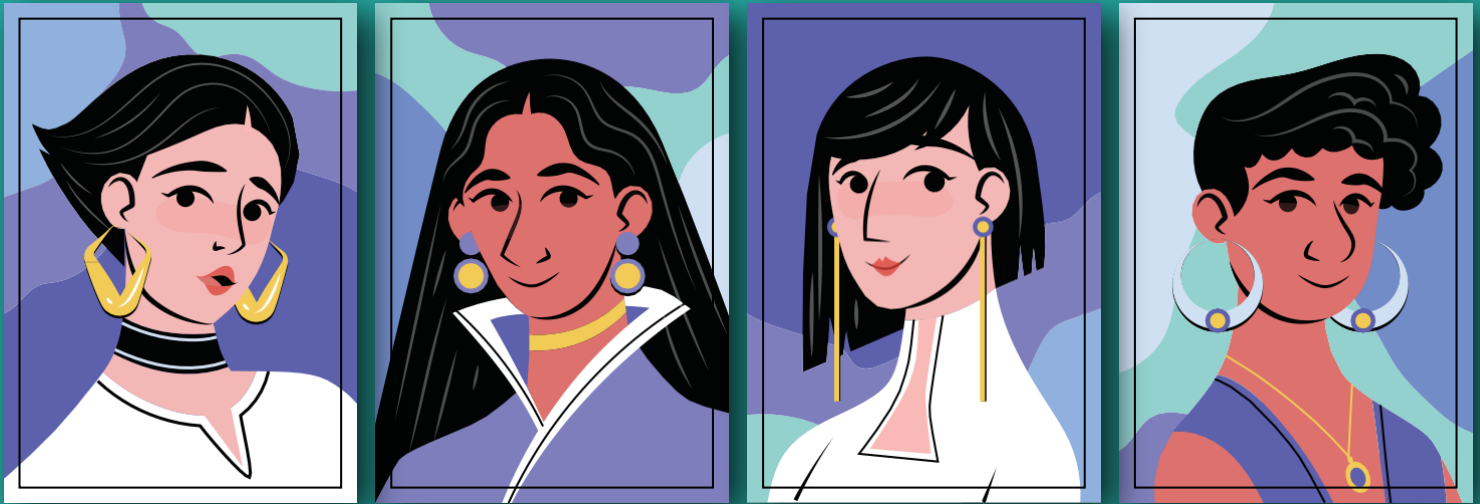




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Women participation in politics in the Pollog region, North Macedonia – Research on influencing factors

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Women participation in politics in the Pollog region, North Macedonia – Research on influencing factors

August, 2021
North Macedonia

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believe that it is necessary to work with political parties to introduce gender parity in party structures. Every 10th respondent is against affirmative action measures to promote gender parity in politics.

Summary of conclusions and recommendations

The citizens in the Polog planning region believe that women are not sufficiently involved in the political life in the Republic of Northern Macedonia. Citizens believe that women politicians, politicians from non-majority communities and young politicians have a secondary role in the political life of RNM. However, the largest percentage of citizens believe that prejudices and the perception that politics is dirty and corrupt have an impact on women not to get involved in the political life of RNM. In the Polog planning region there is no tradition of organization of women in civil society, in order to articulate the interests and needs of women. Deep-rooted cultural norms on the division of responsibilities of women and men in the overall life, that determine certain roles by which a woman identifies with the home and family, and a man with management and leadership lead to a state of (self) exclusion of women from politics. The limited number of women candidates in political parties is the reason for the lower representation of women. The limited turnout is related to the low percentage of women candidates, not to the lack of voter support. Depending on the electoral system, such differences may be due either to gender gaps in political ambitions or to the process of recruitment and selection within political parties.

To strengthen the capacities of the institutional machinery in LSGU in the Polog region because they are the main drivers of the implementation of gender equality policies at the local level as a nucleus of any social change. Insisting on the introduction of special measures at the level of the executive power at central and local level, by setting special quotas for the executive positions as well. To encourage public debate by civil society, in order to inform citizens, specifically women, about the need to include women in public and political life. The Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and women's civic associations to organize trainings for political parties in order to raise their awareness on gender equality and gender parity in party structures. Introduce a gender quota in political parties in order to improve women's access to decision-making structures, with the aim of creating a "role model" for women active in political parties in order to inspire women to be more actively involved in politics.

"positive role model" as a driver of change and consequently women are still excluded from political and social processes. The fact that there is a significant gender gap in the decision-making processes at central and local level is evident. Although on the one hand there is a significant increase in the representation of women in the national parliament (by 34%), women, especially those belonging to the non-majority are less represented in ministerial positions, in senior positions in the diplomatic service.

METHODOLOGY

The research is focused on two dimensions;

Analysis of the legal framework that regulates participation in the political life in the Republic of North Macedonia and

Field Research, by surveying women and men from the Polog region regarding access and participation in political life through the mechanisms of indirect and direct democracy.

The research is based on a primary resource (survey). The Institute for Leadership and Public Policy designed the research methodology by hiring an expert in order to assess the attitude of women and men in the Polog region, regarding the issue of political activism.

The details related to the research instruments, the approach and the sample are presented below in this document.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

It should be noted that the legal framework in the Republic of North Macedonia has set the basic principles for equality, relating to the economic and social rights. In this context, Article 9 of the Constitution reads: "Citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia are equal in freedoms and rights, regardless of their gender, race, skin color, national and social affiliation, political and religious beliefs, property and social status."¹ Citizens are equal before the Constitution and the laws.

The attention to gender equality is also seen in the fact that the political actors in the Republic of North Macedonia have adopted a special Law on Equal Opportunities. This law regulates the issue of gender equality, promoting equal opportunities between women and men in the political, economic, social and educational spheres. The law sanctions the new terminology of

The law obligates state administration bodies and local self-government units to incorporate the principle of equal opportunities in strategic plans and budgets and to monitor the effects and impact of their programs on women and men.⁵

However, for the regulation of women's rights and gender equality in politics, the most important are the amendments to the Electoral Code from 2006 which determined the inclusion of at least 30% of women candidates on party lists, and thus every third place on the list should be for less the represented sex.⁶

The amendments to the Electoral Code from 2015 provided even greater inclusion of women, with at least 40% women, and in every three places, at least one place belongs to the underrepresented gender (women) and additionally at least one more place every ten places. The same applies to the candidate lists for members of the council of the municipality and the city of Skopje.⁷

In the context of the legal framework, the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination of 2020 should be mentioned, because it addresses all forms of discrimination, including that based on gender and gender identity. Pursuant to the Anti-Discrimination Law, a Commission for Protection against Discrimination has been established as an autonomous and independent complaints body, and it translates detailed complaint procedures for any person who believes he or she has been a victim of discrimination in various sectors of public or private life.

