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# OPINIONS ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND DEMOCRACY IN IRAQ



**March 2015**

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# **Opinions on the Electoral Process and Democracy in Iraq**

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**March 2015**





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## Summary of Key Findings

### Overview

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted a public opinion survey of voting-age citizens in Iraq covering 15 out of the 18 provinces from October-November 2014. The three provinces of Anbar, Ninawah, and Salah ad-Din were excluded from the sampling frame due to the conflict situation in those provinces at the time of the survey fieldwork. The main objectives of the survey are:

- Examining opinions of the April 2014 Council of Representatives Elections
- Assessing the adequacy of the pre-election voter information and exposure to the voter registration information campaign
- Measuring knowledge and attitudes towards the new electronic voting cards used in the 2014 elections
- Examining voter registration patterns and understanding of voter registration procedures
- Eliciting views of the Independent High Election Commission (IHEC) and trust in electoral processes
- Tracking opinions on democracy and political efficacy

Exploring views towards women's participation in politics

In 2012, IFES conducted a similar survey, which was administered nationwide (across all 18 provinces) following the same methodology as this survey (apart from the geographic coverage). Below, IFES provides useful comparisons of public opinion changes in key topics to track changes in the public's perceptions.

### Opinions of the April 2014 Council of Representatives Elections

Overall, Iraqis are largely satisfied with the process and procedures of the April 2014 Council of Representatives Elections, with over 84 percent indicating they are very (35%) or somewhat (49%) satisfied. Satisfaction with the election was high throughout the country, except in the North, where only 66 percent expressed satisfaction. Furthermore, Sunni Arabs (77%) and Sunni Kurds (80%) were less satisfied with the conduct of the election than Shias (87%).

Assessments of integrity of the elections were in line with satisfaction with election processes and procedures with over three-quarters (77%) saying the 2014 Council of Representatives Elections were either completely (31%) or somewhat free and fair (46%).

Among positive aspects seen in these elections are their openness and transparency (mentioned by 51% of respondents), people's ability to vote freely (46%), elections are well organized (41%), and elections are peaceful (38%). Among problems or weaknesses, respondents mentioned long lines at polling stations (19%), poor organization at polling stations (11%), and the complicated voting system (9%).

Furthermore, at least two-thirds of Iraqis agreed with different positive statements about the elections: 75 percent agreed every eligible voter had an equal opportunity to participate, 74 percent agreed election results

reflect the will of the people, 70 percent agreed all parties and candidates received impartial treatment, 68 percent agreed that the commission in charge of administering the elections ensured the accuracy and completeness of the voters register, and 67 percent agreed vote counting was accurate. There were differences by sect and ethnicity: for instance, while attitudes towards election results were similar across demographic groups, opinions of the impartial treatment of candidates and parties were mixed: only 53 percent of Kurds agreed all candidates/parties received impartial treatment, compared to 71 percent of Sunni Arabs and 76 percent of Shia Arabs.

Survey respondents who voted in the 2014 Council of Representatives Elections overwhelmingly (80%) believe polling station officials were knowledgeable about polling center procedures.

### **Voting in the April 2014 Council of Representatives Elections**

The survey shows that a full 84 percent of Iraqis in the 15 provinces covered by the survey have reported that they cast a vote in the 2014 Council of Representatives Elections. This figure is much higher than the official voter turnout rate of 61 percent. The discrepancy is most likely due to the social desirability effect often observed with similar survey questions and to the underrepresentation of Sunnis in our sample due to the exclusion of three predominantly Sunni provinces.

The survey nevertheless points to interesting findings in terms of voter turnout: there is a narrow gender gap in voter turnout of seven percentage points with slightly more men than women casting a vote. Voter turnout is highest for Kurds, followed by Shias, and finally Sunnis. By region, voter turnout is lowest in the North and highest in the Center and in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Of those who did not vote, the main reasons for not voting relate to feelings of political inefficacy – that is, not believing their vote makes a difference or lack of trust in the election process (27%), or being sick (16%).

An overwhelming majority of respondents who voted in the 2014 Council of Representatives Election report voting without any pressure or intimidation and at least three in five (62%) report feeling “very safe” when going from their home to the polling station to cast their vote on Election Day. Indeed, over nine in 10 respondents said nobody pressured them to vote in a certain way or abstain from voting.

Going forward, a large majority of Iraqis (84%) say they are either very likely (61%) or somewhat likely (23%) to vote in future elections in Iraq. Again, there is a narrow gender gap with more males responding that they are very or somewhat likely to vote in upcoming elections. Furthermore, Shia Muslims report a significantly higher willingness to participate in future elections compared to Sunni Muslims. Of those that said they would be unlikely to vote in upcoming elections, about half (54%) attribute that to the belief that their vote will not make a difference.

### **Adequacy of Information ahead of 2014 Council of Representatives Election**

In the lead up to the 2014 Council of Representatives Election, Iraqis seem to have adequate information on some aspects of the election while needing more information on others. Voters had the least information about vote counting and how candidates are elected, with a full 73 percent saying they needed more information on this. Similarly, 59 percent said they needed more information on participating political parties and on candidates and campaigns. Moreover, 50 percent of respondents said they needed more information on the electronic card compared to 46 percent who said they have enough information.

It is noteworthy that for all aspects of the election, significantly more women than men say they need more information. This shows that while both men and women need more information on several aspects of the election, the information gap is larger for women.

Aspects of the election for which a majority of Iraqis report having adequate information include information on where to vote (68%), information on voter registration (59%), and on voting procedures and how to mark the ballot (57%). Yet this leaves approximately two in five Iraqis who need more information on these aspects. There is also a large gender gap in voter information regarding voter registration and voting procedures with significantly more women needing more information.

### **Preferred Information Sources for Election-Related Issues**

TV tops the list of information sources to learn about elections for Iraqis with large majorities indicating talk show programs on TV (72%) and news programs on TV (65%) are their preferred sources to learn about election-related issues and procedures. This is followed by word of mouth at 43 percent, talk show programs on radio (25%), billboards (18%), news programs on radio (13%), brochures/flyers (13%), and information on the internet (10%).

The top five information sources are the same for men and women yet with significantly more women (52%) citing word of mouth as a preferred source of information than men (36%). For young Iraqis aged 18-34, preferred information sources on elections do not vary significantly from Iraqis at large.

### **Knowledge of the Electronic Voting Card**

A large majority of Iraqis (72%) report having at least a fair amount of knowledge (55%) about the new electronic voting card that was used to vote in the 2014 Council of Representatives Election and a few (17%) have a great deal of knowledge compared with a quarter of Iraqis who know very little (19%) or nothing at all (7%) about the electronic voting card.

There is a significant gender and age gap in knowledge of the electronic voting card with more women and more people 55 or older lacking knowledge about the new electronic voting card than average. Meanwhile, Sunni Kurds are the most likely to lack knowledge of the card compared with other ethnic/sectarian groups.

In terms of information sources, over nine in 10 respondents with some awareness of the electronic cards indicate they heard about it through word of mouth, satellite TV, or local TV. Other less cited sources include billboards, leaflets and radio.

### **Information Campaign on Electronic Cards**

Nearly three in 10 (29%) Iraqis were able to spontaneously mention the slogan “It’s easy” that was used in the campaign launched by IHEC to encourage citizens to pick up their electronic voting cards. This compares to a 56 percent majority who were unable to recall any messages encouraging citizens to pick up their electronic cards. The campaign seems to have had deeper reach in the South where 38 percent were able to spontaneously recall the slogan than the North (28%) or the Center (27%).

When specifically prompted about the slogan “It’s easy” and asked if they heard it as part of the campaign encouraging people to pick up their electronic cards, the share of Iraqis who recognize the slogan increases from 29 percent (unprompted recall) to a full 65 percent majority (aided recall) who say yes they heard it and the remaining 35 percent say no.

### **Use of Electronic Cards in Recent and Future Elections**

Iraqis seem generally optimistic about the benefits of the electronic voting card with a large majority (86%) believing it would improve the electoral process. There are no gender differences on this question, but there are differences by ethnic/sectarian profiles with only 31 percent of Sunni Kurds believing the electronic card would significantly improve the electoral process compared with majorities of both Sunni Arabs (58%) and Shia Arabs (57%) believing it would significantly improve the process.

A full 93 percent of respondents reported picking up their electronic card ahead of the April 2014 elections. Iraqis seem essentially satisfied with the efficiency of the process of picking their electronic card, with 55 percent saying it was very efficient and 36 percent saying it was somewhat efficient.

Use of the electronic card on Election Day was mostly without problems, however, 10 percent of voters reported experiencing problems. Voters in the South and Iraqi Kurdistan were slightly more likely to experience problems with the use of the electronic card than voters in the Center.

The most cited problems with the electronic card relate to the card being rejected by the machine despite the voter being on the voter list, long queues building up because the electronic card reader was slow, the electronic card reader being unable to scan voters’ fingerprints, and polling staff not knowing how to use the electronic card reader.

Nearly two-thirds of Iraqis (65%) are unaware electronic cards used in upcoming elections may have voters’ fingerprints and photo. Although largely unaware of this, an overwhelming 85 percent of Iraqis are either very comfortable (52%) or somewhat comfortable (33%) with the capture of biometric information for electronic cards.



The few respondents who said they would feel uncomfortable mentioned it is primarily because collecting biometric data might be a problem for people not acquainted with the technology and because it may pose a problem for older people in general.

### **Registering for the 2014 Council of Representatives Election**

Three quarters of respondents (75%) have registered to vote in the April 2014 elections compared with 23 percent who did not. Slightly more men (77%) than women (71%) have registered to vote. By age groups, the difference in registration rates is not statistically significant. Meanwhile, there are significant differences in registration rates by ethnic and sectarian profiles with Sunni Arabs being much less likely to go and register (52%) than Sunni Kurds (90%) and Shias (76%).

A plurality of those who did not register (43%) said it is because their name already exists on the register. If we add up those who went to register and those who are already registered based on our survey sample, the share of those registered to vote in the 2014 elections reaches 85 percent of respondents. Sunni Arabs who did not register for the 2014 elections were nearly twice as likely to respond that their name already exists on the register (60%), compared with Shia Arabs (34%) and Sunni Kurds (31%). Other reasons given for not registering include not being interested or not caring about elections, not going to the registration center, not having their card, illness, and believing that their voice is useless.

Over two-thirds of respondents who actively registered for the 2014 elections (68%) checked their registration status at the voter registration center themselves and 41 percent had a family member check their status on their behalf. Some 20 percent checked their registration status on the IHEC website and 10 percent called the IHEC call center. Only 3 percent called the Governorate Electoral Office (GEO) to check their registration status. In sum, over a quarter of Iraqis who are registered (27%) did not take any steps to check their status.

### **Perceptions of Voter List Accuracy**

Only over a third of Iraqis (35%) believe the voter list is accurate to a great extent while 39 percent believe it is accurate to some extent, meanwhile, 6 percent believe the voter list is only accurate to a limited extent and another 6 percent believed the voter list is inaccurate.

When comparing to the 2012 IFES survey, we notice that assessments of voter list accuracy have improved slightly: in 2014, slightly more respondents (74%) believed the voter list is accurate overall compared with 2012 (68%).

Perceptions of voter list accuracy show significant differences by ethnic/sectarian profiles and by region, with a quarter of Sunni Kurds believing the voter list is only accurate to a limited extent (11%) or inaccurate (14%) compared to 14 percent of Sunni Arabs and 7 percent of Shia Arabs.

## Knowledge of and Confidence in the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)

Over three-quarters of Iraqis (77%) say that they know the body that is responsible for managing elections in Iraq, which represents a significant increase of 20 percentage points from IFES' 2012 survey when 57 percent of respondents said they know the body responsible for elections (Table 1).

Indicator	2012 Percentage	2014 Percentage	Percentage point change
<b>Know the body responsible for managing elections</b>	57%	77%	+ 20
<b>Correctly mention the name "IHEC"</b>	57%	62%	+ 5
<b>Heard a lot or a little about the IHEC</b>	80%	93%	+ 13

Self-reported knowledge of this body is higher among men (84%) than women (68%) and among Iraqis under the age of 55 (78%) than Iraqis 55 or older (64%). Knowledge of the body is also higher among Shia Arabs (82%) than Sunni Arabs (69%) and Sunni Kurds (59%).

When specifically prompted about their knowledge of IHEC, a full 93 percent of Iraqis say that they have heard either a lot (53%) or a little (40%) about the IHEC. This represents an increase by 12 percentage points from 2012, when 81 percent of respondents report having heard either a lot (38%) or a little (42%).

Awareness of IHEC is much higher among men (63%) than women (42%) and higher in the North (68%) and Center (64%) than the South (50%) and Iraqi Kurdistan (37%).

Approximately three in 10 are aware of the free IHEC call center that voters can dial to get election-related information while 70 percent are not aware of the call center. Of those who are aware, 21 percent have called the center for information before. Of those, the majority (79%) said the IHEC call center response was very helpful and was able to answer all their questions, while 20 percent said it was somewhat helpful, answering some but not all their questions.

The share of Iraqis in 2014 agreeing with different positive statements about IHEC's work has increased since 2012 (Table 2).

Indicator	2012 Percentage	2014 Percentage	Percentage point change
<b>Great deal or fair amount of confidence in the ability of the IHEC to organize elections</b>	72%	79%	+7
<b>Agree that "The IHEC has the capacity to effectively manage elections in Iraq"</b>	79%	88%	+9
<b>Agree that "Polling station staff were knowledgeable about their duties and responsibilities during the April 2014 parliamentary elections"</b>	78%	86%	+8

<b>Agree that “The IHEC is transparent in its operations and informs the public and the media about its activities”</b>	66%	76%	+10
<b>Agree that “The IHEC invites input from key groups in society in making critical decisions about the election process in Iraq”</b>	66%	72%	+6
<b>Agree that “The IHEC performs its duties with honesty and integrity”</b>	69%	77%	+8
<b>Agree that “There were as many women as men serving as polling workers at the polling station where you voted in the April 2014 parliamentary elections”</b>	72%	78%	+6
<b>Agree that “The IHEC is an independent institution without political influence affecting its operations and decisions”</b>	58%	71%	+13

Iraqis are largely confident in the ability of the IHEC to organize credible elections, with 79 percent saying they have a great deal (29%) or fair amount (51%) of confidence, an increase of 7 percentage points from 2012, when 72 percent expressed confidence.

Among those with knowledge of the IHEC, most Iraqis have positive attitudes towards its work in managing elections. Indeed, 88 percent agree that the IHEC has the capacity to effectively manage elections in Iraq, 86 percent say polling station staff were knowledgeable about their duties and responsibilities during the April 2014 elections, 78 percent agree there were as many women as men serving as poll workers at the polling station during the April 2014 elections, 77 percent agree the IHEC performs its duties with honesty and integrity, 76 percent agree the IHEC is transparent in its operations and informs the public and media about its activities, 72 percent agree the IHEC invites input from key groups in society in making critical decisions about the election process in Iraq, and 71 percent agree the IHEC is an independent institution without political influence affecting its operations and decisions.

### **Assessment of Iraqi democracy and institutions**

Thirty-eight percent of Iraqis say that Iraq is a democracy, 27 percent say it is both democratic and non-democratic, and 29 percent say that it is not a democracy. This represents a decrease of nine percentage points from 2012, when 47 percent of Iraqis said they consider Iraq to be a democracy. Perceptions of whether Iraq is a democracy or not vary significantly by ethno-sectarian profiles of respondents: Shia Arabs are more likely to say Iraq is a democracy (47%) than Sunni Arabs (33%) and Sunni Kurds (11%).

Among those who think Iraq is not a democracy, over two-thirds (69%) say it is not moving towards becoming a democracy while only 19 percent say it is moving towards becoming a democracy. These numbers are quite similar to 2012.

Iraqis' confidence in different institutions, organizations, and authorities are mixed; however, according to our survey, attitudes have for the most part improved since 2012 (Table 3). Iraqis have the most confidence in institutions tasked with ensuring security, such as the police and security services (83%), and the military (82%). Confidence in both institutions is far higher among Shia Arabs (93% police; 93% military) than all other ethno-sectarian groups.

Iraqis are also largely confident in religious and tribal authorities, with 80 percent saying that they are confident in this institution. The judicial branch likewise inspires confidence (78%). Meanwhile, confidence in the media stands at 66 percent, followed by the national government (64%) and Parliament (50%). And while 59 percent of Iraqis say they have confidence in Iraqi civil society organization, far fewer (43%) express confidence in international organizations operating in Iraq.

The institution that inspires the least confidence in Iraq, however, is political parties, with only 35 percent of Iraqis expressing confidence in it.

Institution	2012 Percentage	2014 Percentage	Percentage point change
<b>Police and security services</b>	79%	83%	+4
<b>The military</b>	76%	82%	+6
<b>Religious and tribal authorities</b>	71%	80%	+9
<b>Judiciary/Courts</b>	73%	78%	+5
<b>The media in Iraq</b>	73%	66%	-7
<b>National government</b>	62%	64%	+2
<b>Iraqi civil society organizations</b>	57%	59%	+2
<b>Parliament</b>	53%	50%	-3
<b>International organizations</b>	40%	43%	+3
<b>Political parties</b>	32%	35%	+3

### **Women's Involvement in Politics**

Over half of Iraqis approve of women's participation through eight different political roles; however, in all of these areas, females are more likely to support female participation than males and males are less likely to "strongly support" women in these roles: large majorities support women working in election administration (89%), women running as candidates in elections (87%), women serving in Parliament (86%), and women working for candidates during a campaign (81%). Slightly fewer Iraqis support women serving as ministers (79%), women being members of political parties (76%), and women heading political parties (64%). The area where the most Iraqis disapprove of women's participation is political protests, with only 59 percent of Iraqis supporting women's involvement.

Provided with a scenario where a male and female candidate for Parliament were both equally qualified, more Iraqis would vote for the male candidate (31%) than the female candidate (21%), and 47 percent say it makes no difference. Females are more likely to say they would vote for female candidates (34%) compared to males (8%), while males are more likely to say they would vote for males (40%) or say it makes no difference (50%) compared to females (22% vote for male; 44% say it makes no difference).

Less than a majority of Iraqis (37%) would vote for a woman as President of Iraq if she was equally qualified as the male candidate, while 41 percent say they would not, and 19 percent say it depends. Female respondents are twice as likely to say they would vote for a woman president (51%) than males (24%).

Just over half of Iraqis (54%) report having heard of the notion of gender quotas (similar to 2012). More men (58%) than women (50%) report knowing about quotas. A 72 percent majority supports a quota system in Parliament and 17 percent oppose it. This marks an increase of five percentage points from 2012. Overall, females tend to support quotas at a higher rate (77%) than males (67%).

Expectations of the future status of women in Iraq are not entirely optimistic, with 46 percent expecting the overall situation of women to improve, 35 percent expect it to stay the same, and 11 percent expect it to become worse. This is a more negative outlook than 2012, when 56 percent expected women's situation to improve, 29 percent expected it to stay the same, and only 5 percent expected it to get worse. Women tend to be more optimistic, however, with 50 percent saying things will improve compared to 42 percent of men.

## Survey Methodology

### Sample and Survey Specifications

- **Sampling frame:** The IFES 2014 survey was conducted in 15 of Iraq's 18 provinces. Three governorates (Anbar, Ninawah, and Salah ad-Din) were excluded from the sampling frame due to the conflict situation in these provinces. At the time of the survey fieldwork in October-November 2014, these provinces were either a war zone or controlled by the Islamic State group (ISIS) forces. This made survey fieldwork impossible in these provinces without putting the life of interviewers under high risk.
- **Sample size:** Two thousand respondents representing voting-age adults (18 years or older) in the 15 provinces of Diyala, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Basrah, Babil, Muthana, Maysan, AlQadissiya, Najaf, Dhi Qar, Wasit, Kerbala, Suleimaniyah, Erbil, and Duhok. Respondents were randomly selected and interviewed face-to-face in their homes. The sample was stratified proportionately across the 15 provinces where interviewing was possible in Iraq.
- **Margin of error:**  $\pm 2.19\%$  within a 95% confidence interval, assuming a pure random sample.
- **Fieldwork dates:** October 11 to November 8, 2014.
- **Survey firm:** IFES contracted with the Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies (IIACSS) of Iraq to conduct fieldwork and data processing for the survey.
- **Funding:** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for this survey.

### Questionnaire and Report Specifications

- **Survey questionnaire:** The survey instrument was composed of 54 closed questions, 6 open-ended questions and 10 demographic questions.
- **Survey analysis:** When data comparisons are presented between 2012 and 2014, we present 2012 figures excluding the three provinces of Anbar, Ninawah, and Salah ad-Din from the 2012 sample in order to have similar sampling frames between the two years. During the 2012 national survey, 2,031 interviews were conducted in the 15 governorates where the 2014 survey was administered.
- **Note about charts in report:** For charts and tables where percentages are based on filtered respondents or certain demographic groups, the appropriate, unweighted sample base for each percentage is specified in the relevant chart or table (example:  $n=456$ ). For all other charts or where not otherwise specified, the sample base is the total sample size of 2,000 ( $n=2,000$ ). There may be slight variation between numbers presented in the analysis and the data figures or tables due to rounding. This occurred in only a few cases and the difference was never greater than one percentage point.

### Sample Sizes of Key Demographic Groups:

#### **Sex**

Female ( $n=954$ )

Male ( $n=1,046$ )

#### **Ethnic Group Variable**

Arab ( $n=1,583$ )

Kurd (n=395)  
Turkoman (n=20)  
Refused (n=2)

***Ethnic/Sectarian Variable***

Shia Arab (n=1,209)  
Sunni Arab (n=271)  
Sunni Kurd (n=350)  
Muslim (sect not specified) (n=135)  
Other Combination (n=34)  
No response (n=1)

***Region Variable***

North (Diyala, Kirkuk) (n=110)  
Center (Baghdad) (n=550)  
South (Basrah, Babil, Muthana, Maysan, AlQadissiya, Najaf, Dhi Qar, Wasit, Kerbala) (n=1,060)  
Iraqi Kurdistan (Suleimaniyah, Erbil, Duhok) (n=280)

***Age Groups***

18-24 (n=358)  
25-34 (n=613)  
35-44 (n=514)  
45-54 (n=304)  
55+ (n=211)

***Income Groups***

Lower (0-200,000 Dinar) (n=35)  
Lower-middle (200,001-400,000 Dinar) (n=403)  
Upper-middle (400,001-600,000 Dinar) (n=417)  
Upper (600,001 Dinar and up) (n=1,054)  
Did not specify (n=91)

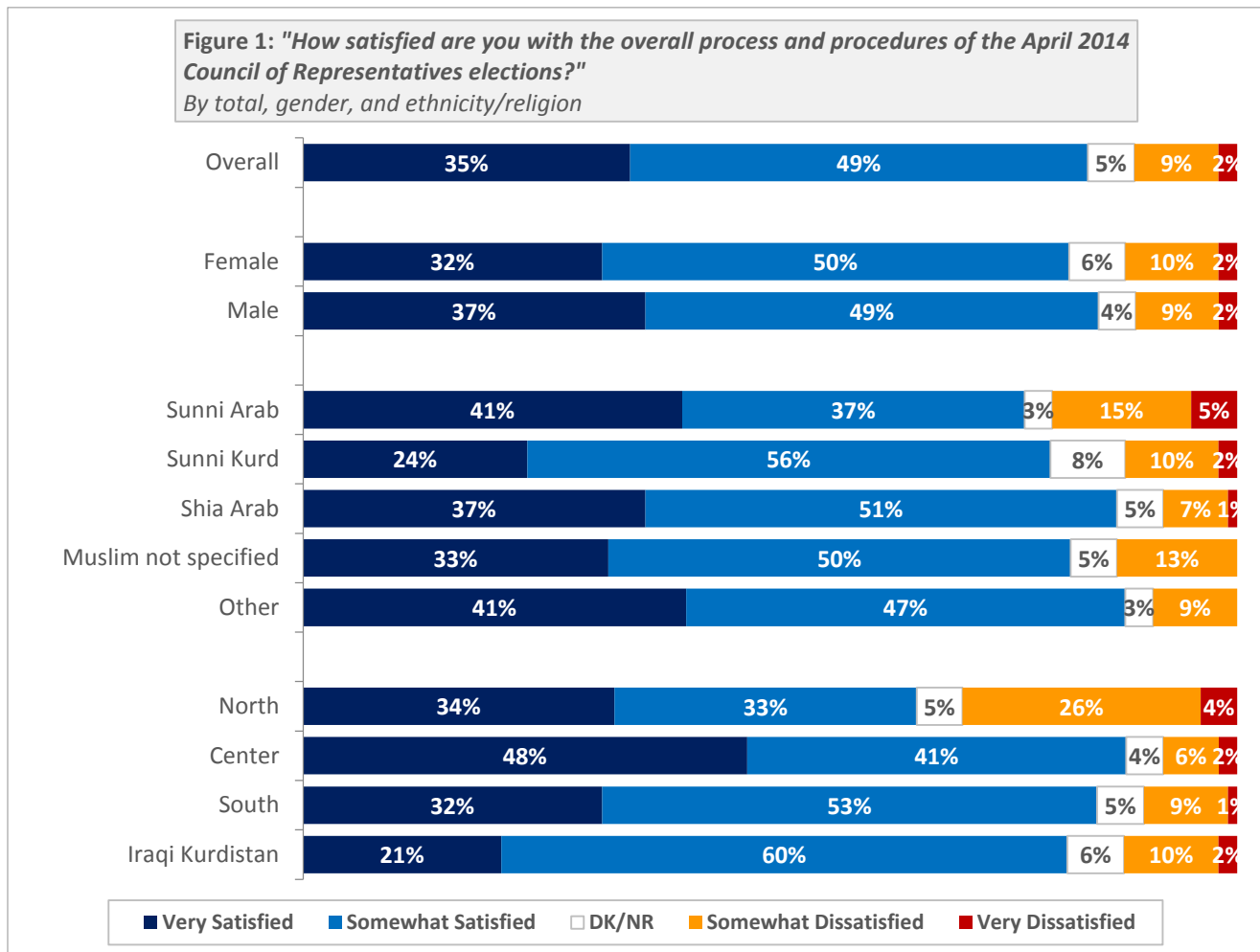
***Educational Attainment***

Illiterate (n=119)  
Reads/writes (traditional education) (n=146)  
Primary (n=491)  
Intermediate (n=438)  
Secondary (n=397)  
Some university/no degree (n=203)  
University degree or higher (n=198)  
Refused (n=8)

