

GENDER DIMENSION OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ARMENIA

REPORT

ON FINDINGS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY



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NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Հայաստանի կազմակերպչական
հետազոտությունների կենտրոն



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OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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in the South Caucasus* Project

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INTRODUCTION. THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE, METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SURVEY

Societal evolution in the present-day world requires adherence to the principles of representative and participatory democracy. It is hard to visualize steady progress of a social system without engagement of various social groups and strata and their active participation in current events and without their impact on public administration and decision-making. At the same time, the analyses of statistical data and observations of unfolding processes as well as the studies conducted by various international and domestic organizations¹ suggest that as is the case in many countries of the world in Armenia too in political decision-making and in the field of participation in economic and social processes there are *instances* of gender inequality and discrimination and problems that have to be solved.

While Armenia has quite a high level of educational attainment of its population, with women accounting for well over a half of college degree holders², nevertheless, women's representation in political decision-making, business and economic management, local self-government and in key regional and central units of public administration as well as in governing bodies of political parties is quite low. It means that women's potential is not adequately utilized in the fields of public administration, decision-making and economic and socio-political governance.

In recent years a number of studies were conducted in Armenia to identify *manifestations* of discrimination against women and *reasons* of women's underrepresentation in decision-making and to conduct expert assessment of the Armenian national legislation from gender-based violence perspective³.

However, more representative studies aimed to identify and analyze the specifics of women's and men's activism and participation in Armenia are still relevant in terms of *comprehensive examination* of the obstacles to representative democracy and of *clarification* of principles for the elimination of those obstacles. The studies should focus on exploration of legal as well as of socio-cultural, moral-psychological, traditional, economic, stereotypical and other factors and of their effect.

That was the mission of a research project implemented in October-December 2010 by *Kovkas* Social Studies Center with funding provided by UNFPA.

¹ See, e.g., *Political participation in the transition society: Gender equality dimension*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2006. *Nation-wide survey on domestic violence in Armenia 2008-2009. Executive Summary*. RoA National Statistical Service and UNFPA. Yerevan, 2010. *Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007. Alternative Report*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2007. *Women's political participation in the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia in 2007*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2007, in Armenian; *Study on causes of women's underrepresentation in decision-making*. RoA National Institute of Labor & Social Research. Yerevan, 2008.

² See *The results of the 2001 census in RoA*. Yerevan, 2003, pp. 243-245. *Women and Men in Armenia. Statistical Booklet*. Yerevan, 2010, pp. 50-53.

³ See *Political participation in the transition society: Gender equality dimension*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2006. *Women in Development. Gender issues of the present-day society (Based on the findings of a sociological survey)*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 1999, in Armenian; *Assessment of the RoA National Legislation from Gender-Based Violence Perspective*. UNFPA. Yerevan, 2009, in Armenian].

Goal of the Study

The goal was to contribute to the formulation and implementation of the State gender policies and to the strengthening of mechanisms that enhance women's representation in power and women's participation in decision-making and in socio-political processes.

The Study objectives were:

- a) to conduct a sociological survey-based quantitative study with a view to providing a comparative description of women's and men's participation in socio-political processes as well as to probing public opinion on the issue;
- b) to identify social, economic, political, educational, advocacy, moral-psychological, traditional, stereotypical and other driving factors that promote or obstruct women's full-fledged participation in those processes;
- c) to make recommendations for the State bodies tasked with formulation of gender policies and for concerned non-governmental organizations on weakening the impact and elimination of the factors that obstruct civil and political participation.

Study sample and tools

The sociological study was conducted through a sampled survey in the city of Yerevan and in four regions of the Republic of Armenia. The sample was constructed through the combination of principles of multi-stage, cluster, proportional and systematic sampling. At the initial stage, selected were the city of Yerevan and four regions of the Republic of Armenia, with two of the latter with prevalence of rural population and two with prevalence of urban population. At the second stage, stratified sampling was used proportional to the population in the Yerevan city communities and in rural and urban communities of the regions, with locality being a sampling unit. At the third stage, the distribution of the sample by clusters and strata was done in line with the principle of proportional representation of final units in it. At the fourth stage, a route-systematic sampling strategy was used for selection of households in a given locality. The sampling interval was set as $n+4$ for multi-unit apartment buildings and as $n+3$ for streets with individual cottages. At the final stage, randomization was done based on the principle of closest birth date.