FIELD RESEARCH

a) Polog region, general data

The Polog region in the period from May 2008 has been established as a planning region according to the Law on Equal Regional Development and is one of the eight regions of the Republic of North Macedonia. This region includes the municipalities: Tetovo, Gostivar, Mavrovo and Rostuse, Zelino, Tearce, Bogovinje, Vrapciste, Jegunovce and Brvenica.

On a territory of 2416.91 km, there are a total of 184 settlements inhabited by 319,916 inhabitants of which 73.2% are Albanians, 18.4% are Macedonians, 5.7% are Turks, 1.9% Roma, 0.01%, Vlachs, 0.32% Serbs 0.08% Bosniaks and 0.66 % other ethnicities. According to the data of the Statistical Office, out of the total population, 161005 are men and 158911 are women

⁵Articles 11 and 14, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

⁶Article 21, paragraph 3, Electoral Code

⁷Law on Amendments to the Electoral Code

Employment – modalities: employed in the public sector, employed in the private sector, employed in the civil society (non-governmental sector), farmer, housewife, pensioner, pupil / student, unemployed, etc.

Net monthly average income in the family– Modalities: up to 9000 denars, from 9001 to 15,000 denars, from 15,001 denars to 21,000 denars, from 21,001 - 27,000 denars from 27,001 - 35,000 denars, from 35,001- 41,000 denars, more than 41,001 denars.

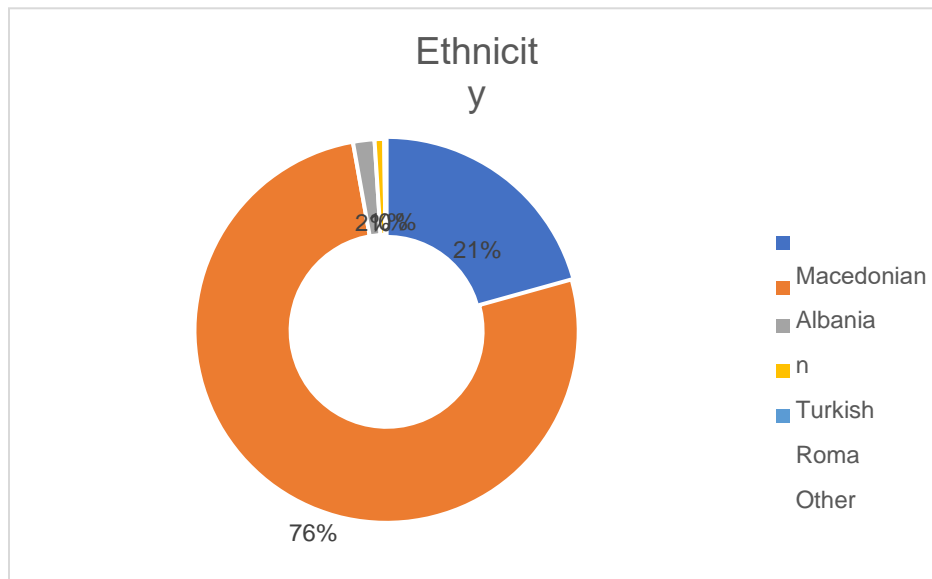
The main results of the research in these areas are presented below, followed by the general recommendations.

g) Overview of variables

Ethnicity

Wanting to have adequate representation of all communities in the survey, the survey samples pay special attention to the variable - ethnicity. Thus, in this survey, out of a total of 498 respondents, 76% are of Albanian ethnicity, 21% are of Macedonian ethnicity, 1.8% are of Turkish ethnicity, 0.8% are of Roma ethnicity and 0.2% identified as other (see Chart 1).

Chart 1 Ethnicity



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

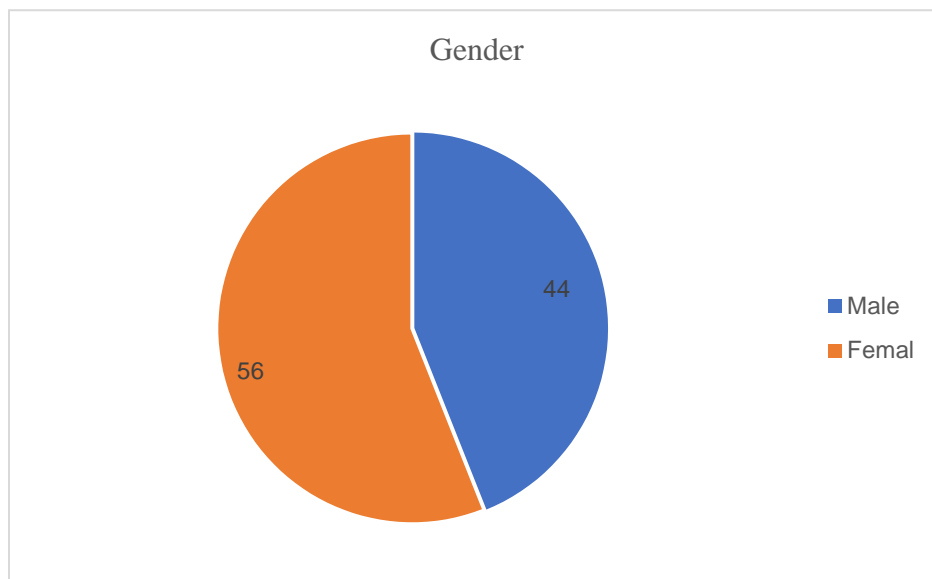
This structure of the respondents is almost appropriate for the structure of the population according to ethnicity. Regarding the inclusion of women in politics according to ethnicity, it is

crucial because it presents possible differences between communities in terms of practices and access of women from different ethnic groups to politics. The differential findings according to this variable are highlighted if there is a need for special interventions based on ethnicity in raising the awareness of women and communities for involvement in politics.

