

QATAR UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

LOCAL POLITICS: EXAMINING THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF QATARI

WOMEN IN THE CENTRAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Local Politics: Examining the Political Participation Of Qatari Women in the Central Municipal Council Elections

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Qatar embarked on a political progressive reform path with the announcement of Central Municipal Council elections in 1999, granting universal suffrage in the same year. The participation of Qatari women since then has been underwhelming, with the presence of only two females in the Central Municipal Council as of 2015.

The main purpose of this thesis was to explore and examine Qatari women's formal political participation through the Central Municipal Council, by employing theoretical, analytical, and empirical components found within existent literature, as well as interactions with Qatari women. The main research questions included: How has the formal political engagement of Qatari women changed within the Qatari society? What are Qatari female's perspectives on CMC elections, on CMC the institutional framework and to what extent has it affected their formal political participation? What and how are the challenges and opportunities interconnected within this formal participation? To what extent have different barriers accounted for low Qatari women's formal political participation? What challenges remain for Qatari women today ahead of the anticipated Consultative Council elections?

The thesis takes into consideration the existent literature, as well as employing quantitative and qualitative methods through a survey among Qatari females and an interview with Shaikha Al Jufairi. The thesis concludes that Qatari females' low political participation can be attributed to the institutional framework of the Council, social/family barriers, of which more government support and initiatives are needed to address and counter it.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to those who believed and persisted more than I did.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Qatar's monarchical nature makes so there are limited opportunities for formal political involvement in the society. Yet, this should not undermine the fact that there are areas of political involvement in the country. Qatar's fast accumulated oil revenue wealth since independence has led the country on an unprecedented development and modernization path, which resulted in significant improvements in the economic, social and political aspects within the country. The country's new path under His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani introduced several political reforms in the society, amongst other fields. Qatar joined other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to introduce elections in the country, in the form of Central Municipal Council (CMC) elections for the entire citizen population, as well as grant universal suffrage in 1999.

The inclusiveness of women in the society politically was formally introduced in the CMC elections in 1999, and yet the first woman was elected in 2003, and today, she remains the only candidate to serve for four consecutive election rounds¹. Thus, since 1999, women have been politically participating as voters and candidates within the society, albeit with a significantly low impact in terms of active participation (Qatar Decree (17), 1998).

In this regard, the inclusiveness of women was a top-down initiative that came as part of the progressive political reforms to go in line with the country's development

¹ Shaikha Al Jufairi retained her seat in the CMC after winning for the fourth consecutive time in 2015.

path. However, women's participation in these local elections have been mediocre at best, with only two women currently holding positions in the CMC.²

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore and examine Qatari women's formal political participation through the Central Municipal Council, by employing theoretical, analytical, and empirical components found within existent literature, as well as interactions with Qatari women. This purpose will be examined through important aspects like: How has the formal political engagement of Qatari women changed within the Qatari society? What are Qatari female's perspectives on CMC elections, on CMC the institutional framework and to what extent has it affected their formal political participation? What and how are the challenges and opportunities interconnected within this formal participation? To what extent have different barriers accounted for low Qatari women's formal political participation? What challenges remain for Qatari women today ahead of the anticipated Consultative Council elections?

In this regard, after having looked into the conceptual and theoretical aspects of women's political participation in this chapter, the second chapter theoretically discusses women's current roles and positions in the country, especially within the local context through a literature review. The third chapter will analytically examines women's perceptions of political participation through first-hand survey that was conducted to better shed light on this issue, as well as an interview with Shikha Al Jufairi. Although the interview was directed at Qatari female candidates and representatives, Al Jufairi was the only representative that was available and agreed to

² Shaikha Al Jufairi and Fatma AlKuwari

participate in the interview process. The fourth chapter then builds on that to discuss the challenges and opportunities that this reform of women's inclusion presents for the society and the country, specifically by examining the results discussed with relevant past studies. The final chapter will offer a conclusion to the thesis study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There is vast existent literature in relation to women and political participation. Given the nature of the GCC, the scope of focus in the literature is directed towards political reforms initiated by GCC regimes since independence, as well as reforms encouraged after the 2011 Arab Uprisings. In the case of Qatar, the limited scope of the political sphere limits the literature covering the formal political aspect, but there is a fair amount of literature related to political reforms in Qatar and the region, and more specifically, reforms relating to women.

In this regard, the literature review will be divided amongst two interrelated scopes: Electoral Reform in the GCC and Qatar and women's political participation and reforms in the GCC, the roles, challenges and barriers of female's political participation in the GCC all of which also focus on Qatar as a case study. These two aspects are deduced to be the most pivotal interrelated aspects in relation to the thesis. This is because the thesis aims to first scope the existent literature from a GCC perspective in relation to reforms process, as this provides an important transition towards female participation. Furthermore, this is important given the relative recent independence of the region, as well as its efforts in both state consolidation and reform, especially with regional and international examinations of the region. Therefore, the two aspects are interrelated in providing a holistic approach towards formal political participation. It is important to lastly note that although the literature scope in this thesis examines political reform and women's participation in the GCC, the thesis study will focus on the State of Qatar as a case study amongst the GCC states.

Literature Concerning Electoral Reform and Political Development in the GCC and Qatar

The relatively recent independence of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries has led to continuous changes, ranging from state consolidation to state development and modernization. These continued efforts have led to the monarchies facing "unprecedented demands for political, judicial, and economic reforms. While regimes and their domestic and foreign critics agree on the need for reforms, divergent views exist on the content of the 'package of reforms' required in the countries of the region" (Khalaf and Luciani, 2006, p. 9). Thus, the "similar political regimes, demographic structures, economic and social systems in the GCC countries make their paths towards reforms comparable, albeit not identical" (p. 10).

Therefore, and in order to overcome these possible sources of instability, the GCC countries, soon after independence, began introducing institutionalization decisions, as there was a realized need for the inclusion of citizens in the political process. In this regard, (Kapiszewski, 2002) highlighted the fact that the six GCC states engaged in political reforms in the past years, more specifically after the Arab Uprisings created serious challenges in the Arab world, even given the fact that these countries are among the richest in the world. Even though they are often viewed as authoritarian governments, there has been a "movement from less transparent and accountable governments to more transparent and accountable ones; from less competitive (or non-existent) elections to freer, fairer, and more competitive ones; from very restricted liberties to better protected civil and political rights; from a totally censored media to a relatively independent one; and from underdeveloped civil society institutions to more developed ones" (p. 89).

Thus, different forms of elections were introduced in the past decades within the GCC states. These elections range from parliamentary to consultative elections, as well as municipal elections in all six states. According to the 2016 Freedom House rankings, Kuwait is considered to be the most democratized when compared to the Council countries, while Saudi Arabia is considered to be the least democratized, as they are ranked as partly free and not free, respectively.³ In a similar report, Polity IV data scores for 2015 revealed that all GCC countries are classified as autocracies, with Kuwait being the least autocratic with a score of -7.⁴ However, these political reform development initiatives are considered modest, at best, compared to other regional and international reform processes, especially democratization reform processes. As Herb (2004) discussed, democracy in the Gulf States (with the exception of Kuwait) need “constitutional revisions to expand parliamentary powers while maintaining a tradition of relatively free elections” (Herb, 2004).

Therefore, in the case of the GCC, a middle ground between complete authoritarianism and full democracy can be observed. As Nonneman (2006) presented, the GCC States and their reform initiatives have led these States to embark on a path of liberalization policies. These policies, as Nonneman defined them, would involve a form of “relaxing government controls” (p. 2). He also significantly noted

³ Freedom House ranks countries from Free (1) to not Free (7). GCC Rankings in Political Rights (PR) and Civil Liberties (CL) are as follows: Bahrain: PR=7, CL=6, Not Free; Kuwait: PR=5, CL=5, Partly Free; Oman: PR=6, CL=5, Not Free, Qatar: PR=6, CL=5, Not Free; Saudi Arabia: PR=7, C:=7, Not Free; and UAE: PR=6, CL=6, Not Free. <https://freedomhouse.org/>

⁴ Polity IV ranks regime trends of countries from a scale of Autocracy (-10) to Full Democracy (10). GCC Rankings are: Bahrain: -10; Kuwait: -7; Oman: -8; Qatar: -10; Saudi Arabia: -10 and UAE: -8. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>

that “reform and liberalization do not equate to democratization – nor do they necessarily lead to it” (p. 31). The GCC countries are in a position that allows them to follow these liberalization policies, as they are not in jeopardy in terms of survival or legitimacy. The point of the matter is, if this middle ground is surpassed, it will happen gradually and will require the interplay of many aspects, such as discussions and policy changes (p. 37). More to the point, Brumberg (2002) has also labeled the Gulf Cooperation Council countries as being in the ‘grey zones’ of “liberalized autocracy” (p. 57), which proved to be far more durable than once imagined” (p. 56). This durability has allowed the GCC rulers to initiate and implement various reforms, including ones relating to representation.

In line with this, Ehteshami (2003) also discussed how the regional and international events since the Iraq-Iran war have led GCC rulers to consider the need for introducing new social and political initiatives (p. 54). The states have made considerable progress in reforming the ‘good governance’ aspects of the societies, including widening participation, transparency and accountability (p. 55). These varying reforms, thus, showcase how “the traditional rentier societies of the Arabian Peninsula have been responding to the internal, regional and international political challenges facing them” (p. 62).

Moreover, the notion of ‘reform from above’ is present in many of the literature concerning the Arab Gulf countries. These reform initiatives were showing the ruling governments’ responsiveness and “recognition of its responsibilities to the citizenry” (p. 62). In an attempt to explain the emergence of this ‘government-sponsored’ reform initiatives, Crystal (2005) attributed two categories of explanations for the change of direction in terms of reform in the GCC, one being the external

pressures, mainly foreign pressure from the United States and other GCC states, due mainly to the "cultural leg" (p. 4) of different groups of people in each country. These pressures, to an extent, do explain the need for more reform implementation. However, the top-down approach does not necessarily explain the entire political nature within the GCC, as oil revenues and the rentier state approach do account for some of the explanations regarding the variations of the extent of the electoral reforms initiated. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, bottom-up demands are not unprecedented in the GCC region, as Saudi Arabia's case with regards to movements and demands by women for greater participation also shed light on this situation.

On the other hand, (Sager, 2006) centralized his argument on domestic elements of reform, and dismissed that external pressure had a major positive part in the reform efforts by the GCC monarchies. He highlighted the "existing and emerging domestic dynamics (population, education, the spread of IT, ...etc.)" (p. 17), as crucial elements of this. Therefore, the improvement of education systems, as well as population growth and a more educated and conscious youth and society have led to a form of continued "transformation process" (Khalaf and Luciani, 2006, p. 10). Thus, Sager discussion crucially disagreed with Crystal's argument that focused on external pressures by underlining the fact that "it is only when an internal consensus has been reached on the future direction of society that it will be possible to argue that a reform movement has indeed taken root" (p. 17), to which these crucial domestic factors have contributed to. He does not, however, undermine the fact that there are indeed external factors that have also influenced the region. But, in the end, as he argued, the case of the GCC countries is unique for each of the six countries, and it is the

"internal debate that will determine the path and ultimate outcome of the political future of the Gulf States" (p. 32).

However, Khalaf (2006) interestingly pointed out that the "stability of the Gulf monarchies is the outcome of two sets of sources of power – external and internal ones. By mobilizing both, Gulf ruling families have been able to operate within two epochs simultaneously – the modern and the pre-modern" (p. 36). He also highlighted two significant concepts of despotic power of the pre-modern state and infrastructural power of the modern state that he quotes of Mann (1984). The despotic power "refers to the capacity to control the distribution of resources without interference from society. It involves the autonomy of the state from social pressures" (Khalaf, 2006, p. 36). On the other hand, infrastructural power "refers to the ability of a state to get things done, to administer and regulate, and effectively exercise its authority and achieve its goals within society" (p. 37). By employing a combination of both of these powers, the GCC states are able to exercise appropriate responses to pressures or possible demands.

This can be seen as manifesting in terms of the methods and the processes of introducing reforms and its processes and dynamics in the GCC context. In this sense, another relative matter in terms of reform and change is what Ehteshami and Wright (2007) labeled as controlled liberalization, where in GCC polities, "an overarching theme is that change has consistently been initiated by the elites themselves and has taken the character of controlled liberalization rather than a substantive shift in power relationships" (p. 930).

An important reasoning for the, more or less, stability of this pattern is the fact that there is a "simple lack of power on the part of civil society to act as a driver of

change” (p. 931). The authors did, however, point out that, “there is a fine balance between liberalizing for legitimacy’s sake and changing the structures of power within society. If and when the latter occurs, the elites are unlikely to be able to exercise full control over the direction and pace of such change. This balance has worked to differing extents for the six GCC countries.

On the other hand, the development of this political environment in the GCC countries is still a complicated process. This is due, as mentioned above, to the "ruling authorities' control rather than democratic representation" (Power, 2012, p. 1). Yet, as Power analyzed in his paper, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman specifically utilized what he referred to as a "managed reform" process after the Arab Uprisings (p. 1). This process led to a redefinition of these states' policies to not only having liberalization reforms, but to implement further reforms with greater participation and representation. The amounted pressure of the 2011 events have thus led to a change in the GCC's dynamics, which widens the scope of the discussion when it comes to political reform in the region. Furthermore, these events brought to the surface the shortcomings of these political institutions, as it "seemed to emphasize the distance between these institutions and what was happening outside. The subsequent paths were determined almost entirely by local and national issues rather than ideologically driven movements for democracy" (p. 27). In this sense, the reforms undertaken led to more of a sense of wanting change to the institutional frameworks and the status-quo dynamics already existent. This can be seen in all the GCC states, as reforms, regardless of their variations, began to swiftly take place in response to the regional events and to maintain stability within the GCC region.

More to the point, the Arab Spring uprisings were initiated out of economic and political frustration. Thus, in the case of the GCC countries, they were able to adjust to the situation by promptly initiating a wide array of reforms, including political and economic reforms (by utilizing oil revenues).

In terms of the Arab Spring uprisings, the protests in the region required the GCC states to act swiftly and thoroughly in order to face the issues of political reforms in their respective countries, which were, more or less, unchanged after their introductions to the societies, even with the case of Kuwait, which is historically the most experienced GCC country with political reform and participation. Thus, “the onset of the Arab Uprisings has brought about new changes between the State and society relationships in the region. The rentier aspect alone was not sufficient for the citizens, albeit many economic reforms and improvement policies have generally been viewed as a means of response to the Uprisings.

Yet, political reform was still urgently needed, as these echoed strongly along with economic reforms, especially in recent years” (Almal, 2016). Moreover, given the recent history of the GCC region, its relatively recent formation has led its countries to prioritize state building and consolidation after independence, and thus, the economic aspect was given more focus than the political aspect. Yet, as is evident from the announcements of previously postponed elections, reforms in the formal political participation channels, and other aspects in these countries, political reform was unavoidable in the region after the Arab uprisings. Hence, even if these reforms range from parliamentary to municipal, they nonetheless reflected the decisiveness within the GCC rulers that economic reforms will not suffice on their own. These

reforms are also “coupled with the fact that international pressure was increasing for more reforms within the GCC region” (Almal, 2016).

In this respect, the notions of stability and legitimacy affect the GCC regimes, especially after the Arab uprisings. In his article, Gjefsen (2012) defined regime stability as the support “citizens give their regime based on a moral conviction that it has a right to rule, and that it serves a common good” (p. 8). Therefore, it can be deduced that the legitimacy of the regime would depend on the regime-citizen relationship, and thus a “regime is legitimate if its citizens have moral reasons for complying with its decision and accepting its right to hold power over them” (p. 8). Gjefsen also classified sources of legitimacy into “quality of government and electoral democracy” (p. 13). Moreover, there are also “socio-structural factors, values and attitudes and economic performance” (p. 13) that fall in line with the authoritarian nature of the GCC states. These factors were thus dealt with and utilized to ensure greater stability and legitimacy after the Arab uprisings.

