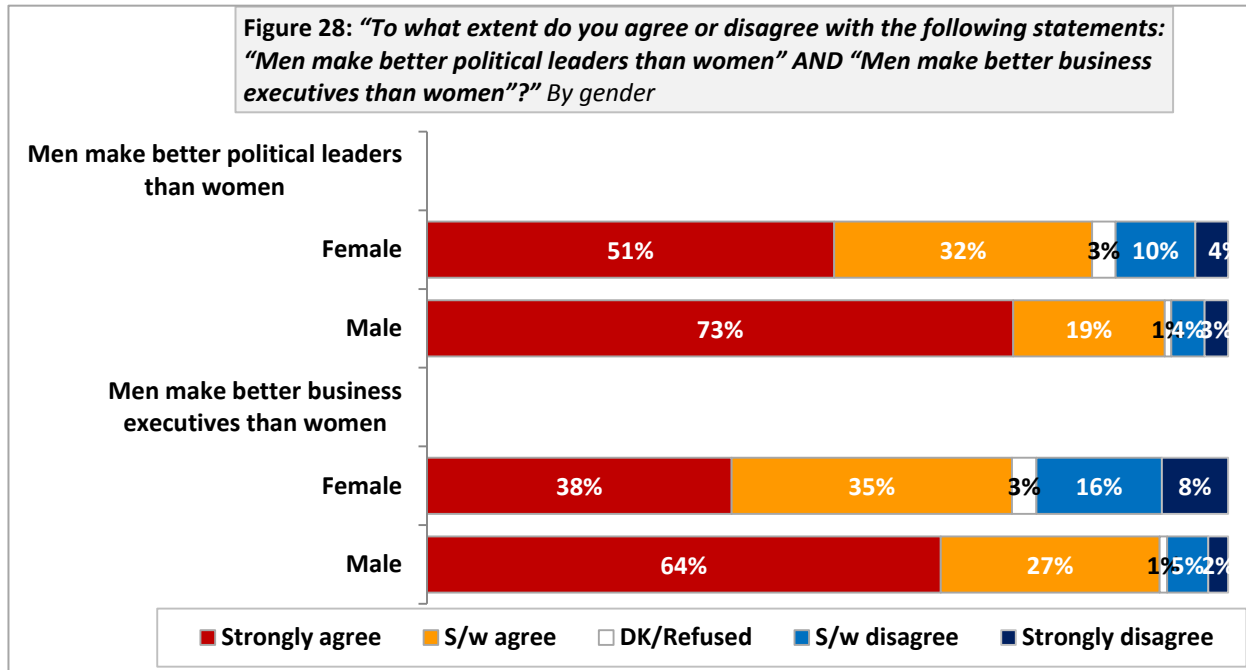


### Men Perceived as Better than Women in Leadership Positions

In this survey, the aim was to explore more nuanced stances in public opinion toward women's roles, especially when looking at women serving in leadership positions, whether in politics or business. Beyond asking directly about support or opposition for women playing different roles in politics, survey respondents were asked about their views of women as political leaders and business executives using more subtle phrasing of the questions. Respondents were presented with the following statements and asked to agree or disagree: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women" and "Men make better business executives than women." Consequently, agreement with these statements would indicate respondents are not necessarily supportive of women in leadership positions.

- Results show large majorities of both women (83%) and men (92%) agree men are better political leaders than women. Similarly, 73% of women and 91% of men agree men are better business executives than women. However, the share of women who "strongly agree" with these statements is much smaller than the share of men who strongly agree. For instance, 73% of men strongly agree men are better political leaders than women, versus 51% of women who strongly agree with this statement. (Figure 28)

- When breaking down this data by age and education, we notice that among younger women (18-24), the share of those who believe men are better political leaders (78%) is smaller than the share of older women who believe so (85%). The data also shows less educated women (with no formal education or incomplete primary education) are the most likely to believe men are better political leaders than women (85%) and those with a university education or higher are the least likely to believe that (82%). These findings are not encouraging, as even among young and highly-educated women, there seems to be very little confidence in the ability of Libyan women to be strong political leaders and business executives.



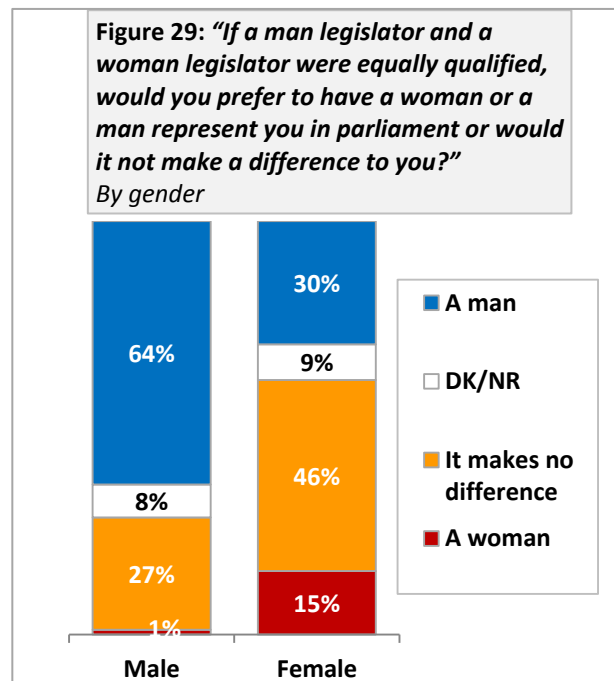
- Another question asked of respondents was whether they would prefer a man legislator or a woman legislator to represent them in Parliament, or whether it would not make a difference to them, assuming that both candidates were equally qualified. The results showed large differences between women’s and men’s responses. Among women, a plurality (46%) say it would not make a difference to them, while 30% say they would prefer a man legislator, and 15% say they would prefer a woman legislator. Among men, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they would prefer a man legislator, 27% say it would not make a difference to them, and only 1% say they would prefer a woman legislator. Even among women, twice as many preferred a man to a woman legislator to represent them. (Figure 29)

### Libyans Hold Mixed Views on Equal Rights between Women and Men

The Status of Women Survey aimed to examine Libyan citizens’ views on equal rights between women and men in access to education, access to economic opportunities and marriage dynamics.

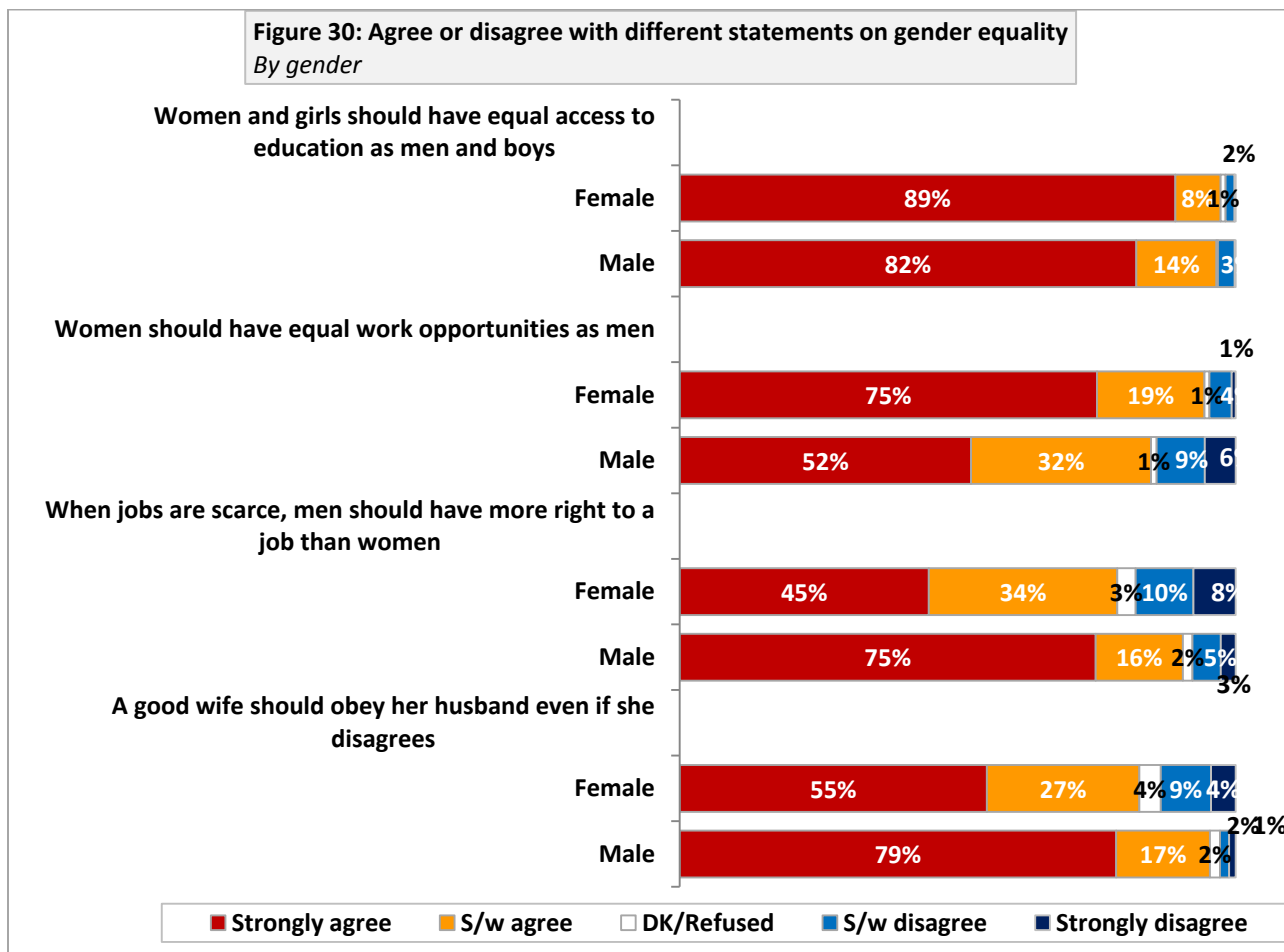
Consequently, respondents were presented with a list of statements and asked to agree or disagree with each statement. Some of these statements are phrased in a way where agreement yields a “progressive” response that favors equality, whereas others are phrased in a way where agreement yields a “non-progressive” response counter to gender equality.

- Survey results indicate large majorities of both men (82%) and women (89%) strongly agree “women and girls should have equal access to education as men and boys.” When adding the share of those who somewhat agree, agreement levels increase to 96% and 97% among men and women, respectively.
- When asked if they agree or disagree “women should have equal work opportunities as men,” large majorities of both men (84%) and women (94%) agree, however, the share of men who strongly agree (52%) is much lower than the corresponding share of women (75%). This shows that while Libyan men strongly believe in gender equality in terms of education access, their endorsement of gender equality in terms of economic opportunities is less explicit.
- When presented with the following statement: “when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women,” large majorities of both men (91%) and women (79%) agree with the statement, countering their declared support for equal work opportunities in the previous statement. Only 18% of women and 8% of men disagree with this statement. This suggests both



women and men in Libya continue to believe men have priority as the breadwinners for their families, and are thus more deserving of work opportunities than women.

- On the issue of marriage dynamics, both men (96%) and women (82%) agree “a good wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees.” While the share of women who strongly agree (55%) is much lower than the corresponding share of men (79%), the fact that very few women (13%) and even fewer men (3%) disagree with the statement shows there is a general belief wives ought to be submissive to their husbands’ wishes. (Figure 30)

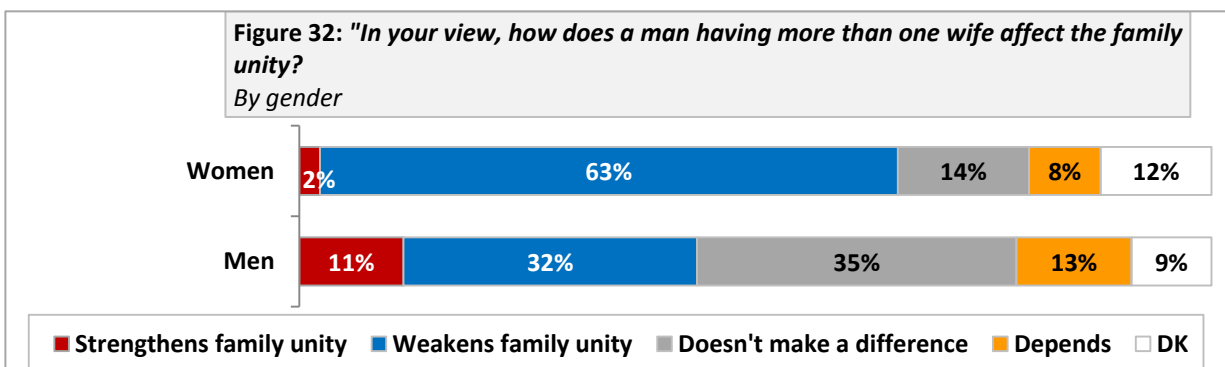
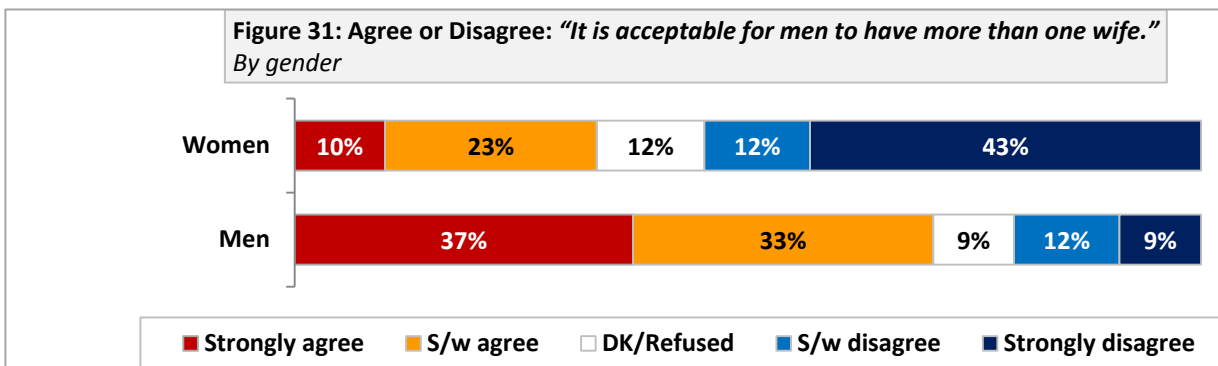


Within the same context, the survey aimed to examine views on polygamy. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with this statement: “It is acceptable for men to have more than one wife.”