Gender

Gender is perhaps the most important variable, according to which different perceptions of women and men about participation in politics will be determined. According to the survey data, 56% of the respondents are women and 44% of the respondents are men (see Chart 2).

Chart 2 Gender



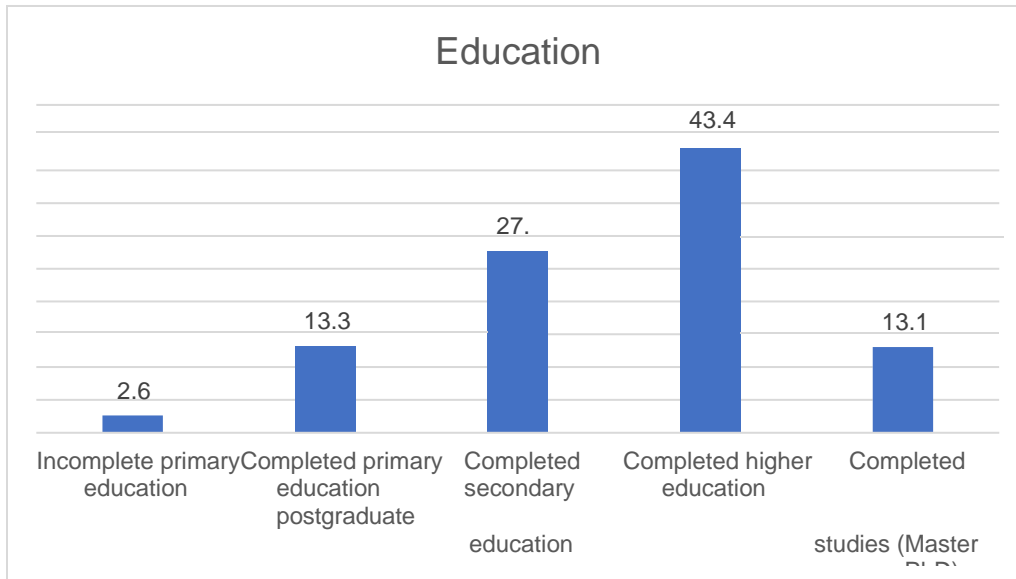
Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Dwelling

Creating attitudes depending on the typology of the settlement, and different sociological and gender analysis plays an important role in representing a phenomenon but also in designing and targeting specific interventions for urban and rural settlements. Such an approach is necessary in this study where the issue of women's participation in politics is treated, ie identification of the views of respondents by settlements because the trend of changes in value systems at micro levels (small communities) plays an important role in women's active

educational structure is analyzed, it is obvious that 2.6% of the respondents have not completed primary education, 13% have completed primary education, 27.7% have secondary education, 43.4% have higher education and only 13.1% have completed postgraduate studies (see Chart 3).

Chart 3 Education



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

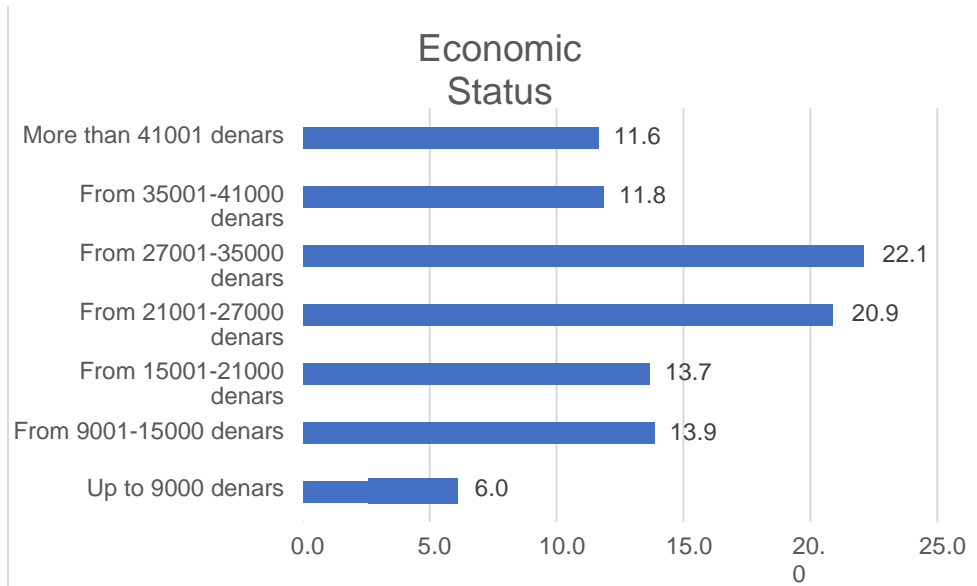
Age

In this part, the majority of respondents belong to the age group 34-41 years (26.5%), followed by the age group 26-34 years (22.5%), 42-49 with (18.1%), group aged 18-25 years (17.7%) and aged 50 + (15.3%).

Generational differences are issues that are the subject of scientific research in the context of trends, values and tastes. This research tries to address the issues of policy approach by analyzing the differences between different age groups regarding the realization and definition of the prominent problem.

Employment variable

Chart 5 Economic Status



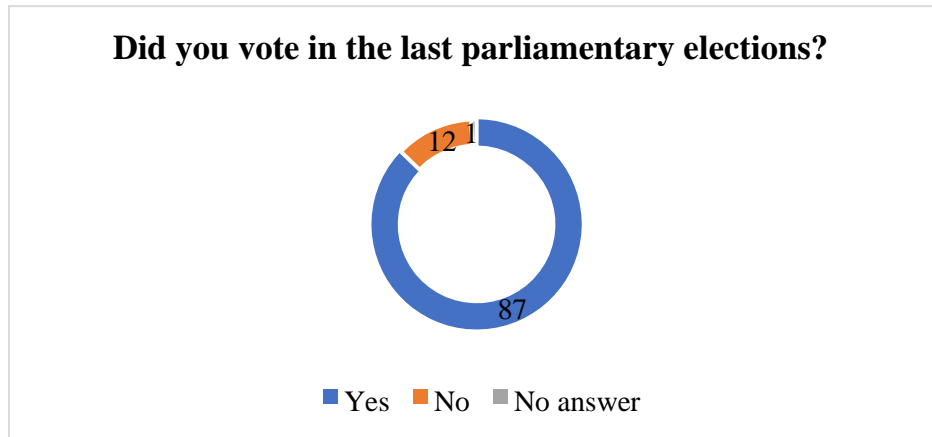
Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

A) Political Activity

Respondents answered the question of political activity. 35% of the respondents are voters of a political party, 11% are members of a political party, 9% are supporters of a certain political party, 5% are activists of a political party, while as many as 40% have no connection with political activity. If we analyze the answers by gender, it can be concluded that% of men involved in politics is higher compared to women (11.9% vs.9.7%), only 2.5% are political party activists, and% of women who are only voters or not interested is also higher compared to men (see Chart 6).