On the other hand, it can be observed that electoral reforms began even before the Arab uprisings, and thus were given more attention on the onset of those uprisings. In his article, Al-Ghanim (2010) discussed his critical approach towards the actual validity and consequence of these recent reforms, as they are yet to produce strong change, and they have not “induced meaningful political change” (p. 139), and he employed Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as case studies. He even quoted of Brumberg in labeling these attempts as being more in the scope of liberalizing rather than democratizing of the political structure in these states (p. 139). Therefore, the redistributive policy reforms initiated further reflect these liberalizing reform attempts, which are also targeting the desire of the states to maintain their own

security and collective security and legitimacy in the region, and the author is pessimistic that these reforms will have concrete effects with the rentier nature (145). This general is indicative of the increased reforms that were initiated by the GCC states after the uprisings began.

In this regard, Qatar and Saudi Arabia remain the only GCC countries with only the Municipal Council as the form of formal political participation. In Qatar, the national Qataris are the only portion of the population who have the "automatic right to be candidates or to vote in municipal or prospective national legislative elections" (Patrick, 2009, p. 21), as opposed to naturalized citizens, who do not have the right to vote (p. 20). This is significant, as the electoral pool becomes restricted to an extent in these local elections. This also applies to candidates, as it is clearly stated in the bylaws of the Law number 12 of the year 1998 (with additional laws added in 2011) regarding the formation of the CMC, in article 5 that the nationality of a candidate who wishes to run must be Qatar, and whoever acquired Qatari nationality must have his father born in Qatar (Qatar Law (1), 2011).⁵

Yet, it is important to discuss the GCC's reasoning and attributes towards introducing electoral reforms in the region. As Rathmell and Schulze (2000) discuss, these introductions suggest "that a causal link can be made between socio-economic change and a gradual transition from authoritarian rule towards broader political participation" (p. 47). In the case of Qatar, its economic situation is viewed to be among the best in the world, as GDP per ranked is ranked the first in the world, with a GDP per capita of approximately \$129,727 (World Economic Outlook Database,

⁵ The 1998 law was modified according to law (1) of the year 2011, which stipulated 7 conditions to run as a candidate in the CMC elections. <http://www.cmc.org.qa/ar/node/237>

2016), and thus, the perplexity of introducing elections demonstrates "how a policy of political reform may be adopted for reasons that have little to do with economic necessity" (p. 47). Hence, Qatar's economic situation does not merit its intentions of introducing electoral reforms, but as he argued, an appeal towards the younger generations and the more Western-educated youth, as well as for a sense International 'approval' (p. 60). In this sense, this study will offer significant insight towards the validity of this argument concerning the appeal to a wider and younger population through the encouragement of political participation.

In this regard, therefore, the Municipal electoral experience in Qatar can be viewed as a significant step towards political reform. The country's ambitions to implement electoral directives was existent since the country's modern presence, as the initial basic system for Qatar stated in its first article that the country's system is democratic, which ensures equality and proper ruling systems (Obaidan and Abu Al Saud, 2010, p. 153). This was driven forward under the ruling of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani since 1995, and as the authors outline, this was done in the phases of the approval of the principal of general election, issuing a permanent constitution and enabling the role of the civil society (p. 154). The country's first ever form of elections in 1999 set the record for the highest voter turnout, as well as having six female candidates from different backgrounds and occupations (but none were elected).

Furthermore, the Central Municipal Council is viewed as a "single body at national level, made up of 29 members who have no executive powers and whose role is limited to advising the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on problems that arise between the ten municipalities that make up the country" (Zaccara, 2011, p. 2).

Hence, the local authority context did undermine the reform ambitions of the government, which was further shown subsequently in the election rounds. To elaborate on this, the fact that there is very limited authority (local) given to the MC representatives, has led to a hindering in progress towards more participation and involvement of the Qatari society in these elections, thus leading to an underwhelming democratic reform ambitions, especially with the announcement of Consultative Council elections. Furthermore, the limited authority is also a critical aspect, as it has led to a modest-at-best approach and interest on the part of citizens, further curbing reform ambitions.

Therefore, the second and third rounds of elections revealed shortcomings in this ambitious path of electoral reform. As the authors discussed, the electoral process took a backward step as other factors emerged in these two rounds that explain the low turnouts and investment in the process (Obaidan and Abu Al Saud, 2010, p. 179). This includes: 1) lack of interest and enthusiasm between the citizens, both in terms of voting and running as candidates, even with government initiatives to introduce the elections and its candidates and procedures; 2) the lack of realization of many candidates to the role and nature of the Municipal Council, and they end up proposing campaigns that exceed in ambition the jurisdiction of the Council; 3) some Council members were ineffective and did not offer anything new in ideas and suggestions; 4) the reluctance of members from the first round to run in the two consecutive rounds led to the lack of response from the citizens in the Council and its functions; 5) lack of experience and efficiency for the members in the second and third rounds and their low educational standard as opposed to the first round members reflected on their

performances; and 6) the second and third rounds did not reach out to the public through the Council, as media utilization was higher in the first round (p. 181).

Taking these factors into consideration, the reform process in the country is apparent to be at a standstill, as these factors are still, more or less, existent in the subsequent rounds. Although the authors did provide several recommendations to activate the electoral process in the following rounds (p. 182), they can hardly be seen as achieved. The most significant of these is to delegate executive decision capabilities to the Council, which is yet to take place, which in turn questions the framework of the CMC and its inherent jurisdictions. Moreover, these top-down initiatives to encourage the population are still yet to be fully achieved, as turnout and involvement are still remarkably low.

One of these top-down initiatives is concerned with utilizing universal suffrage. Although no woman was elected in the first round, the Qatari political scene did witness an unprecedented election path for one female, Al Jufairi, who remains the only member of the council to win four consecutive rounds. Yet, as the section below will show, this is still not sufficient to enable the society to be politically active, which can affect the country's anticipated path of further political involvement and electoral reforms through the Shura (Consultative) Council.

Yet, the high ambitions of increased political participation by the immediate inclusion of women were still underwhelming. In a SESRI policy snapshot of the 2015 elections, the fifth round of elections yielded significant considerations in terms of political participation by the society. Among these findings included the fact that a "1) clear understanding of the CMC and its role is lacking, especially among women and younger citizens; 2) those most knowledgeable about the Council also tend to be

the least satisfied; 3) Satisfaction with the Council is closely tied to the impressions of its authority; [and] 4) independent of views of the CMC specifically, support for electoral processes is high" (SESRI Policy, 2015, p. 1). These findings reflected the view for a wider reach and knowledge instigation for both women and youth. Moreover, the existent knowledge from the respondents did also reflect a low satisfaction for the framework and function of the CMC (p. 2).

In a similar critical perspective, Kamrava (2009) pointed out that after a decade of Qatar's first round of elections, "meaningful political liberalization remains as elusive as ever before, and the prospects for the political system becoming democratic do not seem even remotely possible [and] the parliamentary elections that were promised for 2005 have yet to take place" (p. 402). The prospect of these Shura Council elections were announced again in 2015, but no official date has been set yet.

The literature surveyed and examined above thus allows for a more comprehensive approach in terms of contextualizing the discussion on female formal political participation, as well as the focus on Qatar as a case study.

Literature Concerning Women's Political Participation: A GCC Look; The roles and barriers of women within Civic and political aspects

The exploration of the political reforms in the GCC and more specifically Qatar constitute a significant headway into examining women's political participation. This is due foremost to the importance of contextualizing the discussion on women by firstly inspecting the aspects of political reform in the region and in Qatar, especially with the onset of the Arab uprisings, which constituted a strong changing point for women's political participation, most notably in the case of Saudi Arabia, as will be discussed below.

The topic of female political participation is a vast one, and for the purpose of this research, the focus will be on female participation in the Gulf Corporation Council and Arab world and studies relating to female participation in Municipal and/or Consultative Council elections, due to the fact that it is difficult to emulate research on female presidential elections, for instance, on local elections in this region.

Nevertheless, it is still significant to shed light on female participation in the region, as well as the social constructions concerning women and their active participation. In the general sense, women's participation is still considered to be an ongoing process, and its initiation was a must, especially for this region. In the case of the GCC, this was an added necessity, especially due to the rentier nature and the amounting international pressure for reforms. It is also important to point out the religious aspect of this participation. In examining Al Qaradawi's analysis of women's political and legal aspects in Islam, Stowasser (2007) highlighted Al Qaradawi's discussion that "women have the Islamic right to become ministers and judges, just as they have the right to serve as general overseers and inspectors in other fields" (p. 113). In this regard, the author did also highlight the problematic nature of Islamic modernism (p. 114), which, in varying sense, instigates a wider scope and "initiates broader cultural reaction" (p. 116).

In the same sense, Al-Yousef (2009), a consultant to the General Secretary of the GCC Secretariat, highlighted in her speech the interconnectedness between religion and gender equality:

“The principle of gender equality is enshrined in The Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet which are the sources from which every Muslim woman derives her rights

and duties. Islam established a woman's equality in her humanity with men; neither gender can be superior because it would be a contradiction to equality. Islam also, recognizes and fosters the natural differences between men and women despite their equality. This in no way diminishes either's efforts or benefits. God will reward both sexes equally for the value of their work, though, it may not necessarily be the same activity" (p. 2).

The author also stressed the active participation of women through the family and cultural construct, but at the same time, the active economic and social participation of women, which reflects the dedicated interest in gender reforms through increasing women participation in all fundamental aspects (p. 3).

Moreover, generally speaking, gender politics has been taking center space in electoral political discussions. The fact that universal suffrage did not occur overnight further reinforces this significance. Furthermore, "because political participation is a central component of democracy as well as a means for achieving greater equality, gender inequalities in political participation may both reflect and further reify gender stratification throughout society" (Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010, p. 318). Regionally, women's participation has also been significantly viewed, as the social and cultural norms have uniquely shaped the region. In the case of the relatively recent independent GCC region, women participation has been relatively low as well, with special focus in this case given to tribal influences as well.

Women participation in the government has gradually increased within the past two decades for the Arab Gulf region. The most evident and significant aspects of this are women's participation in "government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGO's)" (Krause, 2009, p. 1). Female empowerment has been one

aspect of government initiatives that would involve, in many extents, prominent female figures from the society and/or the ruling elites. Numerous federations and associations were created focusing on women and women related issues, with Kuwait being the foremost in this, as “two women’s associations were founded by the merchant class in 1963 – the Cultural and Social Society (CSS) and the Arab Women’s Development Society (AWDS) – and remained the only two associations for a decade” (p. 16). Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates has the largest number of government-run women’s associations, and the first female association in Qatar was created in 1982, which was the woman’s branch for the Red Crescent Society (p. 17).

More to the point, as Krause insightfully points out, engagement in these empowerment initiatives, has become important to the governments. Hence, “state feminism becomes an indispensable means of achieving unity, identity-building and stability. This is achieved through women’s educational empowerment, establishing the framework within which women are expected to take up public roles, and the various resources and practices of governmentality unique to a rentier state” (p. 18). Therefore, these top-down initiatives are essential for the government and the society. Yet, a perplexing aspect of these GONGOs in the GCC is that they focus on ‘apolitical’ matters for women, as it is viewed in the developmental sense that “Women are producers of the nation and pass down knowledge; hence, Islamic knowledge is emphasized in such associations” (p. 23). Nonetheless, it does reinforce a sense of empowerment for females within the societies.

It is also important to point out at the forefront the fact that the internal domestic factors of reform have been continuous influencing the GCC reform

dynamics. Women have made considerable progressive advances in political participation in the past two decades within some of the GCC countries. As Al Kitbi (2008) discussed, “The governing elite in the GCC countries generally supports women's political rights, but strong social sentiment against women's participation in politics persists, as does economic and social discrimination” (Al Kitbi, 2008), and through her exploration, she identified that women in the GCC countries were granted voting rights since the 1990s, with Oman being the first GCC state to grant these voting rights, albeit only a selected number of citizens could vote. In the 2003 elections, Qatar became the first GCC country that “marked the first time a woman was elected by universal suffrage in a GCC country” (Al Kitbi, 2008).

Furthermore, in continuation to Sager's line of argument discussed above, he pointed out that just merely glimpsing at the reform measures in the GCC over the past few decades would reveal this dynamic transformation process in terms of political involvement and participation.. For instance, in the cases of Oman, Bahrain and Qatar, "public participation has spread through the establishment of parliaments and consultative assemblies, the holding of elections in which both men and women can either vote or stand as candidates, and the promulgation of constitutions or reform charters" (Sager, 2006, p. 22). Furthermore, "in these countries as well as in the UAE, women have taken on official roles in government, having been appointed as ministers, ministry officials and ambassadors. In Saudi Arabia, the Majlis al-Shura has been given increased power, municipal elections have been held, and a National Dialogue that looks at some of the key issues facing Saudi society has been instituted" (p. 22). Examples of these advancements include, in the case of Saudi Arabia, 20

women winning seats in the 2100 municipal seats during the 2015 elections⁶, which falls within the United Nation's agenda towards empowering women to fulfill the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, in recent decades, the issue of female participation in politics in the region has taken a priority in many fields, and aspects like granting universal suffrage for women represented a positive step by the States towards political reforms. More to the point, in the case of the GCC, there is a strong interrelation between the cultural, societal and political aspects within the States. Thus, the involvement of greater female participation and presence is still considered to be an ongoing process. Perhaps the latest on this path is the decision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to grant universal suffrage and allow women to vote and run as candidates in the 2015 Municipal Council elections, which was announced during his speech in front of the Shura Council in 2011 (AlRiyadh, 2011). In this regard, Al-Khuthaila (2005) argued that Saudi Arabia was able to offer a “unique approach to election that can accommodate both state and religion” (Al-Khuthaila, 2005, p. 605).

Furthermore, the introduction of elections for the Municipal Council allowed the country to begin a more open reform path, and just like Qatar's case, the government initiated the elections for the citizens. The author also highlighted the possible advancements of female participation in Saudi society, and also noted how their inclusion will lead to more “participation in decision making and social awareness” (p. 609). Although the obstacle of Saudi's democratic reform process does

⁶ The United Nations Women initiative released a statement on the Municipal elections in Saudi Arabia in 2015. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/12/un-women-statement-on-the-municipal-elections-in-saudi-arabia>

not exist in Qatar's case (given the fact that universal suffrage was granted in 1999, and government initiatives to encourage Qatari women to politically participate are welcomed and continuous), the author does offer glimpses of the importance of including women in the decision-making process, as well as the importance of the society accepting this inclusion, which can be seen as an obstacle for Qatari women's active political participation.

Therefore, in the case of Saudi Arabia, the 2015 were considered historic, as they took place in the center-hold of Islam. This reflected a strong positive indicator towards the active participation of women, as more than 1,000 female candidates ran and over 130,000 women registered to vote (Aldosari, 2015). The fact that this came from a bottom-up demand for change, as grassroots and activists movements aided greatly in achieving women participation (Aldosari, 2015), makes this milestone even further unique. Therefore, although both the government and the society's efforts to cope with the inclusion of women has varied across GCC states, it nonetheless reflects a shared path and objective within these States to better cooperate and encompass political reforms and change in their societies. This is significant, as this is not only a political change, but also a more successful path for women in terms of economics and social construction of women, among other existent societal norms that are continuously changing.

In the case of Qatar, women's formal political participation has been somewhat modest since its introduction in the later 1990s. Qatar has pursued a new modernized path since the late twentieth century became focused, to a large extent, on human and economic development, to create an overall societal improvement. Female empowerment became an associated aspect of this path. New approaches encouraged

and introduced active female participation in the society, both politically and in terms of engagement in the society and the economy, as Qatari women soon after 1999, began working in “every important domain the country” (Dye, 2006, p. 753).

Politically, the first Municipal Council elections in 1999 paved way for Qatari female’s public participation in the country. Universal suffrage was granted, and women participated both as candidates and voters, with female registration reaching 43.8% of registered voters, and 42.7% of those registered voted (p. 754). Among the eight women who ran in 1999 were “a civil servant, a Qatari TV and radio station employee, the director of a nursing school, a psychiatrist and the head of the women’s section of the Qatari Red Crescent,” which reflected a diverse group of women, and not only members of ‘elite’ groups or families. (Lambert, 2011, p. 92).