- Survey results indicate Libyan women and men are clearly split on the question of polygamy: a large majority of men (70%) agree it is acceptable for men to have more than one wife, while only one-third of women (33%) agree, versus a 55% majority of women who disagree. Gender differences on this issue are stark and imply that while women may believe wives must obey their husbands in general, the majority of women refuse the idea of polygamy, which runs against the interests of wives and forces them to share household resources and their husband’s attention with other women. (Figure 31)



- A follow-up question asked respondents how they think polygamy affects family unity – whether it strengthens it, weakens it or does not make any difference. A large majority of women (63%) believe polygamy weakens family unity, whereas less than a third of men (32%) believe that. A plurality of men believes polygamy does not make a difference to family unity; 13% say it depends. Eleven percent of men say polygamy strengthens family unity. (Figure 32)



### Social Attitudes toward Women’s Roles and Rights Conclusion

Despite declared support for women’s involvement in politics in various political roles, overwhelming majorities of both Libyan women and men still perceive men to be better political leaders and business executives than women. Findings indicate women and men may agree to the concept of equal work opportunities, but not if it means a woman is placed above a man in status or social/professional prestige, and not if it means shifting the balance of power in the household between husbands and wives. Moreover, a large majority of men prefer a male legislator represent them even when presented with a choice between equally qualified female and male legislators. While more men than women believe men are better leaders, these findings show there are entrenched cultural beliefs for both men and women in Libya that continue to give preference to men as leaders.

In order to overcome these attitudinal barriers standing in the way of promoting women in leadership positions, much long-term work is needed. There is a need to ensure that gender equality legislation is not rolled back, but remains in place, and additional affirmative action steps are taken, such as gender quotas, to increase the representation of women in elected bodies and familiarize the Libyan public with the idea and image of women serving in leadership positions. These findings also call for supporting

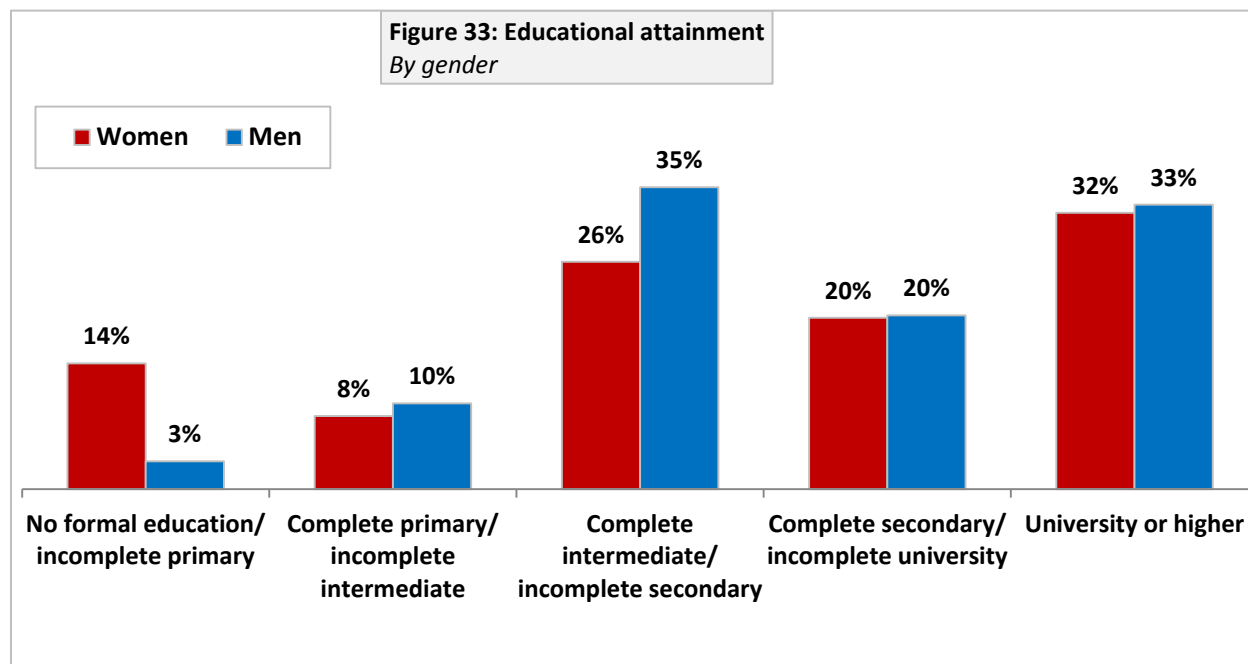
programs that promote women's leadership capacities to help build women's confidence and skills. Such interventions may help to gradually improve public perceptions of women's abilities and their potential to lead. Moreover, the presence of women in leadership roles will lead to progress for all of Libyan society.

## Women's Educational and Employment Profiles

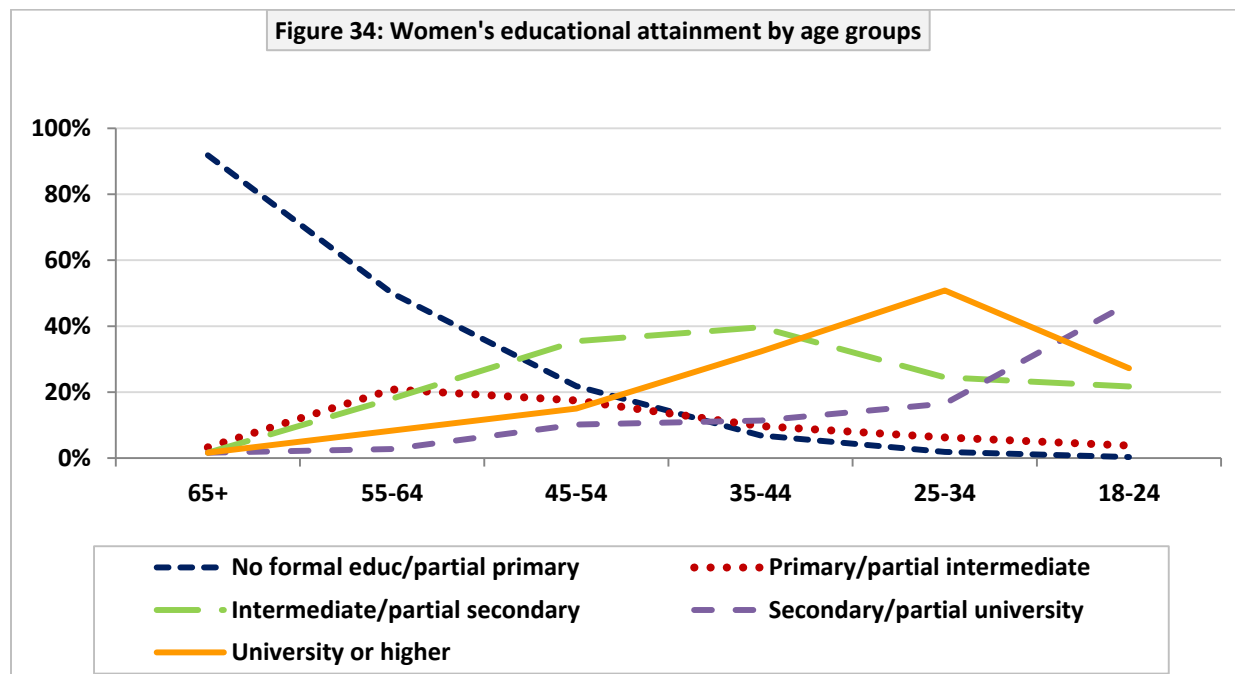
### Education Profile Reveals Gender Parity in Higher Education

The Status of Women Survey aimed to examine Libyan women's educational attainment relative to men as well as young women's educational aspirations, in terms of their future plans for pursuing higher education and the field they would like to study.

- Survey results indicate the education profile of men and women in Libya shows a generally well-educated population with a majority of both women (52%) and men (53%) having at least a secondary education or higher.
- While Libyan women are almost five times as likely to have no formal education or an incomplete primary education (14%) than Libyan men (3%), there are almost as many women as men who have a university education or higher (32% and 33%, respectively), which suggests there is no gender gap in higher education. (Figure 33)



- The data on women’s educational attainment by age groups is encouraging. Survey results show the incidence of lower educational attainment is highest for women who are 65 or older (92% of them have no formal education or incomplete primary), as traced in Figure 34 by the blue dashed line. Additionally, half of women 55–64 have no formal education or an incomplete primary education. On a positive note, this line converges with the horizontal axis, as age groups become younger. This indicates the Libyan female population is becoming increasingly more educated, and that low levels of education generally affects older generations of women. In fact, 51% of women 25–34 have a university education or higher. (Figure 34)



### Large Majorities of Young Women Aspire for Higher Education and a Career

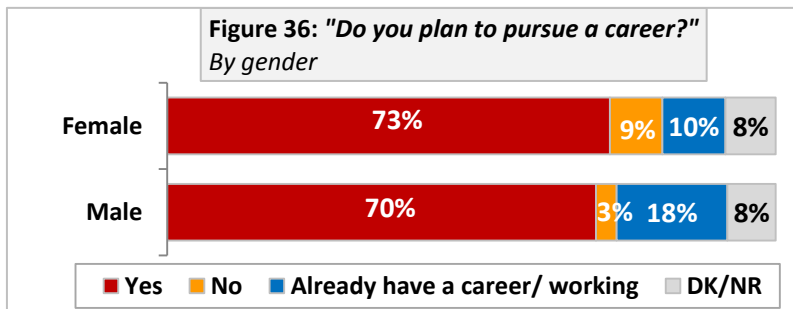
All respondents who are less than 25 years old were asked about their educational aspirations for the future, in terms of the highest level of education they would like to complete.

- The survey shows the overwhelming majority of young Libyan women (77%) intend to pursue either a college/university education (40%) or a post-graduate education – master’s degree or doctorate (36%). While a majority of young men (67%) also intend to pursue advanced education, the share of women who have higher education aspirations is higher by 10 percentage points. More young men (22%) than young women (16%) say they have already completed as much education as they would like.

**Figure 35: Top fields of study that young Libyans would like to pursue**  
By gender for respondents less than 25

WOMEN (n=290)		MEN (n=88)	
Medicine	16%	Engineering	28%
Applied sciences	10%	Accounting and economics	14%
Languages	10%	Medicine	9%
Accounting and economics	8%	Applied sciences	7%
Law	6%	Computer science	5%

- Respondents who would like to pursue college/university degrees were asked what they would want to study. For women, the most popular fields of study are medicine, followed by applied sciences and languages. For men, the most popular fields of study are engineering; accounting and economics; and medicine. (Figure 35)



- Young respondents were also asked if they would like to pursue a career. Results show both young women and young men intend to pursue a career in relatively similar proportions: 73% of women and 71% of men plan to pursue a career. More young men (18%) say they already have a career or are currently working than women (10%). Overall, this shows young women show a similar intent to join the workforce and pursue a career as young men do. (Figure 36)
- In terms of the types of careers they would like to pursue, young women would mainly like to pursue becoming a doctor, teacher or lawyer. Among young men, the preferred career choices are becoming an engineer, doctor or owning a business (self-employed). (Figure 37)