Active suffrage is the basis of direct democracy, which unfortunately in recent years is less and less used by citizens due to the feeling of apathy and distrust of political elites. However, according to the survey results, as many as 87% of respondents voted in the last election, every 10th respondent did not vote in the last election (See Chart 7).

Chart 7 Did you vote in the last parliamentary elections?



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

B. Women's participation in political life

The perception of citizens about the inclusion of women in political life is important because it is the basis for designing interventions for increased participation of women in political life. As many as 33.7% of respondents believe that women are not involved in political life, interestingly that 7% of respondents did not answer this question, and only 14.1% believe that women are involved in political life (see Table 3).

Table 3: Women are sufficiently represented in the political life in RNM

Do you think that women are sufficiently represented in the political life in RNM?		%
Yes		14.1
To some extent		45.2
No		33.7
No answer		7.0
Total		100.0

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Every second respondent, regardless of gender, believes that women are not represented at all in leading positions at the central or national level. Every 10 women respondent thinks that women are very much and largely involved in leading positions at the national level. Consequently, the perception of citizens in the Polog region is that women are excluded from leading positions at the central level (see Table 4).

Table 4: Representation of women at the national level

	Women sufficiently represented / In a leading position at the national level					
	Not at all	Not much	To some extent	Too much	To a large extent	No answer
Male	8.7%	37.9%	37.0%	11.9%	4.1%	.5%
Female	11.8%	40.5%	36.2%	7.9%	3.6%	0.0%

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Local self-government is the nucleus of direct democracy and a platform for the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. It is interesting to note that the % of men who think that women are not represented at all is higher than the % of women (48.4% vs. 48.2%). While 11.9% of men in the Polog region believe that women are highly represented, 8.2% of women agree with this statement (see Table 5).

Table 5 Representation of women in local self-government

	Women represented / In local self-government					
	Not at all	Not much	To some extent	Too much	To a large extent	No answer
Male	13.7%	34.7%	33.8%	11.9%	4.1%	1.8%
Female	8.2%	40.5%	39.4%	8.2%	3.6%	0.0%

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

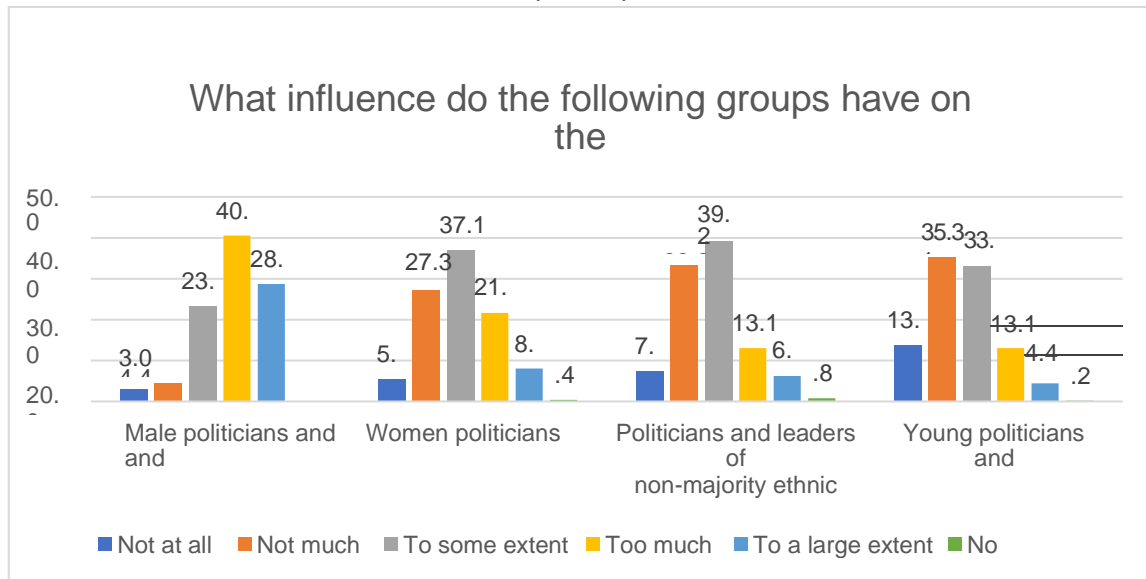
More than 50% of the citizens in the planning region in the Polog region, regardless of gender, believe that women have little or no involvement in leading positions at the local level. Only 4.1% of men and 3.6% of women think that women are largely involved in leading positions at the local level. While 16.4% of men think that women are completely excluded, the percentage of women who share this opinion is lower (10.8%). Interestingly, only 0.5% of men and women did not answer this question (see Table 6).

	Not at all	Not much	To some extent	Too much	To a large extent	No answer
Male	6.4%	23.7%	39.7%	20.1%	10.0%	0.0%
Female	5.0%	24.4%	41.9%	21.5%	6.8%	.4%

Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

The perceptions of the citizens on the influence of various segments of the political elites are important in order to determine the dynamics of the relations and the influence in the political life in RNM. Citizens assessed the influence of male politicians, female politicians, those from non-majority communities as well as young politicians. According to the findings, 69.3% of respondents believe that men politicians have an influence in political life, while 37% of respondents believe that women have some influence, it is interesting to find that as much as 1/3 of respondents believe that women have little or no influence on political life in RNM. Given the fact that in the Polog region the majority population belongs to the non-majority communities is interesting the finding that as many as 41% of respondents believe that leaders and politicians from non-majority communities have little or no influence on political life in RNM. Citizens' belief in the influence of young politicians and leaders in political life is even lower, only 17% of respondents believe that young politicians and leaders have an impact on political life in RNM (see Chart 8).