## Opinions of the April 2014 Council of Representatives Election

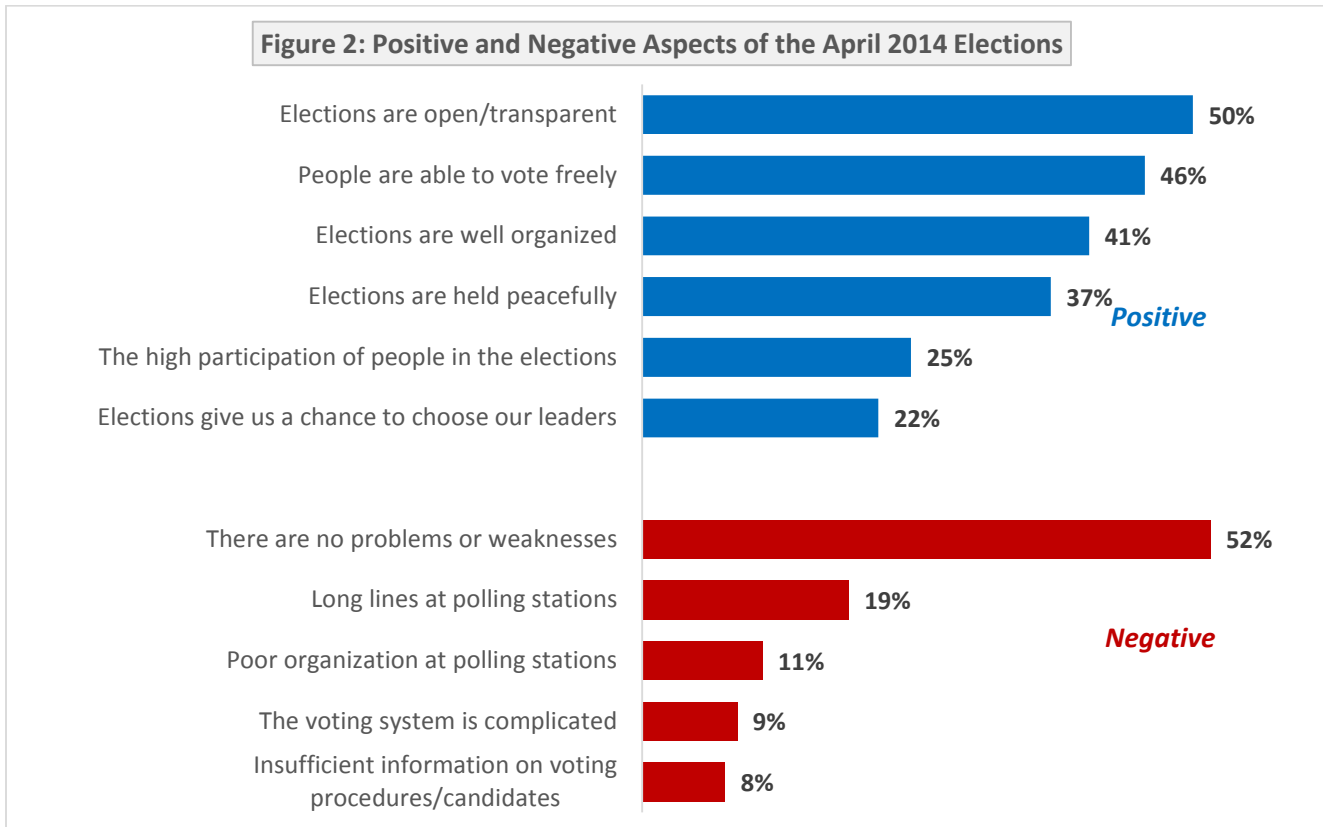
### Satisfaction with the Process of the 2014 Election

- Overall, Iraqis are largely satisfied with the process and procedures of the April 2014 Council of Representatives Election, with 35 percent saying they are very satisfied, and 49 percent saying they are somewhat satisfied (Figure 1). Only 11 percent say they are either somewhat dissatisfied (9%) or very dissatisfied (2%) with the conduct of the elections.
- Satisfaction levels with the election were high throughout the country, except in the North, where only 66 percent indicate they are either very (34%) or somewhat (33%) satisfied with the election. In all other regions, satisfaction exceeded 82 percent of respondents.
- Furthermore, Sunnis were less satisfied with the conduct of the election than Shias. Overall, 87 percent of Shia Arabs say they are satisfied with the conduct of the election, compared to 80 percent of Sunni Kurds, and 77 percent of Sunni Arabs.



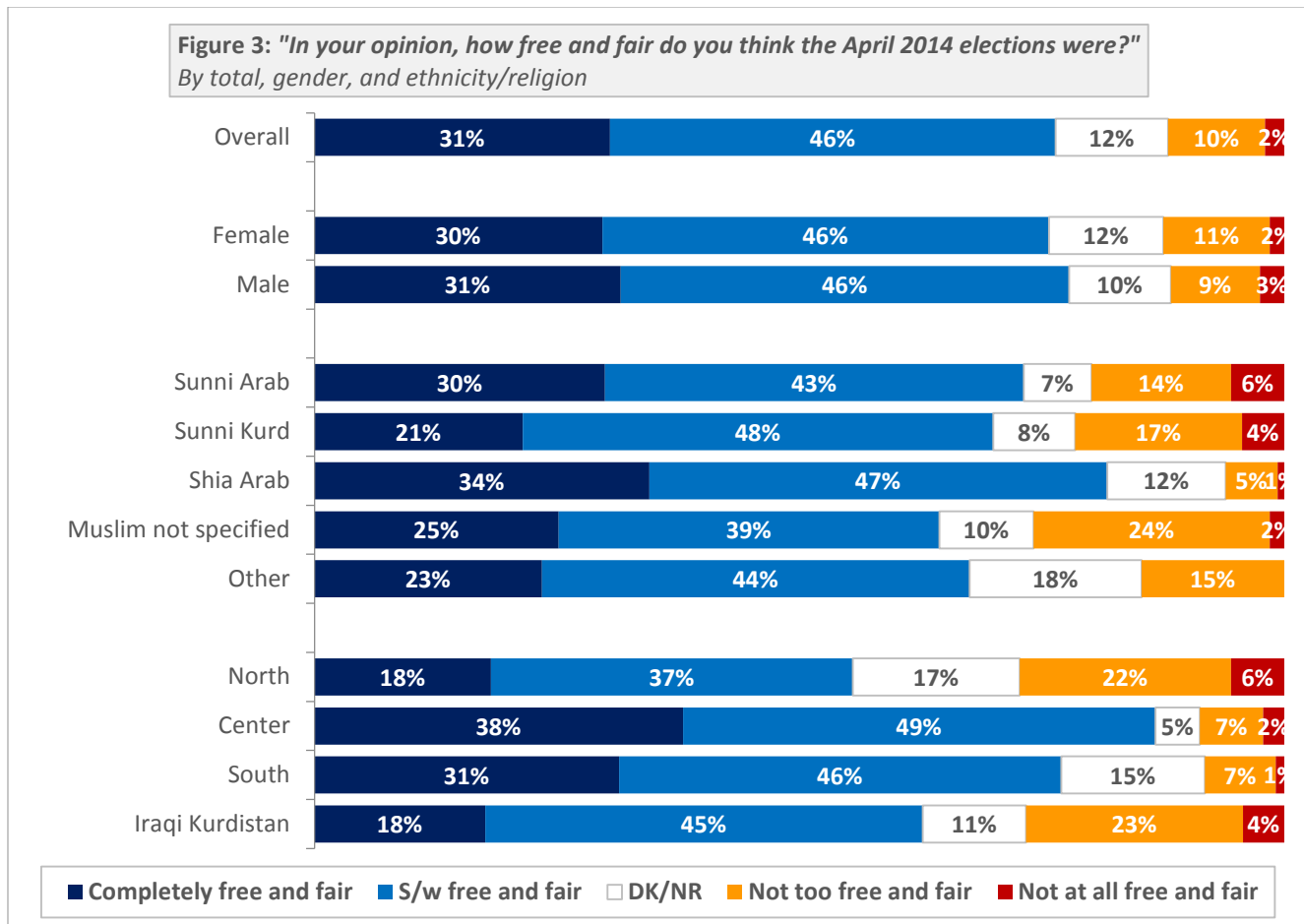


- Among the positive aspects Iraqis saw in the elections include, their openness and transparency (51%), that people are able to vote freely (46%), that the elections are well organized (41%), and that the elections are peaceful (38%) (Figure 2).
- Conversely, when asked about problems or weaknesses with the elections, 52 percent said that there are no problems or weaknesses, while others mentioned long lines at polling stations (19%), poor organization at polling stations (11%), and the complicated voting system (9%).



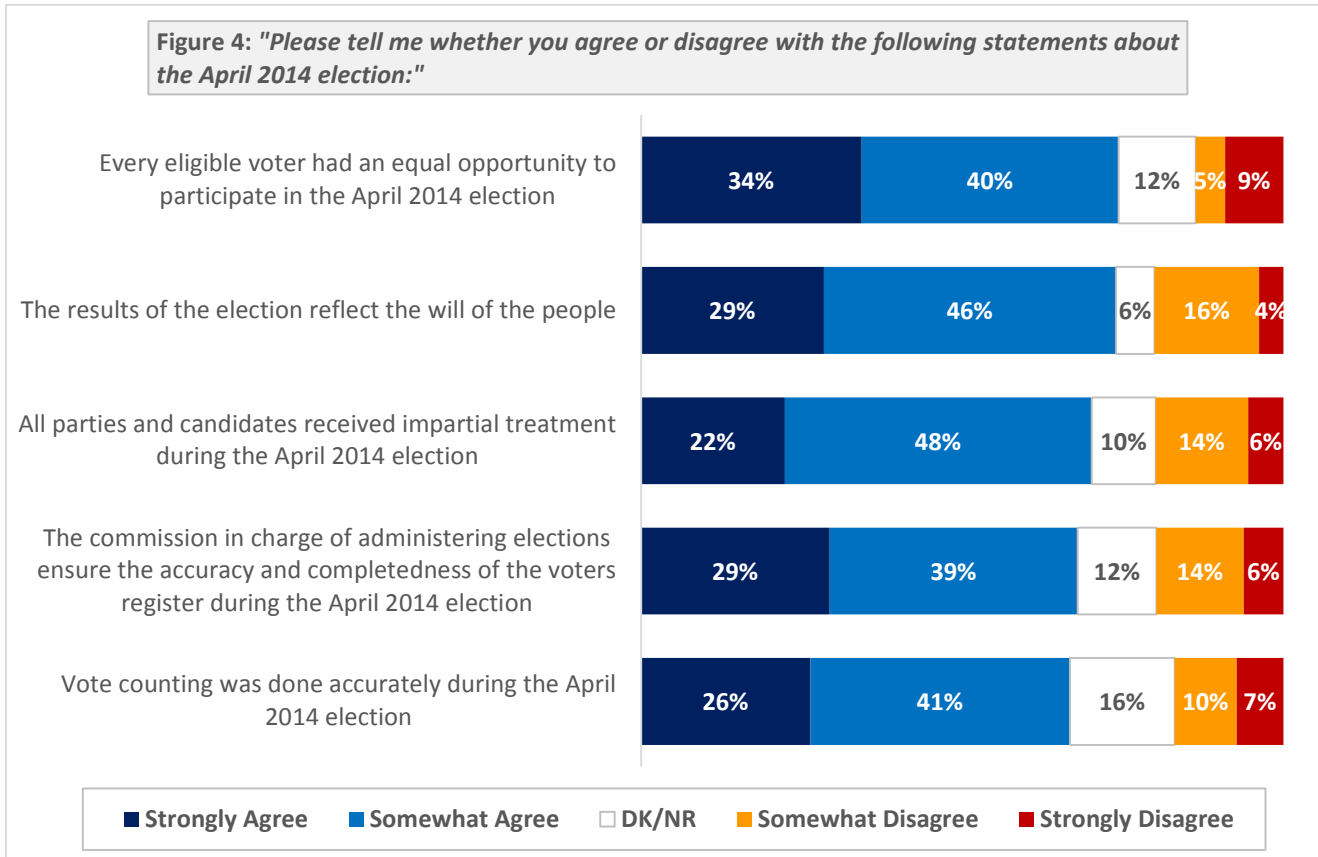
**Assessments of Integrity of the 2014 Council of Representatives Election**

- Over three-quarters of Iraqis (77%) say that the April 2014 Council of Representatives Election was either completely (31%) or somewhat free and fair (46%), while only 12 percent say it was either not too free and fair (10%) or not at all free and fair (2%) (Figure 3).
- Similarly to satisfaction levels, fewer respondents in Iraqi Kurdistan (63%) and the North (56%) say elections were free and fair, compared to much higher numbers in the Center (87%) and the South (77%).
- Additionally, Shia Arabs are more likely to say the Council of Representative elections were free and fair (81%), compared to Sunni Arabs (73%) and Sunni Kurds (69%).



- Survey respondents were presented with a list of different statements describing positive aspects of the election process and asked if they agree or disagree. The data shows that at least two-thirds of Iraqis agree with each positive statement. Overall, 75 percent of Iraqis agree that every eligible voter had an equal opportunity to participate in the April 2014 election (Figure 4). Despite this large number, only 50 percent of Sunni Kurds and 47 percent of residents of Iraqi Kurdistan agreed that every eligible voter had an equal opportunity to participate in the election.
- Meanwhile, 74 percent of Iraqis agree that the results of the election reflect the will of the people, and 70 percent agree that all parties and candidates received impartial treatment during the April 2014 election.
- While attitudes towards election results are consistent across ethnicity, sect, region, and gender, there are some splits in attitudes on the impartial treatment of candidates and parties. Only 53 percent of Sunni Kurds agree that all candidates and parties receive impartial treatment, compared to 71 percent of Sunni Arabs and 76 percent of Shia Arabs. Furthermore, agreement is higher in the Center (79%) and South (73%), compared to the North (53%) and Iraqi Kurdistan (48%).
- Sixty-eight percent of Iraqis say that the commission in charge of administering election ensured the accuracy and completeness of the voters register during the April 2014 election. While Sunni Arabs (72%) and Shia Arabs (75%) largely agree with this sentiment, only 48 percent of Sunni Kurds and 54 percent of other Muslims agree that the voter register was accurate and complete for the election. Furthermore, only 39 percent of residents in Iraqi Kurdistan say that the voter list was accurate and complete for the election.

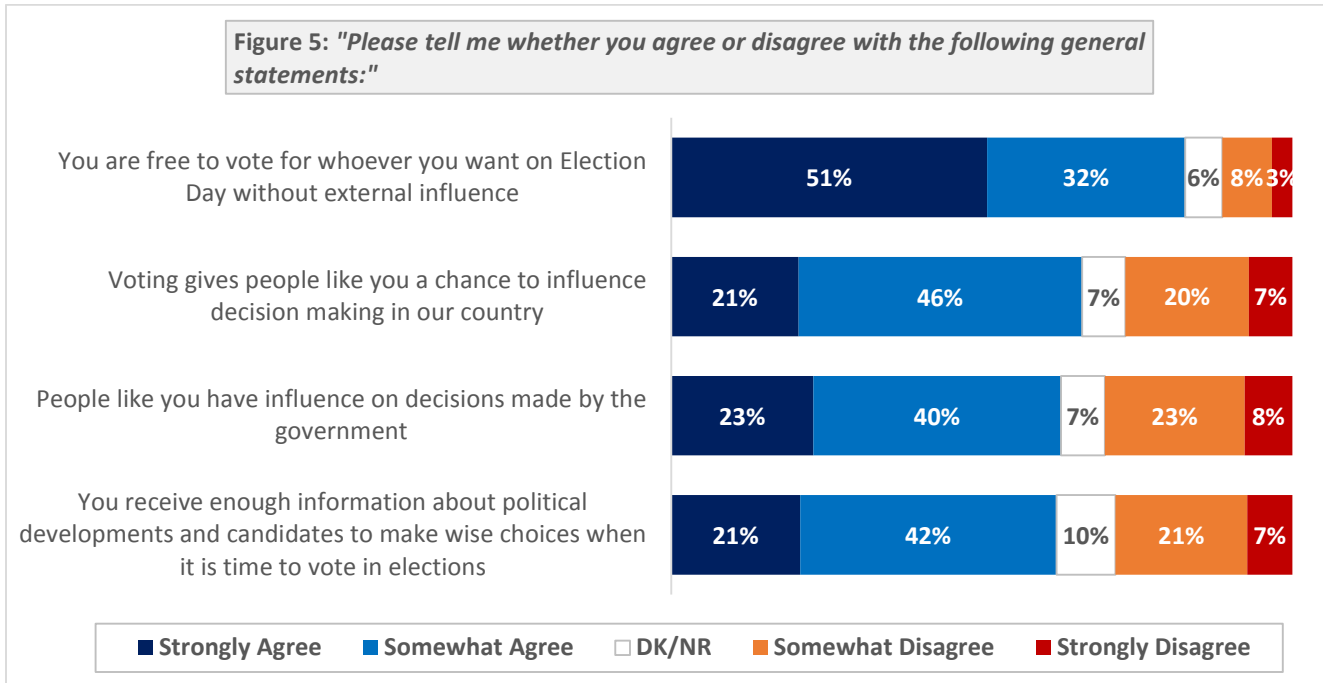
- Finally, 67 percent of Iraqis agree that vote counting was done accurately during the April 2014 election. While 78 percent of Iraqis in the Center and 70 percent of Iraqis in the South agree that the vote counting was done accurately, only 54 percent of Iraqis in the North and 38 percent of Iraqis in Iraqi Kurdistan agree that the counting of votes was done accurately. Furthermore, while 75 percent of Shia Arabs agree that vote counting was done accurately, only 44 percent of Sunni Kurds agree that this was the case.



**Assessments of Political Efficacy**

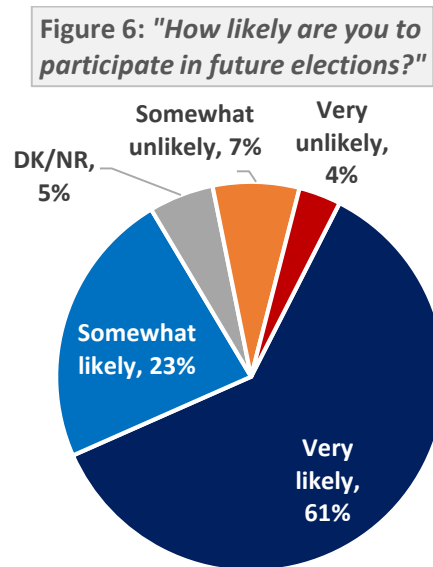
- Iraqis largely agree that they are free to vote for whomever they want to on Election Day; however, they are more split on the actual impact of voting on the government. Overall, 83 percent of Iraqis either strongly (51%) or somewhat agree (32%) that on Election Day they are free to vote for whoever they want without external influence (Figure 5). All Iraqis are likely to agree with this statement with the exception of Sunni Kurds (57%) and residents of Iraqi Kurdistan (51%).
- Two-thirds (66%) of Iraqis either strongly (21%) or somewhat agree (46%) that voting gives regular Iraqis a chance to influence decision-making in Iraq. While Shia Arabs (70%) and Sunni Arabs (67%) are more likely to agree that voting gives them a chance to influence decision making, only 53 percent of Sunni Kurds agree with this statement.
- Furthermore, 63 percent of Iraqis either strongly (23%) or somewhat agree (40%) that people like them can have an influence on decisions made by the government. Iraqis in the Center (74%) and Iraqi Kurdistan (67%) are more likely to agree with this statement than Iraqis living in the North (56%) and South (57%).

- Finally, only 62 percent of Iraqis either strongly (21%) or somewhat agree (42%) that they receive enough information about political developments and candidates to make wise choices when it is time to vote in elections. Sunni Kurds (51%) and residents of Iraqi Kurdistan (49%) are less likely to agree that they have enough information when it is time to vote. Likewise, women (59%) are less likely to have enough information on voting than men (65%) in Iraq.

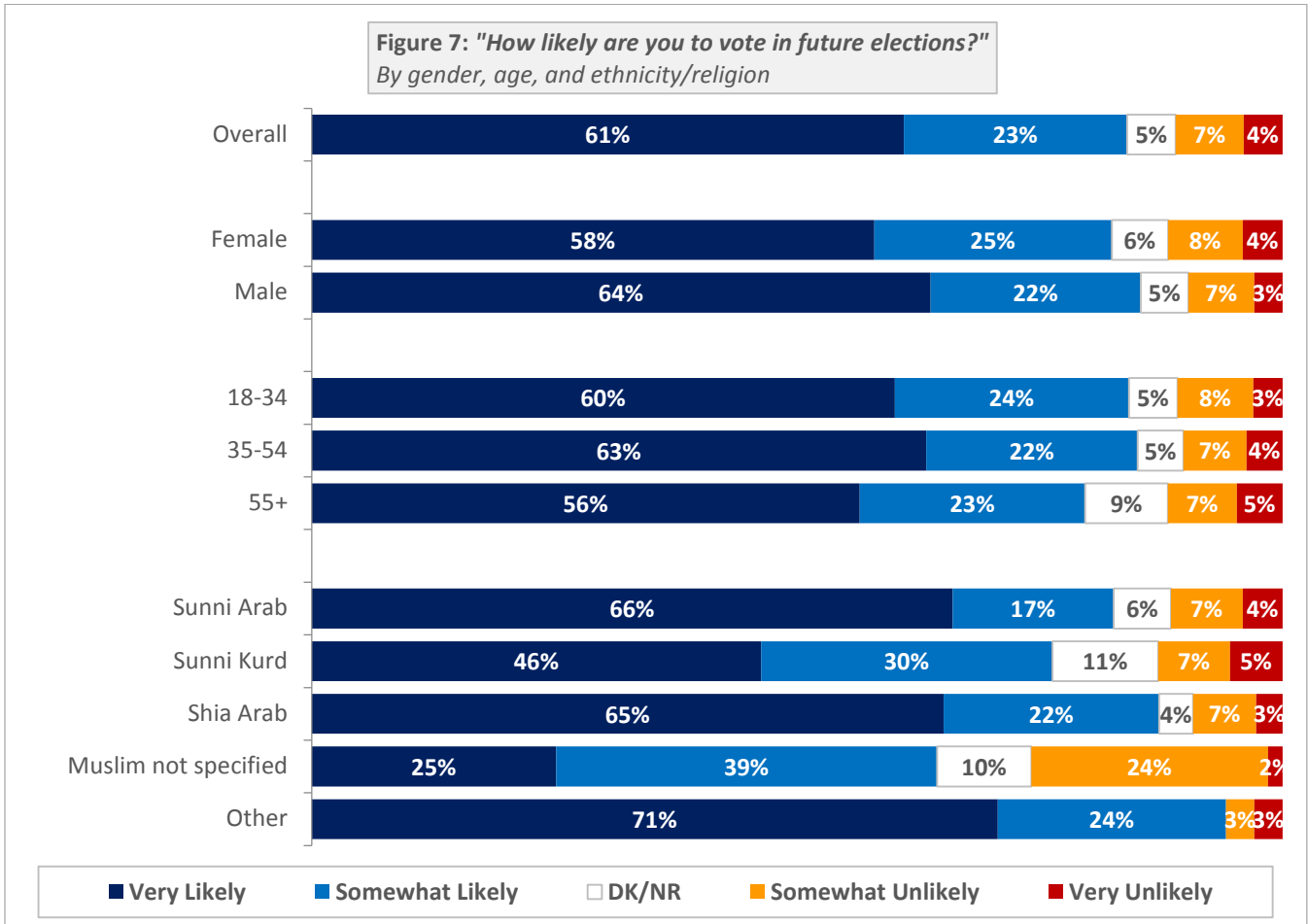


**Likelihood to Vote in Future Elections**

- Going forward, a large majority of Iraqis (84%) say they are either very likely (61%) or somewhat likely (23%) to vote in future elections in Iraq (Figure 6). Among respondents, 93 percent of those who say that voting gives people a chance to influence decision-making in Iraq say they are likely to vote in future elections, compared to 64 percent who disagree with that statement (Figure 7). Among those who say they will not vote in future elections, 54 percent say that their vote will not make a difference, 14 percent say they do not understand politics or know enough about elections and political parties, 13 percent say they don't support any political parties, and 10 percent say they are not interested.



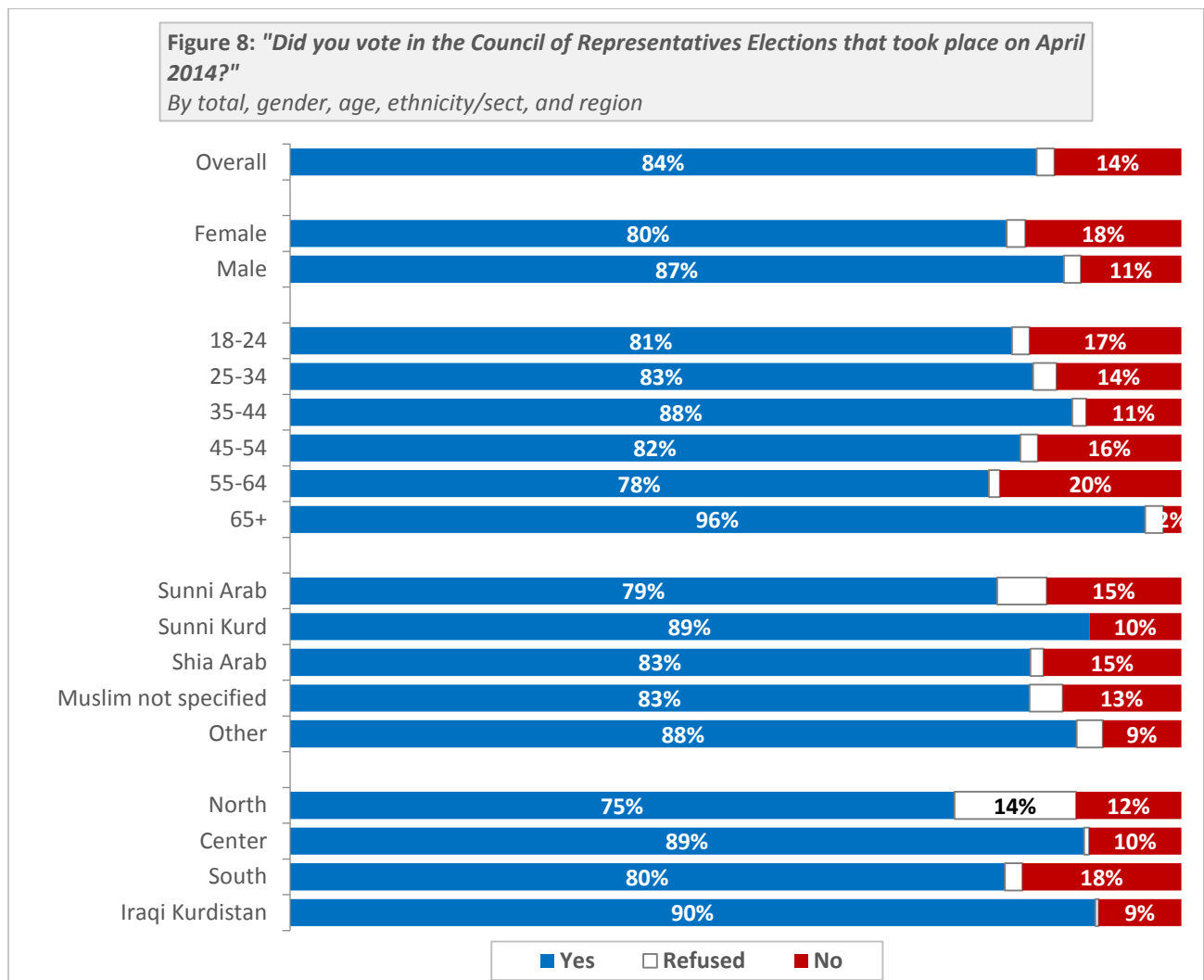
- When comparing the shares of those “very likely to vote” across different demographics, we notice that more men are very likely to vote (64%) than women (58%) and that respondents 55 or older are less likely to vote than younger respondents.
- In terms of the ethno-sectarian profile of respondents, Sunni Kurds are the only group with less than a majority (46%) saying they are very likely to vote in future elections.