However, since the remarkable first elections, the entire population’s interest in the local elections began decreasing strongly. Although the overall voter turnout was 79.7% (First Round Municipal Council Elections Statistics, 1999), and that decreased sharply to only 43.3% in 2011 (Fourth Round Municipal Council Elections Statistics, 2011). Women’s registration and voting rates have been somewhat consistent (but still lower than the first year). Female registration in the 2011 elections was 16221, which was close to the male turnout of 16441. This shows that the initial efforts to be involved in the political sphere are positive, but maintaining high voter turnouts is not. Only 6120 women voted, which is drastically lower than half the registered number (yet the same sharp contrast applies to male turnout) (Fourth Round Municipal Council Elections Statistics, 2011).

The second round of elections in 2003 marked a turning point for female participation in Qatar. Shaikha Al Jufairi became the first female candidate elected in

public office. Although she stood unopposed, her political success did not stop there. Her popularity was clearly evident in the 2007 elections, as she gained 90% of the votes in her district with 800 out of 872 votes.⁷ Her continuous success is definitely unprecedented, and it also shows that it is possible for women to succeed in having a political career. This was shown in the fifth round of elections in 2015, where she became the first candidate ever to win four consecutive rounds. In addition to this, Fatma AlKuwari became the second female candidate to join the Municipal Council after winning in the fifth round of elections. However, it is important to note that during the 2011 elections, Al Kuwari encouraged people to vote for Al Jufairi given her popularity, leading to 803 votes for Al Jufairi and only 62 votes for AlKuwari. Thus, in 2015, a redistricting occurred, allowing the two women to run in different constituencies, where Al Jufairi obtained 852 votes, defeating 3 other candidates in the 8th constituency, and AlKuwari obtained 160 votes, defeating one other candidate in the 9th constituency⁸.

Although the fact that only two women have been elected after five rounds of elections, it is still noteworthy to mention that within the context of Qatar, the success of these two women showcases a strong effort by the government to reinforce and encourage female participation in elections. These initiatives aided in the success of the candidates, and ensured that greater female participation is desired within the

⁷ The elections witnessed a 51% participation rate, compared to 35% in the second round of elections in 2003. www.goo.gl/7LRMwx

⁸ The full list of winners from the Fifth round of elections can be viewed at: <https://www.moi.gov.qa/Elections/Electionsresult2015.htm>

ruling government. However, these strong efforts would not resonate well, more or less, if this pattern continues.

In this regard, an important research conducted Al-Muhannadi's (2011) on the role of Qatari women between tribalism and modernity is perhaps the most directly relevant study conducted that addressed women's roles and challenges in Qatar's society, which is "simultaneously tribal and modern" (Al-Muhannadi, 2011, p. 2). Although the author primarily focused on the social and cultural aspects of women's roles, she dedicated some discussion on women's political roles and participation, which was a sub-question in her research. The objective of her study was to "determine Qatari women's balance between strict tribal customs and their contributions towards a modern state, as well as to shed light on their predicament" (p. 55). In her research, she focused on providing existing social conditions of Qatari women, as well as conduct quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, which would also be useful for this study.

Furthermore, the author depended on employing a descriptive method for her study, relying on an online personality questionnaire for the quantitative research, with 68 Qatari males and females from both Bedouin and Hadar tribes. The survey was sent randomly, as well as sent to the author's Facebook friends. A weakness of this method is that the author did not specify what type of random sampling she used, and sending it to Qatari Facebook friends is also a narrow choice, which limited the random sampling approach she claimed to use. The data collected through SurveyMonkey was entered into SPSS for analysis. A structured interview was used for the qualitative research that "addressed to a sample of 20 female and male students" (p. 40), divided equally between Bedouin and Hadar males and females, all

who were students from Qatar University and Georgetown University in Qatar. The Online survey was tested on 10 respondents who did not become part of the essay, who were also allowed to express their suggestions about the survey. The author, however, did not explain the selection criteria of the interview participants further.

Overall, the data “was collected through document analysis, interviews, surveys and observation” (p. 42). For the purpose of this research, the author’s question on whether the respondents accept and support political participation of Qatari women yielded a 73.8% approval and 26.2% of disapproval, with 3 respondents skipping the question. Overall, the results showed that male Hadar students were “seemingly more open to accepting women’s modern roles and a gender mixture in the workforce and classrooms” (p. 55). Bedouins, on the other hand, were more conservative in their views towards women’s issues. As for female students, the opinions “were nearly identical as they both supported the modern role of women in Qatar” (p. 55).

On the same discussion of Qatari women’s changing roles with the modernization of society, Bahry and Marr (2005) examined the notable changes towards the status and role of women, and its importance to the reform process. Women’s progress in the education and work fields, as well as family and marriage fields, which the authors supported with statistical figures, is significant to the society as a whole. Furthermore, the political field did witness strong changes, with women making up 45% of total voters in the first round of elections in 1999. However, as the authors outlined, reasons for the failure to elect any women to the Municipal Council can be attributed to the society’s conservatism (from both genders), as well as the inexperience and lack of preparation from the female candidates. Given the fact that female participation as both voters and candidates has decreased since the First round

of elections, these reasons are important, especially since this research aims to shed light on the reasons for the lack of Qatari women's political participation, and examining whether these reasons still exist today.

The Federal National Council (FNC) elections in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2006 represent a similar case to that of Qatar's in terms of inclusion of women in the first round of elections as candidates and voters. In a mixed method research study on members and candidates of the FNC council, Al Dabbagh and Nusseibeh (2009) found that, generally, "most men and women held positive attitudes about women's participation, especially in relation to government support, but they were more critical of the role that voters and society at large play in facilitating such participation" (Al Dabbagh and Nusseibeh, 2009, p. 10). Furthermore, generally, most respondents were positive about the distribution of women in the FNC council. The study also offered recommendations regarding the FNC and election process. However, although the study offered an important insight into women's political role and participation in the UAE, it nonetheless was conducted on members and candidates, and not the general population of voters. Thus, this limited the effects of this study, as it can be seen as biased to an extent, due to the exclusivity of the sample. However, the general approaches of this study, both theoretically and the methodology, offer a useful insight for the direction this study, since the UAE's case is similar to that of Qatar in terms of Council elections.

The political role and representation of women in the region is often associated with the challenges that prevent and "confront women in achieving decision-making positions" (Sabbagh, 2005, p. 52). Based on experiences drawn from Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen, the main reasons that hinder women's political participation in the Arab

region include: patriarchy, religion and the public-private divide. These reasons are important ones, and can be applied to women in the Gulf region, although to varying extents, due to some similarities between GCC and Arab societies. One important recommendation that Sabbagh discussed towards promoting women participation is the establishment of national mechanisms to facilitate women's participation. This can already be seen in the case of Qatar, as the government has aimed to include women, and even allowed for the 2003 elections to have a woman run unopposed, so as to show the importance of having women in political positions.

On the other hand, Peterson (1989) took this theoretical discussion on women's status further by focusing on social factors, such as traditional roles, as well as factors that are changing women's involvement like education and organizations, which are changing traditional roles in the society, especially since in recent history, many attempts have been made to include women in the political experiments in GCC countries, such as the national assembly in Bahrain in 1973. In a similar discussion, Bahry's (1999) article was perhaps one of the first to be written after the announcement of universal suffrage in Qatar. His main argument on the "new role of Qatari women" (Bahry, 1999, p. 121) took the discussion of traditional roles of women further, by focusing on top-down initiatives to facilitate the new roles of women, through Her Highness Sheikha Moza's efforts. Bahry also discussed the First round of elections that took place in 1999, where he highlighted the importance of its results, especially that no female was able to obtain a seat. His discussion can also be helpful to apply to the consequent elections, as he argued that these results can indicate that involving women has led to "changing attitudes of families and relatives of the women involved" (p. 123).

However, the decision for the inclusion of women by the government generated other changes for women in Qatar, as “The emir named his sister, Sheikha Aisha, as head of the Women’s Information Committee, which was encouraging women’s participation in the CMC elections and educating women about the virtues of democracy” (Lambert, 2011, p. 92). Furthermore, women anchors, and Her Highness Shaikha Moza Al-Misnad appeared on 60 minutes abroad and spoke publically about many issues (p. 92).

The compiled literature review reveals a comprehensive insight into the GCC in terms of the reform processes and the transitions in the region. It more specifically offers interesting overview of the case of Qatar, both in terms of reform and in terms gender and women's participation. This particular aspect has been instrumental in the case of the GCC, as it its peculiar characteristics instigate closer examination. The various sources utilized in this examination does not, however, reveal thoroughly the extent and context of women's formal participation in the case of Qatar. In this regard, the following chapters will aim to shed light on this issue comprehensively. This will be done by presenting and discussing the findings of a survey conducted among Qatari females to better focus this intended study on the aspects of female's perspectives towards formal political participation in Qatar, and thus, provide a better focus in terms of the unique Qatari case of politics.

CHAPTER 3: A RESEARCH CASE STUDY: QATAR

I. Research Methods

In concurrence with the research questions and purposes discussed in chapter one, this research study employed a cross-sectional quantitative study with a survey research design. Also, a qualitative research method was used in the form of an interview design. This mixed research method is the most appropriate within this context, as it allows for a wider research scope, and a more targeted number of responses and opinions within the Qatari society. Moreover, an anonymous survey allows for more confidence in responses, as participants would not be pressured into voicing a certain opinion.

In this regard, this research methodology had to take several ethical considerations into account. For the survey, a consent introductory part was provided before beginning the survey, to which respondents had to agree or not agree with. The participants were assured that their identity would remain confidential and no question was obligatory in response, and thus had the freedom to offer no response or skip the questions they did not want to answer with no consequences. In terms of the interview, the participant was provided with the consent form before beginning, as well as being provided with all the questions, as it was requested that the answers not be in a structured single question response. For both aspects, the participants were provided with the nature of the research study, as well as methods to contact the researcher and concerned office for details or inquiries.

For the purpose of this study, some technical terms used in the survey are clarified below:

- Election Process/Political Participation: Refers to the participation in the Central Municipal Council (CMC) either as Candidates or as Voters.
- Barriers: which includes any factors that can influence participation, and these factors differ and can include, for example, the society, the family, and others.
- Local Politics: “political activity at local level,” and given Qatar’s political situation, this refers to the Municipal Council Elections in Qatar, which is the only form of citizen participation in the country.
- Political Participation: This refers to participation of Qatari citizens as voters and/or candidates for Qatar’s Municipal Council elections.
- Political Participation: This refers to participation of Qatari citizens as voters and/or candidates for Qatar’s Municipal Council elections.
- Social Barriers: This refers any socially constructed factors that can limit women’s participation, such as private life expectations, patriarchy, culture and religion, among others.

Thus, due to the fact that Qatar’s local domestic politics only refers to participation in the Municipal Council elections, the terms will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

II. Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through an online survey sent to Qatari female participants above the age of 18, since 18 is the age requirement to be able to vote. The survey included information that must be approved by the participant before answering the survey, where the responses remained anonymous. The data was collected through a random probability sampling method, where the links to the

survey in both Arabic and English was broadcasted and sent to eligible Qatari females. Social media was thus utilized for a faster spread of the survey, and to expose the survey to as many Qatari women as possible. The interviews were mainly directed to the two female representatives of the Municipal Council, which allowed for a more inclusive approach in acquiring information from the representatives themselves. Only one representative was present to participate in the interview.

The online survey was developed in both English and Arabic (for better convenience) and sent to three participants to test it and give their own perspectives. The three participants did not become part of the actual study. The survey also included an introductory paragraph stating the purpose of the study and provided contact information, as well as an agreement to participate option (Appendix A). The same method was used with the interview process (Appendix B). The data was then collected through Google Forms, and the excel sheet obtained was exported to Microsoft Excel for analysis. The Data was mainly analyzed through conducting frequency descriptive statistics and tabulation for the different variables and data. The data presentation below will be in the form of tables and figures to illustrate the analysis, as well as narratives when needed. The analysis mainly depended on breaking down responses between those who ever registered to vote and those who did not, so as to get a more comprehensive view of female's opinions and responses. due to the fact that Qatar's local domestic politics only refers to participation in the Municipal Council elections, the terms will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

In terms of evaluation, one weakness to consider with the sampling method is that it could have reflected more of a non-probability sample, as the broadcasts,

although continued through a ripple effect, is difficult to easily generalize and include the entire Qatari female population. Another weakness is that the survey question asking for the main reason respondents think explains low female political participation could have restricted respondents' answers, and could be solved through having it as a multiple-answers question. On the other hand, the strength to my study was that it was focused on opinions, reactions and disagreement levels, which was a direct and less time-consuming approach for the respondents. This guaranteed the internal validity of the study, as there is a confidence in the results obtained, and the research instrument measured what it was supposed to measure. The reliability of the study was also reassured through having a cross-sectional study, which allows for the study to be repeated again with similar general results obtained.

III. Results: Data Presentation and Discussion (Descriptive Data)

The response rate for the survey amounted to 67 valid responses. It is important to note that the total number of respondents was 71, but four responses were omitted from the data analysis, as the respondents checked No, for the initial agreement of participation in the survey, and their responses will not be shared. Moreover, several questions were left unanswered by different respondents, and this has been accommodated within the data analysis.

To begin with, as *Table 1* shows below, the average age of the female respondents to the survey was 29.7 years of age. The respondents' ages varied from 18 years of age to 55 years of age, with the most frequent age of responders being 23 years of age, which also reflects that many of the respondents were of legal age during at least one of the voting rounds for elections. This is further shown in *Table 2*, where only 2 respondents reported they were below the legal age of voting during the

election rounds. However, 3 respondents reported they did not vote, but their ages range from 18-20, suggesting they were most likely under the legal age during the latest round of elections in 2015. In sum, 22 respondents registered to vote in the past elections, whereas 45 respondents did not vote in any of the local elections.

Table 1

Age (Years of Age)

Measures of Central Tendency	Value
Mean (Average)	29.7
Median	25
Mode	23
Minimum	18
Maximum	55

Table 2

Voting in Past Elections

Voting in Past Elections (Question 3)	Responses	Percentage (%)
Mean (Average)	22	32.83%
Median	43	64.17%
Mode	2	2.98%
Total	67	100%

In terms of the occupation of respondents, *Figure 1* below shows the distribution of occupations among the respondents. The majority of respondents reported being employed (66%), whereas 18% are students, 7% are unemployed, 6% reported being housewives, and 3% reported they are retired, respectively. This further reiterates the notion of the different scope of respondents, representing the major sectors of the Qatari society.

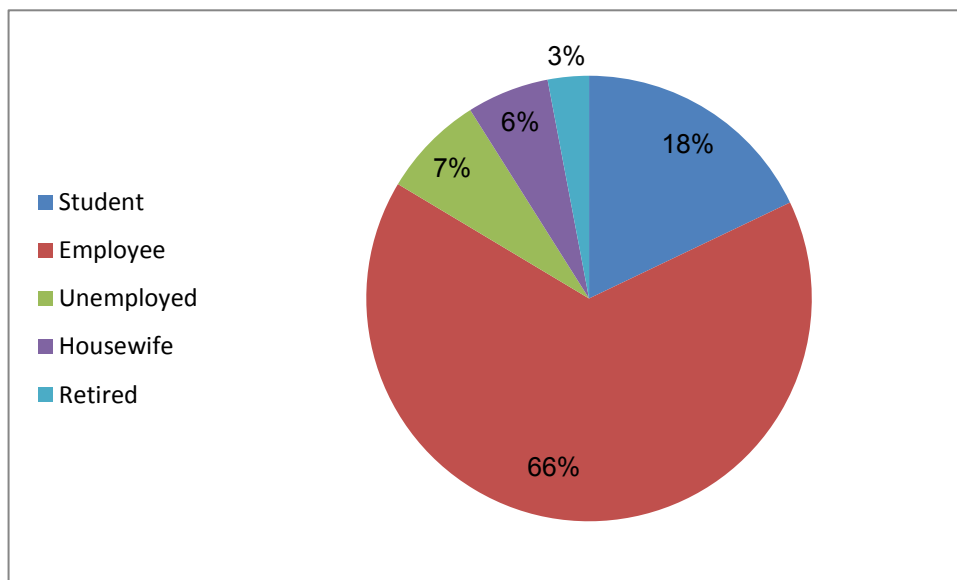


Figure 1. Occupation.