Chart 8: Impact on political life

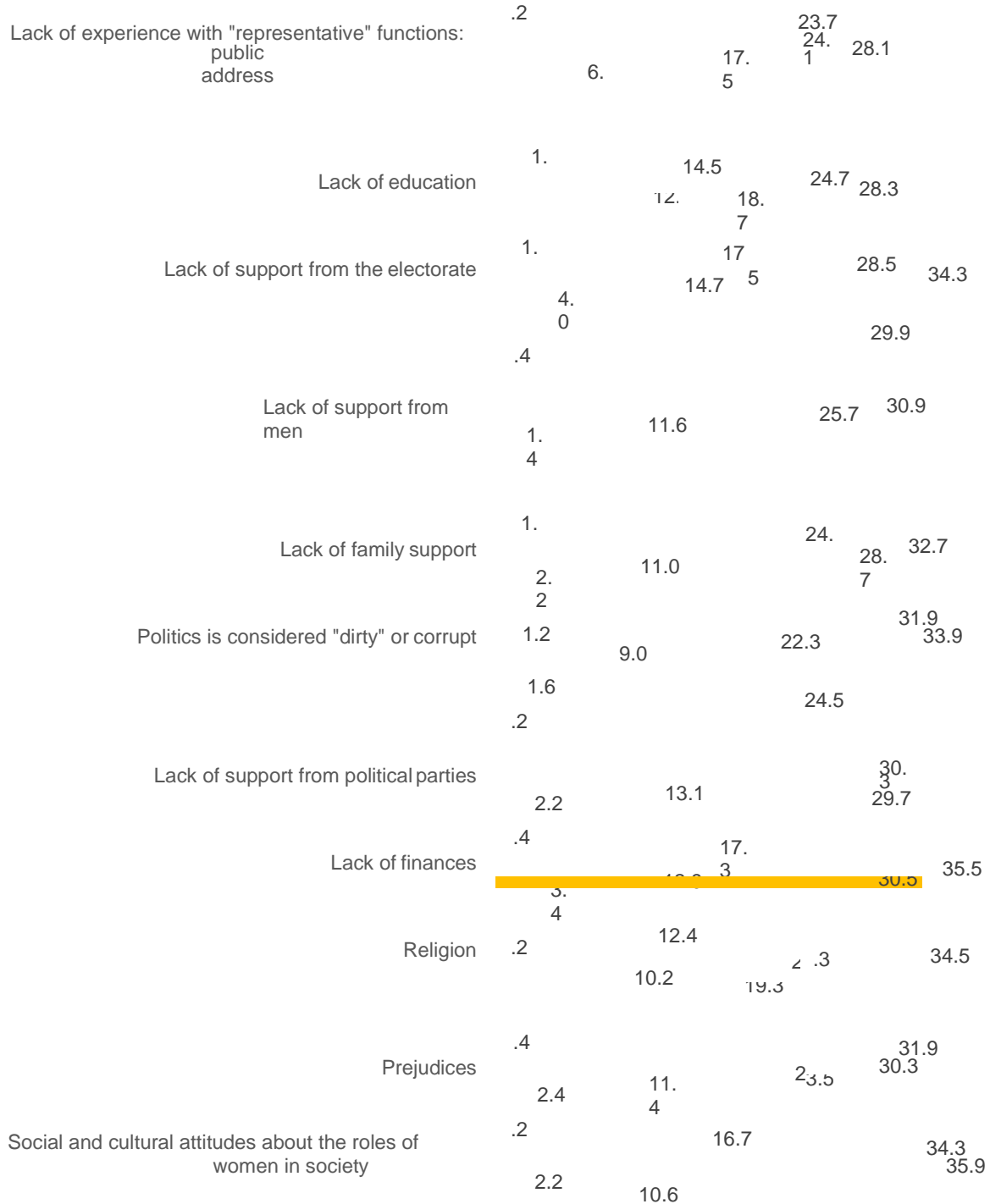


Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Of particular interest for the analysis is the perception of citizens about the factors that influence the determination to get involved in political life. Respondents with the Likert scale

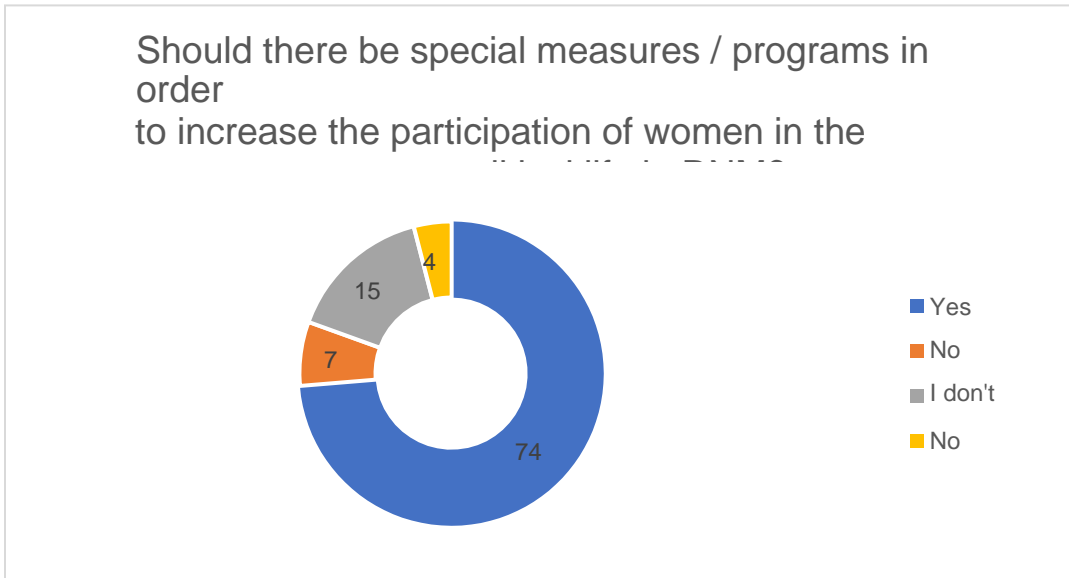
Chart 9: Factors for women's determination to not get involved in politics

How much do the following factors influence women's determination to get involved in politics?