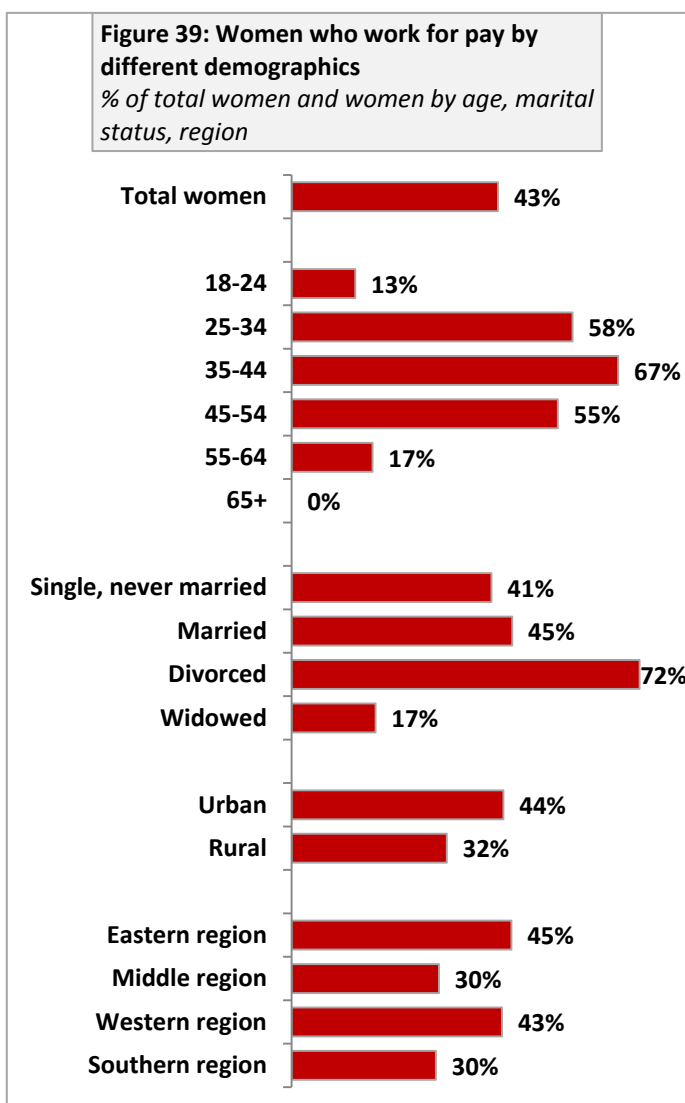
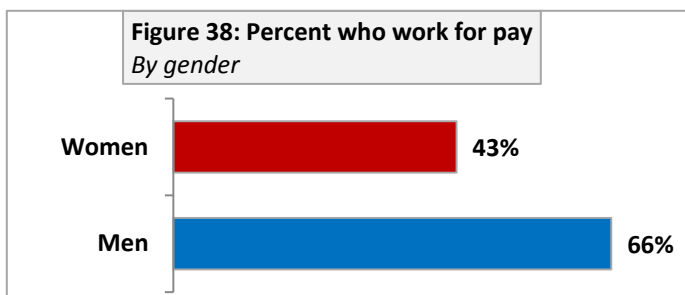
**Figure 37: Top career choices that young Libyans would like to pursue**  
By gender for respondents less than 25

WOMEN (n=290)		MEN (n=88)	
Doctor	23%	Engineer	27%
Teacher	19%	Doctor	8%
Lawyer	6%	Self-employed	8%
University lecturer	6%	Government employee	6%
Government employee	6%	University lecturer	5%

## Women’s Labor Force Participation Significantly Lower than Men

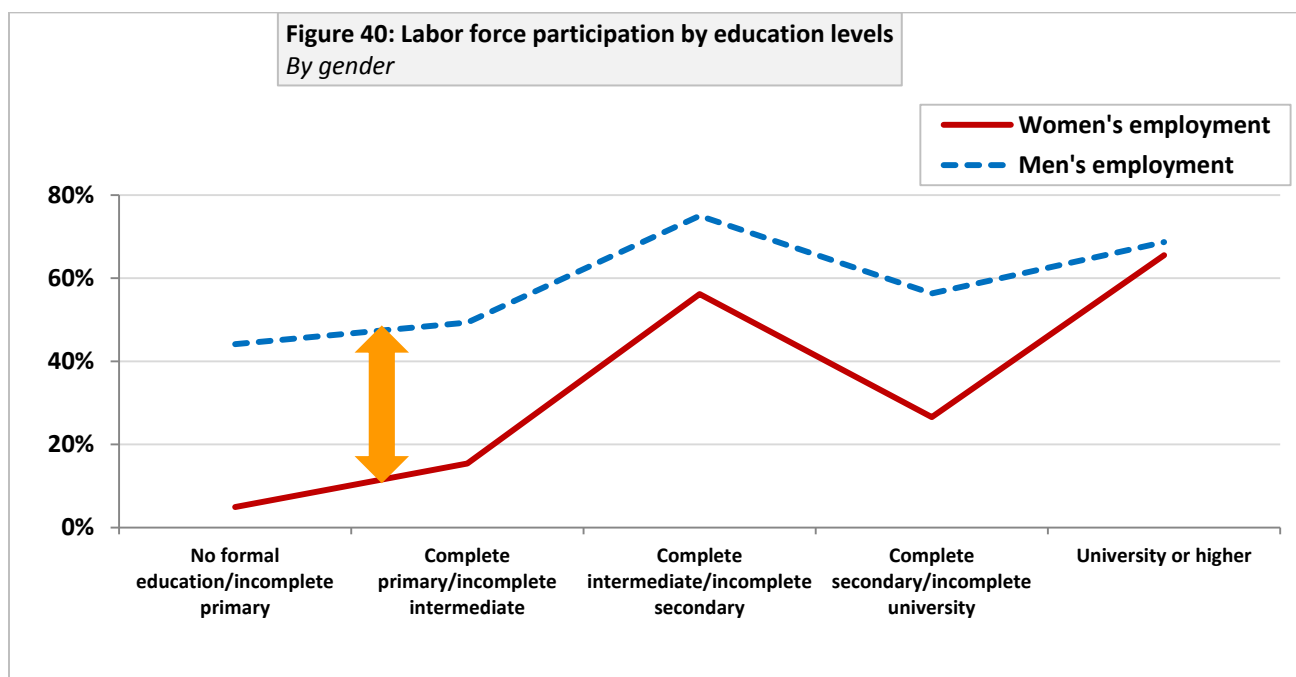
The Status of Women Survey aimed to examine patterns of women’s participation in the formal economy through their wage labor and subsequent control over their earnings and assets. In addition, other features of income and formal sector involvement are discussed, such as receipt of benefits, paid leave and health insurance as part of employment.

- When respondents were asked if they had worked for pay in the past week, 43% of women say they did, compared to a much higher portion of men—66% who say they did. This shows there is a relatively large gender gap in labor force participation between women and men, with men being 1.5 times more likely to be employed than women. (Figure 38) This also indicates a large percentage of both men and women have not worked for pay in the last week.
- When looking at women’s labor force participation patterns by age groups, data shows the most economically active women fall in the 25-54 age group, peaking for the 35-44 age cohort, with 67% of women in this group reporting work for pay. Employment rates are lowest for women above 55 or under 24.
- In terms of employment rates by marital status, data shows married women and single women have relatively similar employment rates (45% and 41%, respectively). The share of divorced women who work for pay is much higher than other groups at 72%. Lowest employment rates are among widowed women (17%), which correlates with older age as well.
- Women’s employment patterns reveal large differences by residential density and regions. Forty-four percent of urban women work for pay versus less than a third of rural women (32%). Moreover, results show



significantly more women in the East (45%) and the West (43%) of the country work for pay in comparison with women in the Middle or South (both at 30%). (Figure 39)

- When tracing the pattern of employment for women and men by education levels, employment rates are very low for less-educated women (those with a primary education or lower). For men, education does not seem to be a key factor for being employed. For instance, of respondents who have a primary education or less, 48% of men are employed versus only 9% of women. On the positive side, it appears the gender gap in labor force participation virtually disappears for highly-educated women. This can be seen in Figure 40 where the red solid line (women’s employment) converges with the blue dashed line (men’s employment) for highly-educated respondents, where 66% of women who have a university education or higher report being employed compared to 69% of men in the same educational category. As such, the data seems to imply higher education is a key driver for increased labor force participation for women. (Figure 40)



- The main reasons for not working for pay in the past week, as cited by female respondents, are: being a housewife (34%), being a student (30%) or not finding available work (19%). Among men, the main reasons given for not working are: being a student (36%), not finding available work (29%) or being retired (22%). (Figure 41)

**Figure 41: Top reasons given for not working**  
*By gender for respondents who reported not working for pay in the past week*

WOMEN (n=789)		MEN (n=147)	
Housewife	34%	Student	36%
Student	30%	No work available	29%
No work available	19%	Retired	22%
House/family duties	4%	Infirmity	4%
Too old/too young	4%	Seasonal inactivity	5%

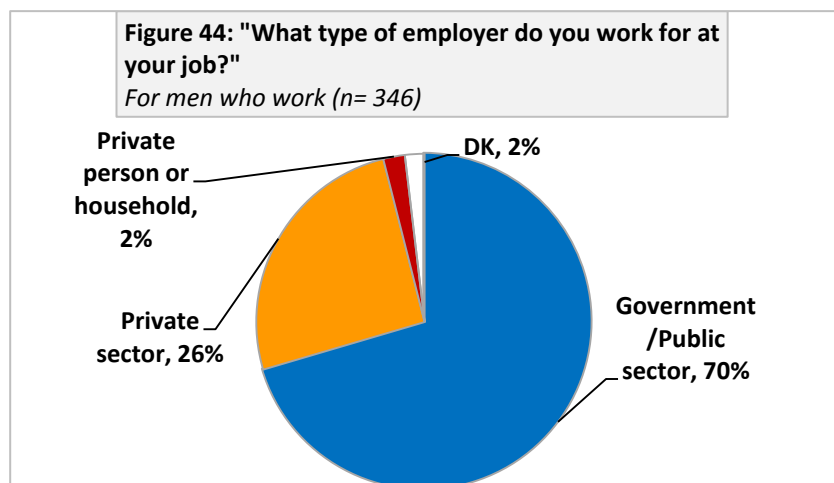
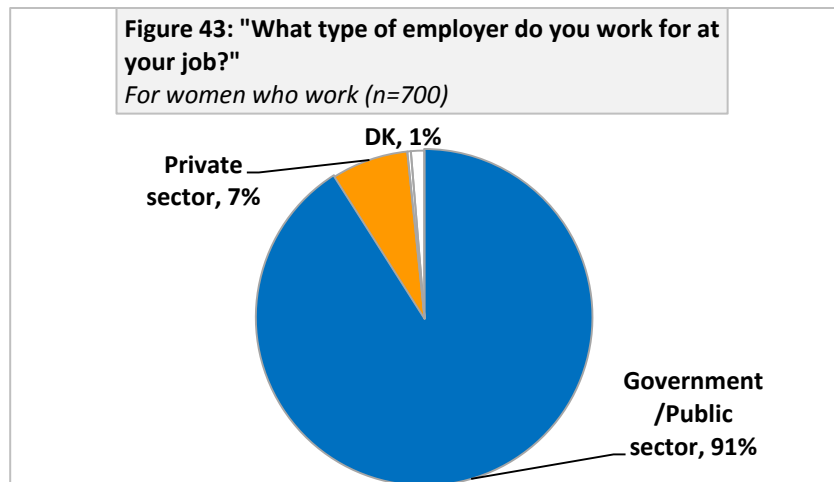
- When asked about the main industry they work in, results indicate while most women work in the education sector and some work in the health sector, men tend to work in a wider variety of industries. Two-thirds of Libyan women (66%) report being employed in the education sector versus less than a quarter of men (24%). Thirteen percent of women report working in the health sector. For men, in addition to working in education, 24% work in the services sector, 14% in trade and selling and 11% in administration. (Figure 42)

Figure 42: Top industries employing women and men By gender for respondents who work for pay			
WOMEN (n=700)		MEN (n=346)	
Education	66%	Education	24%
Health	13%	Services	24%
Administration	8%	Trade/selling	14%
Services	5%	Administration	11%
Domestic services/catering	2%	Transport	7%