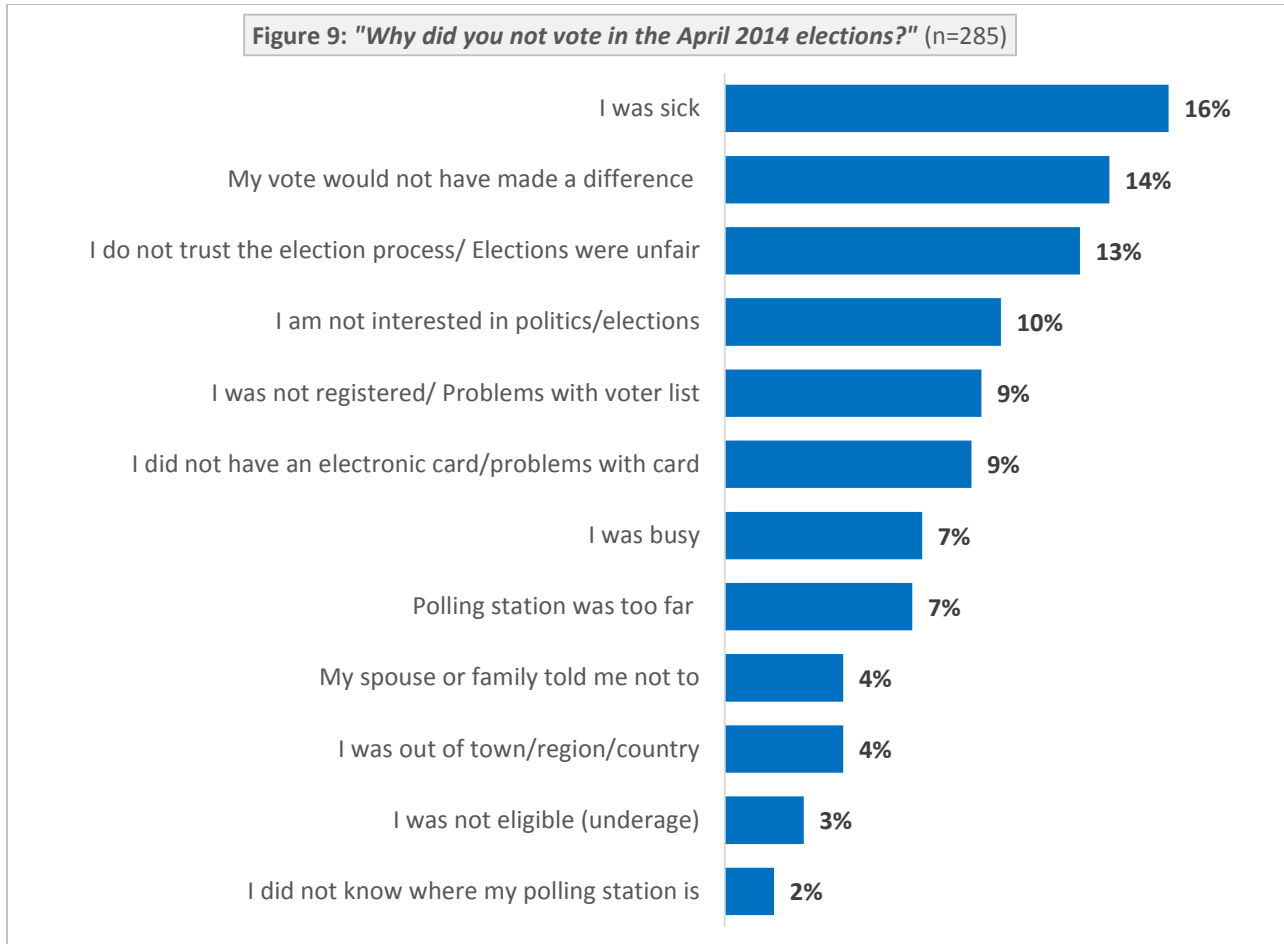
## Experience in the April 2014 Council of Representatives Election

### Voting in the 2014 Council of Representatives Election

- Survey results suggest that a full 84 percent of survey respondents voted in the April 2014 Council of Representatives elections. This figure overestimates the official voter turnout of 62 percent given that the IFES 2014 survey did not cover three key provinces and due to the possibility of the social desirability effect (Figure 8).
- Keeping these caveats in mind, the survey shows that men (87%) were slightly more likely to vote than women (80%).
- Sunni Kurds have a significantly higher turnout (89%) than Sunni Arabs (79%) and Shia Arabs (83%). This is reflected in the breakdown of voter turnout by region: in Iraqi Kurdistan, turnout is 90 percent, followed by the Center region (89%), the South (85%) and the North (75%). Of note, significantly more respondents in the North (14%) than in other regions refused to answer the question on voting due to heightened political tensions and violence at the time of the survey fieldwork.

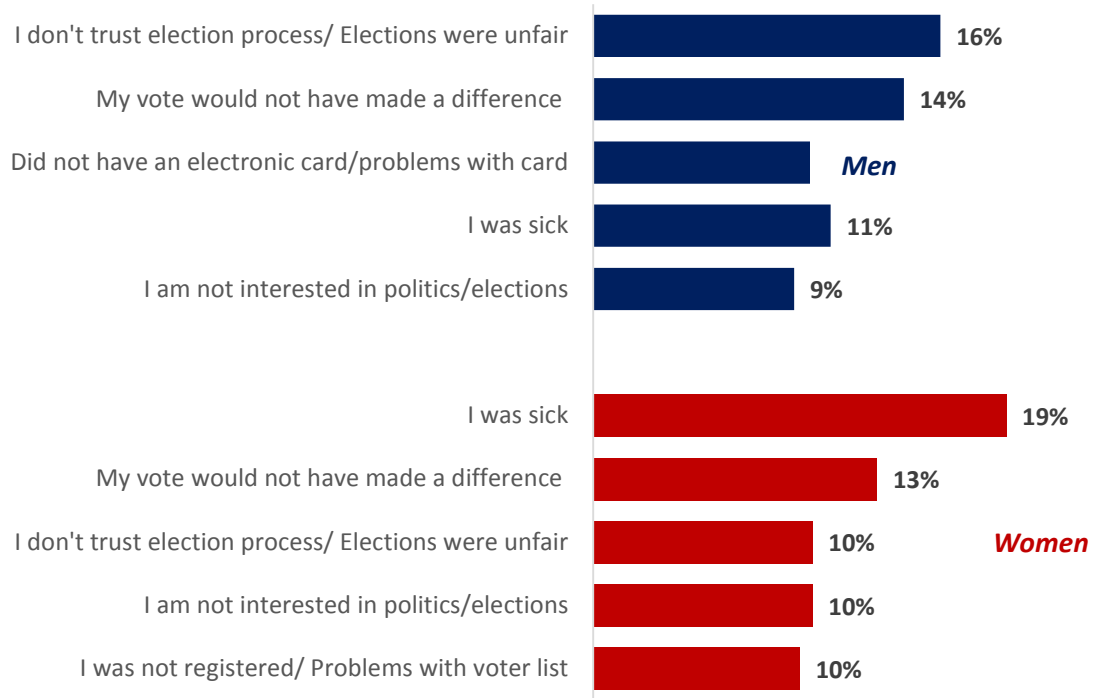


- Respondents who reported not voting in the 2014 Council of Representatives elections were asked why they did not cast a vote. The top three reasons for not voting are being sick (16%), believing that their vote would not make a difference (14%), and lack of trust in the election process (13%) (Figure 9). Taken together, the second and third reason add up to 27 percent, which shows that over a quarter of respondents who did not vote ascribe that to factors related to political inefficacy and distrust in the election system.



- The data shows that the top reason for not voting is different for men and women: for women, the main reason is being sick (mentioned by 19% of women who did not vote) while for men, the main reason is the lack of trust in the election process (16%) (Figure 10). For both men and women, the second most cited reason for not voting is the belief that their vote would not have made a difference (mentioned by 14% of men and 13% of women). For women, the third most cited reason is the lack of trust in the election process (10%). For men, the third most cited reason is not having the electronic card or problems with the electronic card (11%).

**Figure 10: Main reasons for not voting by gender**



**Freedom of Vote and Feelings of Security**

- An overwhelming majority of respondents report voting without any pressure or intimidation in the 2014 Council of Representatives elections and at least three in five report feeling “very safe” when going from their home to the polling station to cast their vote on Election Day.



- Indeed, a full 95 percent said nobody tried to pressure them to vote in a certain way and 96 percent said nobody and no group tried to pressure them to abstain from voting in the 2014 Council of Representatives elections (Figure 11, 12).

Figure 11: "Did anybody try to pressure you to vote in a certain way?" n=1,675

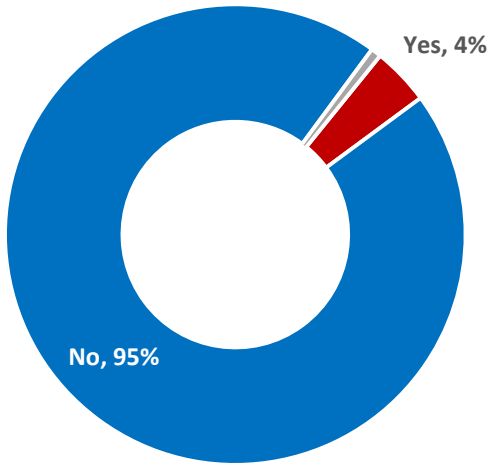
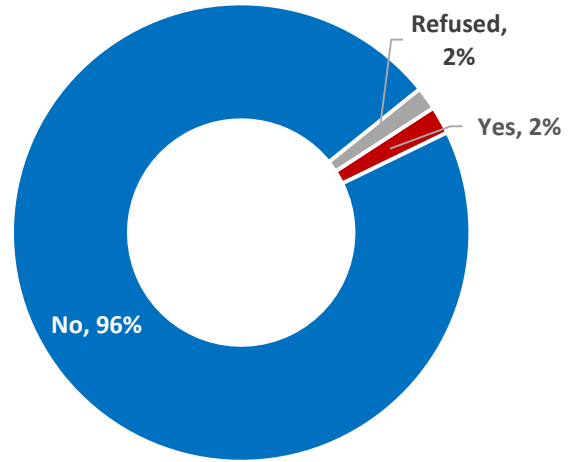


Figure 12: "Did anybody or any group try to pressure you to abstain from voting in this election by any means?" n=1,675



- When asked if they personally knew of people who were intimidated or threatened with violence to vote in a certain way or abstain from voting in this election, 93 percent said no and only 4 percent said yes (Figure 13). It must be noted that had Anbar, Salahadin and Ninewah been included in the IFES 2014 survey sample, these numbers may be different and we may have seen higher rates of respondents reporting pressure or intimidation.

- When asked if they felt safe or worried about violent incidents when going from their home to the polling station to cast their vote, 62 percent said they felt very safe and another 33 percent said they felt somewhat safe (Figure 14). Only 4 percent said they felt worried.

Figure 13: "Do you know of people who were intimidated or threatened with violence to vote in a certain way?" n=1,675

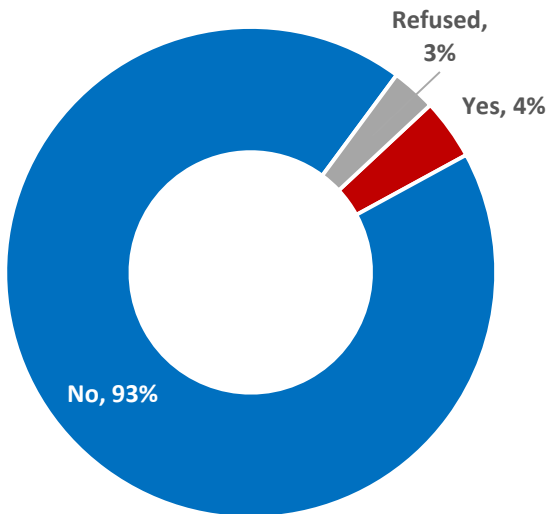
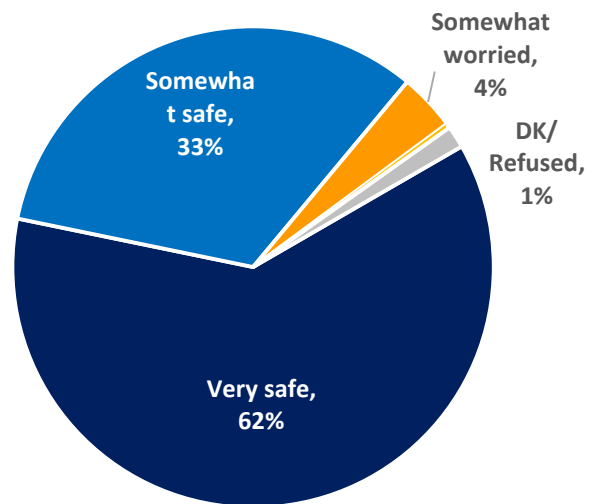


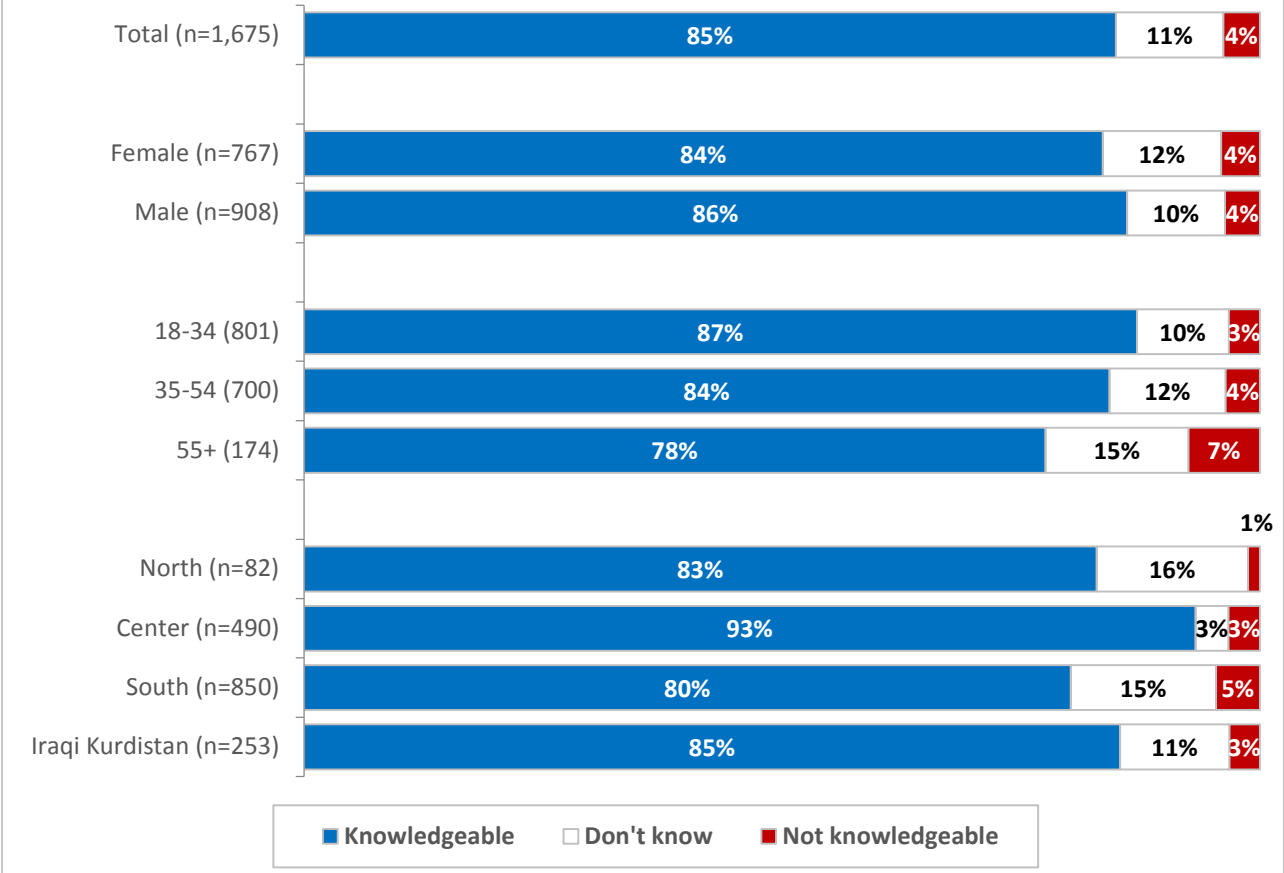
Figure 14: "Thinking back on Election Day, did you feel safe or worried about violent incidents when going from your home to the polling station to cast your vote?" n=1,675



### Voters' Opinions of Competence of Polling Station Officials

- Survey respondents who voted in the 2014 Council of Representatives elections overwhelmingly believe polling station officials were knowledgeable about polling center procedures. Indeed, 85 percent said they seemed knowledgeable compared with only 4 percent who said they did not seem knowledgeable and 11 percent who said they don't know (Figure 15).
- When looking at this data by demographics, we do not observe differences by gender, and while there are slightly more older voters (55 or older) who said polling officials are not knowledgeable (7%), this percentage is too small to suggest serious issues with the competence of polling officials. Voters in the Center region seem to have higher assessments of the knowledge of polling officials than voters in other regions.

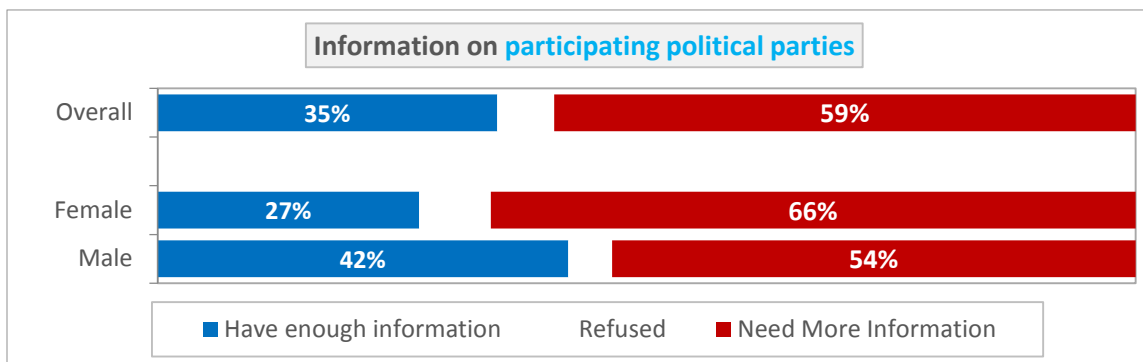
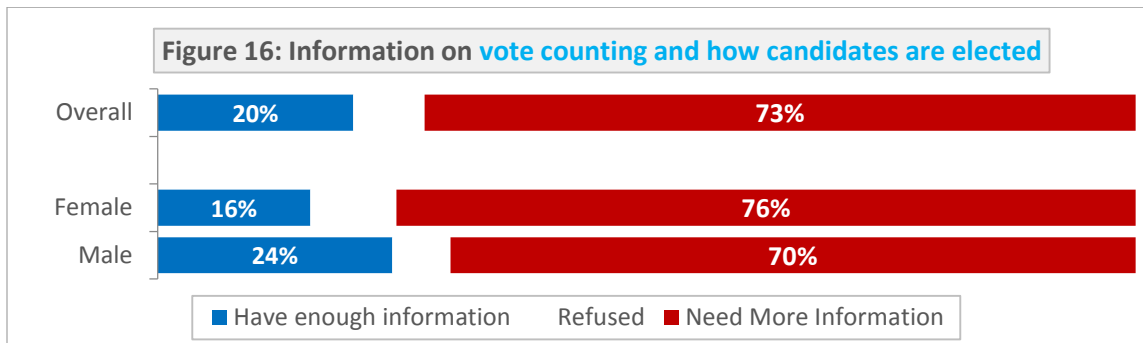
**Figure 15: "Did the polling station officials seem mostly knowledgeable about polling center procedures or not knowledgeable?"**  
*Out of those who voted by total, gender, age, and region*

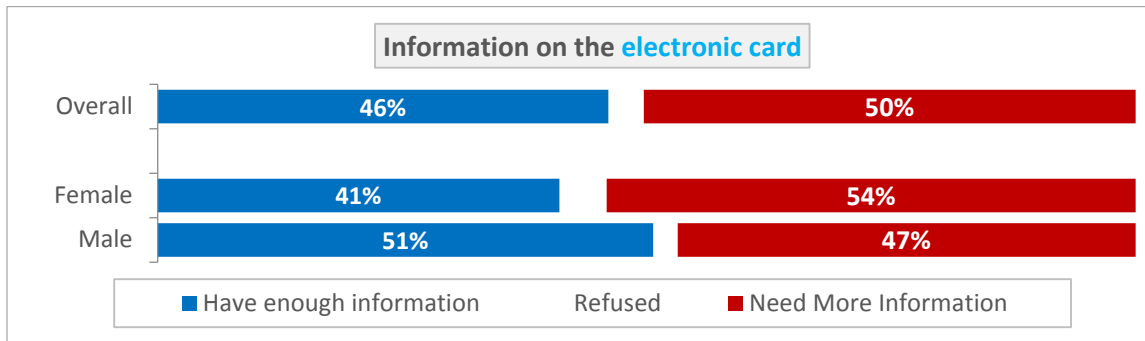
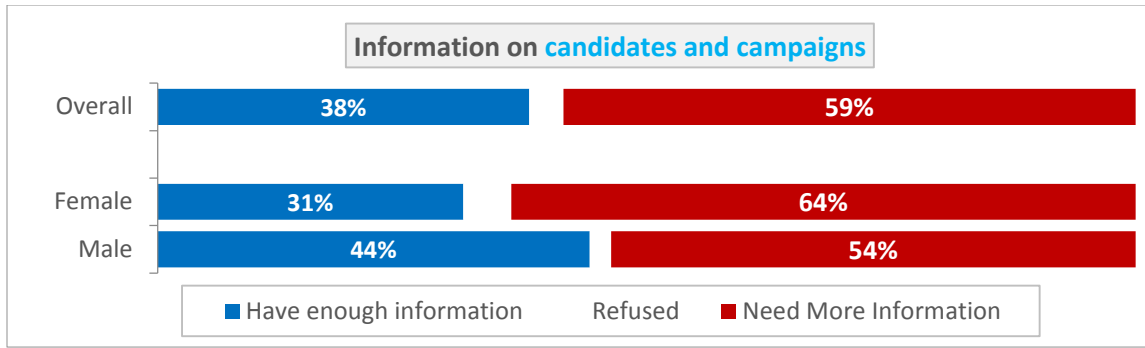


## Voter Information

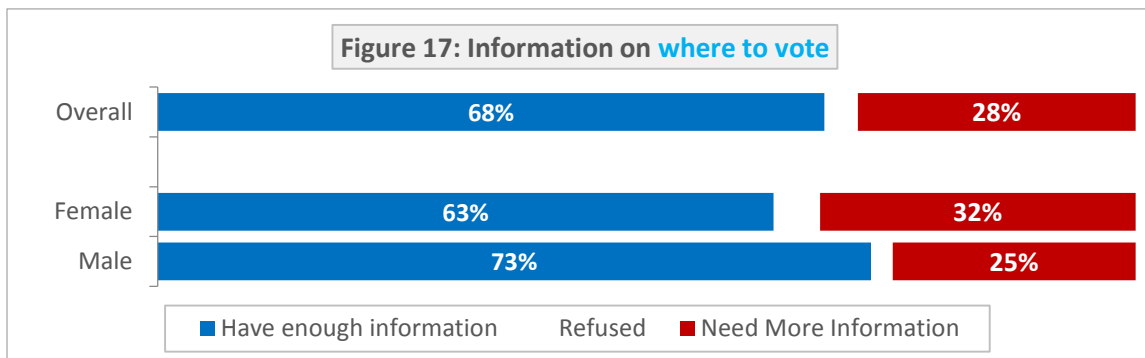
### Adequacy of Information ahead of 2014 Council of Representatives Elections

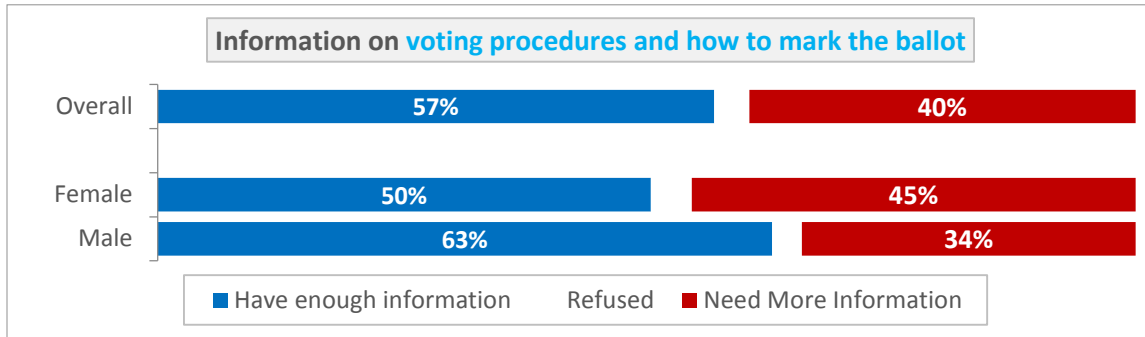
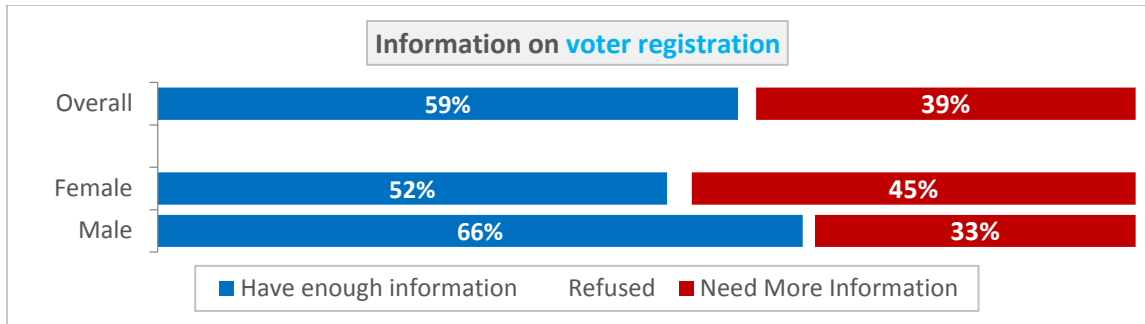
- Survey respondents were asked about the adequacy of the information they received in the lead up to the April 2014 Council of Representatives elections, particularly whether they felt they had enough information or needed more information on several aspects of the election process. The data shows that Iraqis had the least information about vote counting and how candidates are elected with a full 73 percent saying they needed more information on this aspect of the election and only 20 percent saying they had enough information (Figure 16).
- Information on participating political parties and information on candidates and campaigns was also inadequate with 59 percent of respondents saying they needed more information on those aspects of the election.
- A majority of respondents (50%) said they need more information on the electronic card compared to 46 percent who said they have enough information.
- It is noteworthy that for all these aspects of the election, significantly more women than men say they need more information. This shows that while both men and women need more information on several aspects of the election, the information gap is larger for women.