Respondents believe that special measures and programs should be introduced in order to increase women's participation in politics. While the vast majority of 74% are in favor of such measures, interesting is the high % of citizens (15%) who do not have an opinion, while 7% are against such measures (see Chart 10).

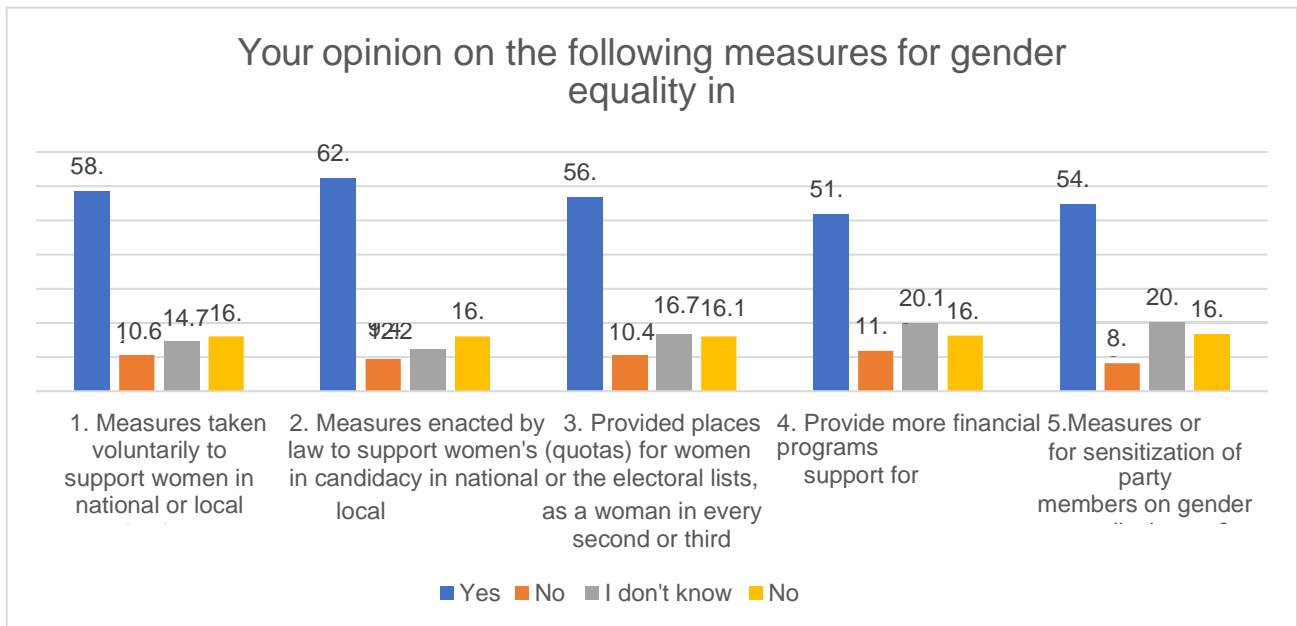
Chart 10: Should there be special measures



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Respondents also answered questions about support mechanisms for achieving gender equality in politics. Consequently, 62.2% support the measures adopted by law to support women candidate lists, 52% believe that women candidates should have financial support, and 55% believe that it is necessary to work with political parties to introduce gender parity in party structures. Every 10th respondent is against affirmative action measures to promote gender parity in politics. An interesting finding is that as much as 16% of the total number of respondents did not answer these questions.

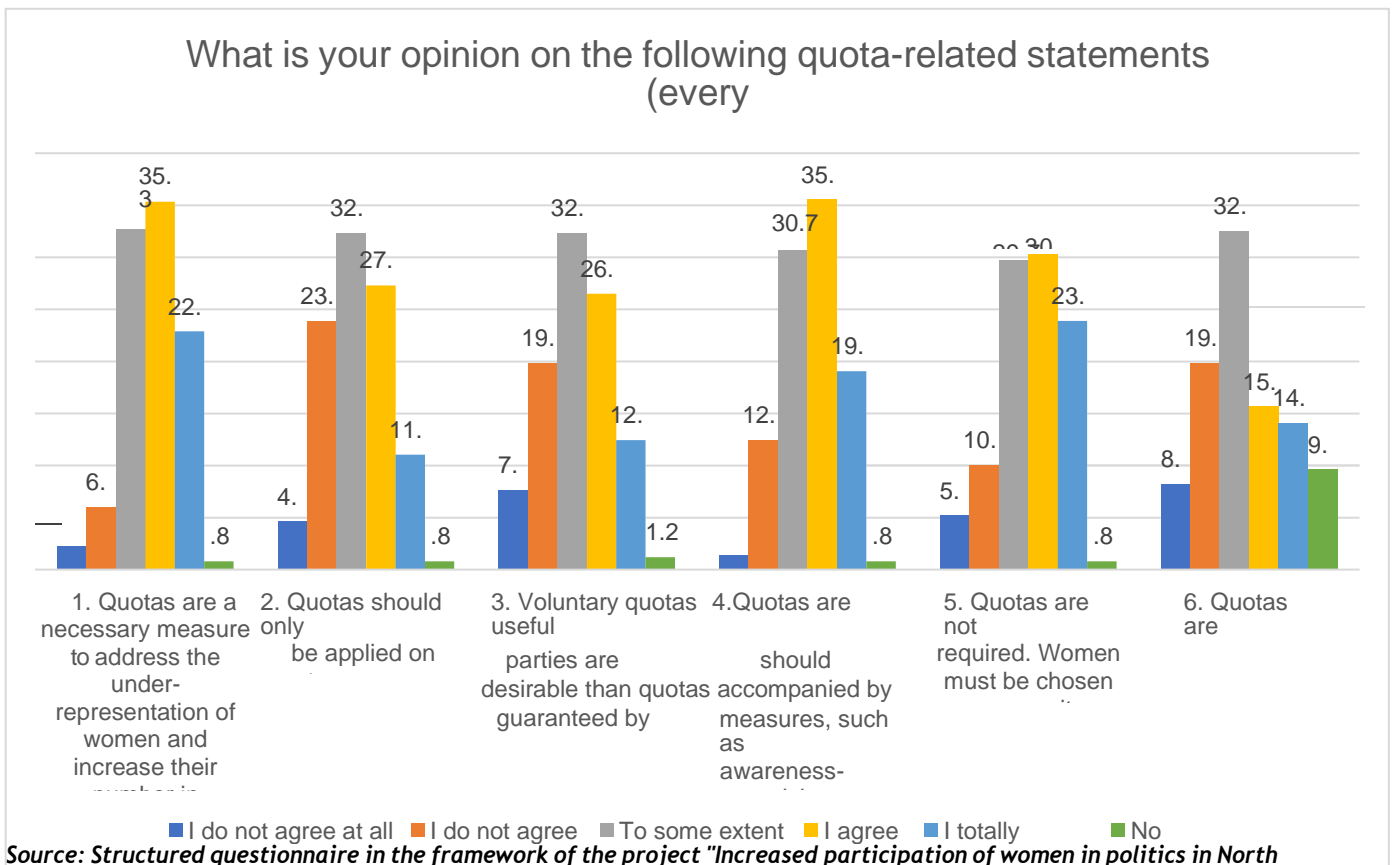
Chart 11 Measures for gender equality in politics