The survey was conducted in ten communities of Yerevan and in twelve urban and thirty-six rural communities in the RoA Armavir, Gegharkunik, Shirak and Syunik regions.

The sample size was 1,200 respondents. The primary sociological data were collected through standardized interviews.

The analysis of the survey results consists of three parts. **Part One** is devoted to the analysis of interest in socio-political processes, of general indicators of awareness and participation and of their gender specifics. **Part Two** contains an analysis of gender aspects of a professional or political career and an assessment of public opinion on those matters. The focus of Part Three is on the analysis of the factors that hinder gender equality, on exploration of the enabling environment for women's political participation and on the review of manifestations of gender discrimination and of the possibilities for eliminating them.

PART I. GENERAL INDICATORS OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND THEIR GENDER DIMENSION

1. Interest in socio-political processes and level of awareness

The most important guarantees for effective solution of the problems faced by public at large and for sustainable development include an active political stand of various social groups and strata and their constructive participation in socio-political processes.

Political participation is society members' engagement in political relations, direct or indirect presence in political life, and involvement in political institutions formation processes and in processes of making and implementing decisions.

Within the framework of philosophy, political science, sociology and psychology there are different, even conflicting conceptual approaches to civic and political participation.

Theoreticians who take a **liberal** stance on issues of political participation believe that maximum possible broadening of the scope of participation in political processes is a solid factor of political legitimacy and the best way to assure mutual security for political parties. At the same time, those who take a **conservative** stance on the expansion of the scope of political participation see it as a threat that will undermine national unity and firm foundations of the political order. They try to find new arguments to support the Heraclitus-Platonic principle, which is known from the Ancient Greek culture and which contends that the rule of the best minority is preferable to the rule of ill-informed majority. According to that view, political decisions should be made by people who are better informed, competent in and capable of political rule. Some others find moderate, informed and institutionalized (regulated and measured) participation most effective. Those approaches have competed interminably from the times of Plato, Democritus and Aristotle to Stanley Katz and Günter Grass of our days⁴.

Other contemporary theoreticians single out 'symbolic' participation of society's members in politics, i.e. in elections and voting. Finding such participation insufficient, the theoreticians attach significance to citizens' direct participation in decision-making processes⁵.

W. Mibright proposes another principle of classification besides direct and indirect (or representative) forms of political participation. He distinguishes *conventional* and *unconventional* forms of participation. The former are legal and regulated by law (e.g. participation in activities of political parties, in electoral processes, authorized rallies, meetings with officials, etc.).

⁴ See Grass, G. "On periods of stagnation within progress." *From the Snail's Diary*. St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 311-213 (in Russian). Katz, S. "Shaping the political structures for democracy: Introduction". *Democracy Is a Discussion. II. The Challenges and Promise of a New Democratic Era*. New London, CT, 1998, p.7. Osipov, V. "Political participation and democratization: The role of NGOs in the transition society." *Political participation in the transition society: Gender equality dimension*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2006, pp. 53-56. Shapaghatian, H. *Current Issues of Political Participation*. Yerevan, 2007, pp. 16-17, in Armenian.

⁵ See Pateman, C. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge, 1970, p. 5.

The latter are illegal and rejected by majority in the society (e.g. involvement in unauthorized rallies, picketing, riots and acts of violence and terrorism)⁶.

Finally, civic and political activism and participation can be *spontaneous* (impulsive, unplanned and unorganized) and *organized* (regulated and controlled by civic and political institutions).

Nevertheless, it is important that a uniform scale be designed for measuring all the above-mentioned forms of participation, thereby making it possible to identify various levels of participation. From that perspective, Russian political scientist A.V. Melnik's classification of participation and activism indicators is noteworthy. It was used in a slightly revised form as a basis in the methodological documents of this study. He proposes the following classification of the participation forms and levels:

1. Reaction triggered by the actions of the political system, institutions and/or their representatives,
2. Participatory actions related to representative powers,
3. Participation in activities of political parties and non-governmental organizations,
4. Execution of political functions within the framework of the institutions that are part of the political system or are against it,
5. Direct participation in political actions (rallies, voting, signature-gathering campaign, etc.),
6. Active involvement in political movements, including in a leadership role⁷.