### Women Work in the Public Sector More than Men and Earn Less

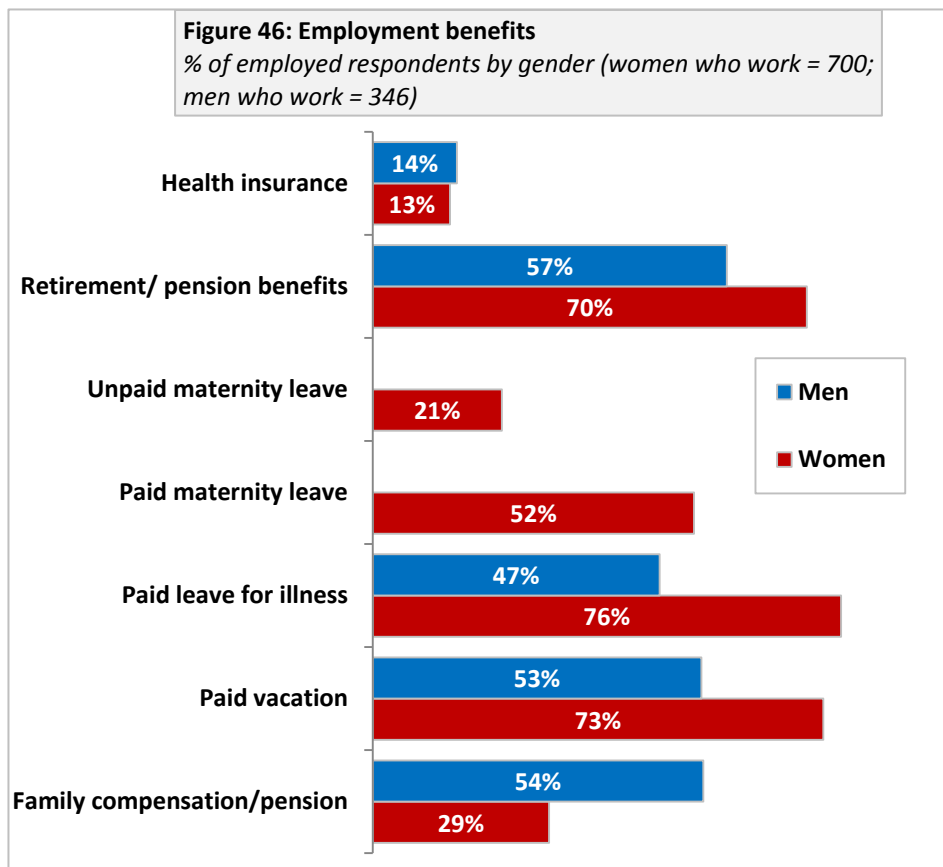
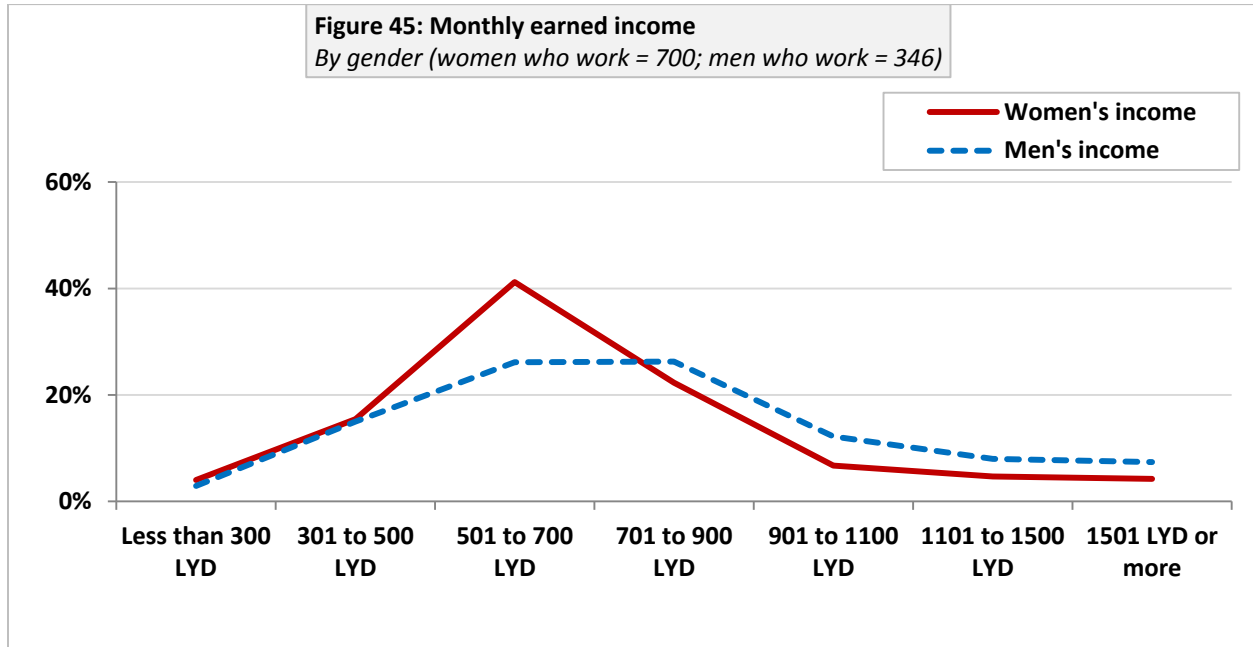
Respondents were asked additional questions about the nature of their work, whether it is full-time, part-time or seasonal, the way they are paid, the type of employer they work for and incomes they earn.

- Results indicate there are differences in types and patterns of work by gender. The majority of both women (73%) and men (72%) who work for pay are employed full-time. Slightly more women (21%) tend to work part-time than men (15%). And more men (10%) than women (4%) say they have a free schedule, which implies they are self-employed.
- The public sector is the main employer of Libyan women and men, yet significantly more women (89%) report being employed in the government or public sectors than men (70%). Over a quarter of men

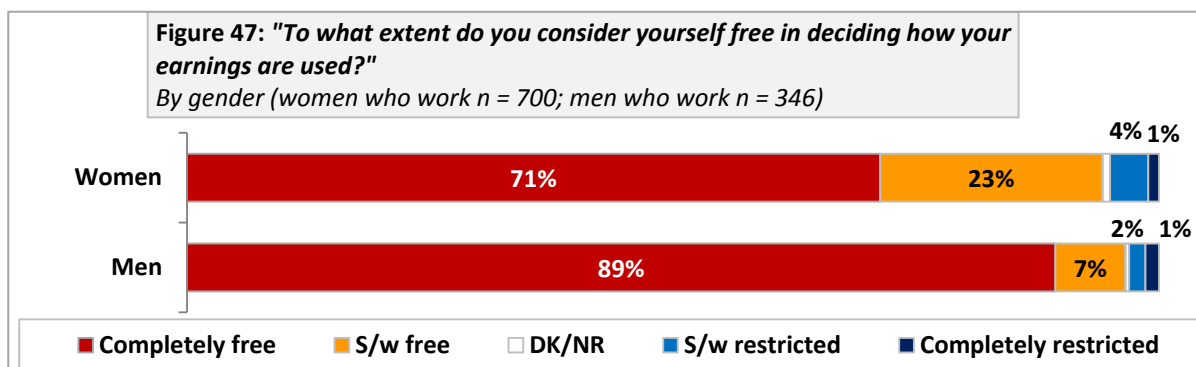




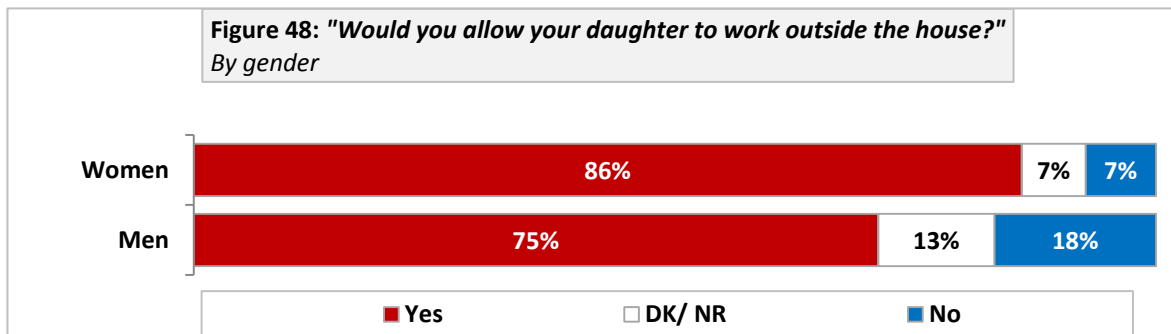
- When comparing the average monthly incomes earned by women and men who work for pay, significantly more men (52%) than women (38%) tend to earn 701 LYD (\$547 USD) or more. Meanwhile, the majority of women who work (61%) make less than 700 LYD (\$546 USD) per month, compared to 44% of men who earn a similar income. (Figure 45)



- When controlling for higher education, the gap in earned income continues to exist between women and men. Indeed, when looking exclusively at the group of respondents who have a university education or higher, the majority of men (57%) earn 701 LYD (\$547 USD) or more, while only 38% of women fall in this income bracket. Sixty percent of women who work and who have a university education or higher make less than 700 LYD (\$546 USD), compared to 37% of working men in the same educational category who earn this income.
- When comparing employment benefits between women and men, women tend to get more benefits than men, which may be explained by the fact that more women are employed by the public sector, which tends to provide more benefits. For instance, 70% of women say they get retirement/pension benefits compared to 57% of men. In addition, significantly more women get paid leave for illness (76%) and vacation (73%) than men do (47% and 53%, respectively). More men report getting family compensation or pension than women do (54% versus 29%, respectively). A slim majority of working women (52%) report getting paid maternity leave. Very few working women and men report getting health insurance benefits. (Figure 46)
- Respondents who work for pay were asked how free they consider themselves in deciding how their earnings are used. Results show differences between genders, with significantly more men (89%) than women (71%) saying they are completely free in deciding how their earnings are used. Women are much more likely to feel “somewhat free” (23%) in deciding how to spend their earnings compared to men (7%). (Figure 47)



- To further investigate possible obstacles that may prevent women from being economically active, respondents were asked whether they would allow their daughters (if they had one or supposing they had one) to work outside the home if they so choose. Results show majorities of both women (86%) and men (75%) would allow their daughters to work outside the house, yet significantly more men (18%) than women (7%) say they would not allow that. (Figure 48)



- A follow-up question aimed to examine the reasons for not allowing their daughters to work outside the home. The main reason given by women (41%) is that it could be dangerous for them, followed by the belief that women should tend to the home and children (32%). Men mentioned the same two reasons, but put more weight on the belief that women should tend to the home and children (mentioned by 44% of men). This shows many of those parents who might try to stop their daughters from pursuing work opportunities still hold very traditional views of women’s role in society, by essentially restricting women’s potential to marriage and reproductive responsibilities. (Figure 49)

Figure 49- Reasons for not allowing the daughter to work outside the house <i>% out of those who would not allow daughters to work; ranked from highest to lowest according to citations by female respondents</i>	Women (n=110)	Men (n=89)	
1) It could be dangerous for her	41%	36%	(2)
2) Women should tend to the home and children	32%	44%	(1)
3) There are no appropriate jobs for women	13%	8%	(4)
4) She should focus on getting married	4%	10%	(3)

Shows ranks according to citations by men

### Women’s Education and Employment Profiles Conclusion

Education is one of the key drivers of Libyan women’s access to the labor force. It is crucial that the existing Libyan tradition of encouraging higher education for women is sustained and further encouraged. Young Libyan women could benefit from having additional information and orientation about the types of college degrees that can adequately prepare them to venture into the labor force.

While higher education helps women get easier access to the labor market and leads to closing the gap in terms of labor force participation, it does not necessarily lead to bridging the income gap between the two sexes. These findings suggest women in the labor force may be facing some form of discrimination in terms of pay and calls for measures to further examine these patterns to help improve both women’s access to the labor market and women’s ability to get equal pay for equal qualifications.

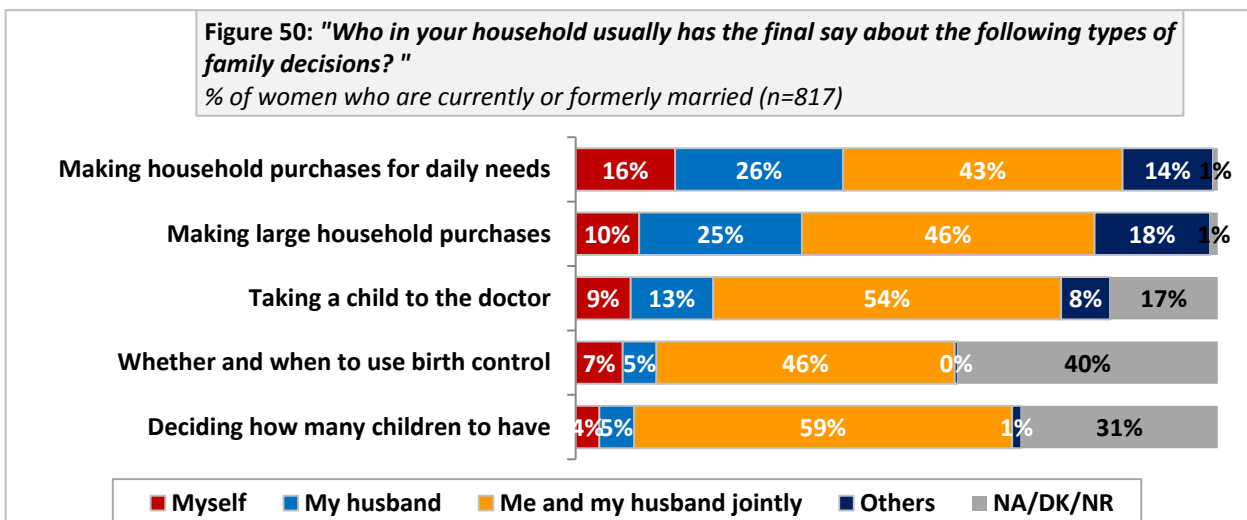
Most importantly, while barriers exist in education and income disparity, one of the root causes of educational and economic disparity is social rejection of women working outside of the home. Additional efforts are needed to ensure cultural attitudes about women in the workplace are addressed and both women as well as men should be part of this dialogue. Beyond discussions, affirmative action and support mechanisms for women in the workplace are needed.