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

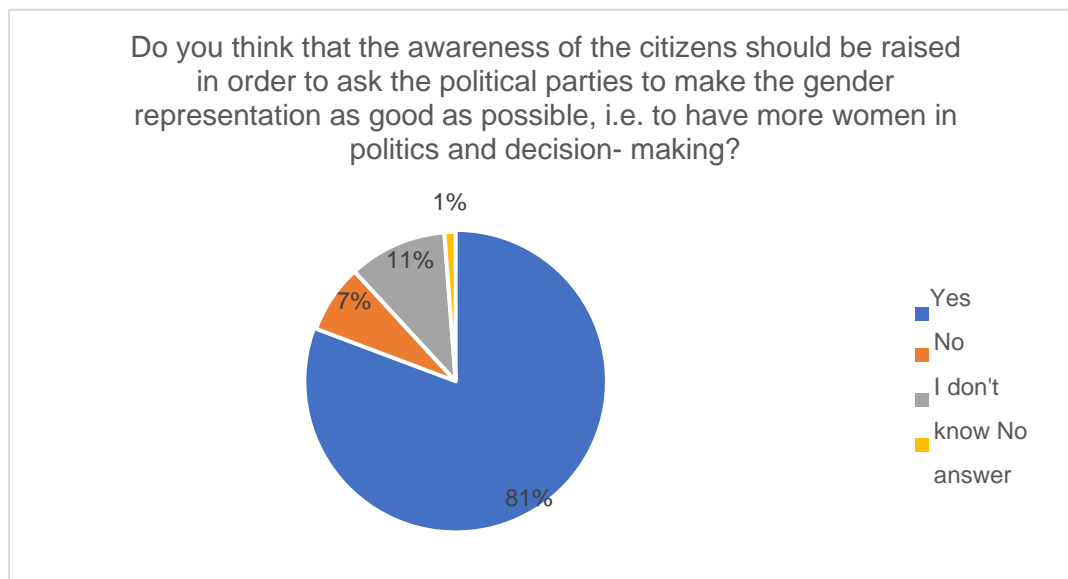
Respondents also answered questions about the existing policy of quotas for women's participation in politics. Consequently, 8% of the citizens are against quotas in the legislative power / parliament of RSM, while more than 90% agree to some extent or completely with this policy. Only 29% of respondents do not agree with the statement that quotas should be applied only temporarily, 2/3 of respondents believe that parties should set higher affirmative quotas than what is legally established quota. Interestingly, 85% of respondents believe that quotas should be accompanied by other awareness-raising measures, about 30% of respondents believe that quotas are discriminatory mechanisms (see Chart 12). The findings indicate the need to raise awareness of the mechanisms implemented to improve the position of segments of the population that / which for cultural and structural reasons are excluded from these processes and the need for specific interventions to improve access to resources, needs, impact etc.

Chart 12: Perception about quotas



Respondents answered the question about the need to raise citizens' awareness of gender parity, 81% of citizens support measures to raise awareness, 7% are against while 11% do not know if there is a need for such mechanisms (see Chart 13).