This version of the classification can probably be complemented with extreme, unconventional forms of political and civic participation (participation in unauthorized rallies, picketing, riots, etc.). Citizens' interest in and awareness of political and civic processes as well as citizens' evaluation of, stand on and attitude towards the latter should be stressed as a precondition for their integration in those processes. The classification should also include citizens' somewhat motivated and deliberate inactivity, apathy or "inaction," which are traditionally designated as an *immobile* form of political participation.

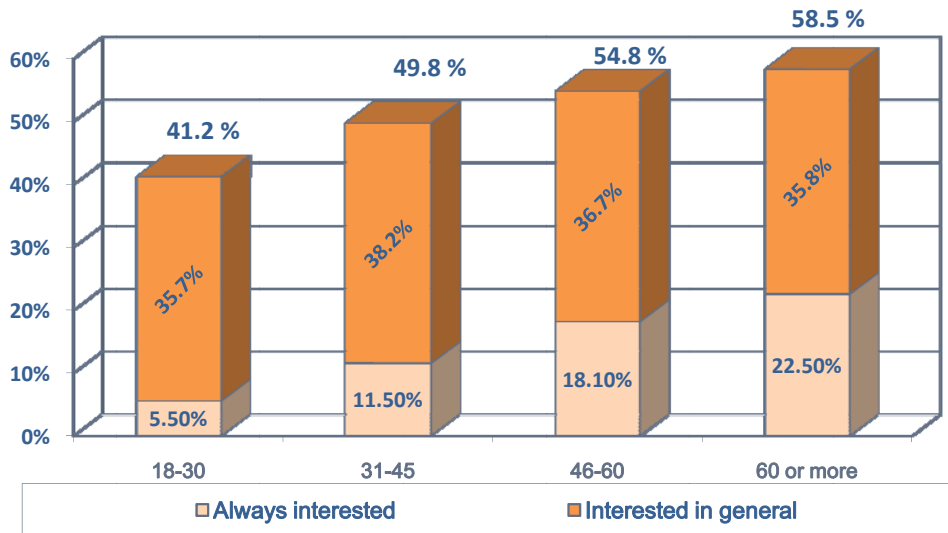
That finalizes a ten-descriptor matrix to be used for the analysis of political and civic participation.

The survey data suggest that an overall share of those who take an interest in socio-political developments and processes is 49.9% (13.2% of the respondents are always interested in the latest developments, while 36.7% of the respondents are interested in general). There is a high positive correlation between age and interest in socio-political developments, with the proportion being highest in the group of the respondents 61 years of age or older (58.5%). See *Figure 1*.

⁶ Quoted by H. Shapaghatian. *Current Issues of Political Participation*. Yerevan, 2007, p. 79. See also Шестопад, Е.Б. *Очерки политической психологии*. М., 1990, с. 388 (Shestopal, E.B. *Essays in Political Psychology*. Moscow, 1990, p. 388, in Russian). According to the findings of the present survey, for instance, 6.0% of the respondents took part in unconventional forms of participation. As to the same data, in some circumstances that percentage can go up to 18.3%. See Appendix 1, Question 38.