## Women's Decision-Making and Control over Household Resources

### Women and Men Share Household Decisions, Men Control Financial Matters

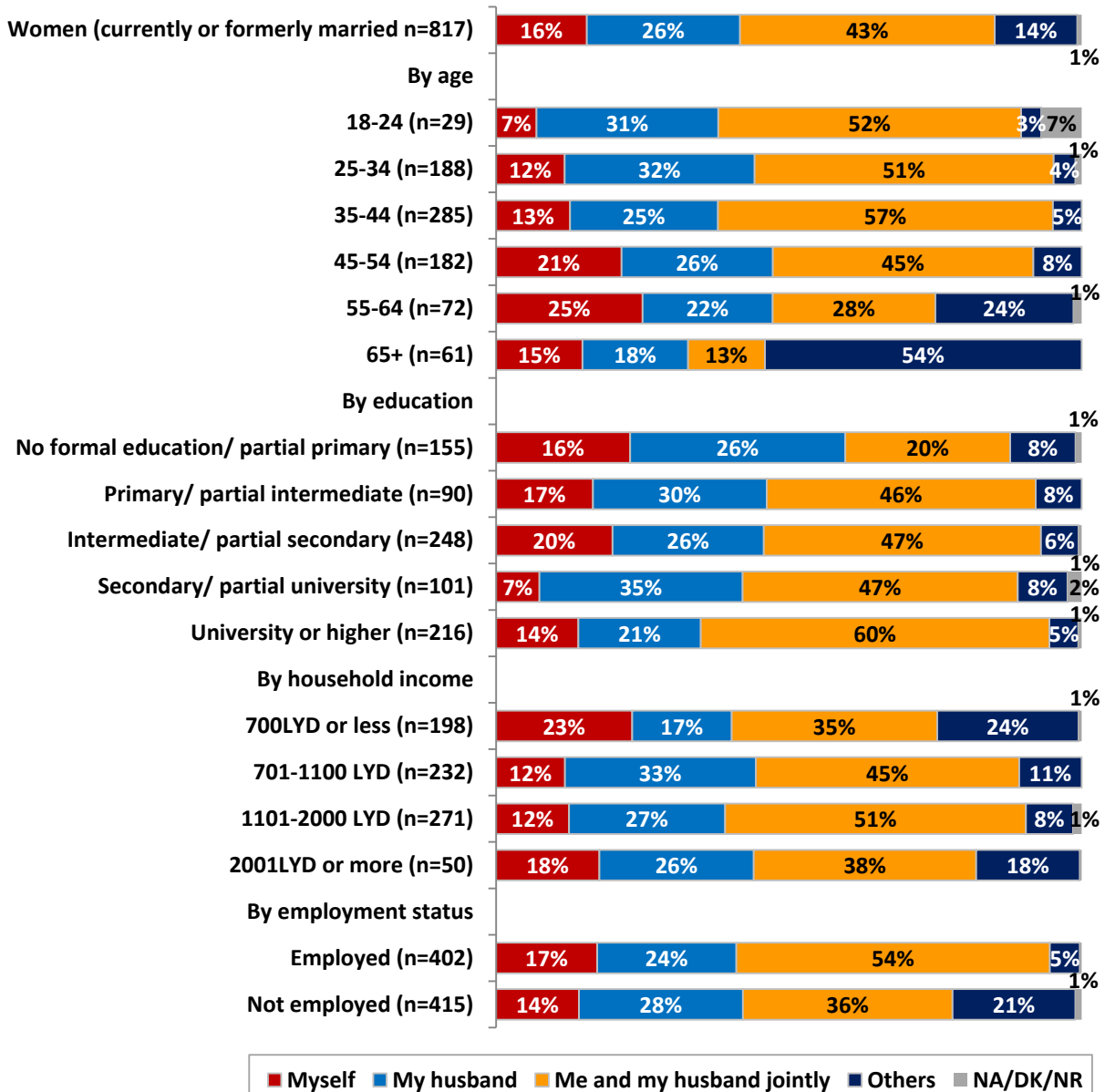
The survey aimed to examine women's level of autonomy in the household over what they view as important through understanding family and household dynamics in different categories of household decision-making. Women who are currently married or previously married (divorced or widowed) were presented with a series of family decisions and asked who in their household usually has the final say, whether it is themselves alone; their husbands alone; them and their husbands jointly; or if the decision is made by another member of the household.

- The data shows there is a tendency to share decision-making between husbands and wives, particularly for non-financial family decisions, such as deciding how many children to have (59% say the decision is taken jointly by the woman and the man, 4% say the decision is taken by the woman alone, 5% say by the man alone). Similarly, when asked about the decision to take a child to the doctor, the majority (54%) say the decision is taken jointly, 9% say by the woman alone and 13% say by the man alone.
- When asked about the decision on whether to use birth control or not, a large proportion of respondents (40%) did not report an answer (10% refused to answer and 31% say it does not apply to their situation), which may be due to this topic being considered sensitive in Libyan society. Meanwhile, 46% say it is a joint decision, 5% say it is the man's decision and only 7% say it is the woman's sole decision.
- In terms of decisions that are more economic in nature that involve spending, men seem to be more dominant: they either contribute to the decision jointly or are the sole decision-makers, with very few women saying they can take these decisions by themselves. When asked who has the final say on making household purchases for daily needs, 26% say the man does; 43% say both the woman and the man do; and only 16% say the woman alone does. Similarly, in terms of decisions regarding large household purchases, 25% say the man alone; 46% say the woman and the man jointly; and only 10% say the woman alone does. (Figure 50)



- To understand what groups of women may have more decision-making power over household issues; the responses to the question on “who has the final say over making daily household purchases” are broken down by key demographics. Data suggests that women’s sole decision-making power (ability to have the final say) tends to increase incrementally with age, moving from only 7% of women in the 18-24 age group (vs. 31% of men) saying they have sole decision-making power to 25% of women in the 55-64 age group (vs. 22% of men) having sole decision-making power. As women get older (above 65), however, they seem to relinquish their decision-making to others in their households such as their children; 54% say “others” have the final say over making daily purchases. Comparatively, a majority of women 18-44 say they jointly decide over making daily household purchases.
- In terms of women’s sole decision-making power by education, there is no consistent trend. However, it appears that as women’s educational attainment increases, so does their tendency to jointly decide with their husbands on daily household purchases.
- When looking at this data by household income levels, the data shows that for all income groups except for the lowest income group, men tend to have higher sole decision-making power than women do, while most respondents indicate the decision on daily household purchases is made jointly. For the lowest income group – households making 700 LYD (\$546 USD) or less per month – 23% indicate women have sole decision-making power, 17% say that men have sole decision-making power, 35% say the decision is made jointly and 24% say others (such as children) have the final say.
- In terms of women’s sole decision-making power by employment status, the data does not suggest women who are employed tend to necessarily have more autonomy in deciding upon daily household purchases than women who do not work. Indeed, 17% of women who are employed say they have the final say in making household purchases for daily needs, while 24% say the husband has the final say and 54% say it is a joint decision. The remaining 5% say others have the final say. Of women who do not work, 14% say they have the final say, while 28% say the husband has the final say, 36% say it is a joint decision and 21% say others have the final say.  
(Figure 51)

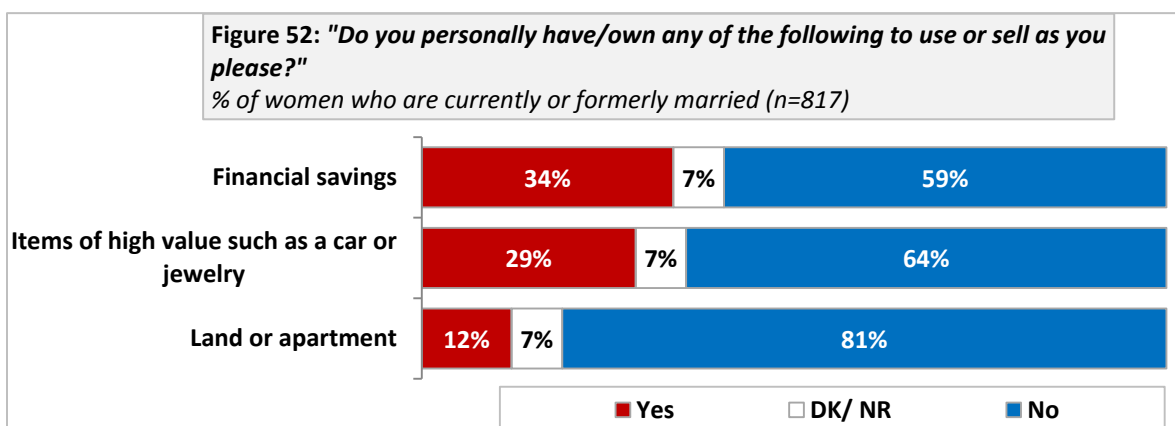
**Figure 51: Decision on household daily purchases by key demographics**  
 % of women currently or formerly married and within these women by age, education, income, and employment status



### Weak Access to Economic Resources, Highest for Women Who Work

To further examine women's ease of access to and control over different economic resources, women who are currently married or have been formerly married were asked if they personally owned different assets or financial resources and if they could use them as they please.

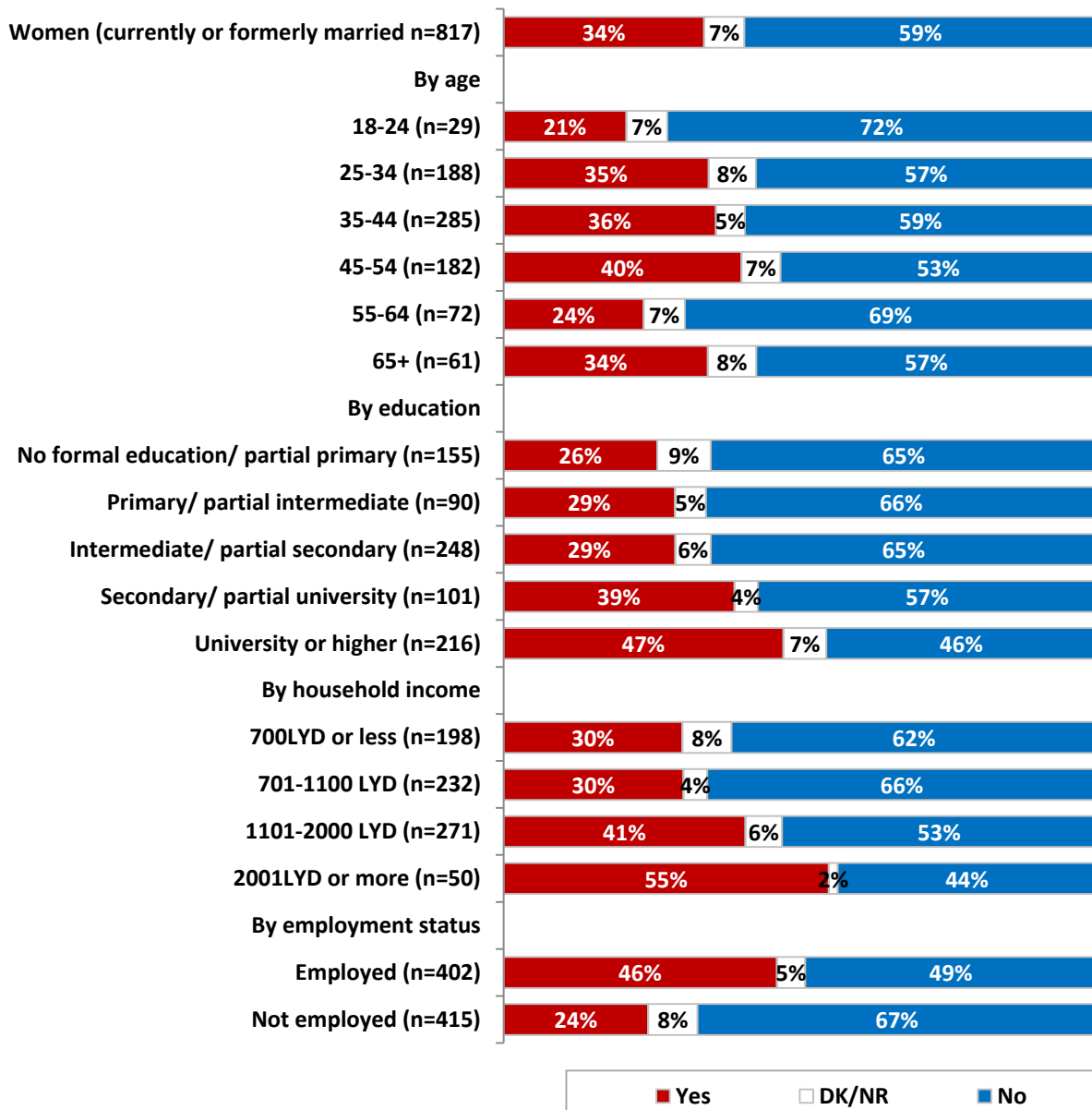
- The data shows majorities of currently or formerly married women do not have access to different economic resources. Indeed, 59% say they do not personally have financial savings versus 34% who do. Sixty-four percent do not own items of high value such as a car or jewelry vs. only 29% who do, while even fewer women – only 12% – own land or an apartment, while 81% say they do not (Figure 52). These results are consistent with findings from a smaller IFES survey of women's organizations conducted in late 2012, which identified "restricted access to economic resources and assets" as the most serious problem facing women in Libya.