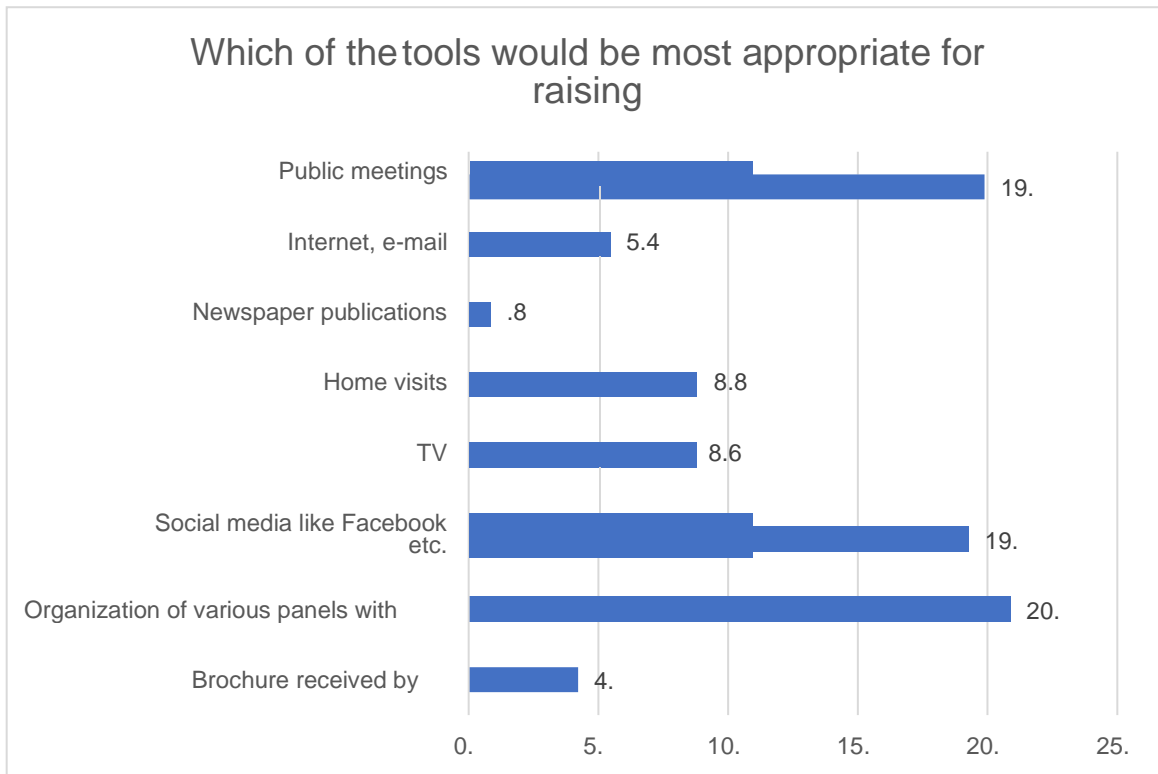
Chart 13: Need for awareness raising



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

Respondents answered the question about the adequacy of the tools that decision makers should implement to raise public awareness of gender parity, 20.9% of citizens believe that panels should be organized with citizens, 20% believe that public should be organized meetings, 19.3% think that they should use social networks, about 9% think that citizens should visit their homes and about 5% think that internet e-mail and mail should be used to inform citizens about this problem. (see Chart 14).

Chart 14: Tools for raising citizens' awareness



Source: Structured questionnaire in the framework of the project "Increased participation of women in politics in North Macedonia"

differences may be due either to gender gaps in political ambitions or to the process of recruitment and selection within political parties.

Research shows that men in the Polog region recognize the need to close gender gaps and support policy changes to achieve gender parity. This means that there are men who would support the process of increasing women's participation in politics and who can be very useful allies in the process.

It should be introduced a gender quota in political parties in order to improve women's access to decision-making structures, with the aim of creating a "role model" for women active in political parties in order to inspire women to be more actively involved in politics.

Support for women's interest groups in order to increase the visibility and legitimacy of these structures and to sensitize the community about the need for more substantial involvement of women in public life in the community.

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- Innovation and good governance Strategy at local level, Council of Europe, http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/strategy_innovation

2. Gender

1. Male
2. Female

3. Ethnicity

1. Macedonian
2. Albanian
3. Turk
4. Roma
5. Other _____

4. Age

1. 18 -25
2. 26-33
3. 34-41
4. 42-49
5. 50+

5. Employment status

1. Employed in the public sector
2. Employed in the private sector
3. Farmer
4. Housewife
5. Pensioner
6. Student
7. Unemployed
8. Other _____

6. Education

1. Incomplete primary education
2. Completed primary education
3. Completed secondary education
4. Higher education
5. Completed post-graduate studies (Master's or PhD)

III. QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

11. Do you think that women are sufficiently represented in the political life in RNM?

1. YES 2. To some extent 3. NO

12. Do you think women are insufficiently represented in politics?

In your opinion, how represented are women in the political life in RNM	To a large extent	Too much	To some extent	Not much	Not at all
1. In the Parliament of the	5	4	3	2	1
2. In a leading position at the Republican level	5	4	3	2	1
3. In the local self-government	5	4	3	2	1
4. In a leading position at the local level	5	4	3	2	1
5. Through political parties	5	4	3	2	1
6. Through various organizations that have an impact on policy	5	4	3	2	1

13. In your opinion, what influence do the following groups have on the political life in RNM?

	To a large extent	Too much	To some extent	Not much	Not at all
1. Male politicians and leaders	5	4	3	2	1
2. Women politicians and leaders	5	4	3	2	1
3. Politicians and leaders of non-majority ethnic groups	5	4	3	2	1
4. Young politicians and leaders	5	4	3	2	1
5. Others	5	4	3	2	1

14. In your opinion, how much do the following factors influence women's determination to enter politics?

	To a large extent	Too much	To some extent	Not much	Not at all
1. Social and cultural attitudes regarding the roles of women in	5	4	3	2	1
2. Prejudices	5	4	3	2	1
3. Religion	5	4	3	2	1
4. Lack of finances	5	4	3	2	1
5. Lack of support from political	5	4	3	2	1
6. Politics is considered "dirty"	5	4	3	2	1
7. Lack of family support	5	4	3	2	1
8. Lack of support from men	5	4	3	2	1
9. Lack of support from the	5	4	3	2	1
10. Lack of education	5	4	3	2	1
11. Lack of experience with "representative" functions: public address, relations with the	5	4	3	2	1
12. Others	5	4	3	2	1

15. In your opinion, should there be special measures / programs in order to increase the participation of women in the political life in RNM?

Yes

No

I don't know

16. If your answer to the previous question is YES, then please comment on the following tools

	Yes	No	I don't know
1. Measures adopted voluntarily to support women candidates in national or local elections			
2. Measures adopted by law to support women's candidacies in national or local elections			

3. Provided places (quotas) for women in the electoral lists, such			
4. Provide more financial support for women candidacies			
5. Measures or programs to sensitize party members on gender equality issues?			
6. Others			

17. What is your opinion on the following quota-related statements (every third place in the electoral roll is guaranteed for women)?

	I totally agree	I agree	To some extent	I do not agree	I do not agree at all
1. Quotas are a necessary measure to address the under-representation of women and	5	4	3	2	1
2. Quotas should be applied only on a temporary basis	5	4	3	2	1
3. Voluntary quotas approved by political parties are more desirable than the quotas	5	4	3	2	1
4. Quotas are useful but not sufficient and should be accompanied by other measures,	5	4	3	2	1
5. Quotas are not required. Women must be chosen based on	5	4	3	2	1
6. Quotas are discriminatory	5	4	3	2	1

18. Do you think that the awareness of the citizens should be raised in order to ask the political parties to make the gender representation as good as possible, i.e. to have more women in politics and decision-making?

Yes

No

I don't know



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