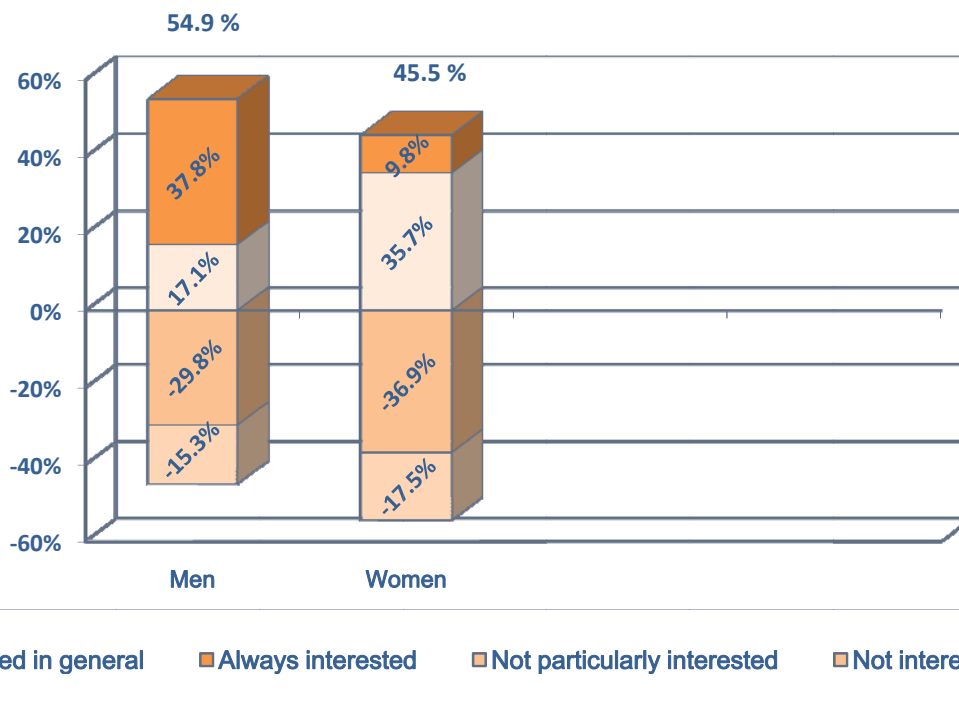
⁷ See Мельник А.В., Политология, М., 1996, с. 338 (Melnik, A.V. *Political Science*. Moscow, 1996, p. 338, in Russian).

Figure 1. Proportion of the respondents who take an interest in socio-political developments, by age groups



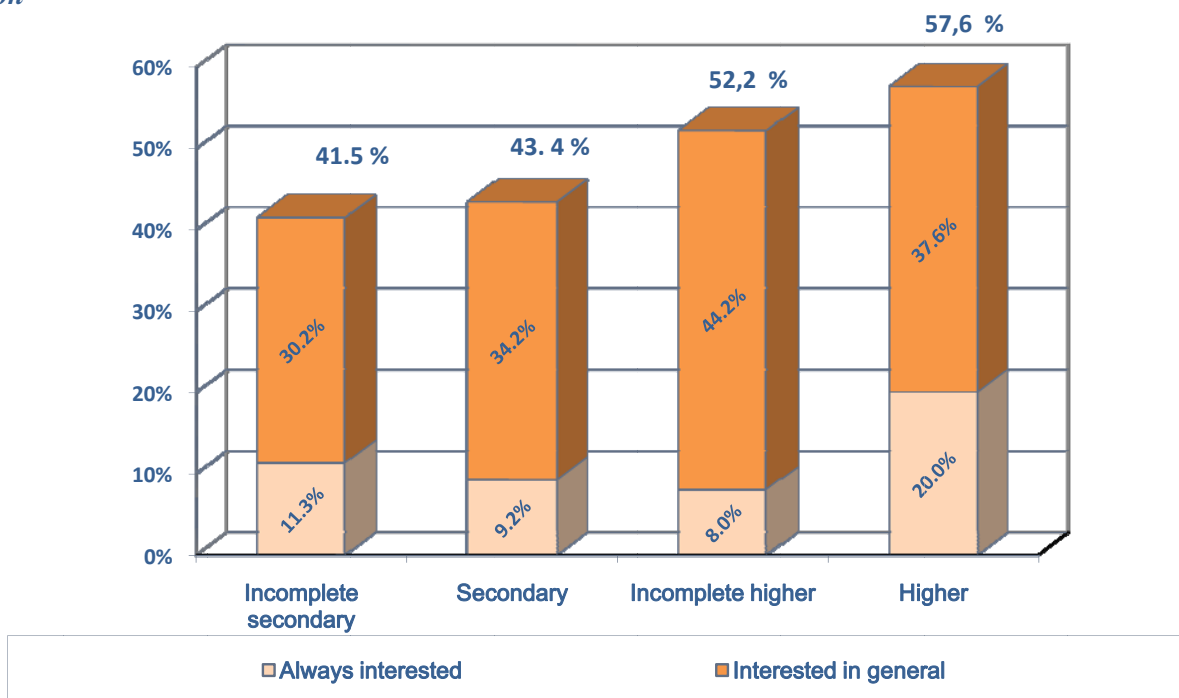
The proportion of those who take an interest in socio-political developments is higher among men than women by 9.4 percentage points. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Percent distribution of the respondents in the sample as to interest in socio-political developments, by sex



Interest in current socio-political processes is also predicated to some extent on the respondents' educational level. The higher the level, the higher the proportion of those who take an interest in those processes tends to be. See Figure 3.