The next section of the survey (Questions 4 through 11) addressed voting and the Central Municipal Council Societal Awareness, and thus acquiring more knowledge about the respondents' political awareness and knowledge regarding voting and the females in the Central Municipal Council.

Figure 2 shows the responses received when inquiring about respondents' reasoning for not registering to vote in any of the past CMC elections. Excluding the

other/NA category (where some responses were left blank due to answering yes to voting previously, no response, or other reasons), 14 respondents believed that there is not significance to voting in the CMC elections, followed by 13 respondents who were not interested in voting, whereas 9 respondents were not aware the elections took place, and 7 respondents did not register to vote. None of the respondents reported that they wanted to vote but did not have the time. Moreover, of the other responses given, one respondent stated she could not vote because she worked in the military (military personnel, both male and female, are not allowed to vote), whereas another respondent stated she was not sure where women could vote, and another respondent state she did not receive any election news to vote.

The range of responses to this question is significant, as they reflect the extent of interest by the respondents in the formal local politics of the country. Given the majority of responses, it is possible to say that this political interest is low among the surveyed respondents, as well as political knowledge about the elections, as the responses showed that this was lacking to an extent.

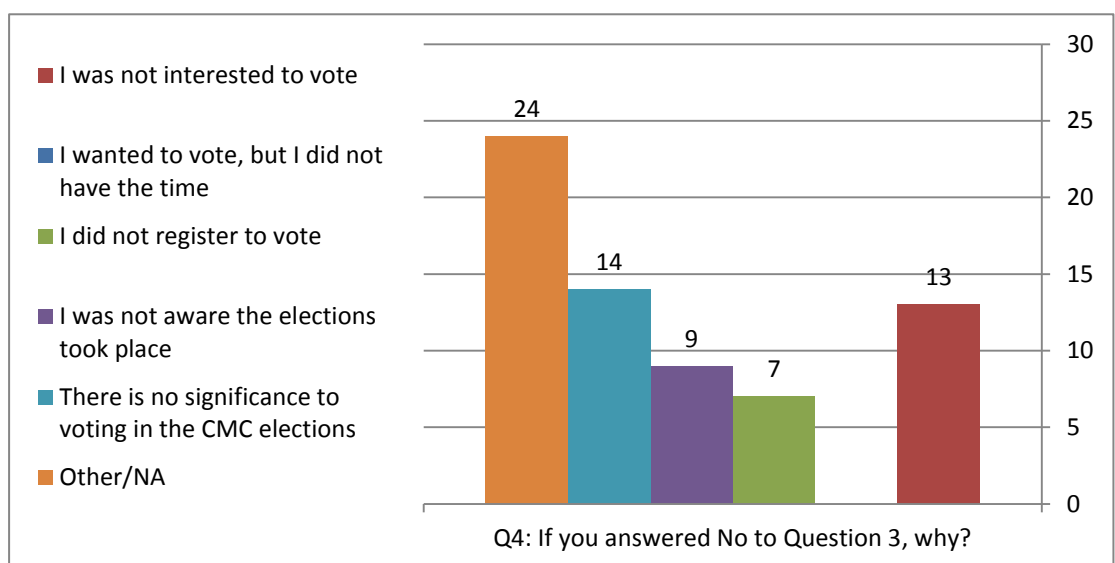


Figure 2. Frequency of reasons for not registering to vote.

In this regard, questions 5 through 9 of the survey narrow the context further towards the respondents' views and knowledge towards women in the formal local politics in Qatar, as well as their perceptions towards voting for females.

The first of these questions specifically targeted respondents who voted in past elections, and if they voted for any female candidates in their respective districts, if any female candidates existed in those districts, or if they would vote for women candidates in their districts. As *Table 3* below shows, only about 15% answered yes, and about 26% stated they did not vote or would not vote for a female in the Municipal Council elections. The remaining 58% opted to answer with not voting in any elections, and two respondents did not answer the question.

Table 3

Voting for Females

Q5: If there were female candidates in your district, did (would) you vote for them?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	10	15.38%
No	17	26.15%
I did not vote in any elections	38	58.46%
Total	65	100%

In a similar fashion, as *Table 4* shows, only about 7% of respondents voted for a female candidate in the past elections. In addition to this, *Figure 3* below shows the

responses in acquiring for reasons behind not voting for women in past CMC elections. Interestingly, 33% of respondents reported there were no female candidates in their districts, whereas 3% of respondents reported that they related more to the male candidate's agenda, as well as 3% stating they did not think the female candidate was qualified. Of the other reasoning provided, some respondents state they were not interested, did not know how and where to vote, or were not 18 at the time. Some intriguing responses included: "Never voted also I think this is just as relevant for men because civic participation is probably very low for men too", "I do not recall any achievement for any candidate so I would be interested" (See Appendix C). This shows that of the 22 women who registered to vote in past elections, only one candidate related more to the male candidate, and most other respondents reported there were no female candidates in their districts.

Table 4

Voting for Females in Past Elections

Q6: Have you ever voted for a woman in the CMC elections?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	7.46%
No	24	36.92%
I never voted	38	58.46%
Total	67	100%

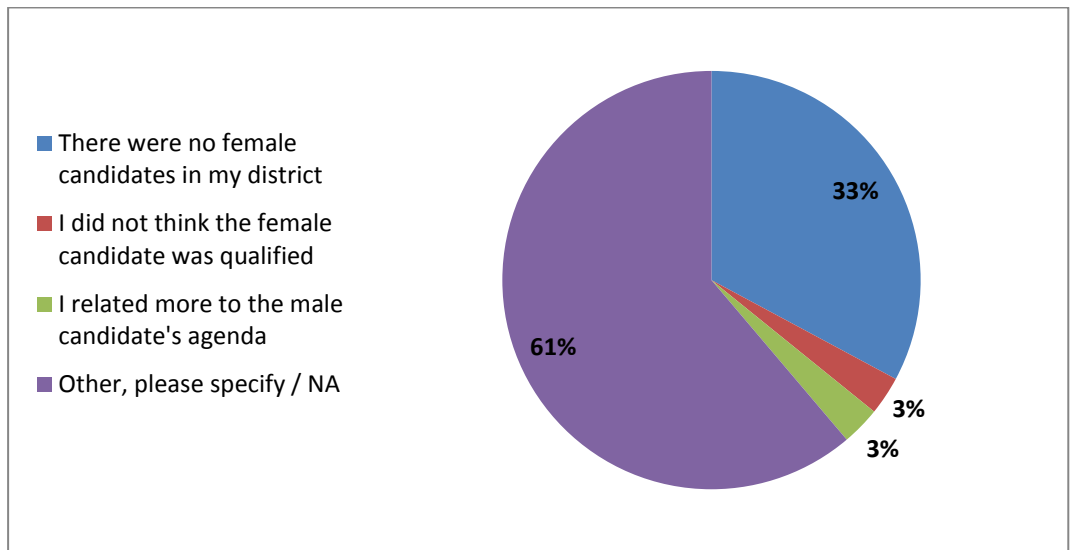


Figure 3. Reasons for not voting for women in past elections

In this regard, the participants' were then questioned on their knowledge and reactions towards female members in the CMC elections. Thus, When asking about the respondents knowledge towards female members currently serving in the Central Municipal Council, the majority of respondents (36) stated they were not aware if there are currently any females in the CM council, whereas 30 respondents stated they were aware (see Figure 4).

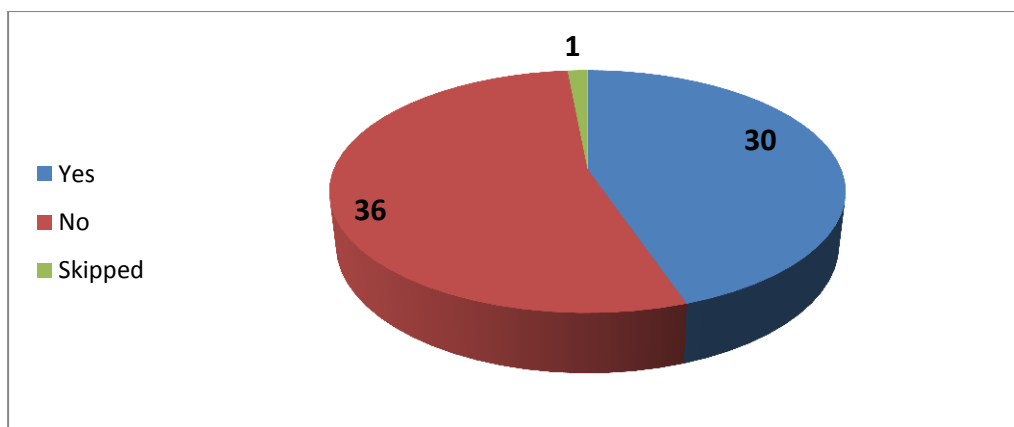


Figure 4. Do you know if there are currently any female CMC members?

Yet, when asked to state the number of current female members in the Central Municipal Council, only 19 respondents answered correctly by stating there are two females currently in the CMC, whereas 7 respondents stated there was 1 female in the CMC, followed by 5 respondents who think there are 3 females in the Council and 3 respondents stating there are more than 3 females currently serving, respectively. Moreover, as *Figure 5* below shows, a total of 33 respondents opted to skip the question at hand.

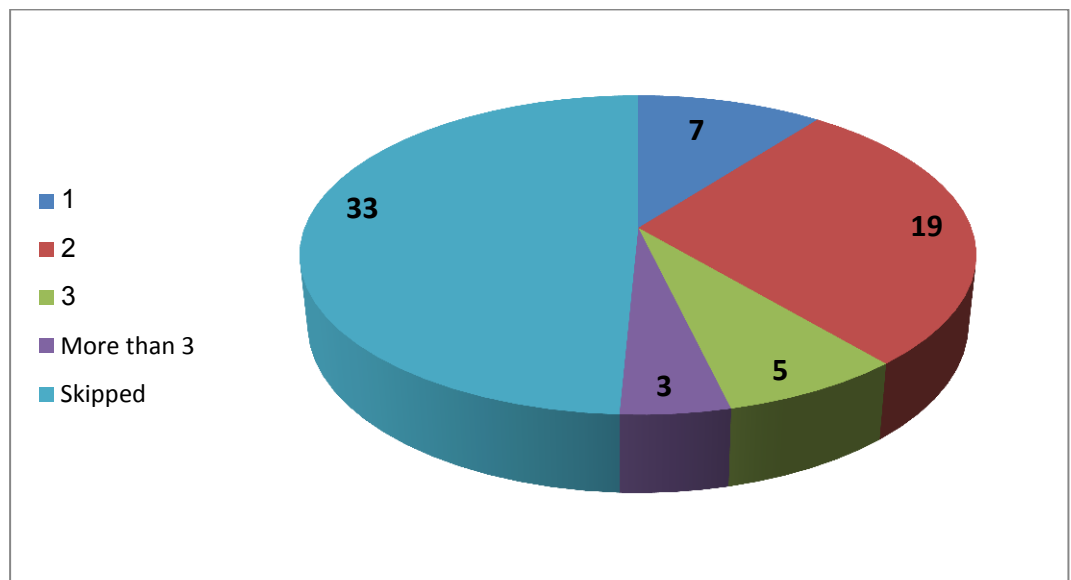


Figure 5. If you answered yes to question 8, how many female CMC members are there?

More to the point, when asked about the awareness of respondents that there has been only one female in the CMC until 2015, 35 respondents stated they were aware, whereas 32 respondents stated they were not aware (*Figure 6*). Similarly, when asked about the awareness that there are currently only two female members of

the CMC, 64% of respondents were not aware that there are only two elected females in the CMC, and only 36% are aware (*Figure 7*).

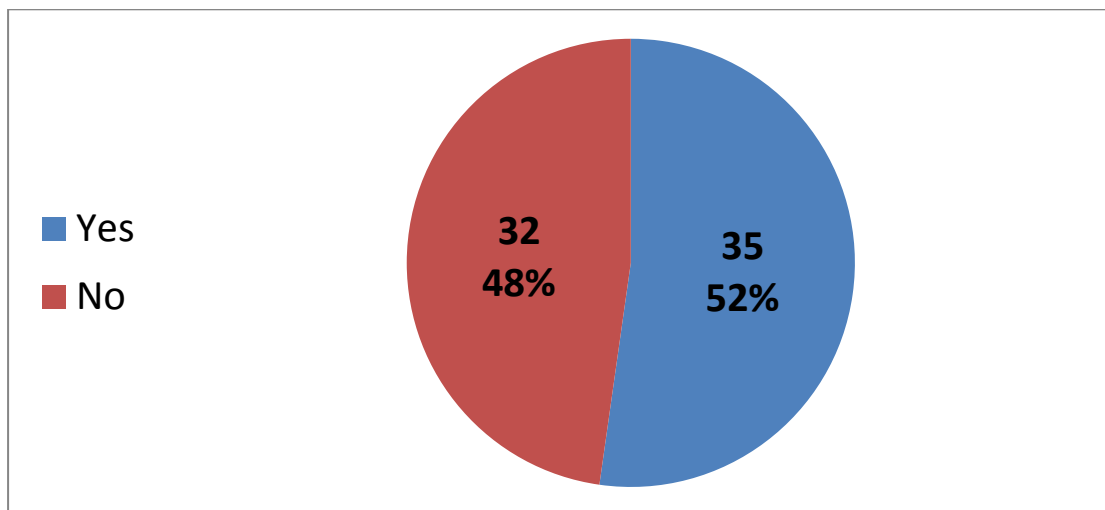


Figure 6. Are you aware that, before 2015, there was only one female representative in the CMC?

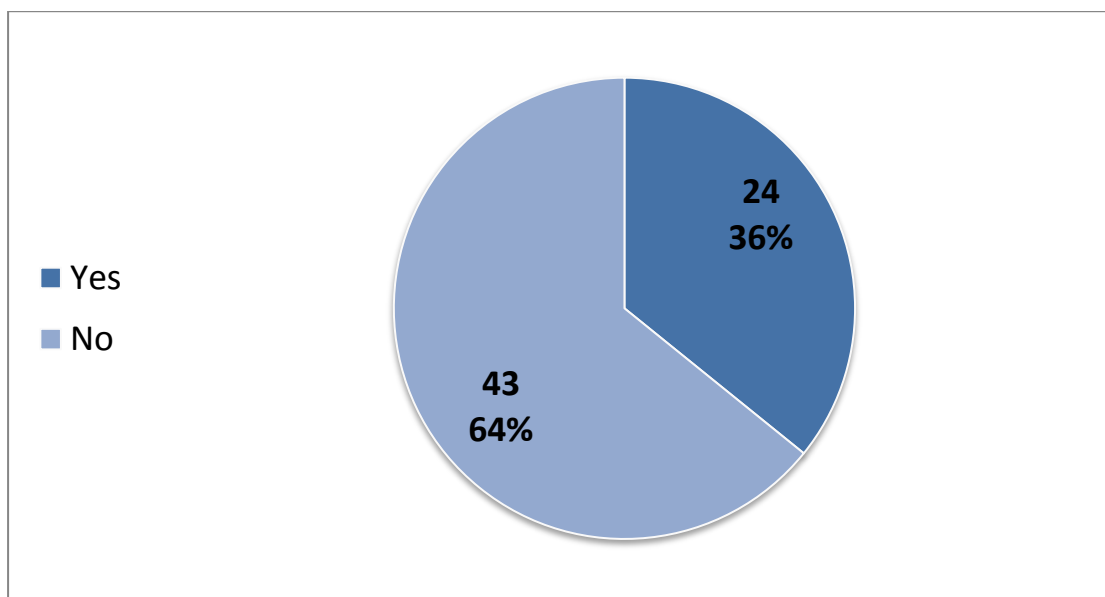


Figure 7. Are you aware that, since 2015, there have been only two female elected members of the Central Municipal Council?