- Aspects of the 2014 Council of Representatives elections for which a majority of Iraqis report having adequate information include information on where to vote with over two-thirds (68%) saying they have enough information and 28 percent saying they need more information (Figure 17).
- Meanwhile, majorities of Iraqis say they have enough information on voter registration (59%) and on voting procedures and how to mark the ballot (57%). Yet this leaves approximately two in five Iraqis who say they need more information on these aspects.
- There is a large gender gap in electoral information regarding voter registration and voting procedures and how to mark the ballot with 45 percent of female respondents saying they need more information on these aspects.

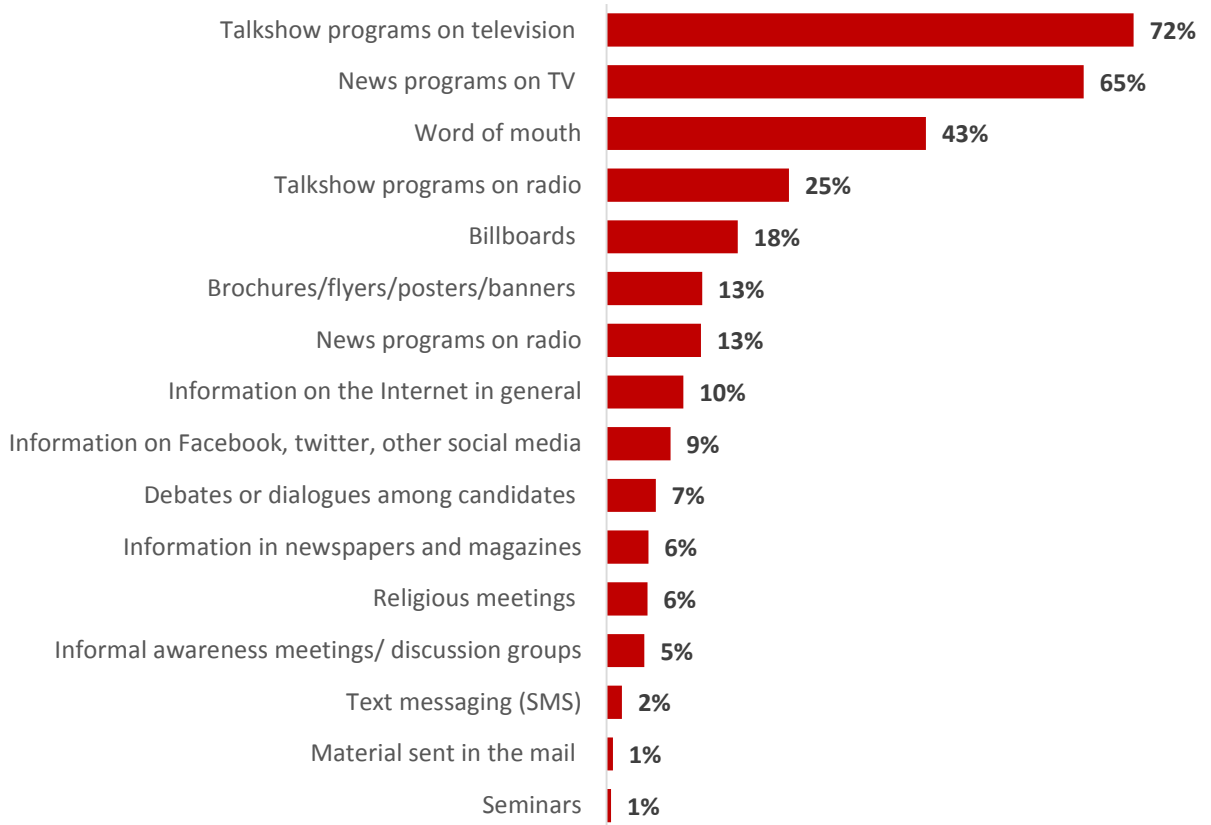




**Preferred Information Sources for Election-Related Issues**

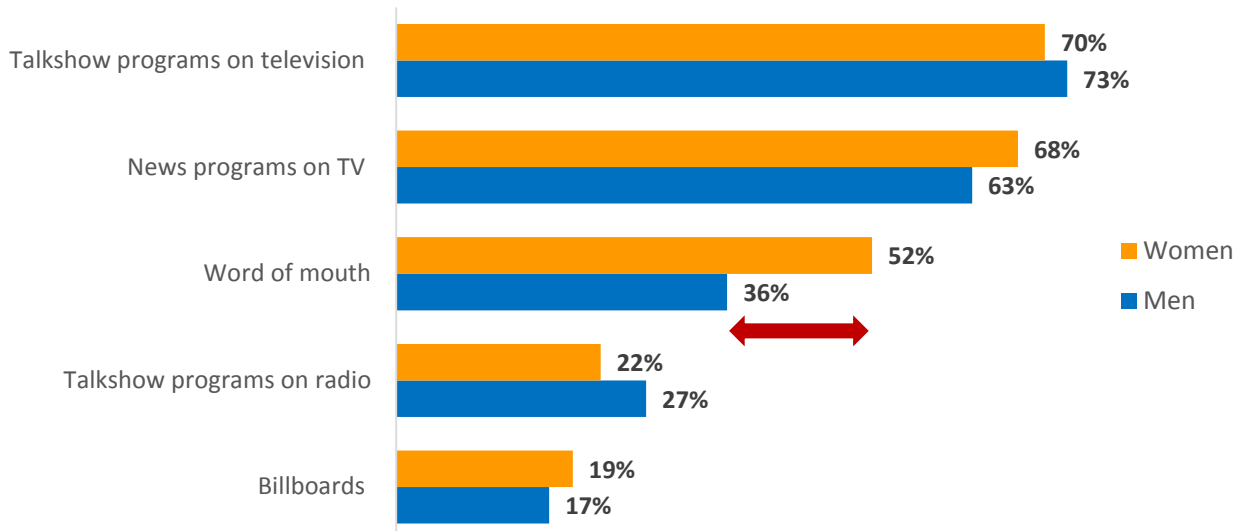
- TV tops the list of information sources to learn about elections for Iraqis with large majorities indicating talk show programs on TV (72%) and news programs on TV (65%) are their preferred sources to learn about election-related issues and procedures (Figure 18).
- This is followed by word of mouth at 43 percent, talk show programs on radio (25%), billboards (18%), news programs on radio (13%), brochures/flyers (13%), and information on the internet (10%). Other sources listed are cited by less than 10 percent of respondents.

**Figure 18: Preferred sources for learning about election-related issues and procedures**



- The top five information sources are the same for men and women yet with significantly more women (52%) citing word of mouth as a preferred source of information than men (36%) (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Top 5 information sources on elections by gender**



- For young Iraqis aged 18-34, preferred information sources to learn about election-related issues and procedures do not vary from Iraqis at large as they cite the same top five information sources. Internet is cited by 15 percent of respondents who are 18-34 compared to 10 percent of respondents of all age groups combined.



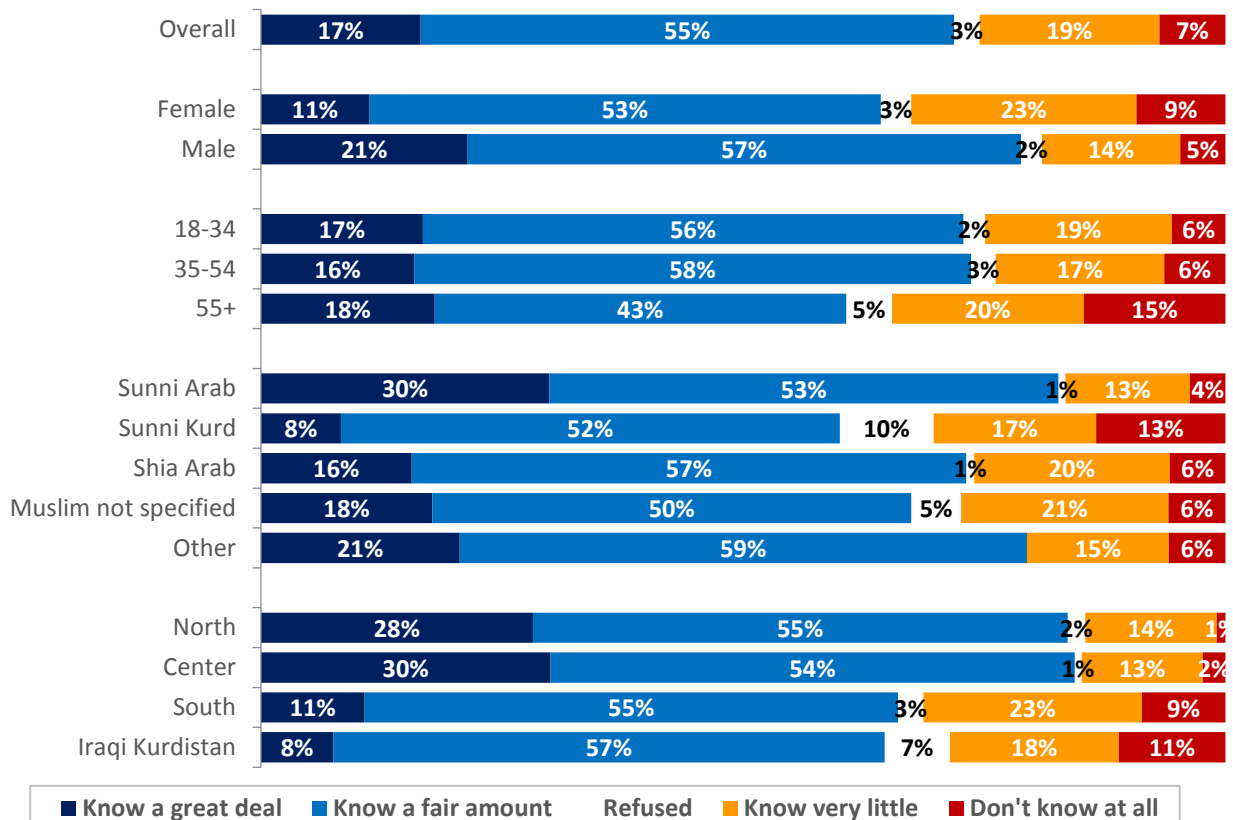
## Knowledge and Opinions of the Electronic Voting Card

### Knowledge of the Electronic Voting Card

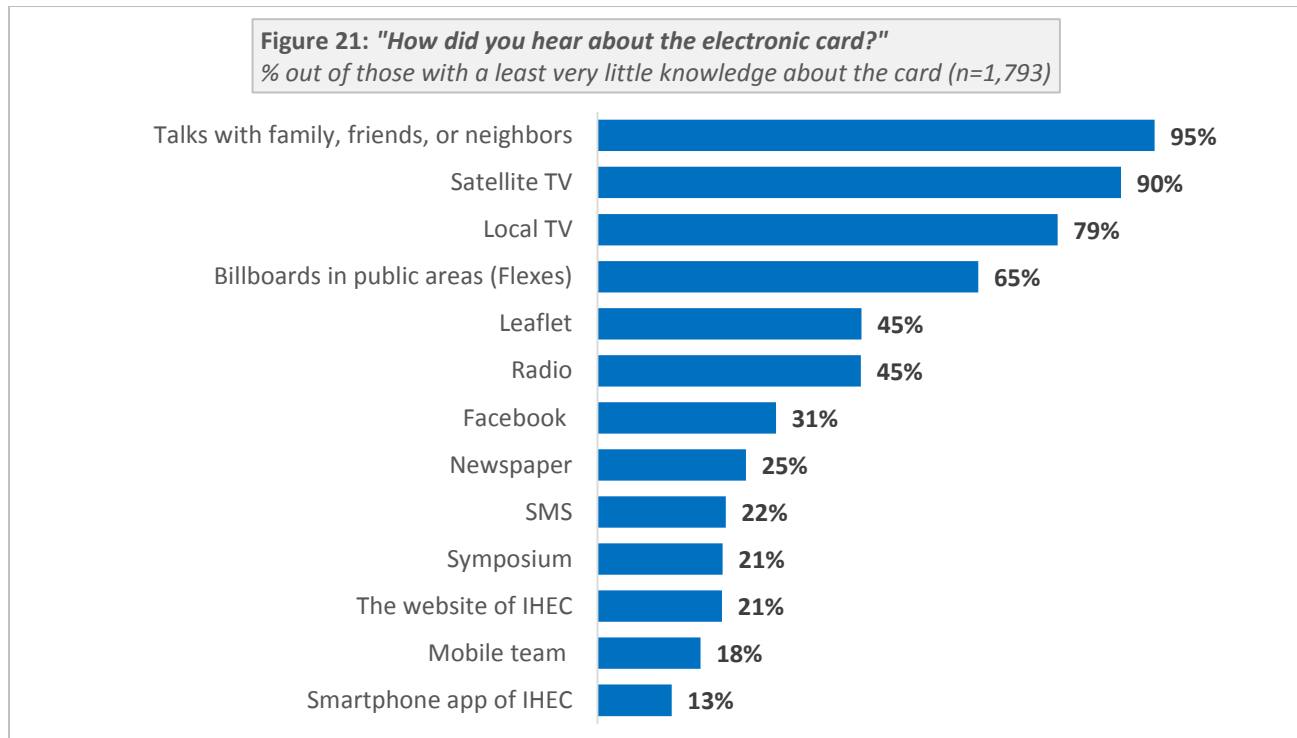
- A large majority of Iraqis (72%) report having at least a fair amount of knowledge (55%) about the new electronic voting card that was used to vote in the 2014 Council of Representatives elections and a few (17%) have a great deal of knowledge (Figure 20). This, however, leaves over a quarter of Iraqis who know very little (19%) or don't know anything at all (7%) about the electronic voting card.
- There is a significant gender gap in knowledge of the electronic voting card: nearly a third of women (32%) have very little or no knowledge about the electronic card compared with a lower proportion of men (19%) with very little or no knowledge.
- In terms of age groups, respondents 55 or older are the most likely to report having very little or no knowledge about the new electronic voting card (35%).
- In terms of ethnic and sectarian profiles or respondents, Sunni Kurds are the most likely to report having very little or no knowledge about the electronic card (30%).
- When looking at knowledge of the electronic card by region, we find that respondents in the South and Iraqi Kurdistan are the most likely to report having very little or no knowledge (32% and 29% respectively).

**Figure 20: "How much do you know about the new electronic voting card that Iraqis used to vote in the elections?"**

*By total, gender, age, ethnicity/sect, region*



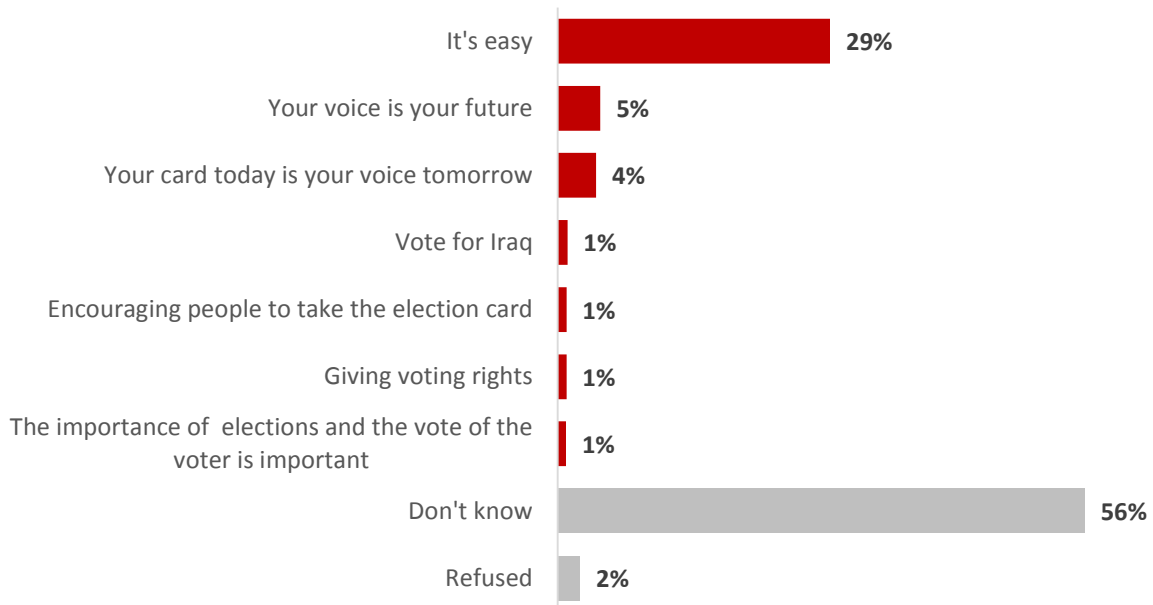
- Respondents who reported having at least very little knowledge about the electronic card were shown a list of possible information sources and asked through which sources they heard about the card. The data shows that Iraqis have heard about the card through many different sources. The overwhelming majority has heard about the electronic card through word of mouth, satellite TV, or local TV (95%, 90% and 79% respectively). Meanwhile, approximately two-thirds (65%) have heard about the card through billboards. Other important sources include leaflets and radio (both at 45%) (Figure 21).



### Exposure to IHEC Information Campaign on Electronic Voting Cards

- All respondents, whether they have some knowledge of the electronic card or not, were asked to spontaneously recall any slogans or messages they may have heard as part of the IHEC campaign to encourage citizens to pick up their electronic voting cards (Figure 22). The data shows that nearly three in 10 Iraqis (29%) were able to spontaneously mention the slogan of the campaign “It’s easy”, while 5 percent mentioned the motivational message “Your voice is your future” and 4 percent mentioned the message “Your card today is your voice tomorrow.”
- Of note, significantly more respondents in the South (38%) were able to spontaneously recall the slogan “It’s easy” than respondents in the North (28%) or the Center (27%) (Figure 23).
- Meanwhile, the majority of respondents (56%) were unable to recall or did not know of any messages encouraging citizens to pick up their electronic cards.
- In another question asking respondents if they remember or can describe the content of the scenes or the comic actors in the scenes used in the campaign that is encouraging people to pick up their electronic cards, approximately 22 percent of respondents were able to mention comic scene content and actors while a large majority (78%) could not recall any content.

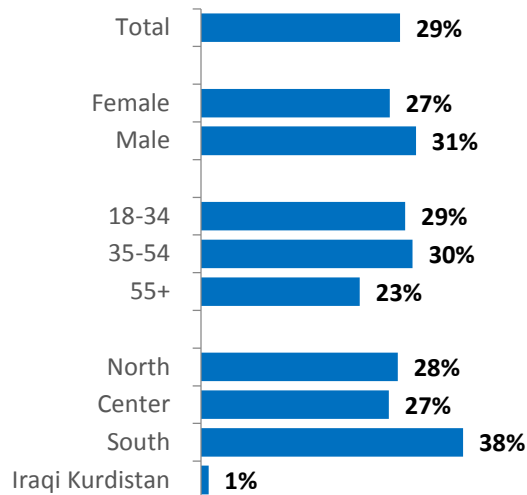
**Figure 22: "As you may know, IHEC conducted a campaign to encourage citizens like you to pick up their electronic voting cards ahead of the 2014 Council of Representatives elections. Can you remember the slogan or any messages you heard in the campaign?"**



- When specifically prompted about the slogan “It’s easy” and asked if they heard it as part of the campaign encouraging people to pick up their electronic cards, a full 65 percent majority of respondents say yes they heard it and the remaining 35 percent say no (Figure 24).
- Interestingly, the breakdown by key demographics of respondents who spontaneously recalled the slogan versus those who recognized the slogan after being prompted, shows that while there was no gender gap in spontaneous recall, there are more men (68%) than women (61%) who recognize the slogan when prompted.
- By age groups, we notice that while nearly two-thirds of respondents 18-54 are able to recall the slogan when prompted, only 45 percent of the older age group (55 or older) could recall the slogan.

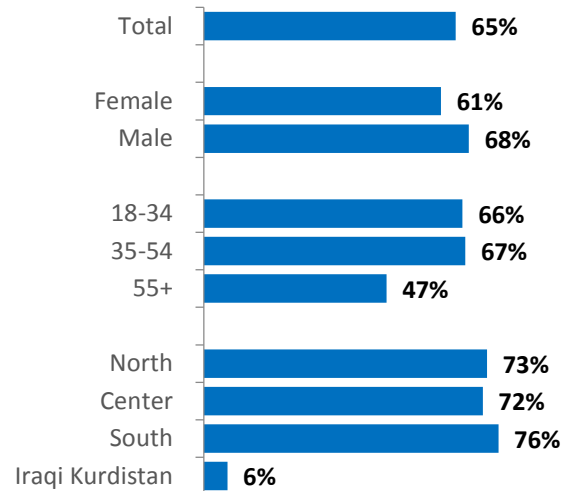
**Figure 23: Spontaneous recall of the slogan "It's easy"**

*By total, gender, age, and region*



**Figure 24: Aided recall of the slogan "It's easy"**

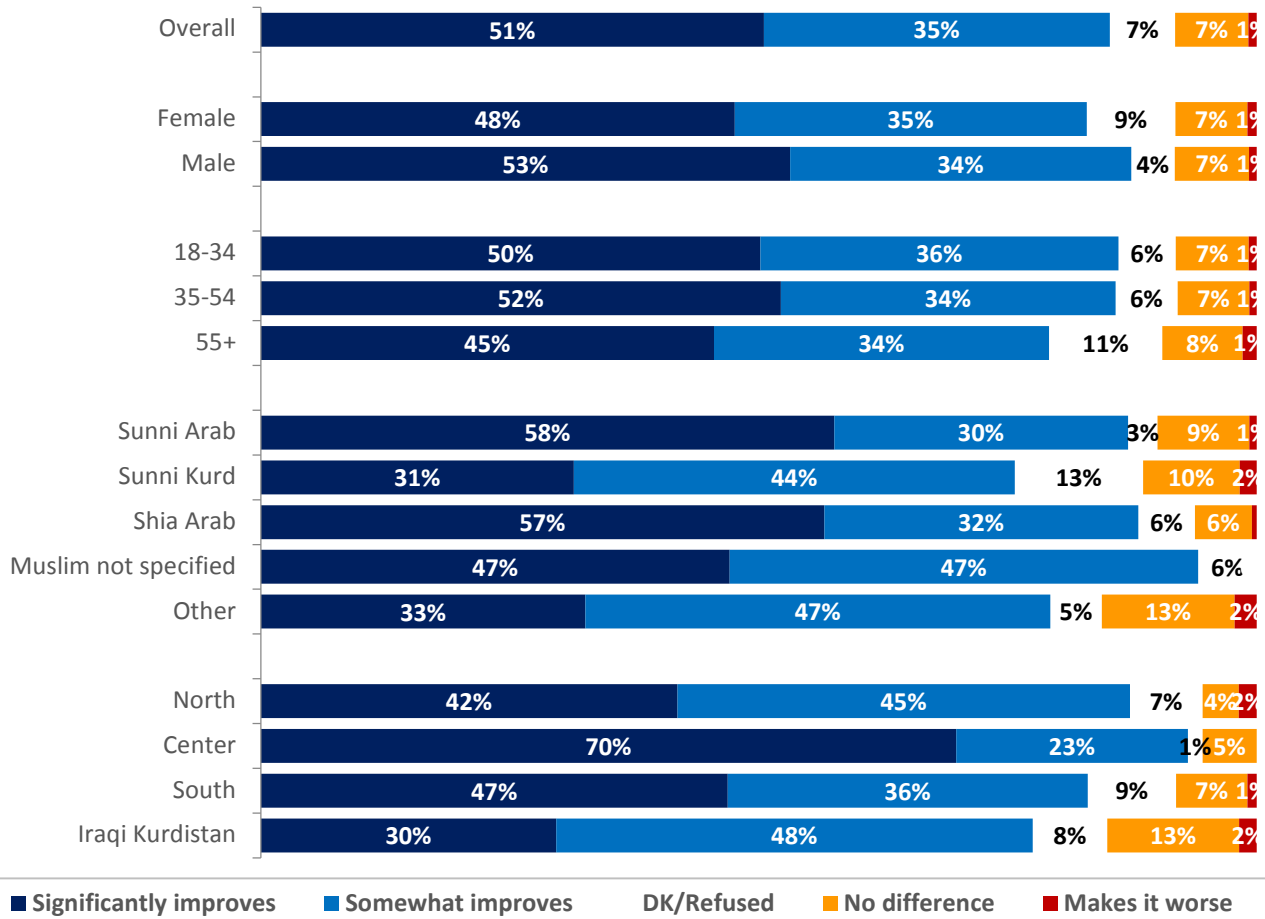
*By total, gender, age, and region*



### Opinions of the Electronic Voting Card

- Iraqis seem generally optimistic about the benefits of the electronic voting card with a large majority (86%) believing it would either significantly (51%) or somewhat (35%) improve the electoral process (Figure 25).
- There are no gender differences in opinions of the electronic card but there are differences by ethnic/sectarian profile of respondents with only 31 percent of Sunni Kurds believing the electronic card would significantly improve the electoral process compared with majorities of both Sunni Arabs (58%) and Shia Arabs (57%) believing it would significantly improve the process.
- On a related note, when looking at opinions of the electronic card by region, we find that respondents in Iraqi Kurdistan seem to be slightly more skeptical than respondents in other regions about the benefits of the electronic card with 15 percent believing it really doesn't make a difference to the electoral process (13%) or that it makes the process worse (2%). Meanwhile, respondents in the Center have the highest majority with 70 percent believing the electronic card would significantly improve the electoral process.