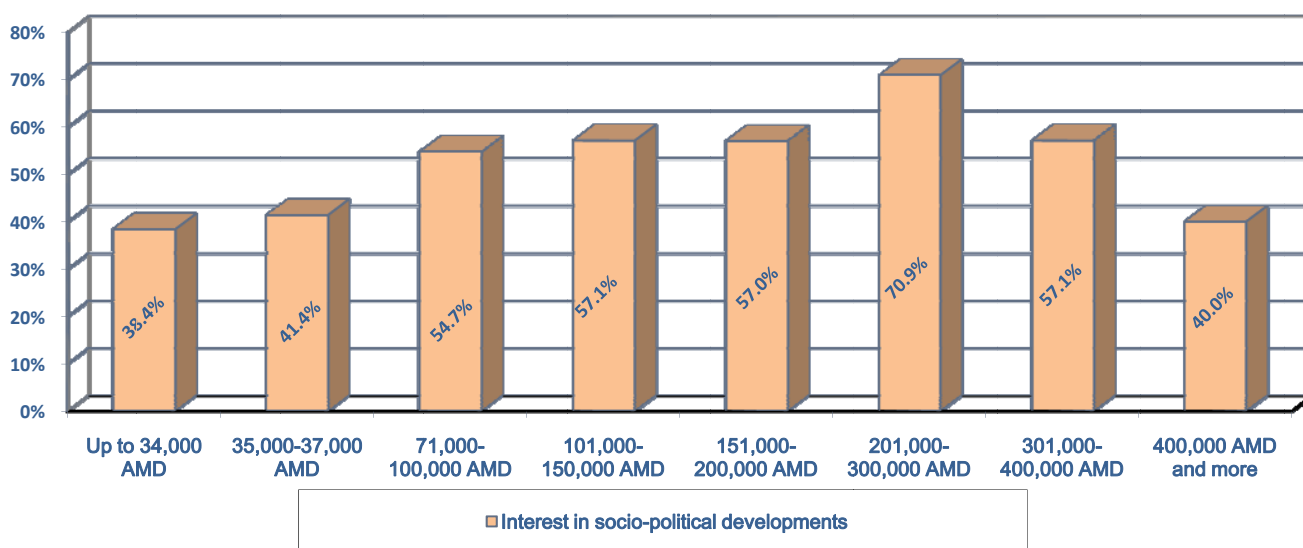
Figure 3. Proportion of the respondents who take an interest in socio-political developments, by level of education



The proportion of those who take an interest in socio-political processes is slightly lower in Yerevan (47.0%) as compared to the regions included in the sample (51.3%).

The survey data suggest that citizens’ interest and an active position are also determined by their financial and social status. The proportion of those who take an interest in socio-political processes is relatively high among the respondents from medium-income families, while the proportion tends to be much lower among the respondents from socially vulnerable families and from well-to-do families. See **Figure 4.**

Figure 4. Correlation between the respondents’ interest in socio-political developments and their families’ monthly income



A sizable group of the respondents in the sample exhibits a passive (33.7%), at times even inert, apathetic and immobile position on socio-political developments (16.5%). The share of those who are not at all interested in socio-political developments is 17.5% among women and 15.3% among men (or 9.5% and 7.0% of all the respondents in the survey sample respectively). Inertness is more pronounced among younger age groups, with 19.8% among 18-30-year-olds and 17.8% among 31-45-year-olds⁸.

Section four of Part One of this survey is devoted to the analysis of the issues of political and civic passivity and absenteeism⁹ and of overcoming them.

The next important indicator of political and civic activism is respondents' **awareness of current processes and developments and assessments of and responses to the said processes and developments**.

The experience demonstrates that respondents' self-assessment does not always match the reality. A sizable group of respondents tends to overestimate, while a relative minority tends to underestimate their own abilities and capacity.

The findings of the survey of young female and male university graduates in Armenia conducted in 2005 indicate that while evaluating their own professional knowledge and skills on a 5-score scale, overall they evaluated those one score higher than did their employers¹⁰.