In this regard, when asked about the reaction of respondents towards having only two female members of the 29 member council, 24 respondents were neutral on the matter, as they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, whereas 26 respondents were either somewhat or very satisfied. The data also reveals that a total of 17 respondents were either somewhat or very satisfied with having only two female members in the Municipal Council (*Table 5*).

Table 5

Reactions towards having 2 female members in the CMC

Q12: What is your reaction towards having 2 female members of 29 members in the Municipal Council?	Frequency
Very Satisfied	7
Somewhat Satisfied	10
Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	24
Somewhat Dissatisfied	15
Very Dissatisfied	11
Total	67

For a more comprehensive view of the matter, the respondents were asked if they were aware of the agendas or areas of interest of the female representatives in the Council, to which an overwhelming majority of 60 respondents reported they were not aware, and only 4 respondents being aware of the agendas or areas of interest for the female candidates. Three respondents did not answer the question (*Table 6*).

Table 6

Awareness of Female Candidates' Agendas/Areas of Interest

Q13: Are you aware of the agendas/areas of interest of the female representatives in the CMC?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	5.97%
No	60	89.55%
I never voted	3	4.47%
Total	67	100%

Following the preliminary questions regarding demographics and respondents' awareness towards the CMC institutional structure and the female representatives, as well as female representation during elections, the survey targeted respondents' agreement levels with regards to a number of issues, mainly regarding female participation in the electoral processes in the country (*Figure 8*).

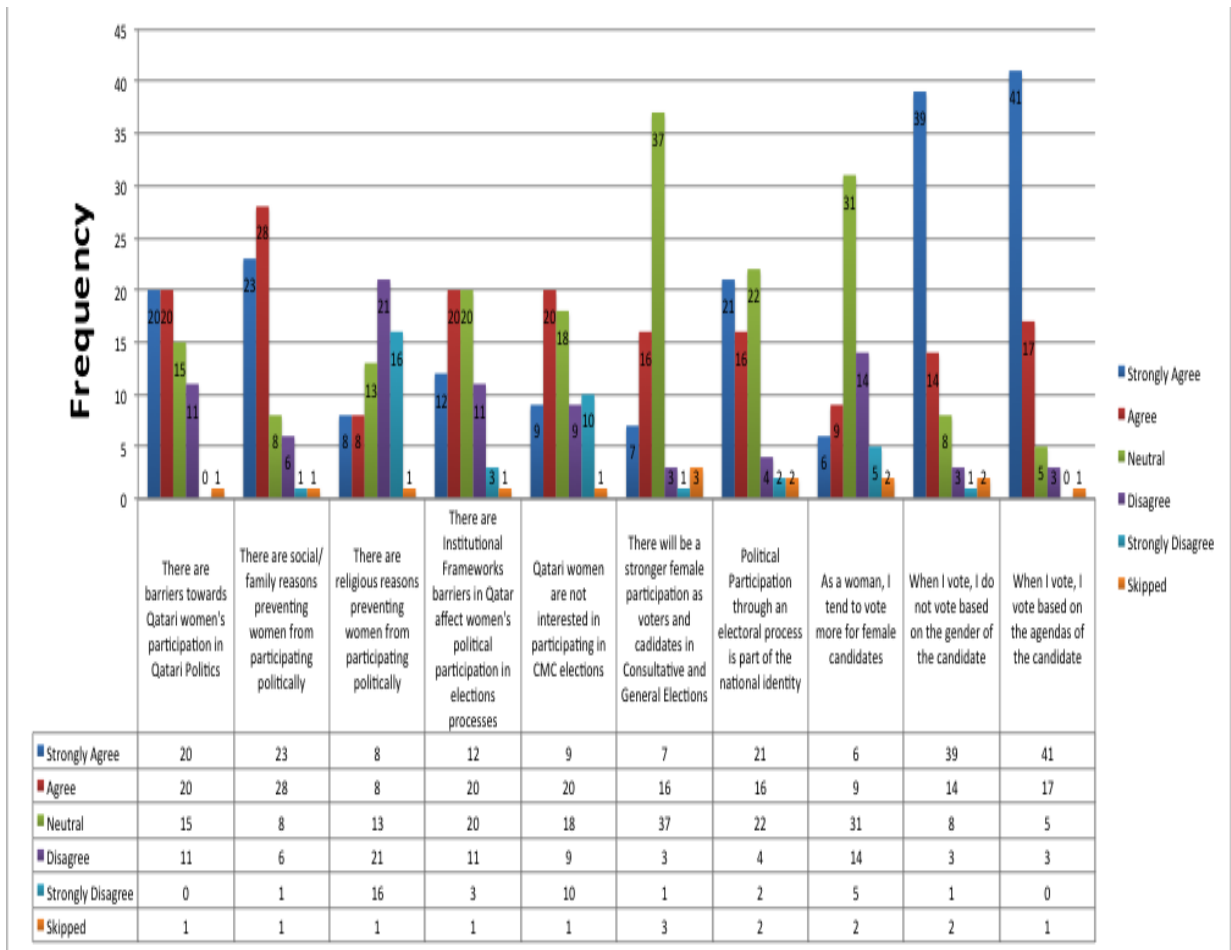


Figure 8. Extent of Agreement on Women and Political Participation.

To begin with, an integral aspect of the thesis study research questions revolves around the extent of barriers towards Qatari females' participation in politics. In terms of having barriers towards Qatari women's participation in Qatari politics, a total of 40 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are indeed barriers, whereas only 11 respondents disagreed with this statement. Similarly, when focusing on the social and family reasons preventing women from political participating, the overwhelming majority agreed or strongly agreed with this (51), whereas only 7 disagreed or strongly disagreed. Interestingly however, when stating religious reasons as a cause of participation prevention, 37 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed,

whereas only 16 respondents agreed or strongly agreed. A large number of respondents (13) were neutral about this.

In another context, when narrowing the focus towards the CMC, 32 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are institutional framework barriers preventing women from political participation in election processes, whereas 14 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. There were 20 respondents who also chose to be neutral on the matter. In terms of interest in participation in the CMC elections, 29 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, whereas 19 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and again, a high number of 18 respondents chose to remain neutral. In terms of expectations towards female participation in the announced Consultative elections and possible general elections, the majority of respondents (37) remained neutral on the matter, whereas 23 respondents agreed/strongly agreed and only 4 respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed.

Similarly, when asked about respondents' own preferences, 15 respondents agreed/strongly agreed that as a woman, they would tend to vote more for female candidates, whereas 19 respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed. The largest neutral response was in this statement with 31 respondents. In a similar context, when asked about the extent of agreement that when the respondent votes, they do not vote based on the gender of the candidate, a striking number 53 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, whereas only 4 respondents disagreed, strongly disagreed. Moreover, 37 respondents believed that political participation through an electoral process is part of the national identity, whereas 6 respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed on the matter. 22 respondents remained neutral. In this regard, another striking number of 58 respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they when they vote,

they do so based on the agendas of the candidate, whereas only 3 respondents disagreed on this. This offered the majority of agreement from the series of questions.

The different array of responses reveals interesting aspects from the sample surveyed. To begin with, there is a tendency presented that there are indeed barriers towards female participation, yet the focus is more towards social and family reasons, as well as institutional framework barriers rather than religious ones. Moreover, there is a slight agreement that Qatari women are not interested in participating in CMC elections, yet there is a belief that the consultative and general elections will yield stronger female participation. More to the point, the notion of association between national identity and political participation is existent based on the responses, as well as the realization of voting based on the candidate's agenda and not on the candidate's gender. However, this group of agreement level-questions did yield a strong neutral reaction from many of the respondents, which is also important to point out.

The survey also targeted respondents' views towards what they believed could increase Qatari females' participation in Qatari local politics (*Figure 9*). The overwhelming majority of respondents (34) believed that there should be more government support of women to encourage participation, whereas 15 respondents believed that there should be increased media campaigns to raise awareness of elections and 10 respondents believed there is no need for increased female political participation, whereas 3 respondents believed there was no low female participation. This reflects a different set of views, as there exists respondents who do not see a need for increased participation or that there is low female participation, even after being informed there are only two female representatives.

Institutionally, many respondents also thought the government support and media campaigns should increase in order to have more female participation. Interestingly, 3 respondents gave different reasoning, stating “Qatari female still needs competitiveness to enter this field strongly and compete and that needs more experiences, training and opportunities” (which can fall under the more support category), “the elections in general are not highlighted and I have never heard of anything the council has done [to] be celebrated or reported so sure they are elected but then what. I don't really think people understand what the point of this is unless it's just to prop up a nonexistent notion of civic participation” (which can be viewed as a criticism towards the institutional framework of the CMC elections) and “there is no need to do anything, every women has the right to participate” (which offers a direct approach towards the fact that low participation can be seen as a result of low interest) (see Appendix C). These three different opinions are also significant for the study, as they give a better understanding of the views of the survey sampled.

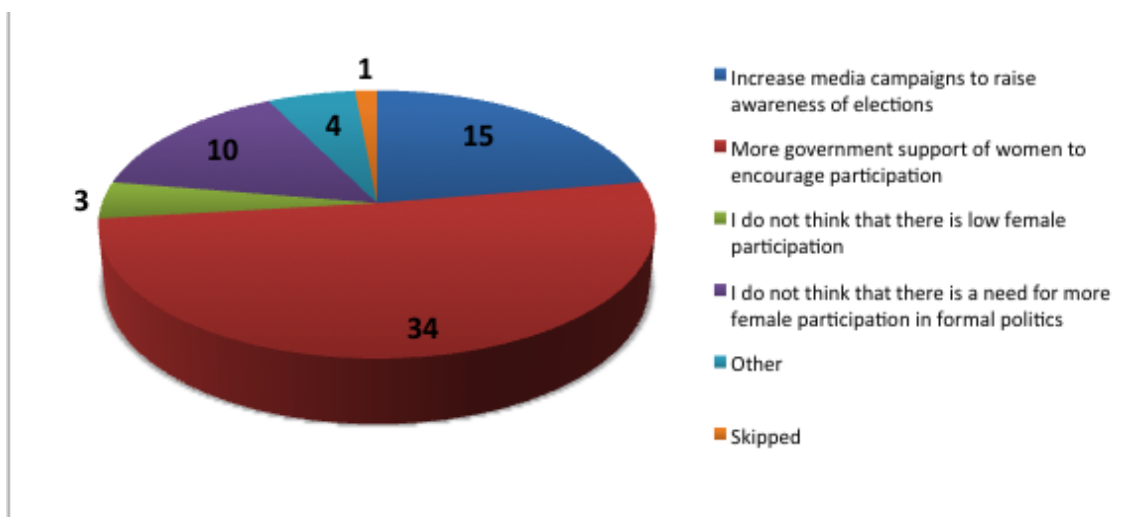


Figure 9. What are some possible ways to increase Qatari females' participation in Qatari local politics?

Finally, the survey asked about the likeliness of the respondents' to vote in the upcoming elections, where a promising number of 39 respondents were likely or extremely likely to vote, whereas 19 respondents were either unlikely or extremely unlikely to vote. 10 responses opted not to answer the question. This does reflect a positive promise towards greater participation for a more institutionally significant set of electoral processes (*Table 7*).

Table 7

Likelihood to vote in upcoming elections

Q16: What is the likeliness of you Voting in the upcoming elections?	Responses
Extremely Likely	16
Likely	23
Unlikely	11
Extremely Unlikely	7
No Response	10
Total	67

The survey also allowed the respondents to further share their opinions in the last comments section (although comments were also open for individual questions), which yielded a total of 14 comments, as presented in Appendix C, along with individual comments to all questions. However, it is important to discuss and highlight some these responses, including:

- Lack of awareness I think is the Biggest obstacle. We do hear about elections, but aren't aware of the process and how / where to vote. Especially for the English speaking population (who refer to English newspapers and online sources). We must instill in the country a culture of voting and public participation. I don't believe many woman vote in general.
- I wish they do not participate because there is nothing they can do, and men are more fit to do this process than women.
- It is not necessary to have a woman participating politically. What is important is the content, work, service and achievement regardless of the candidate's gender, so if Qatari female's participation in politics decreases it goes back in my opinion to the woman's choice herself to be capable of handling this responsibility or not.
- I believe there are many Qatari females who have the capability to uphold political positions in Qatar and with efficiency, and their lack of presence on the scene due to their busyness in raising children, and some their conditions do not allow them due to traditions and norms, and I think whoever has the will and desire and sets it as a target will reach what she wants because there is no law in the country that prevents this and we notice the support for excelling Qatari females every year by the government in the excellence award and it is not restricted to men, and the first minister in the Gulf was Shaikha AlMahmoud.
- The woman in general is not given the opportunities and she needs to be provided more opportunity to prove her efficiency.

- The political woman in Qatar is very wronged even if she gets an opportunity.

These varieties of responses reflect interesting aspects towards the political participation aspect in Qatar. The comments reflect all three initial investigative aspects of the study: the institutional framework of the CMC and its effectiveness, the political awareness of Qatari females, and the overall presence of females and political participation.

IV. Interview

The interview was done with Shaikha Al Jufairi, the longest serving representative in the Central Municipal Council. However, due to the inability of Al Jufairi to meet personally for the interview process, the representative agreed to participate through a social media platform. The participant expressed her agreement with sharing her identity. She also preferred to view the questions and answer them in the order she deemed suitable (See Appendix D). It is important to stress here that although the interview was done with one female representative, it does offer significant and indicative of the insights of the longest serving member of the Central Municipal Council. Moreover, Al Jufairi offered interesting insights on the perspectives of women and political participation, especially in terms of barriers, challenges and experiences and knowledge of women as voters and candidates. This in itself offers significant considerations, especially after taking into considerations the literature reviewed about female participation, and the reactions that Al Jufairi had towards female participation.

To begin with, Al Jufairi is a representative of the 8th municipality, which contained 24 zones, making it one of the biggest municipalities, as its area covers a

third of Doha. She has also been the president of the legal committee since 2003 in the CMC.

In terms of barriers faced in engagement in the political process, Al Jufairi did not find any barriers in her first year in the Council, after being the first woman elected, as "the presidency, members and related authoritative parties to the municipal field" (Appendix D) were all cooperative and welcoming of her. However, during her third term in office, she did admit to facing barriers from the presidency of the council, but she did not get influenced by these obstacles. Moreover, in the fourth round, she faced obstacles from the secretary general of the council, of whom the Council law states operates under the supervision of the Council, and as the president of the Legal committee, she insisted on this principle, to which has adamantly against, causing tensions and barriers. However, the secretary general's actions continued to cause tensions with other entities in the council, leading to his dismissal in one of the sessions. Therefore, the representative did not face obstacles after that incident, as well as in the fifth and current round.

In terms of the political process, the campaigning process was faced with differing levels of difficulty. Among these was trying to locate registered voters through her engagements in the society, as well as the redistricting that resulted in added pressure. In the last round in 2015, voter re-registration was also required, which required strong efforts to encourage citizens to register to vote. In this regard, Al Jufairi used her own social circles and through social media platforms to register. She also pointed out that she would visit houses of possible voters to campaign for herself.

In answering the fifth question, Al Jufairi delved into the social view of her running, she discussed how she ran in the second round of elections because she wanted to change the society's culture towards woman and that she can work in the Municipal Council. She was proud to have won unopposed, as the men who withdrew stated that they did so because of their "belief in the Qatari woman's role and that she is capable of this position [and] for the efficiency of Shaikha Al Jufairi" (Appendix D). This also happened again in the fourth round of elections, where Al-Kuwari contested in favor of Al Jufairi, in the municipality that was labeled as the "soft municipality" (Appendix D), as only women were competing it. She did publically state that the restructuring would give women a better chance of winning, which happened in 2015 with Al-Kuwari.