- When breaking down data on access to financial savings by key demographics of women (within those who are currently or formerly married), employment status is one of the most significant factors associated with more access to or ownership of financial savings: 46% of women who are employed indicate they have financial savings, compared to only 24% of women who are not employed.
- The data also suggests as household income levels increase, women's access to financial savings increases as well, especially for households that earn LYD 1,101 (\$861 USD) or more per month. Of women living in households at the upper income bracket, LYD 2,001 (\$1,565 USD) or more per month, a 55% majority say they have access to financial savings, compared to only 30% of women in the lower-middle or lower income brackets – households making less than LYD 1100 (\$860 USD) per month.
- Women with at least a secondary education or higher tend to have more access to financial savings than women with an incomplete secondary education or lower.
- When looking at access to financial savings by age, no specific trend was discernible. Younger women (18-24) have weak access to financial savings: only 21% say they have their own financial savings. Women 45-54 seem to have the highest level of access to financial savings compared to women in other age groups, with 40% of this category claiming to have their own financial savings. (Figure 53)



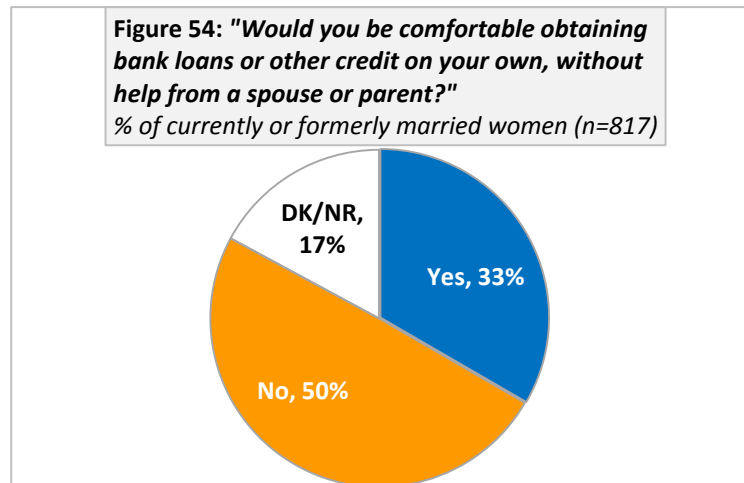
**Figure 53: Access to/ ownership of financial savings by key demographics**  
 % of women currently or formerly married and within these women by age, education, income, and employment status



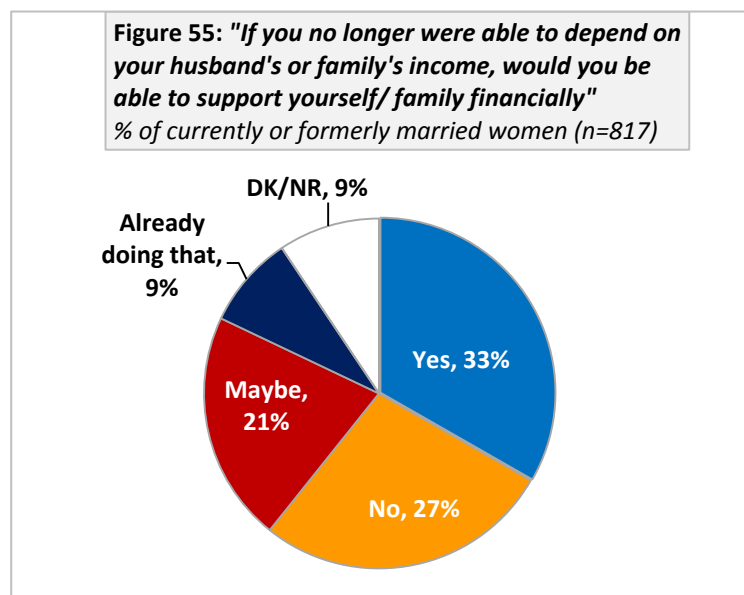
- Owning items of high value, like a car or expensive jewelry, follows a similar trend across key demographics as ownership over financial savings, thus it is higher for women who work (34%) than those who do not work (25%) and it is highest for women living in households belonging to the upper income bracket (LYD 2001 or more per month) with 49% of them saying they have items of high value, versus only 20% of women in the lowest income bracket – LYD 700 (\$547 USD) or less.
- When looking at ownership of assets such as a piece of land or an apartment, women's possession of such assets is relatively low across the board. Of women who are employed, 14% own land or an apartment they are free to use or sell as they please, compared with 11% of women who are

not employed. This shows that, even for women who are employed, access to high-value assets is extremely limited. Further, even among women living in households at the upper income bracket, access to or ownership of real estate is low at 14%.

- Currently or formerly married women were also asked if they would be comfortable obtaining bank loans or other credit on their own, without help from a spouse or a parent. Only one-third of women (33%) say yes, they would be comfortable, versus half (50%) who say no and 17% who did not know or refused to answer. This data shows the majority of married or formerly married women in Libya would find it difficult to seek financial resources on their own. (Figure 54)



- Similarly, when these same respondents were asked whether they would be able to support themselves or their families financially if they were no longer able to depend on their husband's or family's income, a third of women (33%) say yes, 9% say they are already supporting themselves/families financially, 21% say maybe and 27% say no. (Figure 55)



- The data further indicates women's comfort in obtaining bank loans or other credit on their own increases as their educational attainment increases. For instance, nearly twice as many women with a university education or higher (45%) say they would be comfortable obtaining bank loans or credit on their own, compared with only 23% of women who have a primary education or less. Similarly, comfort in obtaining bank loans or credit is much higher for women who are employed (45%) than for women who are not employed (25%). Women's comfort in obtaining loans without help is not higher for women in high-income households. In fact, among women living in households making LYD 2,001(\$1,565 USD) or more per month, only 29% say they would be comfortable obtaining bank loans or credit without help, compared to 31% of women living in households making LYD 700 (\$547 USD) or less per month.

- Women's ability to support themselves or their families financially in the absence of a husband's support is much higher for women who work (49%) than women who do not (21%) and higher for women living in high-income households than women in low-income households. As education increases, women's ability to support their family financially without help increases as well.

### **Women's Decision-Making and Control over Household Resources Conclusion**

Overall, survey findings on access to economic resources indicate employment goes a long way in helping women's access to and ownership of different economic resources, such as financial savings and items of high value, which increases their roles in making decisions for their households. Women's employment is also associated with more autonomy in terms of access to loans and credit and their ability to provide financial support to those in their families without help from a husband or relatives. Nevertheless, entering the workforce remains an opportunity for only a select few women. Few women in general own or control any real estate properties regardless of education levels, household income or employment status.

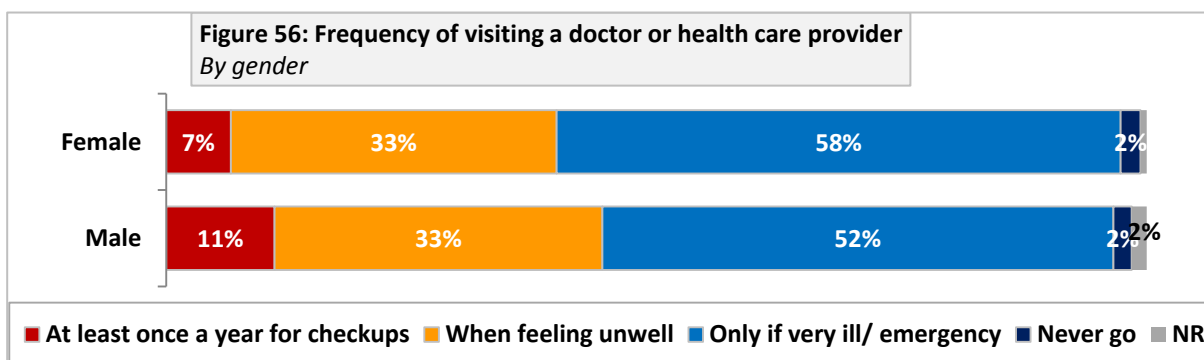
Consequently, promoting women's employment opportunities and encouraging their participation in the labor force may not only help women play a more active role in the country's economy, but also empower them as decision-makers within the household. With this opportunity, women have the ability to independently support themselves and their families, should they no longer be able to depend on their husbands' income or should they be unmarried or widows.

## Women’s Access to Healthcare

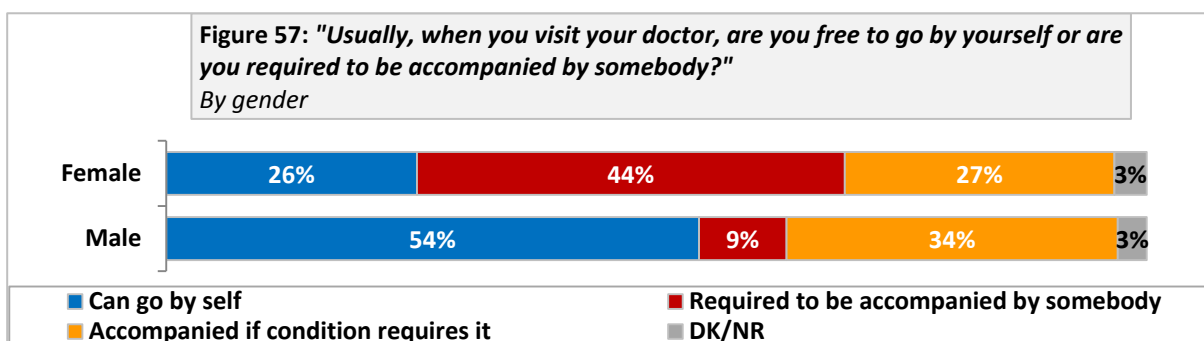
### Libyan Women do not Visit Healthcare Providers Regularly

The Status of Women Survey investigated the extent to which women in Libya have access to formal healthcare. The survey also examined issues of quality of care, use and proximity to medical services. This section presents the principal findings related to the healthcare provision and women’s access to it.

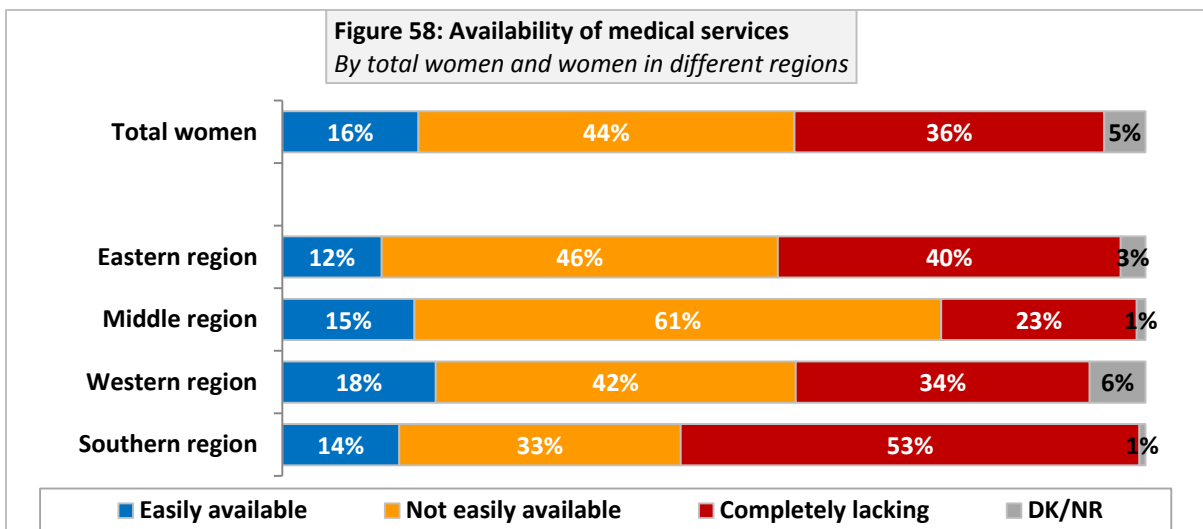
- Survey results show majorities of women (58%) and men (52%) in Libya only visit the doctor when they are very ill or in times of emergency. A third of women and men say they visit when they feel unwell and only 7% of women and 11% of men visit the doctor on an annual basis for check-ups and preventative care. (Figure 56)



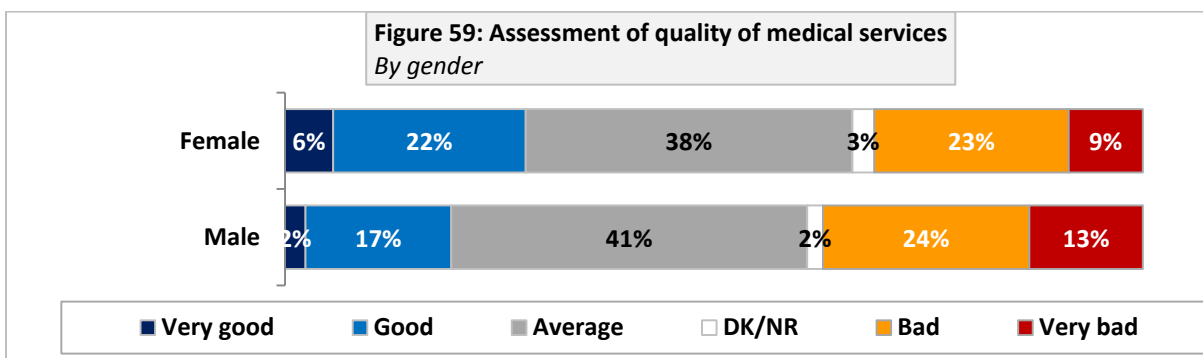
- Libyans also tend to visit different doctors based on other people’s recommendations rather than seeing the same healthcare provider regularly. Two-thirds of both women and men say they try different doctors, and only 18% say they visit the same doctor every time.
- Women are much more likely to be required to be accompanied by someone when they visit their doctor: 44% of women say they are required to be accompanied, versus only 9% of men who say the same. Only a quarter of women (26%) say they can go by themselves, compared to a majority of men (54%) who can go by themselves. Others say it depends on their medical condition. (Figure 57)



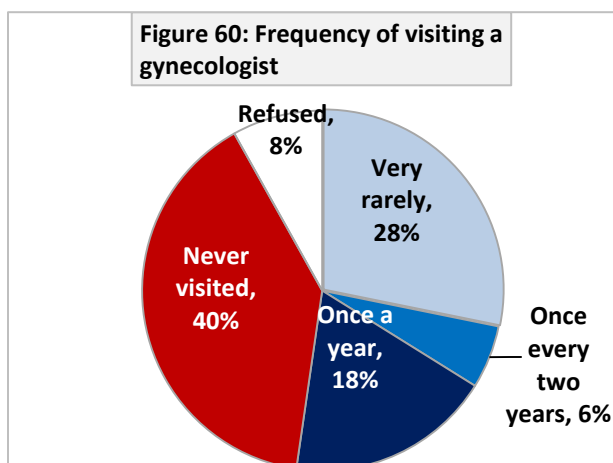
- Medical services do not seem to be easily available for Libyans. In fact, 85% of both women and men say medical services are either not easily available or completely lacking in the area where they live. In particular, sizable proportions of women in the eastern (40%) and southern (53%) regions of the country say medical services are completely lacking in their areas. (Figure 58)



- In general, 38% of women and 42% of men rate the quality of medical services they get as average, and 31% of women and 37% of men rate it as bad or very bad. (Figure 59)



- Forty percent of all surveyed women have never visited a gynecologist, while only 18% say they visit a gynecologist annually, 6% say they visit once every two years and 28% visit very rarely. (Figure 60)



### **Women's Access to Healthcare Conclusion**

Data on access to and quality of medical services in Libya show both women and men do not visit healthcare providers regularly and do not have access to decent quality medical services. Future programs that focus on healthcare provision and promoting good public health practices ought to focus on the eastern and southern regions of Libya, where large proportions of respondents indicate medical services are completely lacking.