**Figure 25: "To what extent do you think the use of the electronic card improves the electoral process?"**  
 By total, gender, age, ethnicity/sect, region

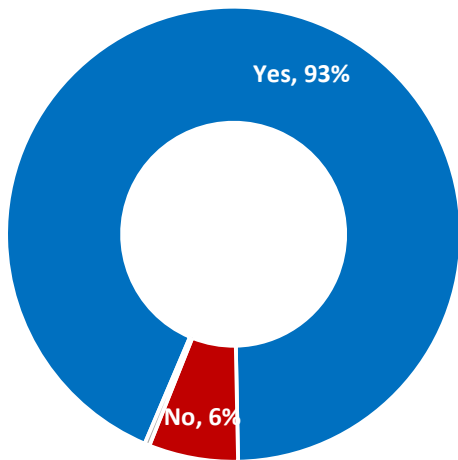


- When asked in an open question why they think the electronic card was introduced, over three quarters of respondents (76%) said it was introduced to facilitate the process and to prevent manipulation. Another 11 percent said it was introduced to make the election process successful.

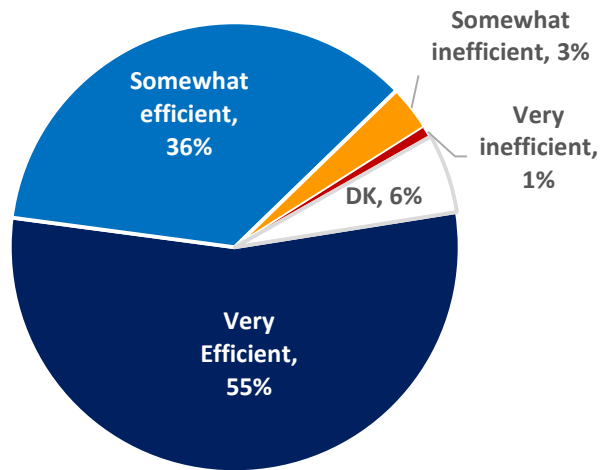
**Experience with Using Electronic Cards in the 2014 Council of Representatives Elections**

- A full 93 percent of respondents reported picking up their electronic card ahead of the April 2014 elections versus only 6 percent who did not (Figure 26). Those who did not said the main reasons for not picking up their card is that it was not found in the voter registration center (39%), they didn't know where to pick it up (13%), or due to security reasons (8%) (Figure 28).
- Iraqis seem essentially satisfied with the efficiency of the process of picking their electronic card with 55 percent saying it was very efficient and another 36 percent saying it was somewhat efficient (Figure 27). Only 4 percent said the process of picking up the electronic card was somewhat (3%) or very (1%) inefficient.

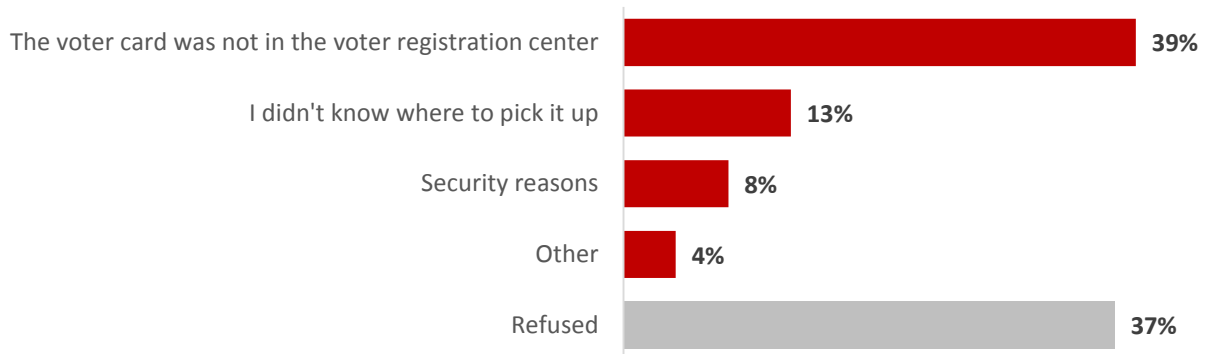
**Figure 26:** "Did you pick up your electronic card ahead of the April 2014 election?"



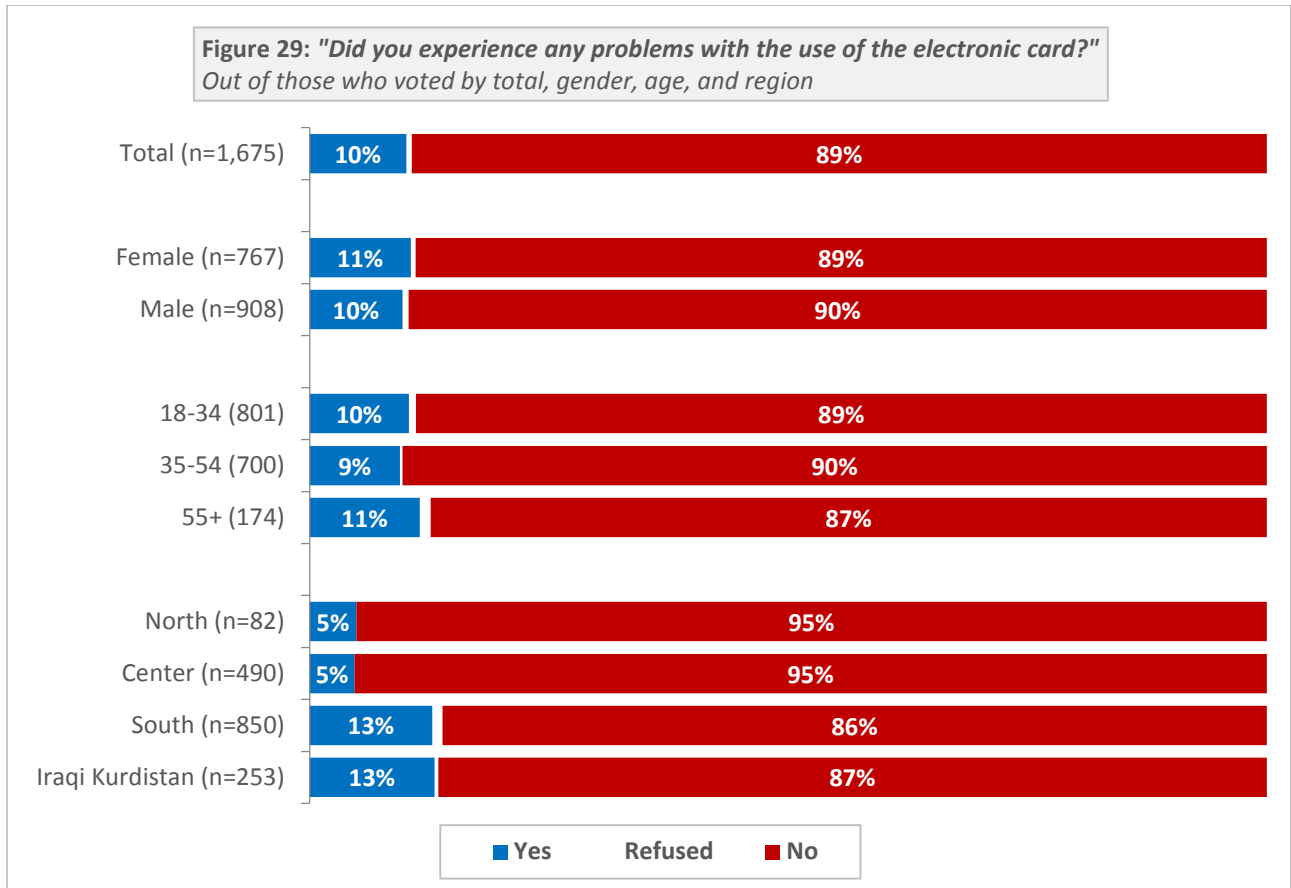
**Figure 27:** "When you picked up your card, how efficient or inefficient did you find the process?" n=1,866



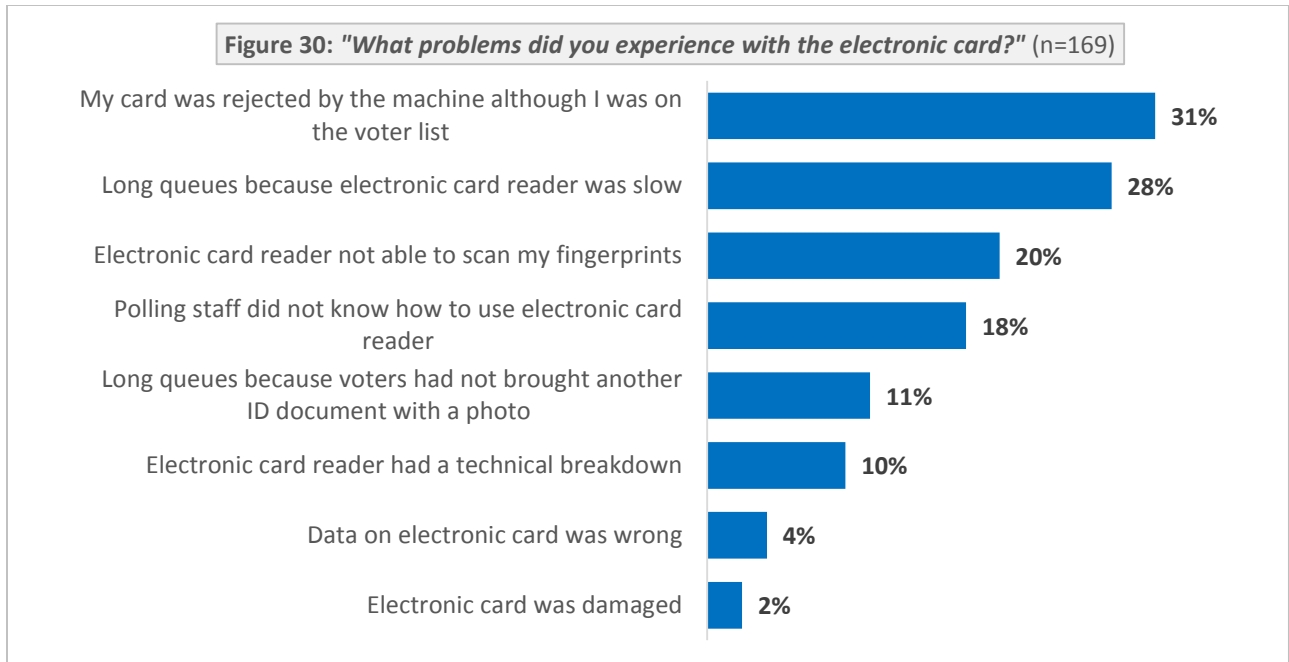
**Figure 28:** "What prevented you from picking up the electronic voting card?" (n=127)



- Use of the electronic card on Election Day was mostly without problems, however, 10 percent of voters reported experiencing problems compared with 89 percent who did not experience any problems (Figure 29).
- When looking at this data by demographics, we find there were no differences in voters' experience in using the electronic card between men and women voters and between voters from different age groups. However, when looking at this data by region, we find that voters in the South and Iraqi Kurdistan were slightly more likely to experience problems with the use of the electronic card compared with voters in the Center. In the North, the sample size is too small to allow drawing robust conclusions about difference in electronic card experience.

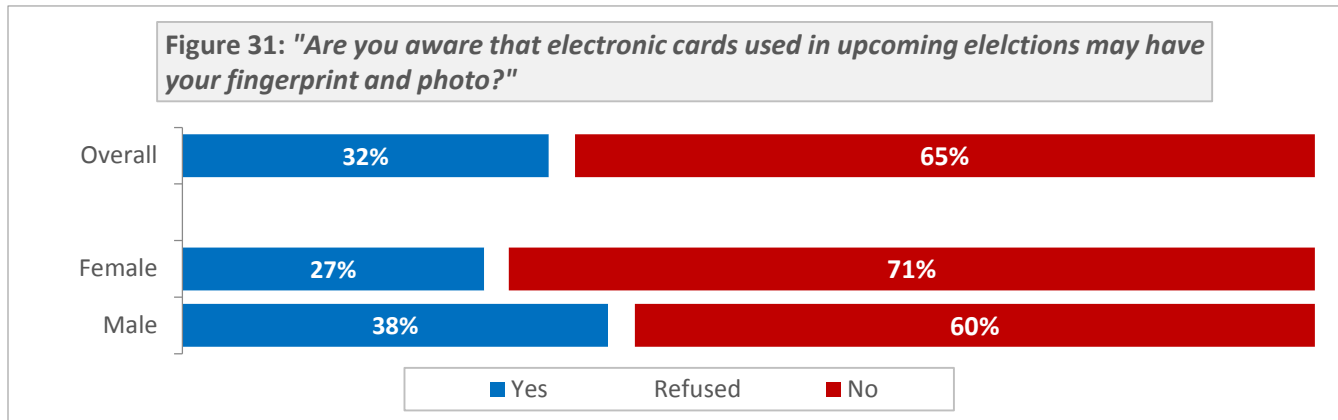


- Those who said they experienced problems with the electronic card were asked what types of problems they faced. The most cited problems with the electronic card among those who experienced problems are related to the card being rejected by the machine despite the voter being on the voter list (31%), long queues building up because the electronic card reader was slow (28%), the electronic card reader was unable to scan voters' fingerprints (20%), and polling staff not knowing how to use the electronic card reader (18%) (Figure 30).



**Use of Electronic Cards in Future Elections**

- Nearly two-thirds of Iraqis (65%) are unaware that electronic cards used in upcoming elections may have voters’ fingerprints and photo while only a third of Iraqis (32%) report being aware of that (Figure 31). Furthermore, significantly more women (71%) than men (60%) are unaware that electronic cards may include biometric data.

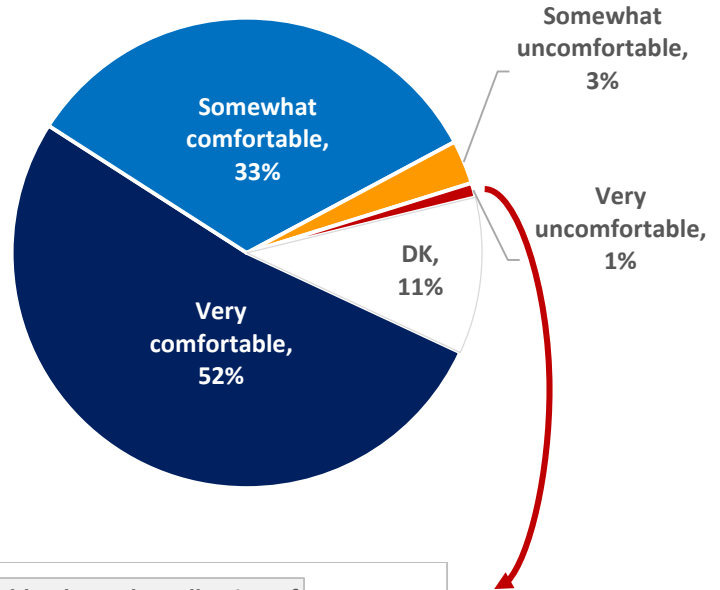


- Next, respondents were asked if they would be comfortable about the collection of fingerprint and photo for electronic cards to be used in upcoming elections. The survey shows that an overwhelming 85 percent of respondents are either very comfortable (52%) or somewhat comfortable (33%) whereas only 4 percent would be uncomfortable and 11 percent say they don’t know (Figure 32).

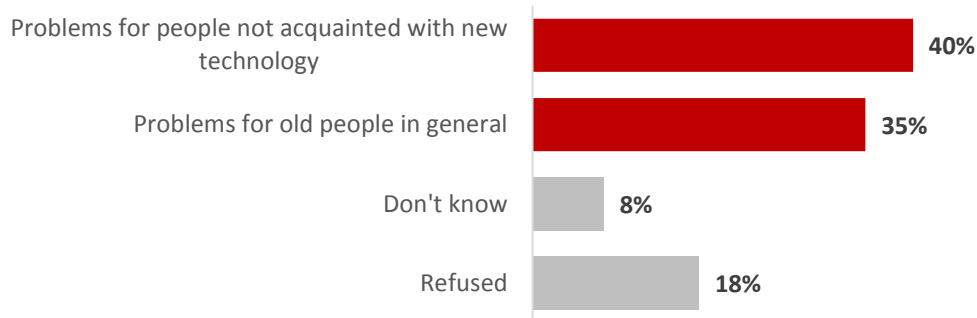


- The few respondents who said they would feel uncomfortable mentioned that it is primarily because collecting biometric data might be a problem for people not acquainted with the technology (40%) and because it may pose a problem for older people in general (Figure 33).

**Figure 32: "How comfortable are you about the collection of fingerprint and photo for the electronic cards to be used in upcoming elections?"**



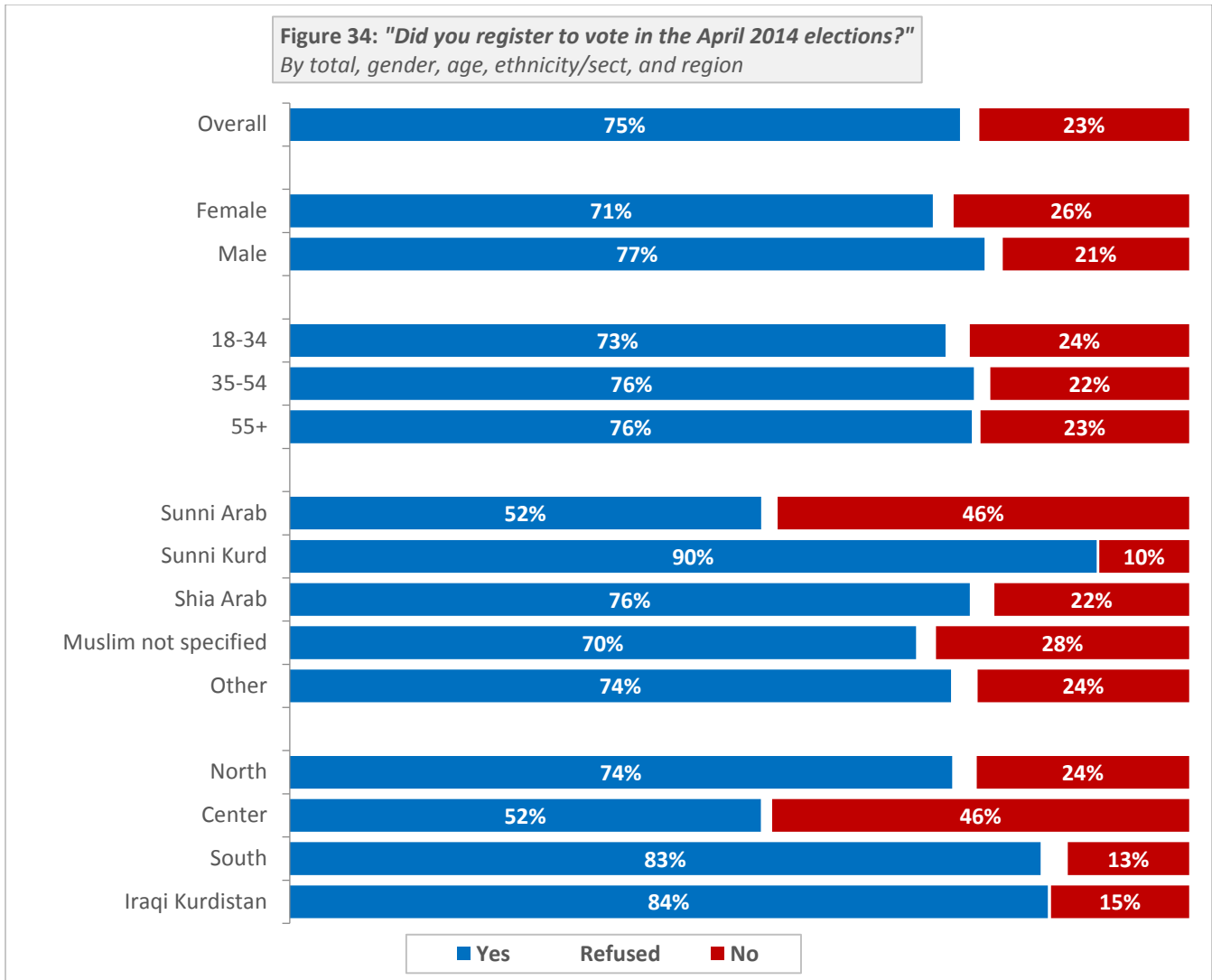
**Figure 33: "Why would you feel uncomfortable about the collection of fingerprint and photo for electronic cards?" (n=80)**



## **Voter Registration in the 2014 Council of Representatives Election**

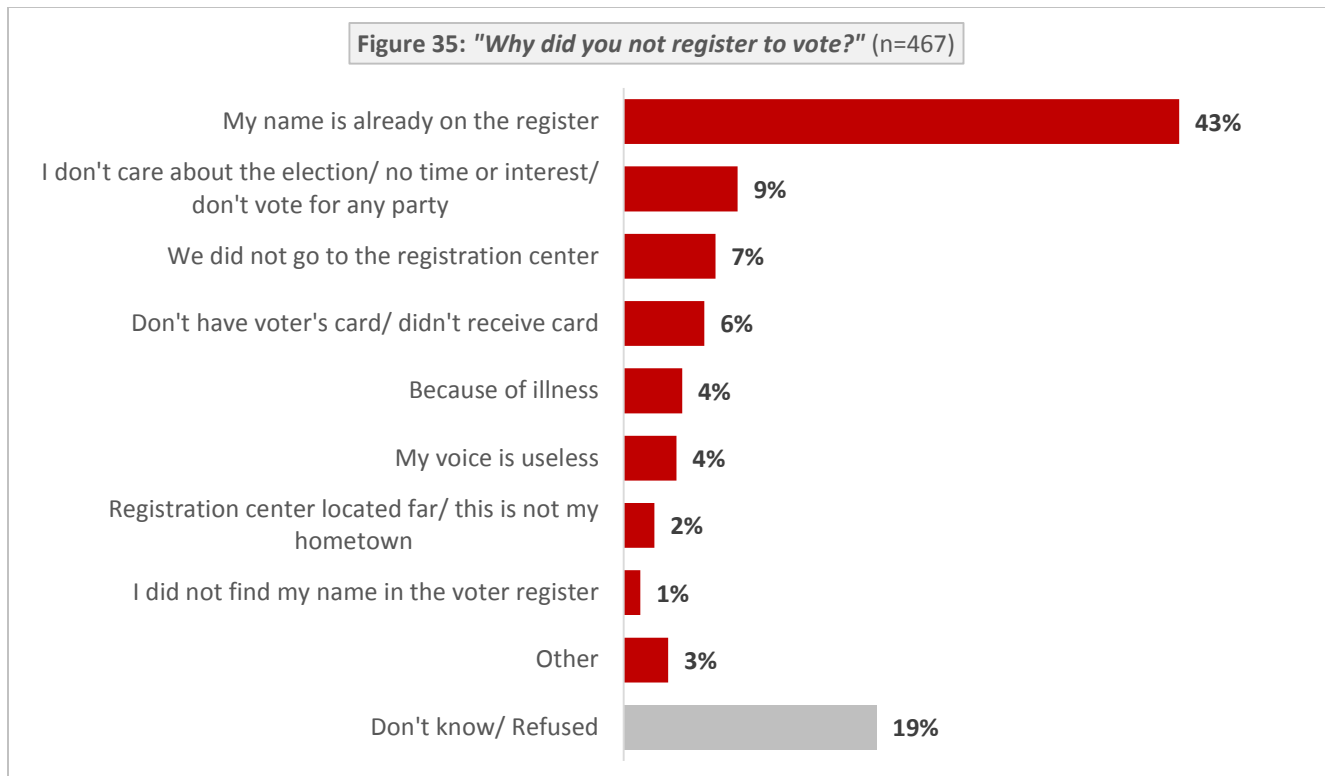
### **Registering for the 2014 Council of Representatives Election**

- Three quarters of respondents (75%) have registered to vote in the April 2014 elections compared with 23 percent who did not (Figure 34). Slightly more men (77%) than women (71%) have registered to vote.
- By age groups, the difference in registration rates is not statistically significant.
- Meanwhile, there are significant differences in registration rates by ethnic and sectarian profiles: our survey shows that Sunni Arabs were much less likely to register to vote than other groups with only 52 percent saying they registered versus 46 percent who did not register. In contrast, a full 90 percent of Sunni Kurds and 76 percent of Shia Arabs report registering for the 2014 elections. It must be cautioned again that our survey sample largely underrepresents Sunni Arabs relative to their true proportions in the Iraqi population due to the inability to conduct interviews in Islamic State group strongholds, which correspond to regions with predominant Sunni Arab populations.
- By region, we notice that registration rates are lowest in the Center (52%), followed by the North (74%) and highest in the South (83%) and in Iraqi Kurdistan (84%).