The third round of elections perhaps offered the most competitive election rounds. Al Jufairi ran with two men in her municipality, but she was able to overcome the competition by gaining the most number of votes in Qatar. The "hot district" (Appendix D) involved 3 male candidates competing against her, of whom she also defeated. This round witnessed a strong female presence as candidates and votes, as 5 women ran and 2 women were able to obtain seats. A noteworthy accomplishment for Al Jufairi that she highlighted in this regard is the fact that the number of female voters was close to the number of male voters, which showcased the benefits of her efforts in the campaigning process.

In regards to the sixth question, Al Jufairi believed that the Qatari woman has overcome the social, cultural and other barriers, especially due to the constant encouragement of His Highness the Emir, His Highness the Father Emir and Her Highness Sheikha Moza Al-misnad to the Qatari woman, including Al Jufairi herself.

Yet, when asked if she believed that the participation of Qatari women is limited, Al Jufairi agreed with this.

Lastly, the representative is optimistic about the Shura Council elections, as she believed that women will have the opportunity to obtain several seats, either as part of the 15 appointed members or as candidates. However, in terms of the Shura Council, it is important to note that, currently, all members are appointed, and there are still no women appointed in the Consultative Council since its initiation in 1972, but plans to raise the number of representatives to 45, with 15 elected members have been announced in 2011, but are yet to take place.⁹

⁹ The Father Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani announced in 2011 that elections for the Shura Council will take place in the second half of 2013, but these have since been postponed. http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2011/11/111101_qatar_elections_.shtml

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATIONS

The results in the survey presented above offer an insightful examination of women's attitudes towards female political participation. The results above revealed that, among the survey sampled, political awareness and interest in the local elections was low among Qatari females, as *figure 2* above showed, this interest was minimal.

The fact that the average age of respondents is about 29 years of age, and the majority are employed is significant to consider in the analysis. This average age reflects the assumption that political awareness of the local elections should be existent to an extent, yet, this was not reflected in the results obtained. Thus, it can be observed the focus on knowledge about female participation in the CMC elections was also insightful, as it revealed that among the survey sampled, 36 respondents were not aware if there are females in the CMC, and 30 respondents assumed there was only one female representative in the CMC.

The thesis study questions proposed in chapter one have manifested significantly in the results presented in *figure 8*. In terms of barriers, the results revealed the extent of these barriers to be more towards social and family related, and not necessarily religious barriers. There was also a strong tendency among the online respondents to believe that Qatari women are not interested to politically participate, as well as the fact that there are institutional barriers towards female participation in politics. More to the point, it can be deduced from the responses received that there is a strong majority that views political participation as a form of national identity, and an even stronger consensus that when voting, respondents would not vote based on the gender of the candidate. This can further lead to the deduction that women would

not necessarily vote for the sake of voting for their own gender, but out of interest in the candidate.

Most importantly, it can be observed that respondents are critical of the institutional framework of the Central Municipal Council. A large number of respondents believed that institutional barriers exist in the CMC that prevent women from politically participation. Furthermore, some respondents also expressed and commented further of the lack of the political influence of the CMC elections, which hinders from political participation, falling in line with existent precedent regarding the effectiveness of local elections with minimal mentionable jurisdiction power. This can also be viewed within the sense that there is also a strong tendency by respondents to politically participate in the anticipated Consultative elections, as well as a strong likeliness to vote in the those elections, as candidates and voters. This was also reassured with Al Jufairi's optimism towards female participation in these anticipated elections, as well as their opportunities to be appointed.

Therefore, the issue of institutional framework barriers are central towards political interest, political investment and political participation. This is because it can be deduced from the data that given the limited scope of jurisdiction of the CMC has led to lower political interest rates among women. Although the Shura Council elections do provide optimism, as stronger female support, as well as stronger investment in terms of addressing collective issues related to women is more possible due to the wider jurisdictions of the Shura Council, it is important to advocate for the importance of the CMC elections. This is because the framework is a key component towards participation, as it can be noticed in the case of other GCC states greater participation and political involvement of women is present in the case of

parliamentary elections. This can be expected in the case of Qatar, as it also allows for an opportunity to overcome other barriers such as social and family barriers. In this sense, the collective involvement of women movements or support initiatives can provide opportunities to better overcome these barriers. In this, the government and the society can better comprehend the significance of this elections in light of the changing patterns in the region, as political participation is part of national identity, which is what the majority of the survey respondents agreed to.

It is also significant to highlight the fact that among the 67 respondents, a majority believed there should be government support to encourage women to participate, whereas as well as more media campaigns to raise awareness about the elections. In this regard, the 2015 elections witnessed utilizing official TV channels of the country to broadcast informative segments regarding registering to vote. Moreover, in terms of government support, it is important to also mention that the government restructured the districts so as Fatma AlKuwari would not run in the same district as Shaikha Al Jufairi, as well as other government initiatives that worked on reinforcing Qatari women's role in the community, as well as granting her full rights and being in lead positions in the country (Al Malki 2015). This falls as well in line with Al Kitbi's discussion that government support for women exists, but social hurdles still exist. This is also reinforced by the fact that some Qatari women believe that there are "old ideas that still control some people, as well as the lack of trust in a number of men in having women taking these positions" (Al Malki, 2015).

This also falls in line with the deductions from the interview. Al Jufairi discussed how she ran in the second round of elections because no woman wanted to run. Thus, regardless of the fact that the male candidates withdrew to give a chance

for Al Jufairi and to reinforce women's participation, her decision paved the way to change the society's culture towards women in the political sphere. This benefited her greatly, as it led to her becoming the only candidate to serve in four consecutive rounds. Furthermore, her strong belief that the Qatari woman has come a long way and overcame the social and other barriers due to the encouragement of the leadership is also significant, as it offers a form of reassuring that there is government support that encourages women to politically participate, of which the survey did not agree with, as many respondents believed there should be more government support to encourage more female participation.

However, although Al Jufairi won uncontested in the second round, she continued to face institutional barriers within the council. Interestingly though, these barriers were not gender related, but focused on the workings of the CMC itself, to which other members also faced.

Another important aspect to consider is that in 2011, Al-Kuwari contested on the election day, and thus advocated for Al Jufairi, allowing her to obtain 800 votes. The fact that only two women ran in that district led to restructuring of the districts in the 2015 needs to be highlighted. Although this top-down initiative encouraged greater female participation, it does inevitably reflect a form of easiness towards running for females, which questions the CMC institutional surroundings itself, as it brings to the forefront a form of 'special treatment' to some extent.

In this regard, it is also important to examine relevant areas of comparison between this study and past studies done about political participation in the case of Qatar. Although these studies focus on both genders, it is nonetheless important to consider when viewing the results obtained in this study on a wider context.

The first of these studies was conducted by Al-Muhannadi in 2013. Although the study focused mainly on tribal vs. modernity aspects of both male and female Qataris, the author did deduce common attitudes in her analysis, one of which that "Qatari society does not accept a mixed-gender society, although they did believe that Qatar possesses elements of both a tribal and modern society" (Al-Muhannadi, 2013, p. 67). Furthermore, the "majority of the respondents also accept Qatari women's political participation" (p. 67). This can be seen to complement this thesis study, as the majority of women reacted positively towards female participation, yet the social and/or family barriers can be attributed, to an extent, to tribal elements.

In more broad study, Shockley, Bethany and Justin Gengler (2016) conducted a study that examined Arab voter preferences via a conjoint experiment, in order to shed light on whether voting is done based on qualification or affiliation. In this, it can be deduced from the authors' analysis of the data obtained that in terms of voting factors, only 23% of the respondents (both male and female) viewed family and tribe to be important factors, whereas education and religion were viewed to be very important (87% and 62% respectively). Moreover, on a scale of 0-10, the mean score of respondents who believed the CMC has institutional authority in their countries was 4.4, as well as a 4.8 mean on CMC satisfaction. This is very significant, as these attitudes towards the CMC have also been reflected in this thesis study survey, as a strong proportion of women believed that there are institutional framework barriers in the Qatari CMC, leading to low satisfaction, as well as the deduction that there is a low interest in the CMC due to the lack of indicative institutional authority.

Furthermore, in their study experiment, the percentage of respondents who were aware of who won in the district was 47%, which when compared in the

perspective of Qatari females' awareness of the CMC elections is quite high. To elaborate, Qatari females were, to an extent, unaware of the election process, presence of female candidates and/or representatives, which reflected their lack of knowledge about who won in their districts and the candidates who run in those respective districts. The fact that some respondents also stated that they were not aware the elections took place, or were not aware how to vote reflects this further, as well as the fact that they suggested there needs to be more government awareness on the matter.

In the same context, the Social and Economic Survey Research Institute (SESRI) conducted a survey in 2014 regarding life in Qatar, which included political attitudes and gender attitudes. Although the study focused on both nationals and expatriates of both genders, it nonetheless offers areas of comparison with this thesis study.

To begin with, among the Qataris surveyed, the report stated that the "proportion who report being 'very interested' in politics has increased almost threefold over the past three years, from only 12 percent in 2011 to 29% in 2014" (p. 19), as well as an increase among Qataris in living in a democratic country (p. 22). This is surprising, and is not reflected in the survey among Qatar women in this research, as many of the Qatari did not express interest in the CMC elections, as well as an interest in terms of registering to vote or voting in the past elections. This can further be generalized in the fact that the CMC election rounds are yet to produce a high voter turnout to surpass the turnout witnessed in the first round of elections in 1999. Interestingly however, Qatari women did express a likely interest in politically participating in the anticipated Shura Council elections or general elections, which

can be reflective of a political interest in a more institutionally significant electoral process.

In terms of gender attitudes, the study deduced that, overall, “Qataris hold positive attitudes towards gender roles and show more egalitarian attitudes in recent years” (p. 27), as well as an overall presentation of the data that there is a “decrease in traditional attitudes towards gender roles” (p. 28). More interestingly, the survey asked respondents about their agreement level on the statement that “leadership of community should only be in the hands of men” (p. 27), and surprisingly, this “significantly decreased from 65 percent in 2012 to 51 percent in 2014” (p. 28). This can be viewed as reflective of both genders moving away from the more or less traditional views, which although still being a high percentage of 51%, it still represented a strong decrease. In comparing this to this research study, many of the Qatari females surveyed believed that there are indeed social and family barriers towards participation in CMC elections, which can be seen as encompassing traditional beliefs. Thus, the more general SESRI survey does indicate a decrease in past years, yet among the Qatari women surveyed, there is still belief that there are social and family barriers. Yet it is important to also mention that there was also a proportion of women who believed that Qatari women are capable of participating, including Al Jufairi, who believed that achieving a strong presence and willingness among women was possible, which can be seen as reflective in the voter turnout in her district, which had a majority of female voters.

In this regard, it is important to lastly discuss the perspective of the sample size and influence of this research study. Although, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the sample size might in reality reflect a non-probability sample, it

nonetheless offers significant insights into the society's interaction with the issue of formal political participation. To elaborate, female Qatari's perspectives allowed different significant aspects to be deduced from the analysis, which paved way into significant discussions and interpretations. Furthermore, the somewhat low response rate should not undermine the results of this study, as it paved way into showing the positive shift of the inclusion of females in the political process in the country. In addition to this, it is also important to stress that the interview itself offers a significant insight, as well as important indications towards female participation. This is because Al Jufairi offered insights into both her own experience in the Council, which spans over 12 years, as well as her own insights into other female candidates and participants. This further supports the shift towards a positive utilization of political participation.

Thus, the survey and interview offer important analyses even with the inability to generate larger response rates, as they represent a fraction of Qatari women in the issue of political participation of women in the society and their views towards the that matter. It is also important to mention that the low political awareness towards the CMC did limit the scope as several respondents were not able to answer the survey due to their lack of knowledge. Yet, as the data has shown, women's views towards political participation cannot be ignored, which range from the need of more support and awareness, to views that women would not vote based on gender, or would not have voted for females in past elections. These attitudes provide a strong window of examination that surpass the aspects of response rate. Therefore, it is again important to stress that generalizations can be deduced from the data analysis, especially given the fact that the study focused on women's own reactions and

attitudes towards female participation, allowing for a first-hand approach on an issue that women need to and are related to.

Overall, these general studies do provide an interesting aspect that complements the narrower focused study on Qatari women. This is due to the fact that the comparisons made between the two aspects offer a thought-provoking insight on the matter of formal political participation in Qatar. These past studies were utilized and introduced to further expand the examination in the case of Qatar and female political participation through the Central Municipal Council, both as voters and candidates.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis study started with the emphasis on the needs and background of the study. It then focused on examining past and contemporary literature focused firstly on a general examination political reform in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, then focused on political reform process in Qatar and finally on female political participation, as well as barriers both within the GCC perspective and the more narrowly focused Qatar perspective. This was done for the purpose of contextualizing the discussion and to offer a better insight when conducting and designing the thesis instruments and methodology.

The research methodology focused on Qatari women as a case study, and employed both a quantitative and qualitative approach, utilizing an anonymous survey, as well as an interview with Shaikha Al Jufairi, the longest serving representative in the Central Municipal Council. These methods focused on participant's views and attitudes towards female political participation and the Central Municipal Council, both in its female representation and within its institutional framework.

The thesis study explained how the institutional framework of the CMC has hindered the Qatari society, and more specifically Qatari females, from actively participating, due to its limited designated authority capabilities, as well as its lack of integral influence within the political framework of Qatar. The study also revealed that there is indeed limited awareness when it comes to the CMC and the electoral process, and more significantly, it revealed that there is still strong sentiment of belief towards the existence of social and family barriers towards Qatari females' political participation. The thesis thus not only focused on whether there is low female

participation in Qatar, but it further focused and contextualized the discussion by examining how there is low female participation, as well as contextualizing why there is low participation by examining if and what barriers exist. The study further revealed that the majority of respondents still do believe that the government needs to increase its efforts in terms of raising awareness and encouraging and encouraging more female involvement in the formal local politics.

In this regard, this thesis study can be utilized to offer opportunities and ways forward to move on from this. The relevant governing authorities can benefit from this in realizing that there is indeed more to be done in terms of promoting and encouraging greater female participation, as well as raise awareness further of the electoral process in time for the next elections or for the anticipated Shura Council elections. There also need to be efforts to overcome the challenges that still exist in terms of barriers, whether they are institutional or related to the society, and encouragement from all stakeholders involved is necessary so as to yield a stronger female representation both as candidates and voters. The crucial threshold in this context is surpassing the strong presence and participation in the first round of elections in 1999, which can be achieved with stronger efforts and greater dedication towards both the institutional framework of the Central Municipal Council and within the society as a whole.

This study can help in raising further awareness, as well as opportunities to overcome the different barriers and challenges. This is because, as mentioned, the analysis obtained in this study can generate a stronger influence and awareness among Qatari women within the society. The study also showed that women are indeed not participating politically as was envisioned and anticipated since 1999. The different

barriers, as well as limited or no political knowledge of the CMC can be overcome both through top down initiatives, as well as bottom up initiatives that will better enhance the society for future elections, as well as for the anticipated elections. This would reflect, not only for women, but for the society as a whole, that the inclusion of women is a positive shift within Qatar's path towards its own development for 2030 and beyond, as well as for women in general.

Thesis Research Limitations

It is important to highlight the following limitations that were encountered in this research study:

1. It can be observed that there is limited research regarding the CMC and electoral reform process in the case of Qatar academically. The electoral process, especially during the time of elections, witnesses a strong interest within the community in the form of blogs/social media/ newspaper opinion columns, but there is a limit to academic research dedicated on the matter, which can be very significant in the case of Qatar, but limited the study.
2. The focus on females only also yielded a limitation in the sense that the studies conducted mainly focused on the gender aspect, even when viewing female participation, which offered a hindering in the discussion. This can also be applied in the case of the survey, as a greater response rate could have been reached if the study was generalized to include both males and females.
3. Obtaining direct interviews was a strong limitation in this study, as there were only two female candidates, one of who was outside the country and could not conduct the interview in any form. Also, due to Al Jufairi's many

commitments, a personal interview could not be arranged, but she greatly welcomed answering via a social media platform.