The low percentage of women who report visiting gynecologists regularly suggests women in Libya may not be aware of the health implications of not seeking or being able to access women's healthcare facilities. These findings call for raising awareness among women about the benefits of women's healthcare and reproductive health and exploring ways to make this type of healthcare more easily available and less of a stigma, especially for younger unmarried women.

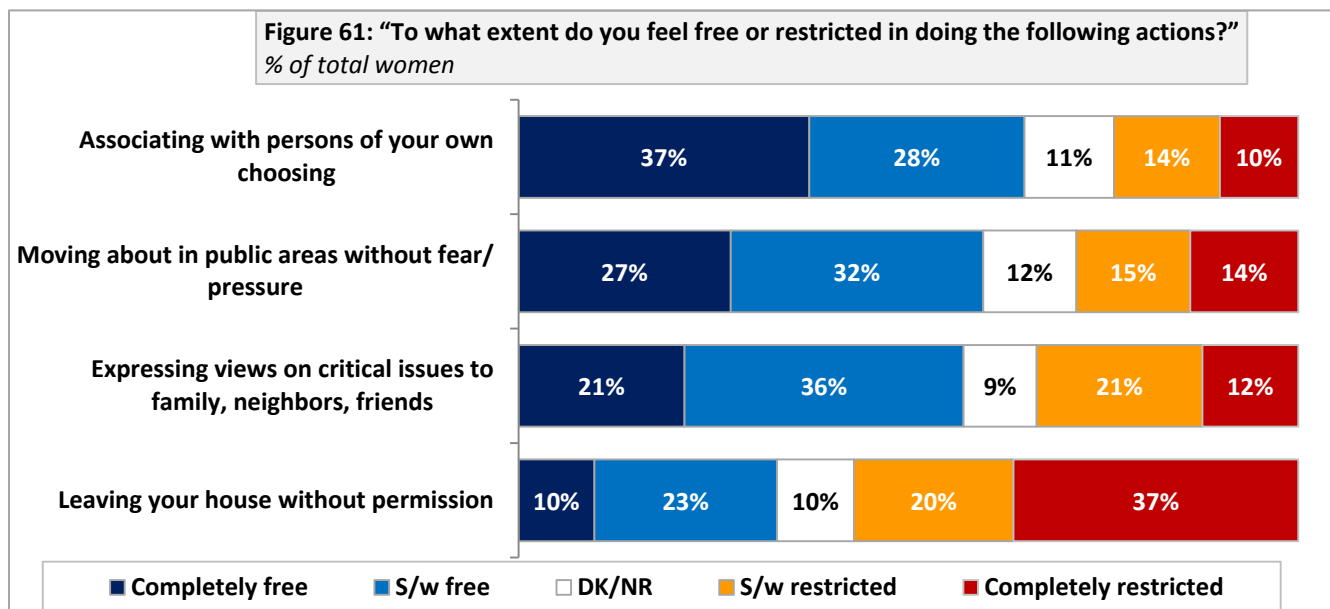
## Freedom of Movement and Freedom from Harassment and Violence

### Libyan Women Somewhat Restricted in Their Freedom of Movement and Expression

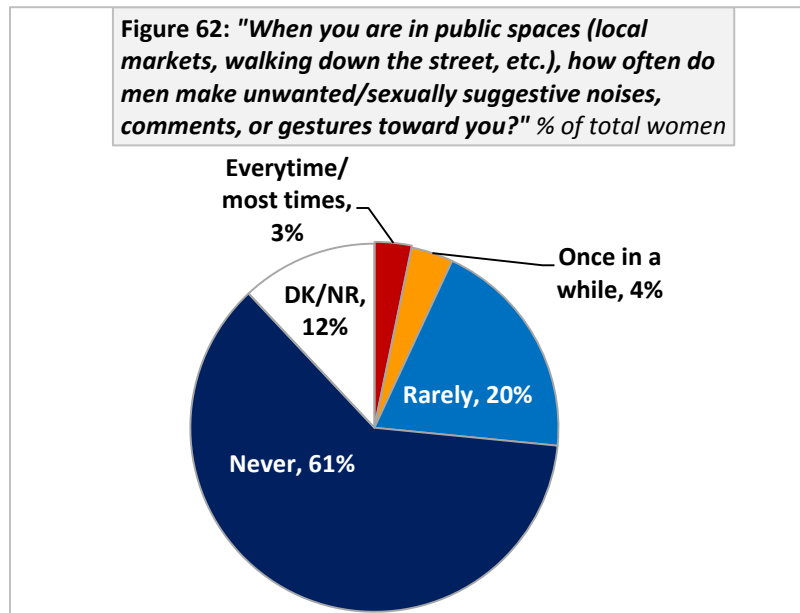
In this section, survey respondents are presented with a series of questions to examine the extent to which women enjoy freedom of movement without pressure from family or society, in addition to exploring attitudes toward violence against women and the degree to which domestic violence is tolerated or rejected by society. Harassment is considered a type of violence because a lack of safety and dignity limits women in all activities—from achieving a degree to holding political office.

Female respondents were asked about their perception of freedom of movement and expression. They were presented with a list of actions and asked to what extent they feel free or restricted in partaking in these activities.

- Survey results show Libyan women tend to be relatively restricted in their abilities to move and express themselves freely with a majority of women (57%) being somewhat (20%) or very (37%) restricted in leaving their house without permission.
- While majorities of women say they are free to express their views on critical issues (57%), move in public areas without pressure (59%) and associate with persons of their own choosing (65%), at least one in five women says she is restricted to some extent in these actions. This shows that there are limitations imposed on women that affect their ability to move or act freely. (Figure 61)



- When female respondents were asked how frequently they encounter harassment when they are in public spaces, such as men making unwanted/sexually suggestive noises or comments or gestures toward them, 3% of women say it happens every or most times; 4% say once in a while; 20% say rarely; and 61% say never. This indicates the frequency of experiencing harassment in public spaces is limited. When looking at these responses by age groups, data shows that among those ages 18-24, 11% say they experience these types of harassment every or most times when in public spaces. The likelihood of experiencing harassment drops with age. One could also argue the extent of encountering annoyances or harassment in public spaces may be more pronounced if women went out more frequently. However, nearly three in 10 women say they feel completely (14%) or somewhat (15%) restricted in moving about in public areas without fear or pressure.



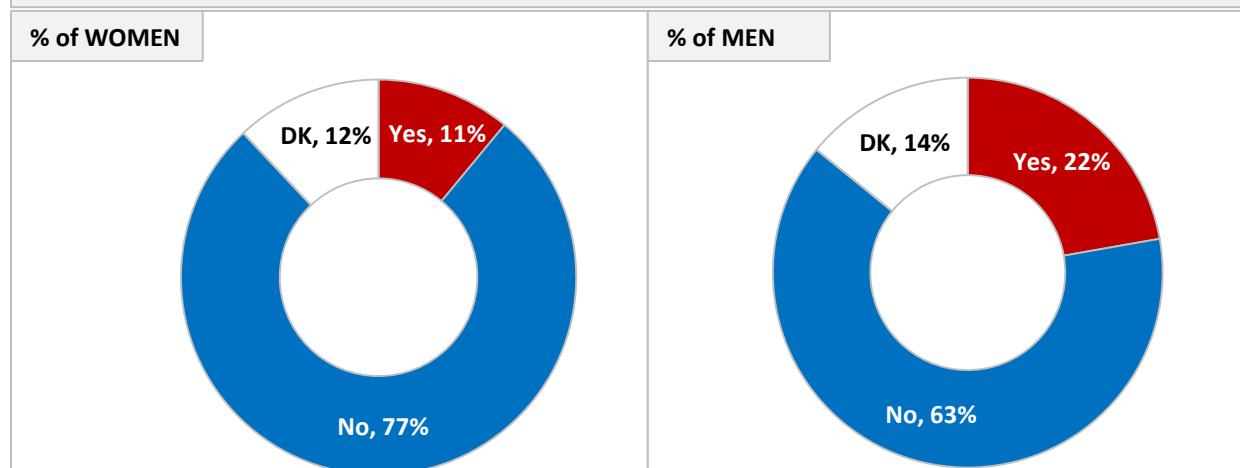


### High Acceptance Levels of Domestic Violence in Libyan Society

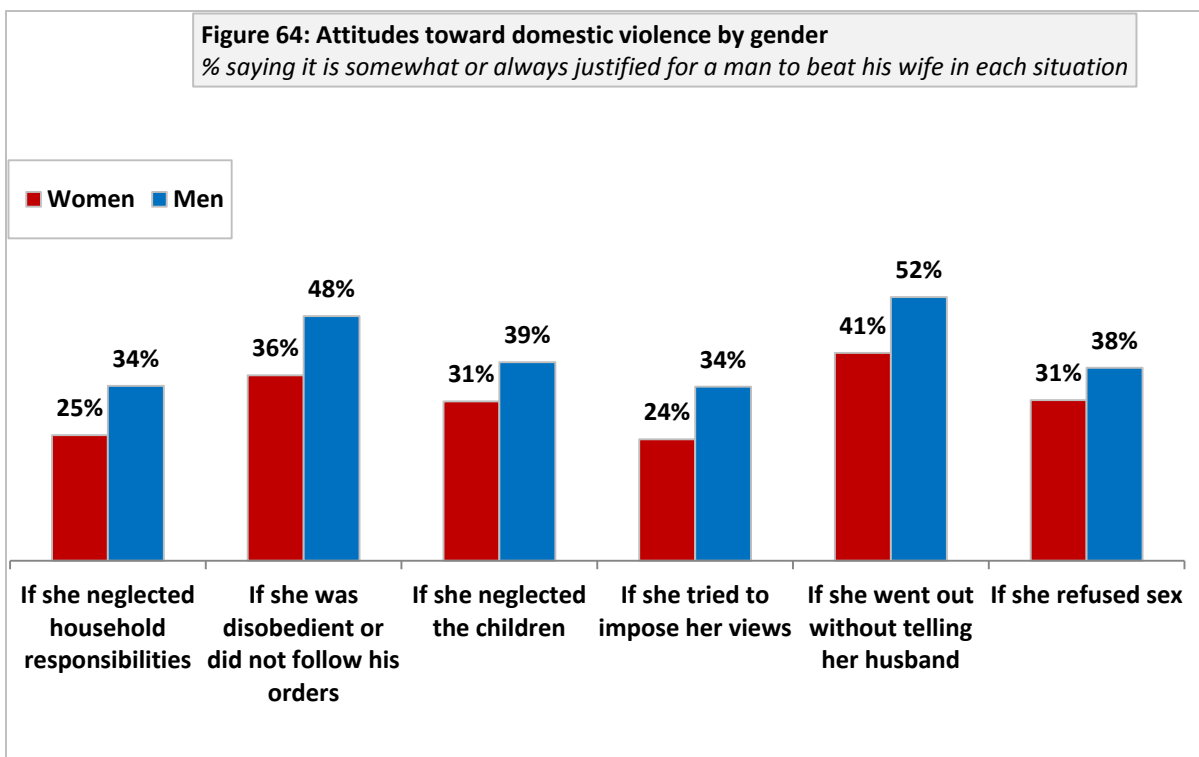
Next, respondents were asked a series of questions about their views of domestic violence, whether they think it is acceptable in general, and whether it can be justified in different hypothetical situations.