### Main Reasons for not Registering

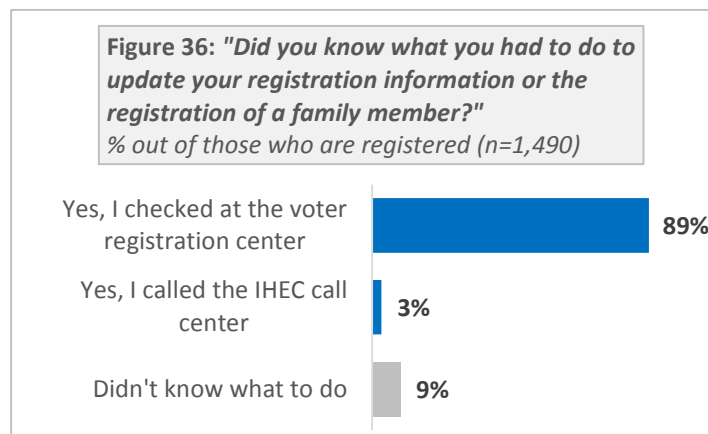
- A plurality of those who did not register (43%) said they did not register because their name already exists on the register (Figure 35). If we add up those who went to register and those who are already registered based on our survey sample, the share of those registered to vote in the 2014 elections reaches 85 percent of respondents, which is very similar to the share of respondents who reported voting in the 2014 elections (84%).
- It is noteworthy that Sunni Arabs who did not register for the 2014 elections were nearly twice as likely to respond that their name already exists on the register (60%), compared with Shia Arabs (34%) and Sunni Kurds (31%). If we add the number of Sunni Arabs who registered to vote to the number of those whose name is already on the list, we arrive at a rate of 70 percent who are registered to vote in the 2014 elections.
- Other reasons given by all respondents for not registering include not being interested or not caring about the election (mentioned by 9% of those who did not register), followed by not going to the registration center (7%), not having or not receiving their card (6%), illness (4%), believing that their voice is useless (4%).



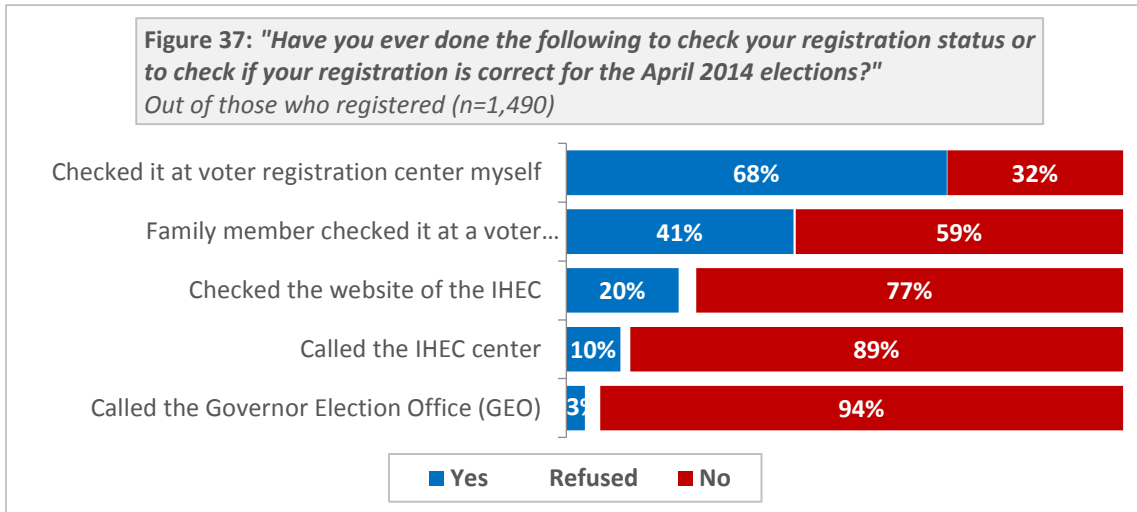
**Voter Registration Procedures**

- When respondents who registered to vote were asked if they knew what they had to do to update their registration information or the registration of a family member, a full 89 percent said yes, they knew and they checked at the voter registration center and 3 percent said yes, they knew and they called the IHEC call center while 9 percent said they didn't know what to do (Figure 36).

- Respondents who reported actively registering for the 2014 elections were asked if they took steps to check their registration status. The data shows that over two-thirds of respondents who are registered (68%) checked their registration status at the voter registration center themselves and 41 percent had a family member check their status at the voter registration center on their behalf (Figure 37). Some 20 percent checked their registration status on the IHEC website and 10 percent called the IHEC call center. Only 3 percent called the Governor Election Office (GEO) to check their registration status.

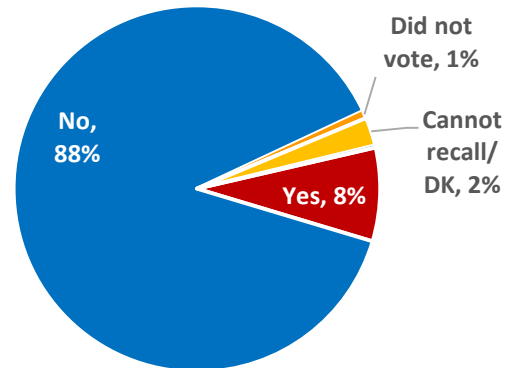


- In sum, over a quarter of respondents who are registered (27%) did not take any specific steps to check their registration status.



- A full 88 percent of respondents who registered for the 2014 elections did not experience any problems during the elections as a result of their registration compared with 8 percent who experienced problems, 2 percent who cannot recall, and 1 percent who did not vote (Figure 38).

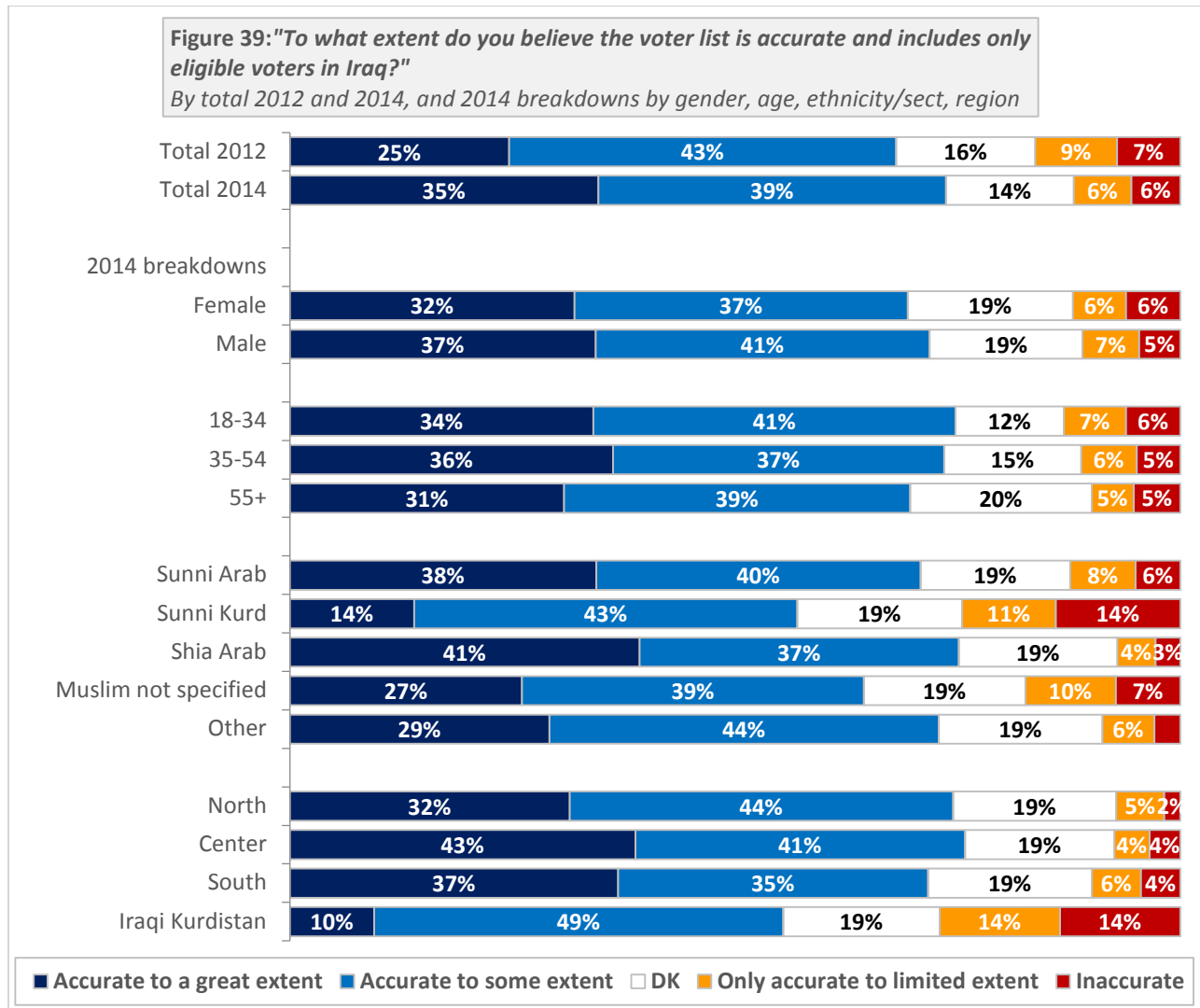
**Figure 38: "Did you experience problems during the 2014 elections as a result of your registration?"** n=1,490



**Perceptions of Voter List Accuracy**

- When asked of their views of the accuracy of the voter list, only few respondents (35%) believed the voter list is accurate to a great extent and another 39 percent believed the voter list is accurate to some extent, meanwhile, 6 percent believed the voter list was only accurate to a limited extent and another 6 percent believed the voter list is inaccurate (Figure 39). Nearly 15 percent of respondents either did not know (14%) or refused to respond (1%) to the question on voter list accuracy.
- When comparing figures to the 2012 IFES survey, we notice that assessments of the accuracy of the voter list have improved slightly: in 2014, slightly more respondents (74%) believed the voter list is overall accurate compared with 2012 (68%). In 2012, 25 percent of respondents said the voter list is accurate to a great extent and 43 percent said it is accurate to some extent.
- Perceptions of voter list accuracy show some difference by gender. Indeed, men are more likely to believe the voter list is accurate to a great extent (37%) than women (31%) and women are nearly twice as likely to say they don't know (18%) than men (10%).

- Perceptions of voter list accuracy also show significant differences by ethnic/sectarian profiles and by region. A quarter of Sunni Kurds believe the voter list is only accurate to a limited extent (11%) or inaccurate (14%) compared to 14 percent of Sunni Arabs and 7 percent of Shia Arabs. Sunni Kurds are also the least likely to say the list is accurate to a great extent (14%) compared with 38 percent of Sunni Arabs and 41 percent of Shia Arabs. By region, respondents in Iraqi Kurdistan are the least trusting of the accuracy of the voter list.

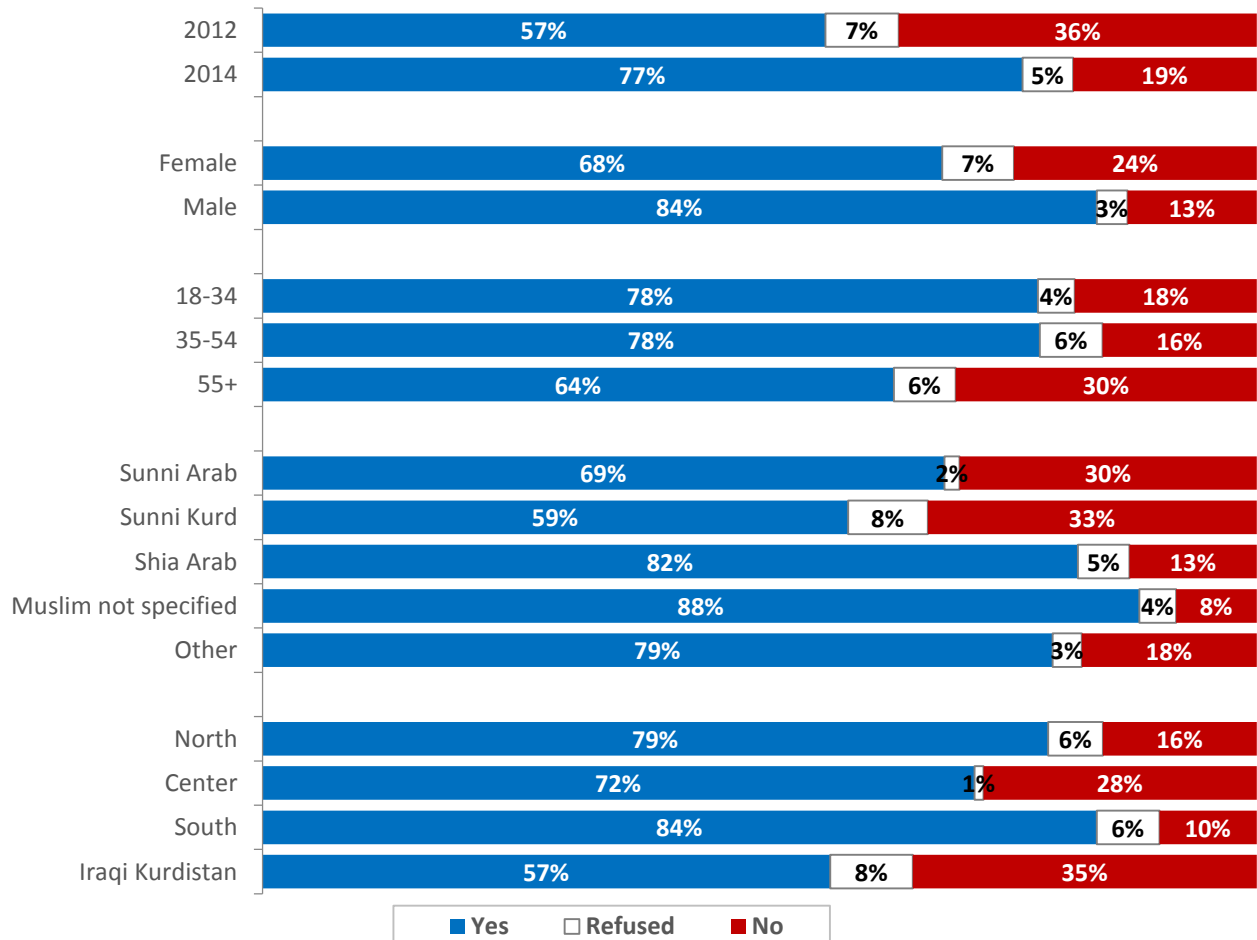


## Independent High Election Commission (IHEC)

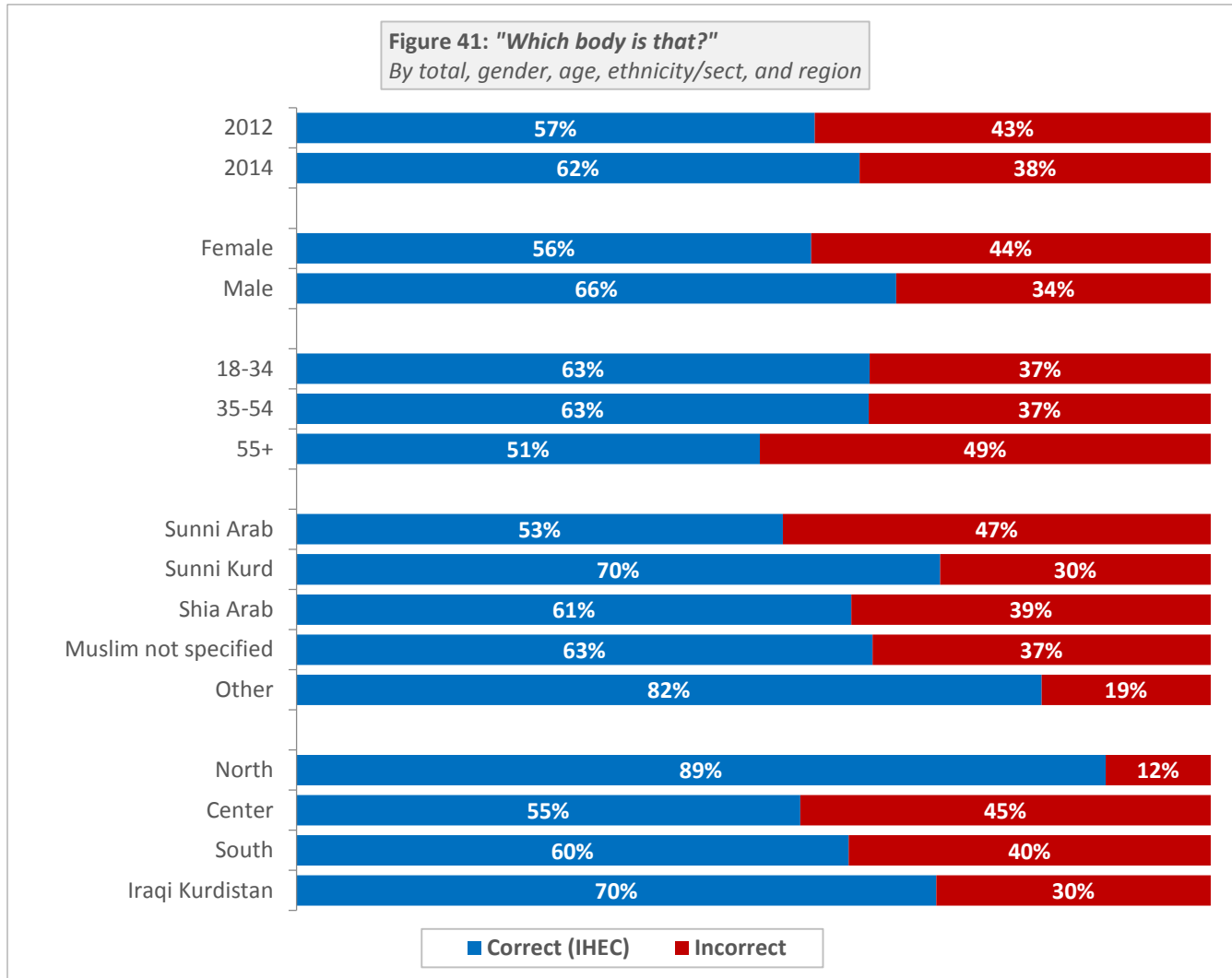
### Knowledge of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC)

- Over three-quarters of Iraqis (77%) say that they know the body that is responsible for managing elections in Iraq, which represents an increase of 20 percentage points from IFES' 2012 survey in Iraq, when 57 percent of respondents said they know the body responsible for elections (Figure 40).
- Self-reported knowledge of this body is higher among men, 84 percent of whom said they know the body, compared to only 68 percent of women. Furthermore, knowledge of the body is greater among Iraqis under the age of 55, with 78 percent knowing the body, compare to 64 percent of respondents over the age of 55.
- Furthermore, knowledge of the body is higher among Shia Arabs (82%) and non-denominational Muslims (88%), compared to Sunni Arabs (69%) and Sunni Kurds (59%). The lower self-reported knowledge among Sunni Kurds also translates to a lower knowledge level in Iraqi Kurdistan (57%) than in other regions of the country.

**Figure 40: "Do you know which body is responsible for managing the election process in Iraq?"**  
By total, gender, age, ethnicity/sect, and region



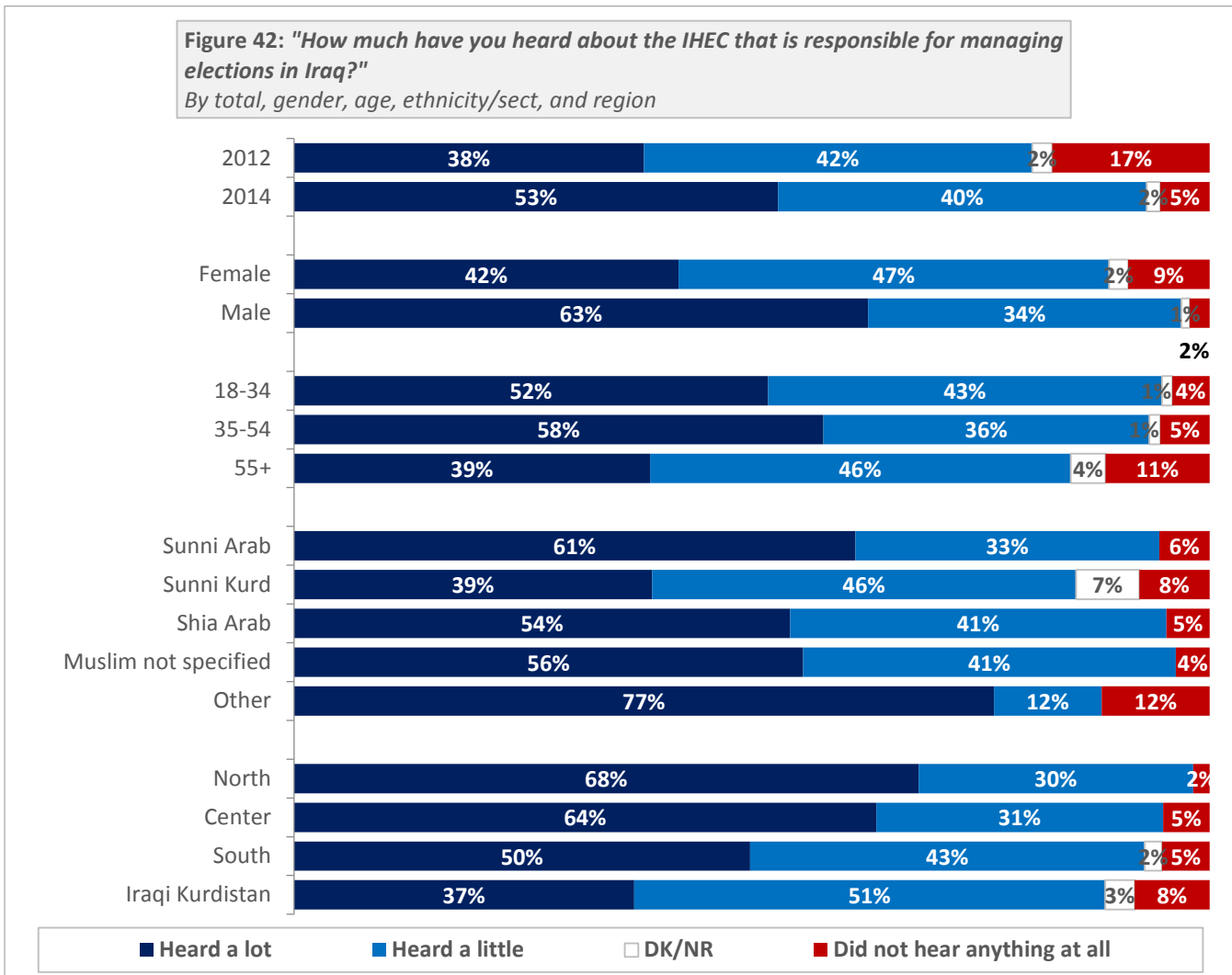
- Among Iraqis who said they were able to correctly identify the body that is responsible for managing elections in Iraq, 62 percent correctly said that the IHEC is responsible for the managing elections in Iraq (Figure 41). This represents an increase from 2012, when 57 percent correctly identified the body as the IHEC. Demographic trends seen in knowledge of the IHEC are prevalent here as well, with males (66%) more likely to correctly identify the IHEC than females (56%), and respondents under 55 (63%) more likely to identify the IHEC than respondents over 55 (51%).
- However, while fewer Sunni Kurds said they knew the institution for managing elections, those who said they did, were able to identify the IHEC at a higher rate (70%) than all other ethno-sectarian groups.



- When specifically prompted about their knowledge of IHEC, a full 93 percent of Iraqis say that they have heard either a lot (53%) or a little (40%) about the IHEC, with 5 percent saying they have not heard anything at all (Figure 42). This represents an increase from 2012, when 81 percent of respondents report having heard either a lot (38%) or a little (42%).
- Males report hearing a lot about the IHEC at a greater rate (63%) than female respondents (42%). Iraqis in the North (68%) and Center (64%) report hearing a lot about the IHEC more than Iraqis in the South



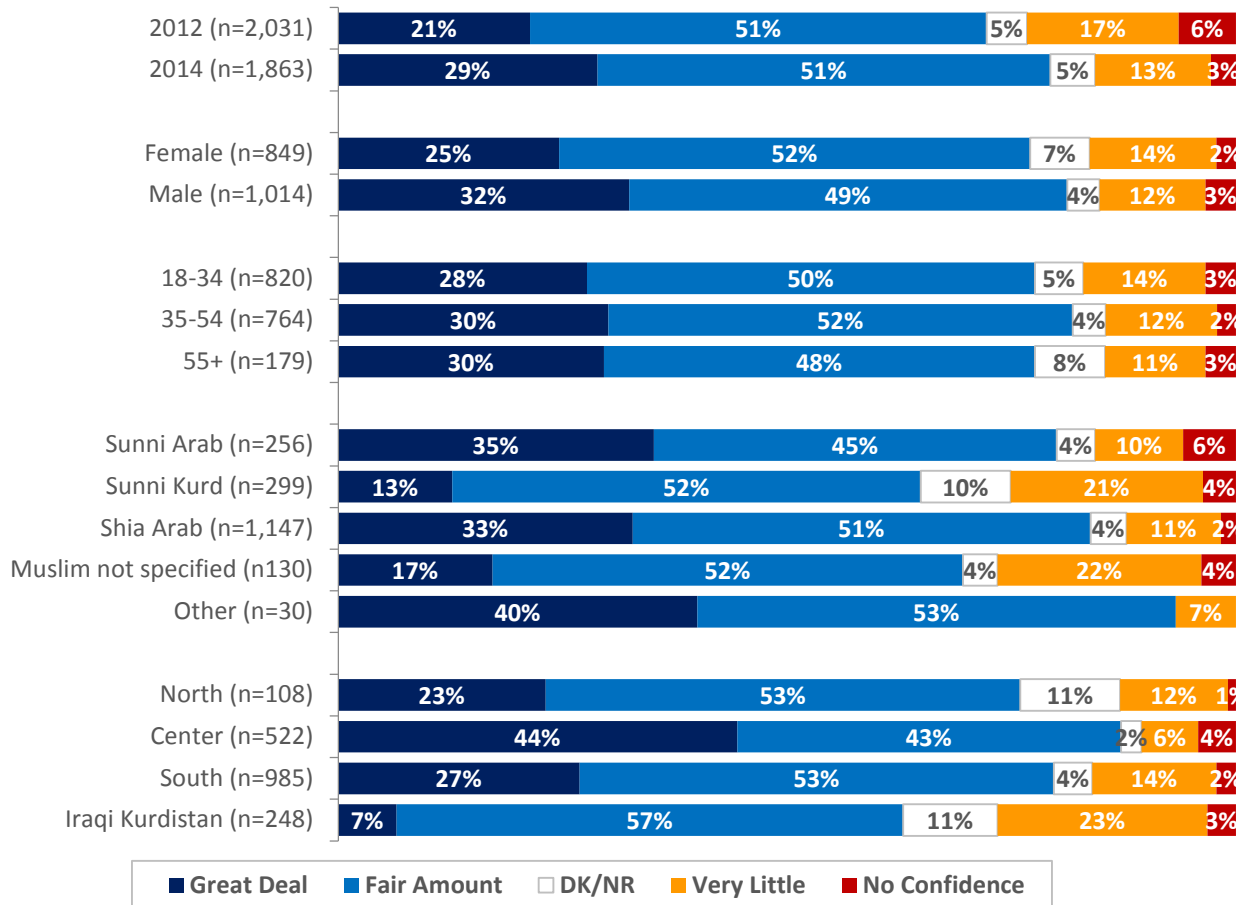
(50%) and Iraqi Kurdistan (37%). Sunni Kurds also report hearing a lot about the IHEC (39%) than all other ethno-sectarian groups in Iraq.