4. A great difficulty faced as well was that there was a lack of detailed published data concerning the CMC elections, as the results published by the relevant authorities do not give detailed aspects, but rather only focused on giving a general overview. There were also expectations of published research by entities such as SESRI, but they were indefinitely postponed for the duration of this research study. However, it is important as a final note to commend the significance of SESRI's research that asked relevant questions on democracy and people's inclination towards it.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY

English Version

Qatari Women's Political Participation: Roles, Challenges and Opportunities¹⁰

Consent Approval:

The purpose of this research project is examining the political roles of Qatari women with the society, with a focus on the Municipal Council elections, and the limitations and opportunities of female political participation. Below is a more detailed description of the intended study, including research questions for the research:

In this thesis topic, the researcher aims to explore the role of Qatari women, through their political participation within the Qatari society, as well as the perceptions and attributes of their participation, including challenges and accomplishments. Through this, the researcher aspires to explore and examine the different roles that women encompass in the Qatari society; the researcher intends to focus from this on formal participation through the elections in the country. Through this examination, there will also be a focus on possible challenges and obstacles that present themselves for women in the Qatari society, as well as opportunities that counter this.

Furthermore, the thesis will attempt to focus on important aspects, such as: how has the civic engagement (political engagement) of Qatari women changed within the Qatari society, what and how are the challenges and opportunities interconnected within this active participation, and in what aspects has women participation been most prominent? How have the Municipal Council elections affected Qatari women's political participation? What challenges remain for Qatari women today ahead of the anticipated Consultative Council elections?

Some terms relevant to the research study can be summarized as follows:

- Election Process/Political Participation: Refers to the participation in the Central Municipal Council (CMC) either as Candidates or as Voters.

¹⁰ The full survey can be accessed through the following link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/lyAHWtAMU2mgoXBe2>

- Barriers: which includes any factors that can influence participation, and these factors differ and can include, for example, the society, the family, and others.

There are no direct costs involved with participation and there are also no direct benefits to you. However, your participation will contribute to understanding the nature of Qatari women's formal political among Qatari females specifically and contribute to efforts in addressing possible challenges of Qatari women's participation. The collected data will be entirely anonymous and will be used as part and for the purpose of a research thesis project.

Upon your approval below, you are kindly requested to answer the following survey through multiple-choice answers and open-ended answers, which are entirely left for your opinion. This survey should not take more than 15 minutes to complete.

Objective of the Research: To investigate the challenges and opportunities of Qatari female's formal political participation through the Central Municipal Council elections.

If you have any inquiries, please contact Jawahar Almal: ja1512171@qu.edu.qa, or the Gulf Studies Center: gulfstudiesprogram@qu.edu.qa.

* Required

Do you agree to participate in this survey? *

- Yes
- No

1- Age *

2- Occupation

- Student
- Employee
- Housewife
- Unemployed
- Retired

3- Have you ever voted in any of the past Municipal Council Elections (CMC)?

- Yes
- No
- No, I was under 18 during the past elections

4- If you answered No to Question 3, why?

- I was not interested to vote
- I wanted to vote, but I did not have the time
- I did not register to vote
- I was not aware the elections took place
- There is no significance to voting in the CMC elections
- Other:

5- If there were female candidates in your district, did you vote for them?

- Yes
- No
- I did not vote in any elections

6- Have you ever voted for a woman in the CMC elections?

- Yes
- No
- I never voted

7- If you answered no to question 6, why?

- There were no female candidates in my district
- I did not think the female candidate was qualified
- I related more to the male candidate's agenda
- Other, please specify.

8- Do you know if there are currently any female CMC members?

- Yes
- No

9- If you answered yes to question 8, how many female CMC members are there?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

10- Are you aware that, before 2015, there was only one female representative in the CMC?

- Yes
- No

11- Are you aware that, since 2015, there have been only two female elected members of the Central Municipal Council?

- Yes
- No

12- What is your reaction towards having 2 female members of 29 members in the Municipal Council?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

13- Are you aware of the agendas/areas of interest of the female representatives in the Municipal Council?

- Yes
- No

14- To what Extent do you agree with the following?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There are barriers towards Qatari women's participation in Qatari Politics					

There are social/family reasons preventing women from participating politically					
There are religious reasons preventing women from participating politically					
There are Institutional Frameworks barriers in Qatar affect women's political participation in elections processes					
Qatari women are not interested in participating in CMC elections					
There will be a stronger female participation as voters and candidates in Consultative and General Elections					
Political Participation through an electoral process is part of the national identity					
As a woman, I tend to vote more for female candidates					
When I vote, I do not vote based on the gender of the candidate					
When I vote, I vote based on the agendas of the candidate					

15- What are some possible ways to increase Qatari female's participation in Qatari local politics?

- Increase media campaigns to raise awareness of elections
- More government support of women to encourage participation
- I do not think that there is low female participation
- I do not think that there is a need for more female participation in formal politics
- Other:

16- What is the likeliness of you voting in the upcoming elections?

- Extremely Likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Extremely Unlikely
- No Response

17- Do you have any further comments regarding Qatari Female's Political Participation in Qatar?

Arabic Version

استبيان حول المشاركة السياسية للمرأة القطرية: الأدوار، التحديات، الفرص¹¹

طلب موافقة على المشاركة:

اسمي جواهر المال، وأنا طالبة في برنامج دراسات الخليج التابع للدراسات العليا لجامعة قطر، سيتم استخدام هذا الاستبيان كجزء من المتطلبات لتحقيق درجة الماجستير الهدف التركيزي من هذا المشروع هو بحث الأدوار السياسية للمرأة القطرية في المجتمع القطري، مع التركيز على انتخابات المجلس البلدي المركزي، بالإضافة إلى المعوقات والفرص لمشاركة المرأة السياسية. فيما يلي تفصيل أكثر حول الدراسة المعنية، والذي يتضمن أيضاً الأسئلة المحورية للدراسة:

الهدف من البحث هو دراسة دور النساء في قطر من خلال مشاركتهن السياسية الرسمية في المجتمع القطري، بالإضافة إلى التصورات والصفات المصاحبة لمشاركتهن، والذي يتضمن أيضاً التحديات والإنجازات لهذه المشاركات. من هذا المنطلق، تأمل الباحثة لاستكشاف وتحليل الأدوار المختلفة للمرأة في المجتمع القطري. تهدف الباحثة على التركيز في هذا على المشاركة الرسمية في الانتخابات في الدولة. من خلال هذا التركيز، سيتم التطرق أيضاً إلى التحديات والعوائق الممكنة، والتي تظهر للمرأة في المجتمع القطري، بالإضافة إلى الفرص الممكنة لمواجهة هذه التحديات والعوائق الموجودة.

علاوةً على ذلك، ستركز الرسالة على أوجه مهمة، مثل: كيف تغيرت المشاركة السياسية والفعالة في المجتمع القطري؟، ما هي وكيف ترتبط التحديات والفرص للمشاركة فيما يخص هذه المشاركة الفعالة، وفي أي منظور تعد مشاركة المرأة بارزة وأكثر فاعلية؟، كيف أثرت انتخابات المجلس البلدي على المشاركة السياسية للمرأة القطرية؟ أية تحديات لا تزال موجودة للمرأة القطرية اليوم قبيل انتخابات مجلس الشورى المتوقعة؟

بعض من المفاهيم المتعلقة بالبحث يمكن تلخيصها فيما يلي:

- العملية الانتخابية/المشاركة السياسية: ويُقصد بها المشاركة في انتخابات المجلس البلدي المركزي سواءً كناخبين أو مرشحين.

- عوائق: والتي تتضمن أي عوامل قد تؤثر على المشاركة، وتختلف هذه العوامل وتتضمن على سبيل المثال المجتمع، الأسرة، وغيرهم.

لا توجد أية تكاليف للمشاركة، كما لا توجد فوائد مباشرة لكم. ولكن، مشاركتكم ستساهم في فهم طبيعة المشاركة السياسية الرسمية للمرأة القطرية ضمن النساء القطريات خاصة، وستساهم في الجهود لمواجهة تحديات ممكنة للمشاركة السياسية للمرأة القطرية.

مشاركتكم في هذا الاستبيان ستبقى مجهولة، وسيتم استعمالها ضمن البحث الدراسي لهذه الرسالة.

¹¹ The full Arabic survey can be accessed through the following link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/M88sVhcbH10kAbzk2>

بموافقتكم على المشاركة، يرجى منكم التكرم بالإجابة على الأسئلة الاستبائية في الأسفل عن طريق الاختيار أو الإجابة بتعليق، والتي متروكة لأرائكم تماماً. هذا الاستبيان لا يجب أن يستغرق أكثر من ١٥ دقيقة لإتمامه. موضوعية البحث: دراسة والتحقيق في التحديات والفرص للمشاركة الرسمية للمرأة القطرية عن طريق انتخابات المجلس البلدي المركزي.

لأية استفسارات، يرجى التواصل مع جواهر المال عبر البريد الإلكتروني ja1512171@qu.edu.qa أو مركز دراسات الخليج عبر البريد الإلكتروني: gulfstudiesprogram@qu.edu.qa هل توافقين على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة؟ *

- نعم
- لا

١- العمر *

٢- المهنة

- طالبة
- موظفة
- ربة منزل
- غير موظفة
- متقاعدة

٣- هل سبق لك التصويت في أي من انتخابات المجلس البلدي السابقة؟

- نعم
- لا

• لا، كنت تحت عمر ١٨ عاماً

٤- إذا كانت الإجابة لسؤال رقم ٣ بلا، لماذا؟

- لم أكن مهتمة للتصويت
- أردت التصويت، ولكن لم يكن لدي الوقت
- لم أقم بالتسجيل للتصويت
- لم أكن على دراية بأن الانتخابات قد حصلت
- لا توجد هناك أهمية للتصويت في انتخابات المجلس البلدي المركزي
- Other:

٥- إن كان هنالك مرشحات نساء في دائرتك، هل قمت بالتصويت لهم؟

- نعم
- لا

• لم أقم بالتصويت في أية انتخابات

٦- هل سبق وأن قمت بالتصويت لأية امرأة في انتخابات المجلس البلدي؟

- نعم
- لا

• لم أقم بالتصويت أبداً

٧- إذا كانت الإجابة للسؤال رقم ٦ بلا، لماذا؟

- لم يكن هنالك مرشحات نساء في دائرتي
- لم أعتقد بأن المرشحات النساء مؤهلات
- ارتبطت أكثر بأجندة المرشحين الرجال
- أخرى، الرجاء التحديد
- Other:

٨- هل أنت على علم بوجود أية مرشحات نساء حالياً في المجلس البلدي المركزي؟

- نعم
- لا

٩- إن أجبت بنعم في السؤال ٨، كم عدد النساء المنتخبات في المجلس حالياً؟

- ١
- ٢
- ٣
- أكثر من ٣

١٠- هل أنت على علم بأنه قبل ٢٠١٥ توجد امرأة واحدة فقط ممثلة في المجلس البلدي المركزي؟

- نعم
- لا

١١- هل أنت على دراية بأنه، منذ ٢٠١٥ يوجد هنالك فقط امرأتين منتخبين ضمن أعضاء المجلس البلدي المركزي؟

- نعم
- لا

١٢- ما هي ردة فعلك تجاه وجود امرأتين عضويتين من أصل ٢٩ عضواً في المجلس البلدي المركزي؟

- راضي جداً
- راضٍ إلى حدٍ ما
- لا راضٍ ولا غير راضي
- غير راضي
- غير راضي جداً

١٣- هل أنت على دراية بأجندة/نطاقات التركيز للأعضاء النساء في المجلس البلدي المركزي؟

- نعم
- لا

١٤- إلى أي درجة تتفقين مع ما يلي:

أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق بشدة
				توجد هنالك عوائق تجاه مشاركة المرأة القطرية في السياسة القطرية

					هناك أسباب اجتماعية/عائلية تمنع المرأة من المشاركة سياسياً
					هناك أسباب دينية تمنع المرأة من المشاركة سياسياً
					هناك عوائق في الإطار المؤسسية في قطر تؤثر على مشاركة المرأة في العمليات الانتخابية
					النساء القطريات غير مهتمات بالمشاركة السياسية في انتخابات المجلس البلدي المركزي
					ستكون هنالك مشاركة سياسية نسائية بشكل أكبر في انتخابات مجلس الشورى والانتخابات العامة
					المشاركة السياسية عن طريق العملية الانتخابية تعد جزء من الهوية الوطنية
					كامرأة، أميل إلى التصويت أكثر إلى المرشحات النساء
					عندما أقوم بالتصويت، لا أصوت بناءً على جنس المرشح
					عندما أقوم بالتصويت، أصوت بناءً على أجندة المرشح

١٥- ما هي بعض الطرق الممكنة لزيادة مشاركة المرأة القطرية في الانتخابات المحلية؟

- زيادة الحملة الانتخابية لزيادة الوعي فيما يخص الانتخابات
- دعم أكثر من الحكومة للنساء لتشجيع مشاركة المرأة
- لا أعتقد بأن هنالك مشاركة منخفضة للنساء
- لا أعتقد أن هنالك حاجة لمشاركة سياسية أكبر للمرأة في السياسة الرسمية
- Other:

١٦- ما هي احتمالية تصويتك في العمليات الانتخابية المقبلة؟

- من المرجح للغاية
- من المرجح
- من غير المرجح

• من غير المرجح للغاية

• لا رد

١٧- هل لديك أية تعليقات أخرى فيما يتعلق بالمشاركة السياسية للمرأة القطرية في قطر؟

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW

English Version

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW

(Women's Political Roles and Participation in Qatar: Challenges and Opportunities)

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Jawahar Almal** from *Gulf Studies* at Qatar University. The purpose of the **study is to examine the role of Qatari women, through their political participation within the Qatari society, as well as the perceptions and attributes of their participations, including challenges, accomplishments and opportunities.** The results of this study will be included in **Jawahar Almal's** Masters thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because ***you are a female representative in the Qatari Central Municipal Council.*** You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- This interview is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time or for any reason. It is expect that the interview will take about **30 minutes.**
- You will not be compensated for this interview.
- Unless you give me permission to use your name, title, and / or quote you in any publications that may result from this research, the information you tell me will be confidential.
- I would like to record this interview so that I can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. I will not record this interview without your permission. If you do grant permission for this conversation to be recorded, you have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end the interview at any time.

This research project will be completed by **June 2017**. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure workspace until **6 months** after that date. The recordings will then be destroyed.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

(Please check all that apply)

[] I give permission for this interview to be recorded.

[] I give permission for the following information to be included in publications resulting from this study:

[] my name [] my title [] direct quotes from this interview

Signature of Subject _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Please contact (*Jawahar Almal, email: ja1512171@qu.edu.qa*) with any questions or concerns. You can also contact the Gulf Studies Center (tel.: 44036523; email: gulfstudiesprogram@qu.edu.qa) with any inquiries regarding this interview and research

Interview schedule Transcript

Introduction

My name is Jawahar Almal and I am from the Gulf Studies Program at Qatar University.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview.

In this study I want to explore and examine *the role of Qatari women, through their political participation within the Qatari society, as well as the perceptions and attributes of their participations, including challenges and accomplishments*. The results of this study will be important in understanding the perceptions of female Qatari representatives towards the political participation in the Qatari society.

- Before we move on, do you have any comments or inquiries?

Interview Questions:

1. What position do you currently hold in the Central Municipal Council?
2. Can you please describe what obstacles/barriers have you faced in the first term of your first term in office?
 - a. Do you still face these after five rounds of candidacy? (*For Mrs. Shaikha Al Jufairi*)
3. Can you please describe what difficulties did you face while campaigning during your candidacy?
 - a. Can you please give me an example?
4. How have you been able to acquire large support for your candidacy?
5. Describe, in your opinion, how has Qatari female's participation been, as candidates and/or voters, during your candidacy?
 - a. Would you agree that female participation has changed in the past years?
6. To what extent do you agree that there are social, cultural and/or other barriers preventing women from politically participation?

- a. Can you please describe further?
7. What main obstacles do you consider exist for more female involvement in formal politics?
8. Do you agree that Qatari female's political participation in the CMC elections has been limited?
9. To what extent do you agree that Qatari men show greater political participation than Qatari women?
10. How has the addition of a second female affected the CMC performance after the 2015 elections?
11. How do you view the general discussion of the possibility of introducing quotas for women during the expected Shura Council elections?
12. Do you have any further comments?