- When respondents were asked in general about whether they believe it is acceptable for women to be beaten by their husbands in certain situations (without specifying any examples), the majority of both men (63%) and women (77%) say it is not acceptable. However, twice as many men (22%) as women (11%) believe it is acceptable. (Figure 63)

**Figure 63: “Do you personally believe it is acceptable for women to be beaten by their husbands in certain situations?”**



- When given specific situations – such as neglecting household responsibilities, being disobedient to the husband, going out without telling her husband, etc. – the share of both women and men who believe domestic violence is acceptable increases significantly, with systematically more men than women saying that beating the wife is somewhat or always justified. For instance, a troubling majority of men (52%) say it is somewhat or always justified for a man to beat his wife if she goes out without telling him, compared with 41% of women who would justify domestic violence in this situation. Similarly, 48% of men believe it is justified for a man to beat his wife if she is disobedient or does not follow his orders, compared to 36% of women who would justify violence in this situation. (Figure 64)
- When looking at data in the aggregate, only 34% of women reject domestic violence in any of the listed situations, versus 30% of men who do so. This means that for approximately seven in 10 Libyan women and men, there are situations where domestic violence can be justified. When breaking down this data by age and education, women 45-54 are the most likely to reject domestic violence in any situation; 41% say domestic violence is never justified in any of the listed situations, versus an average of 34% for all age groups combined. When breaking down data by education groups, survey findings do not support the speculation that highly-educated women necessarily espouse more progressive views about this matter.



### Freedom of Movement and Freedom from Harassment and Violence Conclusion

The data shows that women in Libya are quite restricted in their freedom of movement with the majority unable to leave their house without permission. This has been exacerbated by post-revolution security concerns. Such restrictions force many women to remain bound to their homes and may be a factor that limits their civic engagement. It will be important for CSOs seeking to involve girls and women in their programs to engage with their families in planning and implementing these programs. This will help increase the understanding and trust of families, thereby improving female participation rates in civic and political activities and ensuring women from different walks of life are participating in their programs.

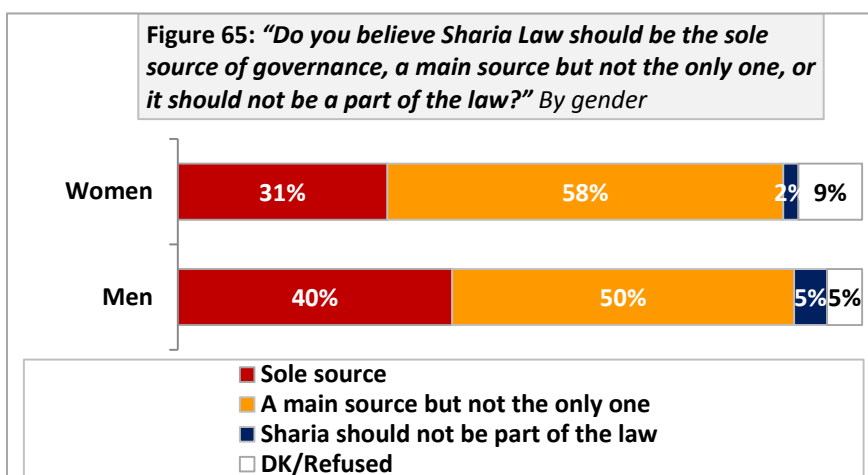
Survey findings on opinions and attitudes toward domestic violence are concerning, as they indicate a relatively high level of acceptance of domestic violence in Libyan society by both women and men, but men to a higher extent. This calls for raising awareness about women’s rights to safety and security in the household and enacting laws that protect women from this type of violence. Women who are survivors of gender-based violence should be aware of and have access to medical and legal services.

## The Future Role of Sharia and its Impact on Women’s Status

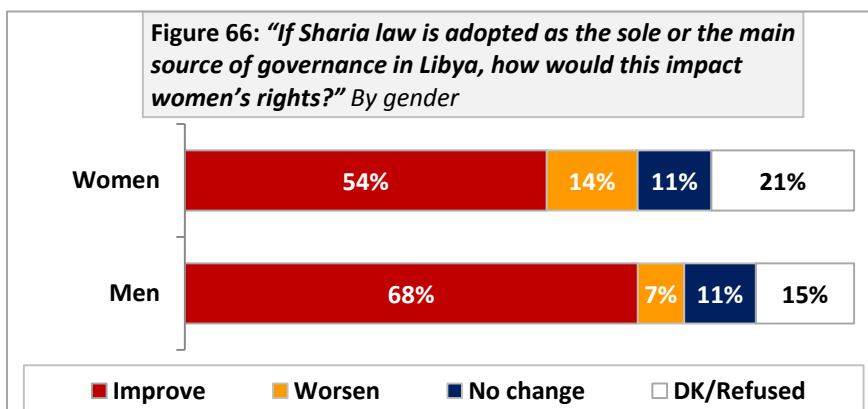
### Majorities Expect Sharia to Positively Impact Women’s Rights

Within the ongoing debate in Libya about the new constitution and expectations regarding the role Islamic Law (Sharia) will play, respondents to the Status of Women Survey were asked about their opinion regarding the role of Sharia in governance, whether it would become the sole source of governance; a main source of governance, but not the only one; or whether it should not be part of the law.

- A majority of both women (58%) and men (50%) prefer Sharia be adopted as a main source of governance rather than the sole source in the new constitution. More men (40%) want Sharia to be the sole source of legislation than women (31%). (Figure 65)



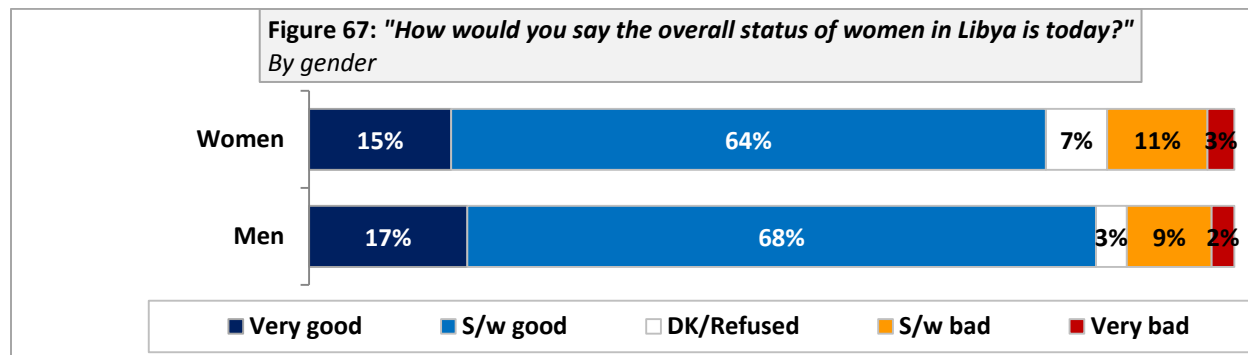
- When asked what impact the adoption of Sharia would have on women’s rights in Libya, a slim majority of women (54%) and a sizable majority of men (68%) say it would improve women’s rights, while very few respondents feel it would worsen women’s rights. However, twice as many women (14%) as men (7%) believe the adoption of Sharia would worsen women’s rights. When breaking down this data by educational attainment, only small differences in opinions are found: for instance, 18% of women who have a complete secondary education or partial university education believe the adoption of Sharia would worsen women’s rights, compared to only 6% of women with no formal education or incomplete primary. (Figure 66)



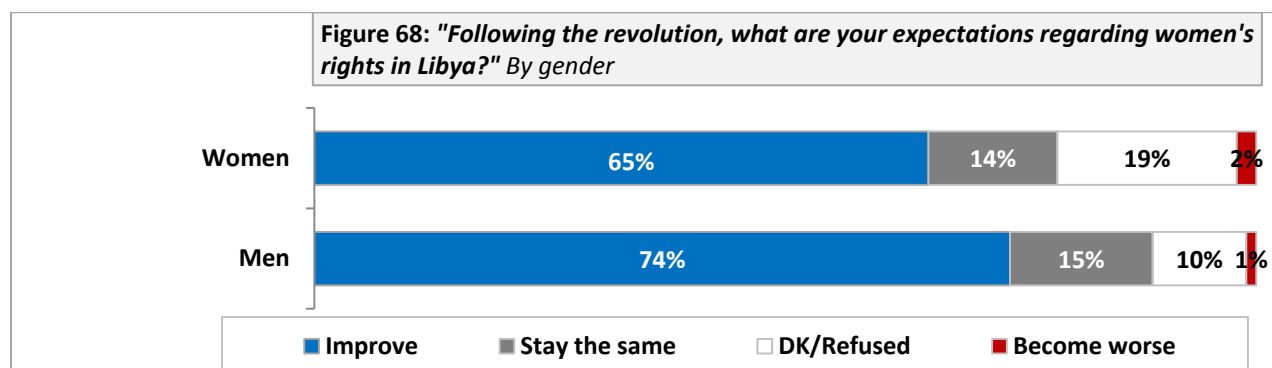
### Libyans Optimistic about Women’s Status in the Future

Survey respondents were asked about their views about the status of women in Libya today and their expectations regarding women’s rights in the future.

- Approximately two-thirds of both women (64%) and men (68%) believe the status of women in Libya is somewhat good, and another 15% of women and 17% of men believe it is very good. Very few respondents believe the status of women is somewhat or very bad (14% of women and 11% of men). (Figure 67)



- In terms of their outlook for the future, when asked what their expectations regarding women’s rights in Libya are after the revolution – whether they would improve, stay the same or become worse – nearly two-thirds of women (65%) and three-quarters of men (74%) believe it would improve, while very few believe it would become worse. Some 14% of women and 15% of men believe women’s rights would stay the same, and a sizable share of women (19%) say they do not know. (Figure 68)



### **The Future Role of Sharia and its Impact on Women's Status Conclusion**

While slightly more women than men show concerns about the impact of Sharia on women's rights, both Libyan women and men seem to agree Sharia would improve women's rights. However, a focus group project that IFES implemented in Libya in November 2012 suggests Libyans show enthusiasm to the idea of adopting Sharia without necessarily having an in-depth knowledge of its implications on women's rights and women's roles vis-à-vis men. Consequently, debates about the role of Sharia should ensure there is a common understanding among various stakeholders of what the application of Sharia means for women's rights. Further, work done by civil society groups and other stakeholders working to promote women's rights must ensure Libya lives up to its obligations as a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Overall, despite challenges that may deter progress on women's issues, Libyans are essentially optimistic about women's rights in the future. Women seem more cautious than men in assessing the status of women, expressing more uncertainty regarding their expectations about their own rights in the future. This shared optimism, however, suggests an opportunity to generate support to enshrine and promote women's rights by incorporating Islamic and international law.

## Recommendations

- **Inclusion of women in government institutions:** Many issues related to the well-being of women and girls in Libya are currently being discussed, and as a matter of priority, governmental processes taking place right now must include women.

The formation of the Constitution Drafting Committee is at the top of this list of priorities. It is critically important women participate as active, engaged members of the Constitution Drafting Committee to safeguard issues important to all members of society across Libya.

- **Support to women as decision-makers:** Women members of the GNC and women leaders in civil society have requested support in the form of capacity building workshops; trainings on advocacy and leadership; coordination and dialogues with actors sharing similar concerns; visits from neighboring countries' elected women officials; the formation of a women's caucus in the GNC; campaigns for inclusive work environments; and many other activities supporting equality and inclusion of women.

Further, creating more opportunities for women in leadership positions to actively participate in the public sphere outside the home as part of the labor force or in civic activities will go a long way to empower women in their household, communities and government.

- **Outreach to “invisible” women:** Women were very active in the revolution and in the 2012 election. With these milestones in the past, there is now the question of how to continue to engage women from all walks of life in the public sphere. Before many women retract completely from view behind the walls of their households, efforts must be made to maintain the momentum of the past year and ensure that women remain visible partners in the transition to a sustainable democracy. There is an opportunity to engage with these women and their families to ensure acceptance and support for their participation and movement outside the household. An approach that helps women and their families appreciate women's participation will also assuage entrenched cultural attitudes about the roles of men and women in Libya.
- **Economic empowerment of women:** The IFES survey reveals that economic autonomy for women leads to greater independence and decision-making responsibility for women in their homes and communities. Yet, entering the workforce in Libya remains a steep hurdle, especially for rural, less educated women. Creating a work environment that is more conducive and encouraging of women's participation through equal opportunity labor legislation, affirmative action measures and sensitivity campaigns for men and women is critically needed. Efforts should be made to encourage and support unmarried and widowed women's economic independence.
- **Reduce stigma related to women's health:** Survey results indicate a clear hesitance by women (and men) to access healthcare in Libya. For women, this has far-reaching consequences related to women's health issues, such as reproductive health. While stigmas remain for public discussions of topics such as

women health and violence against women, there is clearly a need and interest in such issues. More must be done to increase information about, access to and treatment for women's health.

- **Civil society organization (CSO) coordination:** While there is much enthusiasm and energy among the plethora of women's groups and other CSOs springing up across Libya in the post-revolutionary space, there is also a need to ensure they maximize their impact. Much work is needed to professionalize CSOs and to demonstrate the relevance and impact of coordinated approaches to advocacy by civil society. For instance, women-led CSOs could better coordinate their support to public and high-profile consultation processes, such as the consultations ahead of the drafting of the constitution.
- **Optimism equals opportunity:** That the majority of women and men surveyed are optimistic about the status of women indicates there is an important opportunity to ensure that women's rights continue to be protected under Libyan law and to increase women's engagement in activities outside of their homes. To ensure existing legal safeguards are not rescinded and that thought is put into additional necessary laws to improve the status and wellbeing of women, it is imperative that culturally-sensitive and relevant links between women's empowerment and the prosperity of Libyan society are well understood and made.



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