**Confidence in the IHEC**

- Iraqis are largely confident in the ability of the IHEC to organize credible elections, with 79 percent saying that they have either a great deal (29%) or fair amount (51%) of confidence in the IHEC (Figure 43). This represents a slight increase from 2012, when 72 percent said they had either a great deal (21%) or fair amount (51%) of confidence in the IHEC.
- Males report having a higher level of confidence (81%) than females (77%). Furthermore, residents of Iraqi Kurdistan report having lower rates of confidence in the IHEC (63%; with only 7% saying they have a great deal of confidence) than Iraqis in other parts of the country. Concurrently, Sunni Kurds, also show lower rates of confidence with 13 percent saying they have a great deal of confidence, and 52 percent saying they have a fair amount of confidence.

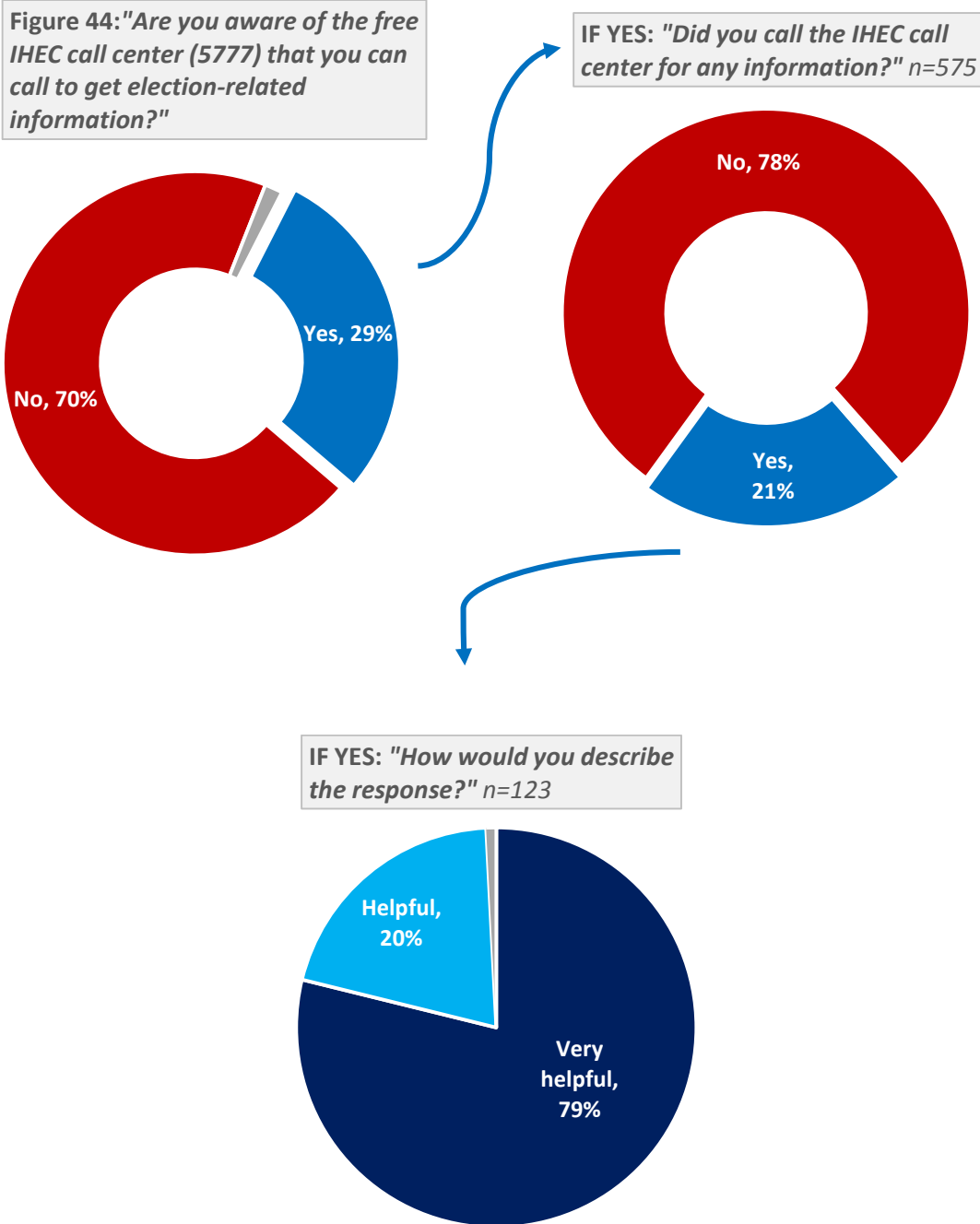
**Figure 43: "How much confidence do you have in the ability of the IHEC to organize credible elections?"**  
 By total, gender, age, ethnicity/sect, and region



- Among those with knowledge of the IHEC, most Iraqis have positive attitudes towards their work in managing elections. Furthermore, in all areas, the number of Iraqis agreeing with each statement has increased since 2012.
- Overall, 88 percent of respondents either strongly (38%) or somewhat agree (50%) that the IHEC has the capacity to effectively manage elections in Iraq. Furthermore, 86 percent of Iraqis say that polling station staff were knowledgeable about their duties and responsibilities during the April 2014 parliamentary elections, and 78 percent agree that there were as many women as men serving as poll workers at the polling station during the April 2014 elections. Seventy-seven percent of Iraqis agree that the IHEC performs its duties with honesty and integrity, while 76 percent agree that the IHEC is transparent in its operations and informs the public and media about its activities. Finally, 72 percent of Iraqis agree that the IHEC invites input from key groups in society in making critical decisions about the election process in Iraq, and 71 percent agree that the IHEC is an independent institution without political influence affecting its operations and decisions.

### Awareness and Use of the IHEC Call Center

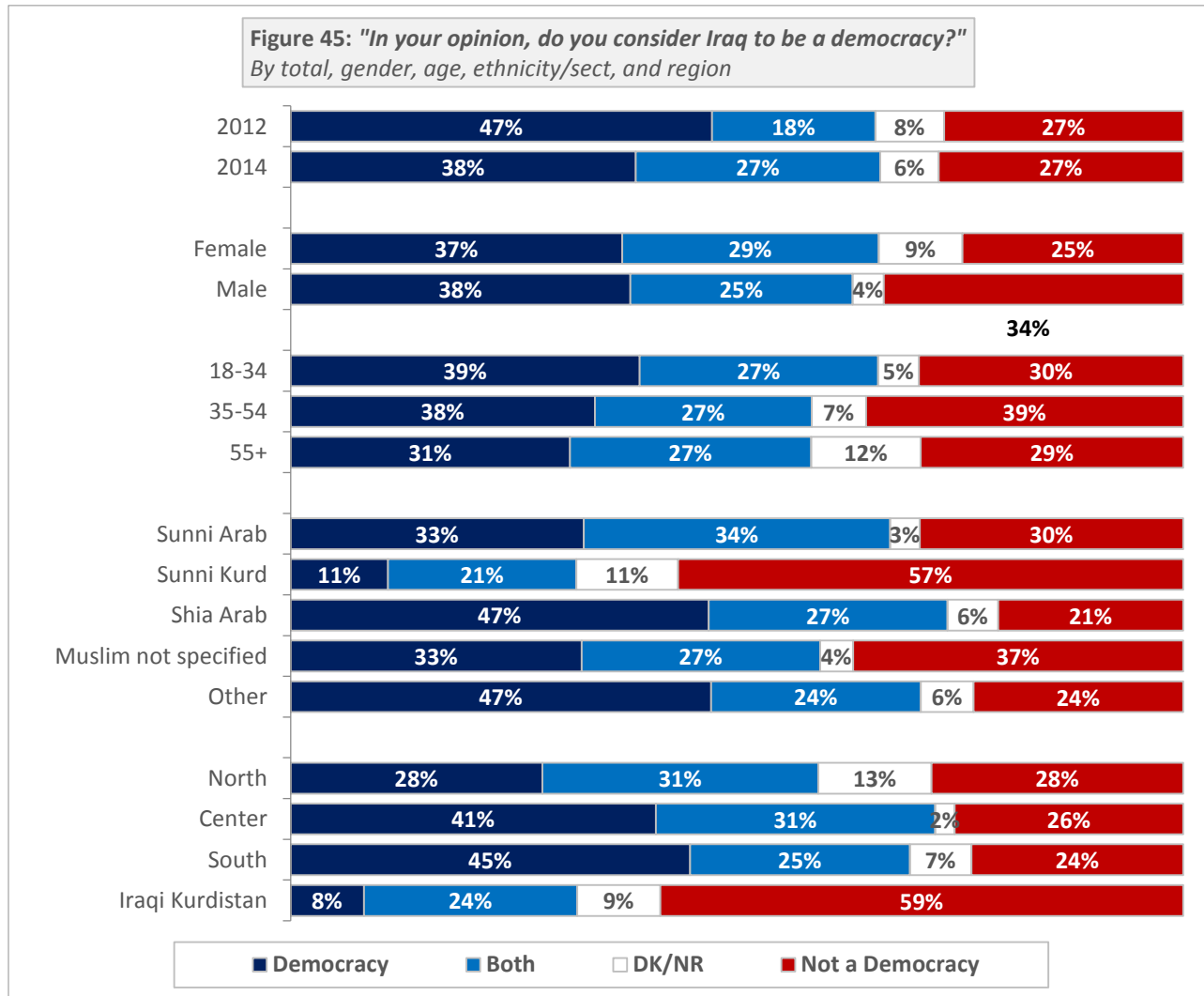
- Approximately three in 10 respondents are aware of the free IHEC call center that voters can dial to get election-related information while 70 percent are not aware of the call center (Figure 44).
- Of those who are aware, 21 percent have called the center for information before. Of those, the majority (79%) said the IHEC call center response was very helpful and was able to answer all their questions, while 20 percent said it was somewhat helpful, answering some but not all their questions.



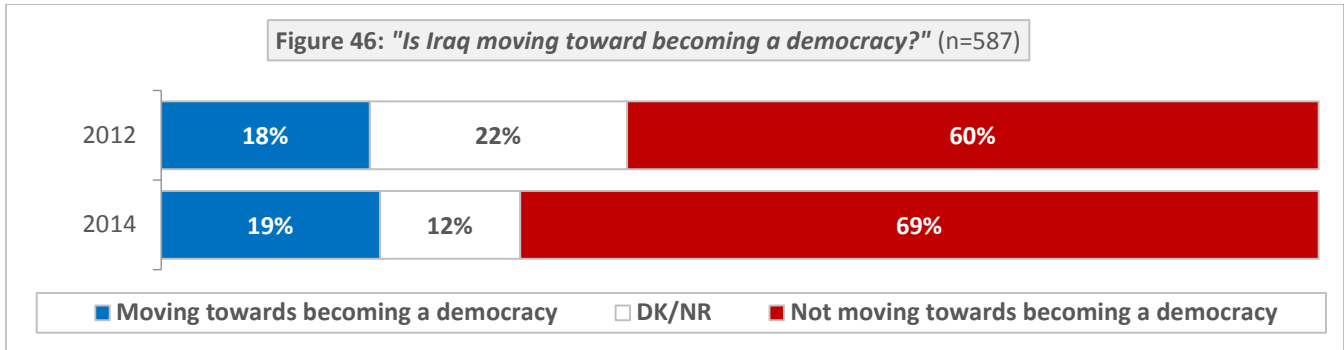
## Assessment of Iraqi Democracy and Institutions

### Assessment of Iraqi Democracy

- Thirty-eight percent of Iraqis say that Iraq is democracy, 27 percent say it is both democratic and non-democratic, and 29 percent say that it is not a democracy (Figure 45). This represents a decrease of nine percentage points from 2012, when 47 percent of Iraqis said they consider Iraq to be a democracy.
- Iraqis in the South (45%) and Center (41%) are more likely to say that Iraq is a democracy than those in the North (28%) and Iraqi Kurdistan (8%). Indeed, 59 percent of respondents in Iraqi Kurdistan say that Iraq is not a democracy at all.
- Perceptions of whether Iraq is a democracy or not vary significantly by ethno-sectarian profiles of respondents: Shia Arabs are most likely to say Iraq is a democracy, with 47 percent of respondents saying this. Sunni Arabs (33%) and Sunni Kurds (11%), who have less representation in the government say that Iraq is a democracy at lower rates.

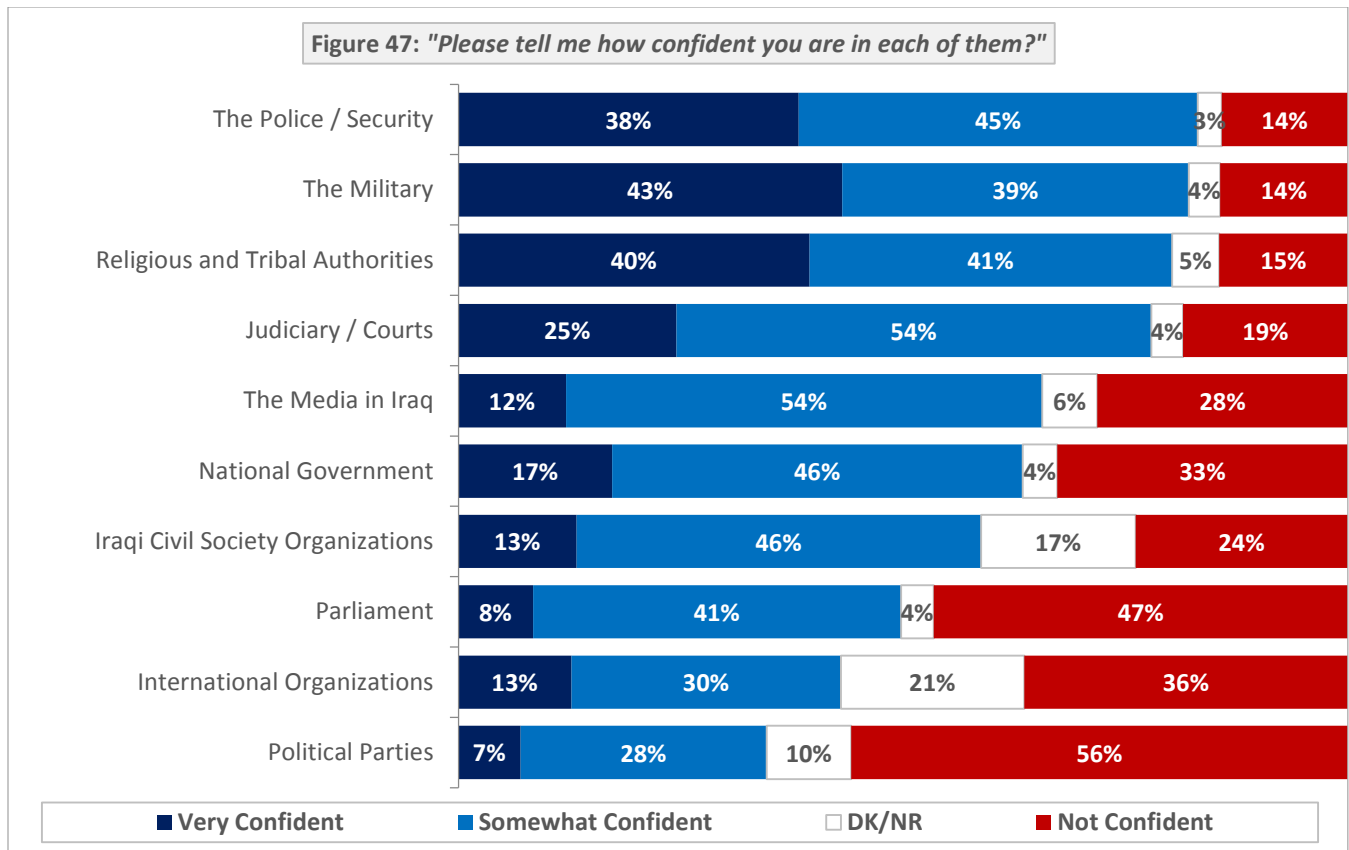


- Among those who think Iraq is not a democracy, 19 percent say that Iraq is moving towards becoming a democracy, while 69 percent say it is not moving towards becoming a democracy (Figure 46). These numbers are similar to 2012, when 18 percent said Iraq was moving towards becoming a democracy, and 60 percent said it was not. Sunni Kurds (3%) and residents of Iraqi Kurdistan (4%) are least likely to think that Iraq is moving towards being a democracy, and most likely to think that Iraq is not moving to becoming a democracy (Sunni Kurd, 82%; Iraqi Kurdistan 82%).



### Confidence in Institutions

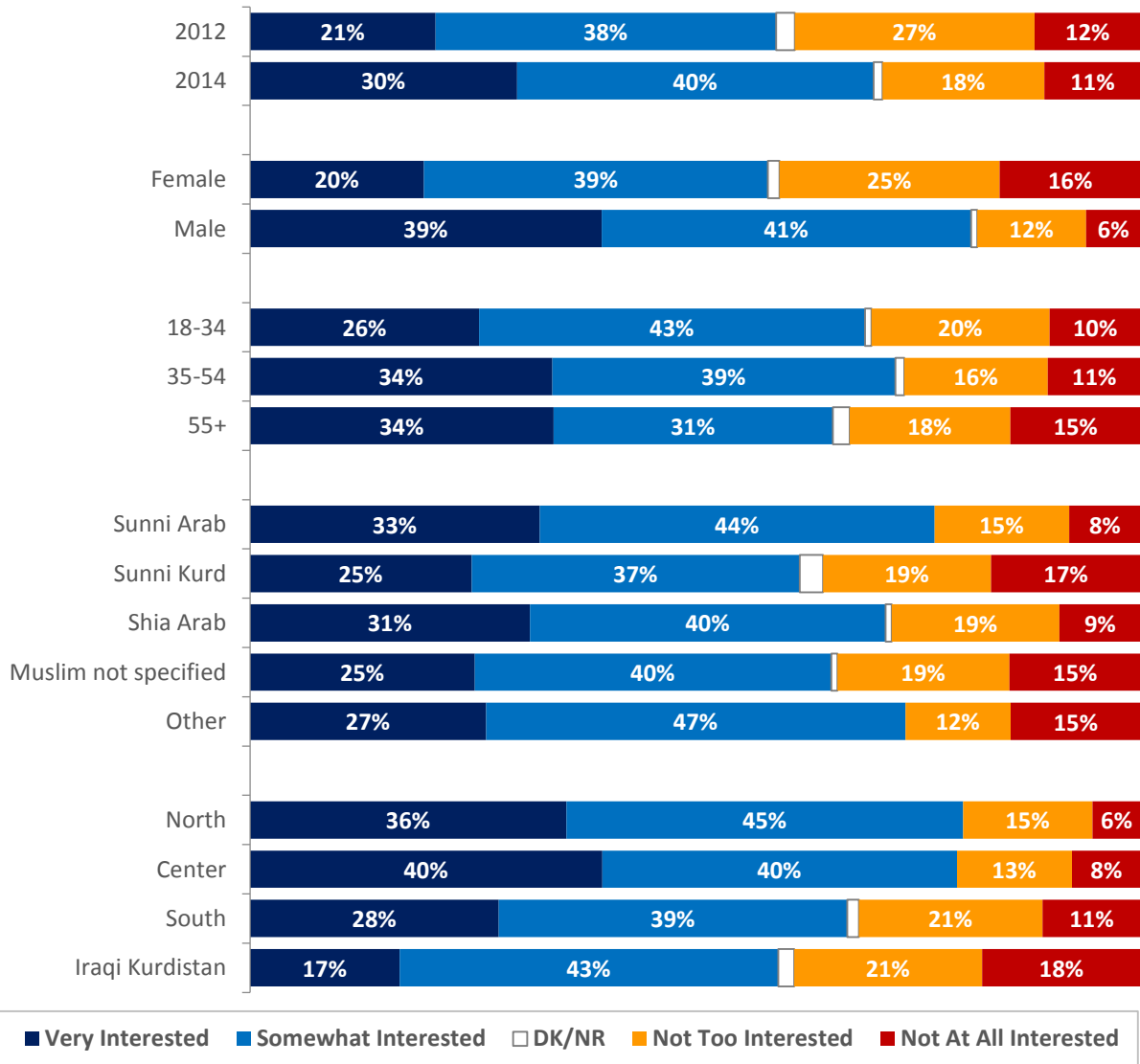
- Iraqis' perceptions towards different institutions, organizations, and authorities are mixed; however, according to our survey, attitudes have for the most part improved since 2012.
- Iraqis have the most confidence in the institutions tasked with ensuring security, with the 83 percent having confidence in the police and security services, and 82 percent having confidence in the military (Figure 47). Confidence in both institutions is far higher among Shia Arabs (93% police; 93% military) than all other ethno-sectarian groups.
- Iraqis are also largely confident in religious and tribal authorities, with 80 percent saying that they are confident in this institution. The judicial branch likewise inspires confidence, with 78 percent saying they are at least somewhat confident in the courts in Iraq.
- Two-thirds (66%) of Iraqis say that they have confidence in the media. Slightly less than two-thirds (64%) say that they have confidence in the national government; however far fewer (50%) say they have confidence in the Parliament. Fifty-nine percent of Iraqis say they have confidence in Iraqi civil society organizations, while far fewer express confidence in international organizations (43%) operating in Iraq.
- The institution that inspires the least confidence in Iraq, however, is political parties, which only 35 percent of Iraqis express confidence in.
- With the exception of the media (66%, down from 73% in 2012) and Parliament (50%, down from 53% in 2012), positive attitudes towards all of these institutions have increased since 2012.



**Interest in Matters of Politics and Government**

- Iraqis are largely interested in matters of politics and related developments (Figure 48). Overall, 70 percent of Iraqis are either very interested (30%) or somewhat interested (40%) in matters of politics, while 18 percent are not too interested and 11 percent are not at all interested.
- This total represents an increase of 11 percentage points from 2012, where 59 percent said that they are interested in matters of politics.
- Male respondents are far more interested in politics than females, with 81 percent of males saying they are interested, compared to 58 percent of females. Non-denominational Muslims (65%) and Sunni Kurds (62%) are the least interested ethno-sectarian groups, with at least 71 percent of all other groups being interested in politics. Interest in politics is higher in the North (80%) and Center (79%) than in the South (67%) and Iraqi Kurdistan (59%).