Thank you for your time.

Arabic Version

الموافقة للمشاركة في مقابلة

الأدوار والمشاركة السياسية للمرأة في قطر: التحديات والفرص

لقد تم الطلب منكم المشاركة في بحث دراسية معد من قبل جواهر المال من برنامج دراسات الخليج في جامعة قطر. الهدف من هذا البحث الدراسي هو دراسة دور المرأة القطرية، من خلال المشاركة السياسية في المجتمع القطري، بالإضافة إلى التصورات والصفات لمشاركتهن، متضمناً التحديات والإنجازات والفرص لهذه المشاركة. سيتم إدراج نتائج هذه المقابلة ضمن البحث الدراسي لرسالة الماجستير لجواهر المال. تم اختياركم كمشارك محتمل في هذه الدراسة لأنكم امرأة ممثلة في المجلس البلدي المركزي القطري. يجب عليكم قراءة المعلومات التالية، وطرح أية تساؤلات فيما يخص أي شيء غير مفهوم، قبل أن تقررُوا المشاركة من عدمها.

- هذه المقابلة طوعية. لديكم الحق لعدم الإجابة على أي سؤال، وإيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت ولأي سبب. من المتوقع أن تستغرق المقابلة حوالي ٣٠ دقيقة.
- لن يتم تعويضكم لمشارككم في هذه المقابلة.
- لن يتم استعمال الاسم، اللقب، أو أية اقتباسات في أية مطبوعات قد تنتج من هذا البحث السياسي من دون موافقة مسبقة من قبلكم وستبقى المعلومات التي تقدمونها سرية إلا بإذن منكم لنشر نتائج هذا البحث.
- أود تسجيل هذه المقابلة حتى أستطيع الرجوع إليها واستخدامها كمرجع مع استمرار هذا البحث الدراسي. لن أقوم بتسجيل هذه المقابلة بدون إذن مسبق من قبلكم. إن تم إعطاء الموافقة للتسجيل، يحق لكم الرجوع عن هذه الموافقة أو/و إنهاء هذه المقابلة في أي وقت.

سيتم الانتهاء من هذا البحث بحلول شهر يونيو ٢٠١٧. أية تسجيلات لهذه المقابلة سيتم حفظها في مكان آمن في العمل حتى ستة أشهر بعد تاريخ الانتهاء. سيتم التخلص من هذه التسجيلات بعد هذه الفترة.
(الرجاء تحديد كل ما ينطبق)

() أعطي الإذن لتسجيل هذه المقابلة.
() أعطي الإذن لاستعمال المعلومات التالية في أية منشورات قد تنتج من هذا البحث
الدراسي:

() اسمي () لقبني () اقتباسات مباشرة من
هذه المقابلة

اسم المشارك:

التاريخ:

توقيع المشارك:

التاريخ:

توقيع الباحث:

الرجاء التواصل مع جواهر المال، أو الإيميل: ja1512171@qu.edu.qa بأية أسئلة أو استفسارات. يمكنكم أيضاً التواصل مع مركز دراسات الخليج (هاتف: ٤٤٠٣٦٥٢٣ إيميل: gulfstudiesprogram@qu.edu.qa) حول أية استفسارات فيما يخص هذه المقابلة أو هذا البحث الدراسي.

جدول نص المقابلة

المقدمة:

اسمي جواهر المال وأنا طالبة في برنامج دراسات الخليج في جامعة قطر. شكراً لموافقتكم للمشاركة في هذه المقابلة. في هذا البحث الدراسي، أود دراسة وبحث دور المرأة القطرية، من خلال المشاركة السياسية في المجتمع القطري، بالإضافة إلى التصورات والصفات لمشاركتهن، متضمناً التحديات والإنجازات والفرص لهذه المشاركة. ستكون نتائج هذه المقابلة هامة في فهم تصورات الأعضاء الممثلات النساء تجاه المشاركة السياسية في المجتمع القطري.

قبل أن نبدأ، هل لديكم أية استفسارات أو تعليقات؟

أسئلة المقابلة:

١. أي منصب تشغلونه حالياً في المجلس البلدي المركزي؟
 ٢. هل يمكنكم شرح ما هي العوائق/العراقيل التي واجهتوها في منصبكم في أول سنة من توليكم المنصب؟
a. هل لا تزالون تواجهون هذه المشاكل بعد خمس جولات شغلتموها في المنصب (خاص للسيدة شيخة الجفيري)
 ٣. هل يمكنكم شرح أية مشاكل واجهتوها خلال حملتكم الانتخابية؟
a. هل يمكنكم توفير مثال على هذا؟
 ٤. كيف استطعتم حشد دعم كبير لترشيحكم؟
 ٥. هل بإمكانكم شرح، بناءً على رأيكم الخاص، كيف كانت المشاركة النسائية - سواءً كناخبات أو مرشحات - أثناء ترشحكم؟
a. هل توافقون الرأي بأن المشاركة النسائية قد تغيرت في السنوات الماضية؟
 ٦. إلى أي مدى تتفقون أنه توجد عوائق اجتماعية، ثقافية أو/و غيرها تمنع النساء من المشاركة السياسية؟
a. هل يمكنكم الشرح بشكل مفصل أكثر؟
 ٧. من وجهة نظركم، ما هي العوائق الرئيسية الموجودة تجاه مشاركة أكبر للنساء رسمياً في السياسة؟
 ٨. هل تتفقون مع الرأي بأن المشاركة السياسية للمرأة في انتخابات المجلس البلدي محدودة؟
 ٩. إلى أي مدى تتفقون أن الرجال القطريين يُظهرون مشاركة سياسية أكبر من النساء القطريات؟
 ١٠. كيف تؤثر إضافة امرأة أخرى بعد انتخابات ٢٠١٥ على المجلس البلدي المركزي؟
 ١١. كيف تنظرون إلى المناقشة العامة حيال توفير مقاعد محددة للنساء في انتخابات مجلس الشورى المتوقعة؟
 ١٢. هل لديكم أية تعليقات أخرى؟
- شكراً لكم على وقتكم.

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL RESPONDENTS COMMENTS ON
SURVEY¹²

- *The parameters of political participation by society as a whole would be a much more relevant study as there is very little in the way of literature about it and I think it's something that is lacking across the board. Maybe that conversation needed to happen before we started this gendered one so we could at least compare and contrast and have something to measure women's participation or lack thereof against.*
- *Lack of awareness I think is the Biggest obstacle. We do hear about elections, but aren't aware of the process and how / where to vote. Especially for the English speaking population (who refer to English newspapers and online sources). We must instill in the country a culture of voting and public participation. I don't believe many woman vote in general.*
- *There is no awareness of the participation.*
- *I wish they do not participate because there is nothing they can do, and men are more fit to do this process than women.*
- *I hope the Qatari female receives more attention.*
- *It is not necessary to have a woman participating politically. What is important is the content, work, service and achievement regardless of the candidate's gender, so if Qatari female's participation in politics decreases it goes back in my opinion to the woman's choice herself to be capable of handling this responsibility or not.*
- *I believe there are many Qatari females who have the capability to uphold political positions in Qatar and with efficiency, and their lack of presence on the scene due to their busyness in raising children, and some their conditions do not allow them due to traditions and norms, and I think whoever has the will and desire and sets it as a target will reach what she wants because there is no law in the country that prevents this and we notice the support for excelling Qatari*

¹² These comments are a compilation of both English and Arabic comments that have been translated by the researcher to accommodate the research analysis.

females every year by the government in the excellence award and it is not restricted to men, and the first minister in the Gulf was Shaikha AlMahmoud.

- *Unfortunately we lack the political awareness, the woman's interests are shallow and she has not role in the political sphere.*
- *The woman in general is not given the opportunities and she needs to be provided more opportunity to prove her efficiency.*
- *I hope she is present in the Shura Council and Parliament.*
- *I prefer the man nominates.*
- *The political woman in Qatar is very wronged even if she gets an opportunity.*

Maybe just highlight a few of them?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW RESPONSE¹³

ملاحظة: تم إجراء المقابلة كاملةً عن طريق استخدام موقع تواصل اجتماعي، وقد تمت الموافقة على المشاركة في المقابلة، حيث تم طلب إلقاء جميع الأسئلة وتمت الإجابة على النحو التالي:
"نعم أوافق على المشاركة. الاسم: شيخة بنت يوسف بن حسن الجفيري. عضوة المجلس البلدي المركزي د ٨. رئيسة اللجنة القانونية بالمجلس البلدي".

أنا عضوة في المجلس البلدي المركزي للدائرة الانتخابية الثامنة وبها ٢٤ منطقة وتعبر د ٨ من أكبر د الانتخابية مساحتها ثلث مساحة الدوحة كما انني أشغل منصب رئيسة اللجنة القانونية في المجلس منذ ٢٠٠٣ وحتى الآن
في أول سنة لم أجد عراقيل الجميع كان متعاون معي من الرئاسة والأعضاء والجهات التنفيذية ذات الصلة بالعمل البلدي
لكن خلال الدورة الانتخابية الثالثة من ٢٠٠٧ الى ٢٠١٠ واجهتني عراقيل من رئاسة المجلس لكنني تجاهلت تلك العراقيل ومشيت على قدم وساق واستطعت أن أنجز عملي سواء داخل المجلس من خلال رئاستي للجنة القانونية أو من خلال متابعتي لشؤون دائرتي الانتخابية
أما في الدورة الانتخابية الرابعة والحالية الخامسة فإن هناك تعاون تام من رئاسة المجلس ومن الأخوة الأعضاء باستثناء الدورة الرابعة كانت هناك عراقيل من قبل الأمين العام للمجلس البلدي بالرغم من أن قانون المجلس واضح وصريح بأن الأمين العام يقوم بعمله تحت إشراف المجلس وبصفتي رئيسة اللجنة القانونية فكنت أؤكد على حق المجلس بالإشراف على الأمين العام وهنا اشتد الخلاف وازدادت العراقيل من قبله. ولكن بعدها اشتد الخلاف بين الرئاسة والأمين العام وبين غالبية الأعضاء والأمين العام مما نتج عنه أن المجلس قرر في إحدى جلساته إعفائه من منصبه وذلك مراعاة لمصلحة المجلس وبعدها والحمد لله استقر المجلس وأصبحنا نحن الأعضاء مرتاحين من قبل الأمانة العامة ومن الأمناء العاميين الذين تم تعيينهم بعد ذلك وحتى الآن

لأن الأمانة العامة في المجلس البلدي المركزي وجدت لخدمة ومساعدة الأعضاء فيما يخص شؤون دوائرهم الانتخابية

خلال حملتي الانتخابية في الدورات الثانية والثالثة والرابعة لم تواجهني مشاكل الا في بعض الأحيان اننا توجد لدينا كشوفات أسماء الناخبين فقط دون بيان عناوينهم أو أرقام هواتفهم ولكن بصعوبة بالغة حصلت

¹³ The responses are presented in Arabic and relevant quotes have been translated to English within the thesis.

على بعض عنوانين الناخبين عن طريق أشخاص آخرين يعرفونهم. والسبب أن إدارة الانتخابات تمنع تسليمنا ذلك وهنا يقع البحث عن طريق المرشحين

كذلك من الصعوبات التي واجهتني في الدورة الخامسة انتخابات ٢٠١٥ أن الدائرة الانتخابية الثامنة التي أمثلها الآن. قد ضمت ثلاث دوائر انتخابية وهي دائرة المطار ودائرة الهلال ودائرة الجسرة وذلك طبقاً لقرار وزير الداخلية رقم ٥١ لسنة ٢٠١٤ بتحديد الدوائر الانتخابية للمجلس البلدي المركزي ومن الصعوبات التي واجهتنا في الدورة الخامسة أيضاً هو إعادة تسجيل الناخبين من جديد. وهنا تكمن الصعوبة بأننا قمنا بجهد كبير لإقناع المواطنين للتوجه الى المقار الانتخابية لتسجيل أسماؤهم كناخبين. والمقر الانتخابية كانت في المدارس

وفي هذه الحالة الحمد لله استطعت إقناع غالبية المواطنين الذين يقطنون في د ٨ وذلك عن طريق قرع الأبواب وكانوا يرحبون بي وكذلك عن طريق مواقع التواصل الإجتماعي بل وفي كثير من الأحيان الاتصال المباشر مع بعض الناخبين خاصة كبار السن سواء من الرجال أو النساء وكذلك عن طريق الاجتماعات الجماهيرية التي كنت أعقدها معهم في منزلي لأشرح لهم برنامجي الانتخابي وماتحقق من إنجازات في السنوات السابقة

أثناء ترشحي كان هناك مشاركة نسائية كبيرة كناخبات وهذا في الدورة الثانية هنا لم ترشح أي امرأة فقررت الترشح وكان هدفي تغيير ثقافة المجتمع نحو المرأة وأنها قادرة للعمل في المجال البلدي والحمد لله فزت بالتركية بعد انسحاب المرشحين من الرجال لصالحني وقد عقدوا مؤتمر صحفي وبنينا ان سبب انسحابهم هو. ١ - لإيمانهم بدور المرأة القطرية وأنها قادرة على هذا المنصب ٢ - لكفاءة شيخه الجفيري وفي الدورة الثالثة كان عدد النساء الذين ترشحوا ٣ وأنا منهم ولكن في دائرة المطار ترشحوا معي رجلين ولكني بفضل الله والناخبين والناخبات فزت عليهم باكتساح وحصلت على أعلى الأصوات على مستوى دولة قطر

وفي الدورة الانتخابية الرابعة ترشحت معي السيدة فاطمه الكواري ولم يترشح أي رجل وقد أطلقت الصحافة على المطار بالدائرة الناعمة كَوْن امرأتين يتنافسان على مقعد العضوية وفي يوم التصويت صناديق الإقتراع حدثت الناس عني حيث فزت باكتساح على منافستي وبنسبة ست تسعون في المية حيث حصلت على ٨٠٠ صوتاً في حين حصلت فاطمه الكواري على ٦٠ صوتاً تقريباً

أما في الدورة الخامسة فإن عدد النساء المرشحات فكان خمس وأنا من بينهم وفي هذه الدورة كما ذكرت سابقاً وحسب تحديد الدوائر الانتخابية فقد تم فصل منطقة الثمامة عن دائرة المطار وأصبحت دائرة انتخابية وهنا أصبحت في الدائرة الثامنة وترشح معي ثلاث رجال وأنا الرابعة وقد أطلق على الدائرة الثامنة. ب الدائرة الساخنة على مستوى الدولة والحمد لله فزت باكتساح على منافسيني كما أريد أن أنوه بأنني قد صرحت في الجرايد بأن تقسيم الدوائر الانتخابية الجديد سوف يعطي المرأة فرصة أفضل للفوز ففعلاً فازت فاطمه الكواري على المرشح الذي نافسها

كما يجدر الإشارة الى أن عدد الناخبات في د الثامنة كان متقارب جداً مع عدد الناخبين وهذا يدل على وعي المرأة القطرية للمشاركة في العملية الانتخابية

بالنسبة للسؤال السادس فأعتقد بأن المرأة القطرية قد تجاوزت ذلك والفضل للقيادة الحكيمة من صاحب السمو الشيخ تميم بن حمد أمير البلاد المفدى وصاحب السمو الأمير الوالد الشيخ حمد بن خليفة والدعم اللامحدود من رائدة المرأة القطرية صاحبة السمو الشيخ موزا بنت ناصر وتسجيعها الدائم للمرأة القطرية وأنا منهم

إجابة س ٨ نعم

بالنسبة لإنتخابات مجلس الشورى المرتقب وطبقاً للدستور القطري فإن عدد الأعضاء خمس وأربعون منهم ١٥ سوف يتم تعيينهم من قبل الحكومة وسوف تكون هنا فرصة للمرأة للحصول على عدة مقاعد تحت قبة مجلس الشورى هذا إضافة إلى النساء اللاتي سوف يترشحن لعضوية مجلس الشورى