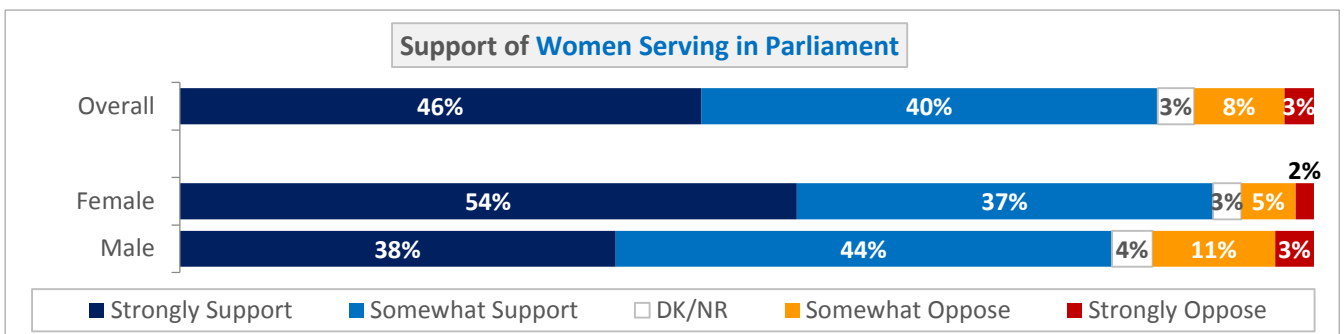
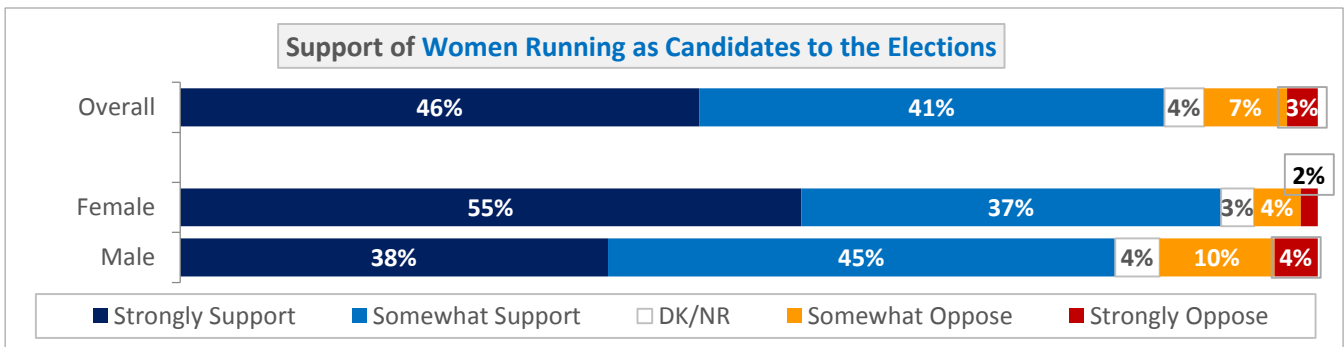
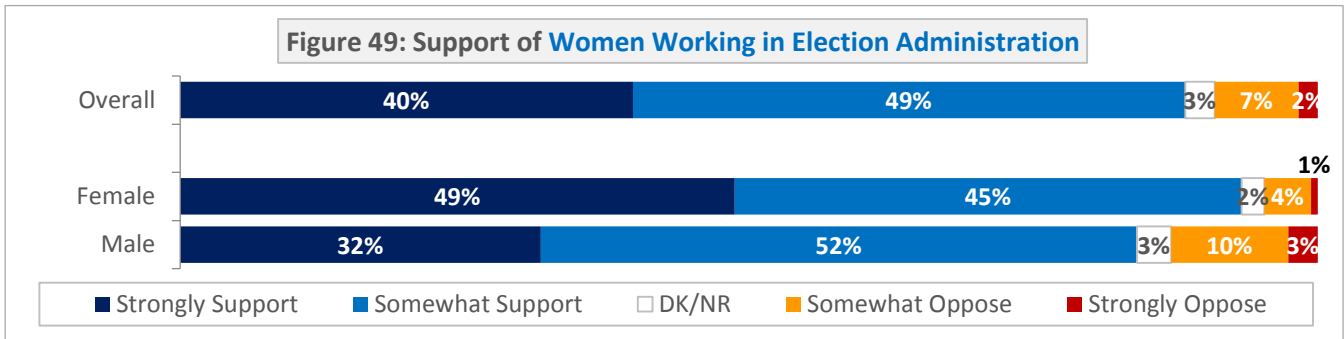
**Figure 48: "Please tell me how interested you are in matters of politics and related developments"**  
 By total, gender, age, ethnicity/sect, and region



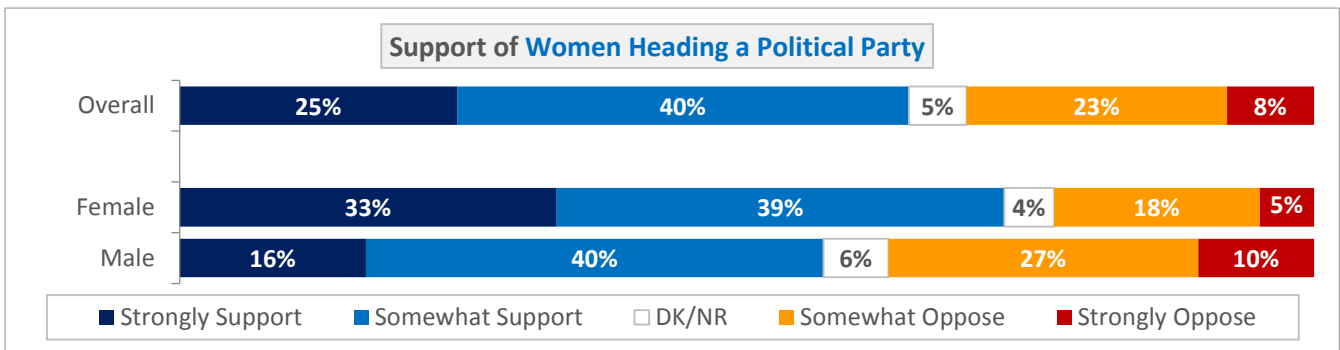
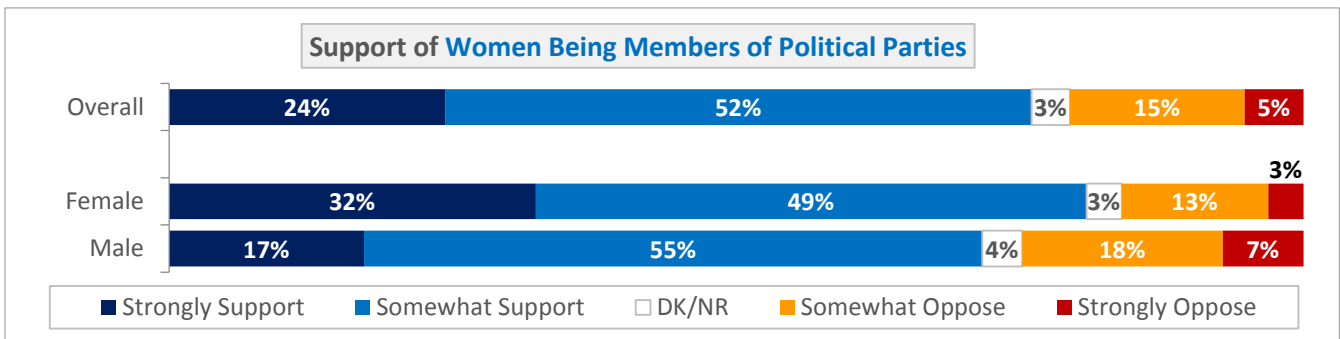
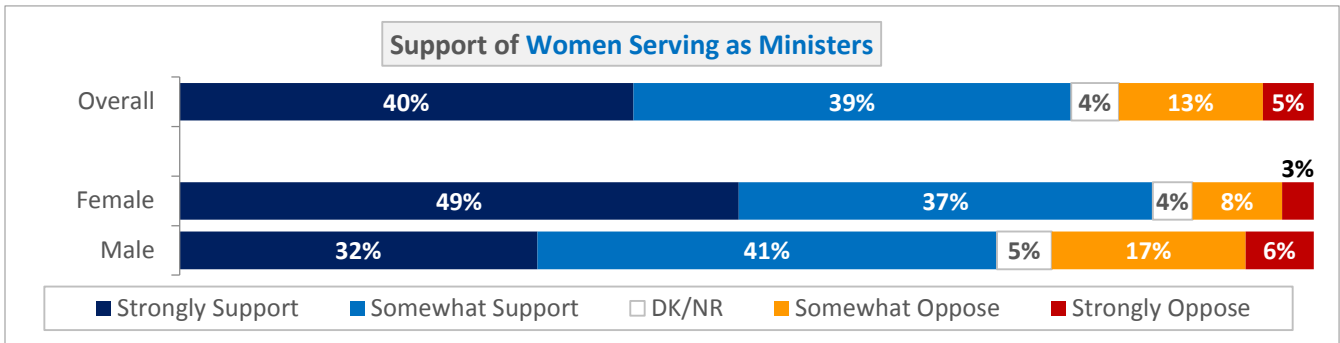
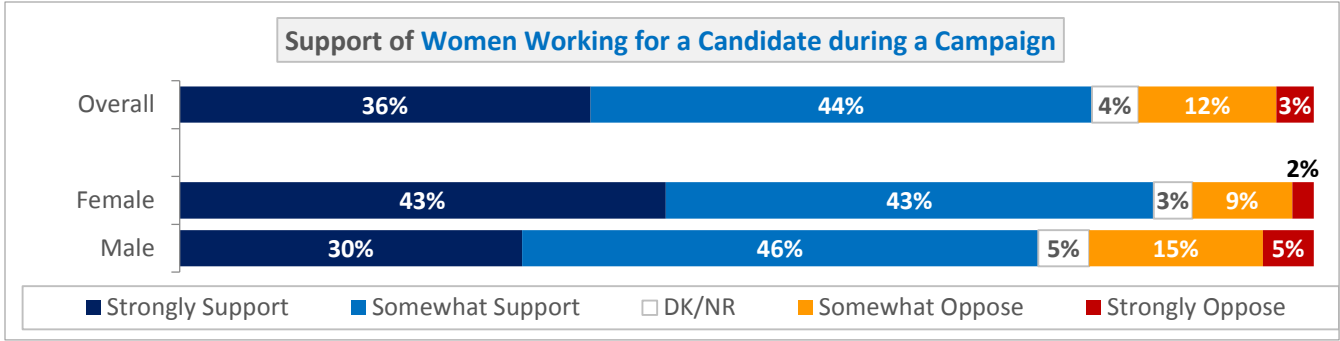
## Attitudes Towards Women’s Involvement in Politics

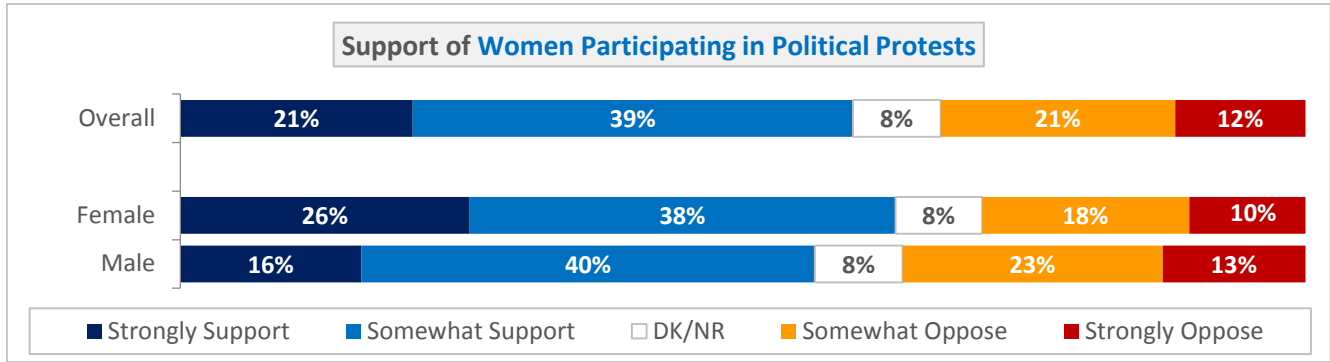
### Support for Women in Different Political Roles

- Iraqis tend to have a positive attitude towards women’s participation in politics, with over half of Iraqis approving of women’s participation through eight different political roles; however, in all of these areas, females are more likely to support female participation than males and males are less likely to “strongly support” women in these political roles.
- Large majorities of Iraqis support women working in election administration (89%), women running as candidates in elections (87%), women serving in parliament (86%), and women working for candidates during a political campaign (81%) (Figure 49). Slightly fewer Iraqis support women serving as ministers (79%), women being members of political parties (76%), and women heading political parties (64%). The area where the most Iraqis disapprove of women’s participation is political protests, with only 59 percent of Iraqis saying they support women’s involvement here.

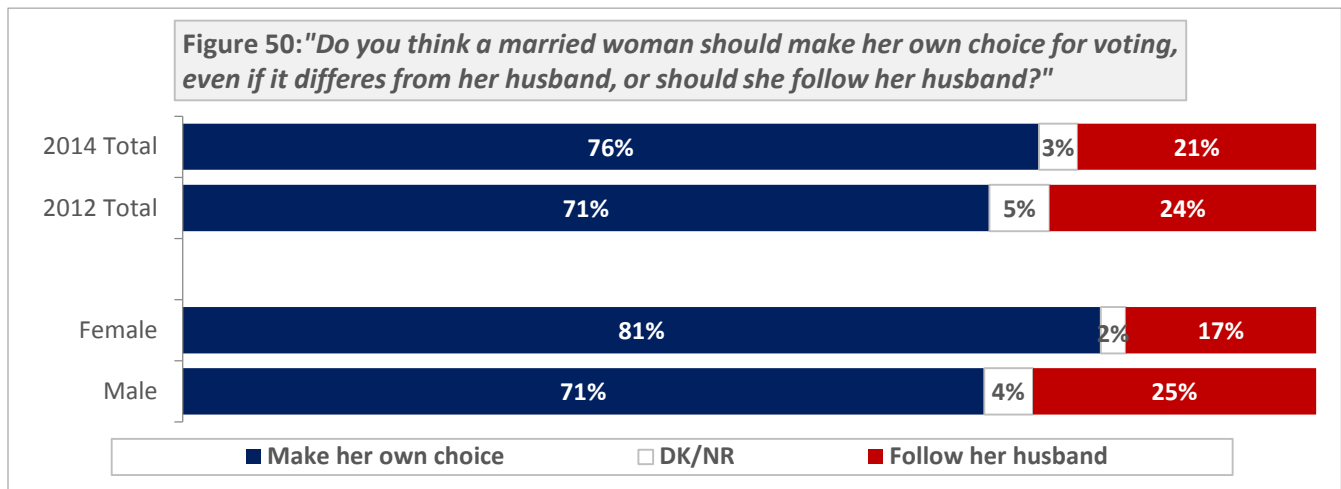




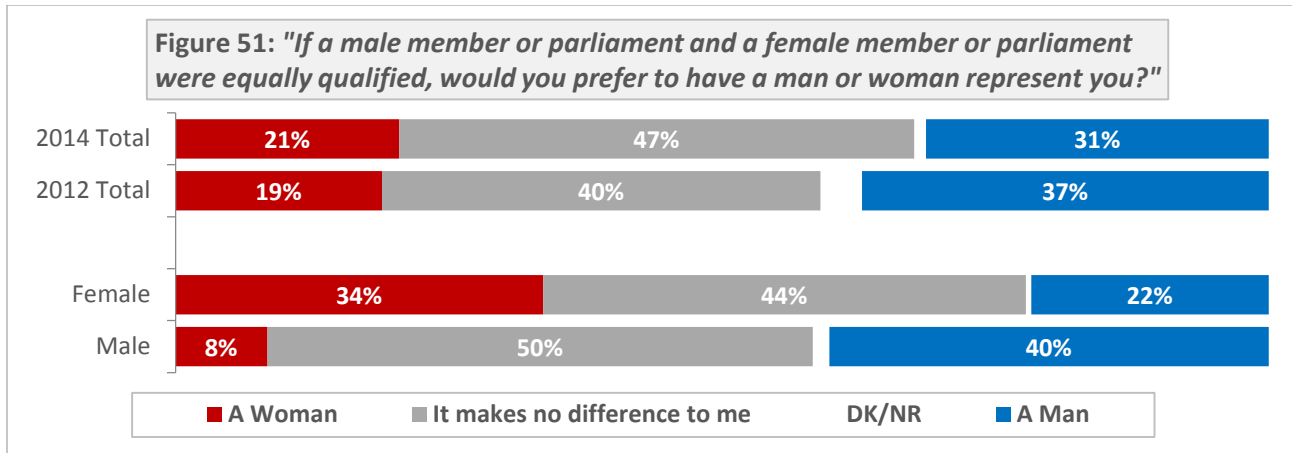




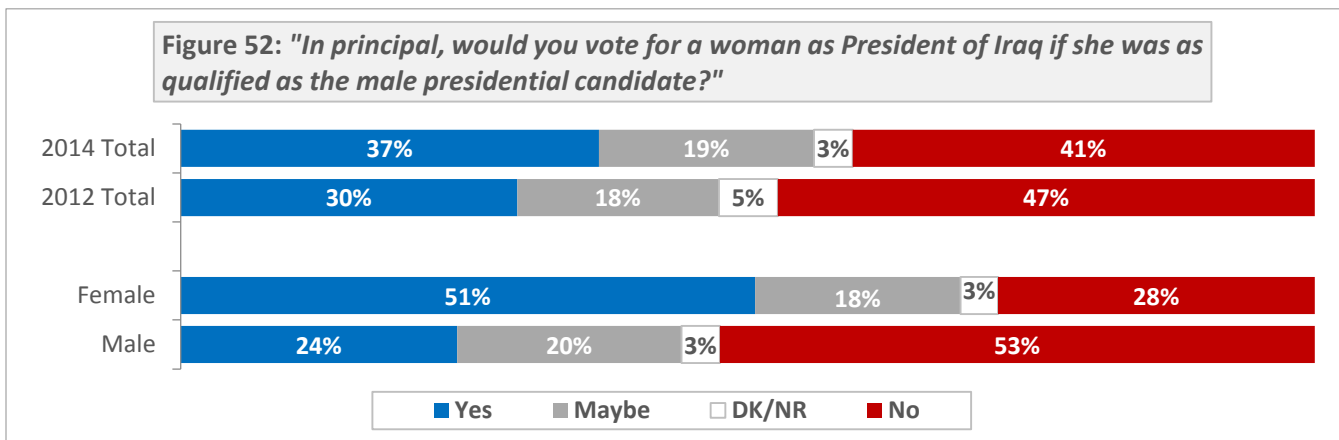
- Seventy-six percent of Iraqis say that married women should make their own choice when voting, even if that choice differs from her husband, while 21 percent say she should follow her husband. This total represents an increase of five percentage points from 2012, when 71 percent said that women should make their own choice in voting (Figure 50). Females are more likely to say that they should make their own choice, with 81 percent saying this, compared to 71 percent of males.



- Provided with a situation where a male and female candidate for parliament were both equally qualified, 21 percent of Iraqis say they would vote for the female, 31 percent say they would vote for the male, and 47 percent say it makes no difference as to their sex (Figure 51). Comparatively, in 2012, 19 percent said they would vote for the female, 37 percent for the male, and 40 percent said it makes no difference as to their sex.
- Females are more likely to say they would vote for female candidates (34%) compared to males (8%), while males are more likely to say they would vote for males (40%) or say it makes no difference (50%) compared to females (22% vote for male; 44% say it makes no difference).

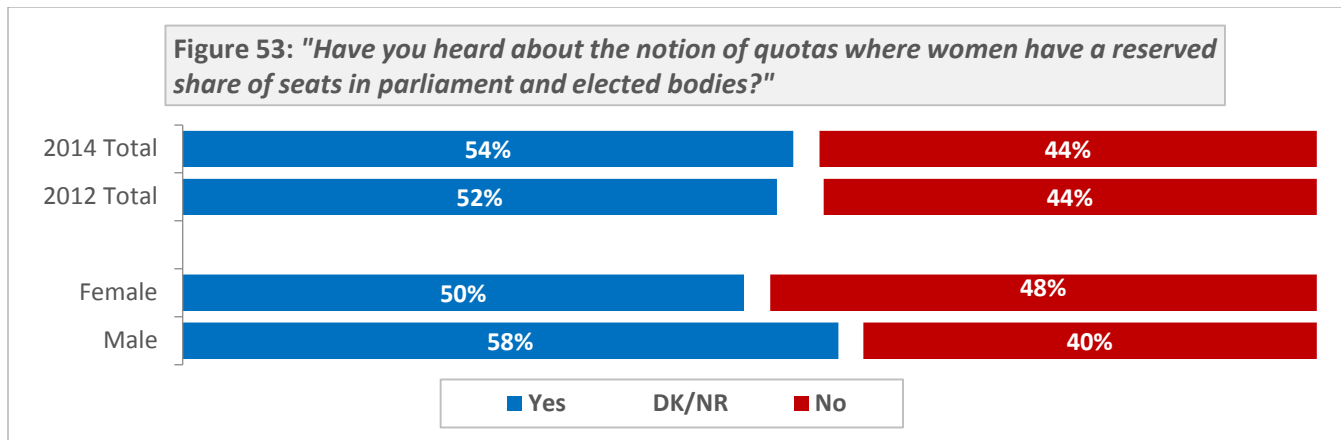


- Regarding the office of President, 37 percent of Iraqis say they would vote for a female for President if they were equally qualified to the male candidate, while 41 percent say they would not, and 19 percent say it depends (Figure 52). The number who would say they would vote for an equally qualified candidate increased by seven percentage points from 2012, when only 30 percent said they would vote for a female candidate for President. Females are more likely to say they would vote for the female candidate (51%) than males (24%).

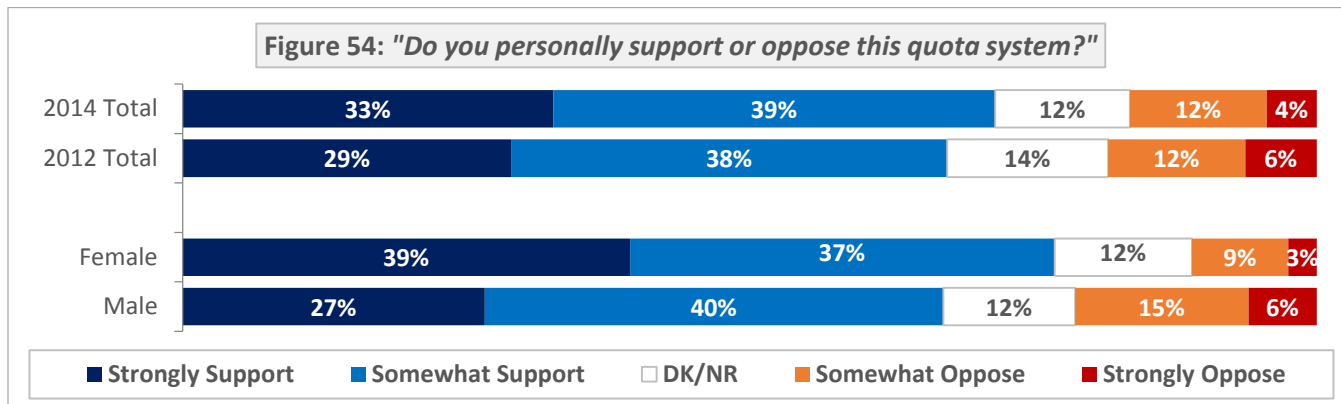


**Awareness and Support of Gender Quotas**

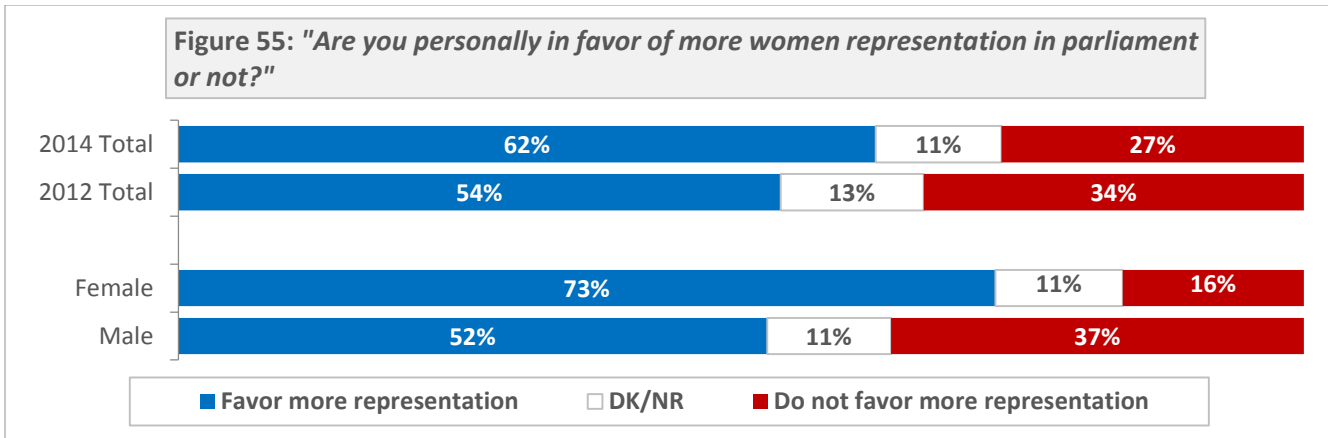
- Just over half of Iraqis (54%) say they have heard about the notion of quotas, wherein women would have a reserved share of seats in Parliament, which is statistically similar to the rate in 2012, when 52 percent said they knew about quotas (Figure 53). Overall, 58 percent of males say they know about quotas, compared to 50 percent of females.



- Seventy-two percent of Iraqis either strongly (33%) or somewhat (39%) support a quota system to reserve seats for women in Parliament, while 17 percent either somewhat (12%) or strongly (4%) oppose such measures (Figure 54). This represents an increase of five percentage points from 2012, when 67 percent either strongly (29%) or somewhat (38%) supported gender quotas in Parliament. Overall, females tend to support quotas at a higher rate (77%) than males (67%).

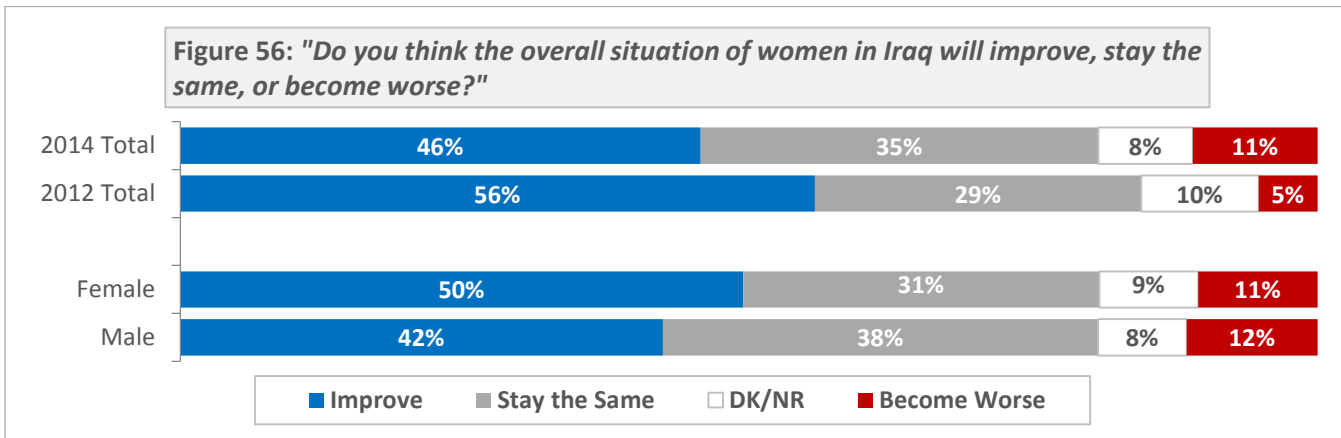


- Currently, 25 percent of members of the Iraqi Parliament are women. Sixty-four percent of Iraqis, however, favor more representation of women in Parliament, while 27 do not favor more representation, an increase of 10 percentage points from 2012, when 54 percent of respondents said they support more representation for women (Figure 55). Females support greater representation at a higher rate (73%) than males (52%).



**Expectations of the Overall Situation of Women in Iraq**

- Overall, 46 percent expect the overall situation for women to improve, 35 percent think it will stay the same, and 11 percent expect the situation to become worse (Figure 56). This represents a more pessimistic outlook than in 2012, when 56 percent expected things to improve, 29 percent thought things would stay the same, and only 5 percent thought things would get worse. Females tend to be more optimistic, with 50 percent saying things will improve, 31 percent saying things will stay the same, and 11 percent saying things will get worse. Comparatively, 42 percent of men think things will improve, 38 percent think things will stay the same, and 12 percent think things will get worse.





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