Within the framework of the present study the respondents were asked to point out the current form of government in the Republic of Armenia choosing one of the following options "presidential," "parliamentary," or "semi-presidential" system. Even though the Third Republic of Armenia has a semi-presidential form of government and the system remains essentially semi-presidential after powers of the Parliament and of the Government were expanded as a result of the constitutional amendments adopted in 2005, nevertheless, 47.8% of the respondents believe the form of government in the Republic of Armenia to be "presidential," 6.2% "parliamentary" and only 31.2% "semi-presidential." 12.6% chose "(I) do not know" option¹¹. It is noteworthy that those answers do not differ dramatically for the respondents who differ by a level of interest in socio-political developments. Perhaps, the answers of those respondents who take an interest in those developments always or in general could be stressed, as 36.0% of them qualified the existing form of government in the RoA as "semi-presidential." The respondents from rural areas also stand out, with 38.2% of them giving the correct answer in terms of political science as they indicated "semi-presidential" system as a form of government in the Republic of Armenia¹².

⁸ When inert-stand respondents, as a group, are broken down by age, 18-30-year-olds constitute 36.4% and 31-45-year-olds 31.3%, whereas when they are broken down by sex, women account for 57.6% and men for 42.4%.

⁹ The concept of 'Absenteeism' (from Latin *absens* [*absentis*] meaning "absent") is used to denote the phenomenon of non-participation in and avoidance of political elections and processes. See *Краткий политический словарь*. М., 1989, с 5 (*Concise Political Dictionary*. Moscow, 1989, p. 5, in Russian).

¹⁰ See *Conceptual Approaches to Formulation of State Policies in the RoA Professional Education Sector*. UNDP, RoA Ministry of Education & Science, 2005. Part 6.5. <http://www.undp.am/docs/publications/2005publications/education.pdf>, in Armenian

¹¹ 2.1% of the respondents gave some other answer, which is outside the logic of the question. For the most part the designation used were negative such as "(mafia) clan system," "oligarchic," "slave-owning," "unbearable," etc.

¹² The share of those who gave the same answer among the respondents from urban areas in the regions and from Yerevan is 33.1% and 22.3% respectively.

It can be assumed that those responses actually reflect public perceptions of the phenomenon rather than legal knowledge of the issue. It is not a secret that the “President factor” in newly independent Armenia has been and still is the most important, sometimes even the decisive one as compared to other power institutions and entities.

The second question given to assess the respondents’ awareness ruled out potentially different perceptions as well as differences between de-facto and de-jure interpretations of the issue. The respondents were asked to indicate how many factions there are in the RoA National Assembly of the 2007-2008 convocation¹³. 22.7% respondents in the sample gave the correct answer regarding the number of factions in the National Assembly. 48.1% chose the “Don’t know” option, while 24.2% gave the wrong answer. It should be mentioned that only 35.5% of those respondents who always or in general take an interest in socio-political processes (*See Appendix, Question 1, items 1 and 2*) gave a correct answer, while 35.5% opted for the “Don’t know” response and 25.9% gave the wrong answer.

It is noteworthy that the proportion of those who gave the right answer to this question is higher among men (34.5%) than among women (21.8%). **See Table 1.**

Table 1. Answers to the question on the number of current factions in the RoA National Assembly, by respondents’ sex

	Of the total number of respondents	Of men	Of women
Correct answer	27.7%	34.5%	21.8%
Wrong answer	24.2%	26.9%	21.8%
Don’t know	48.1%	38.5%	56.9%

As suggested by the table data, the proportion of well-informed and of those who give a wrong but decisive answer is higher among men, whereas among women the proportion is higher of those who were not sure or who avoided a definitive answer.

The proportion of the “knowledgeable” persons is relatively high among 46-60-year-olds or older respondents (31.8%) and among the respondents who have higher education (33.6%). What gives concern, though, is that the proportion of knowledgeable respondents is lower for younger age groups. The proportion of those who gave a correct answer is the lowest (23.9%) and of those who gave wrong answers is the highest (26.4%) among 18-30-year-olds.

Thus, the issue of adequate awareness of public at large about socio-political developments and processes is still on the agenda of the powers that be, political parties and, especially, of non-governmental organizations and mass media because ill-informed activism as well as spontaneous and situational behavior may prove counterproductive for the society’s stability and development.

¹³ In the National assembly there were three factions representing the ruling coalition (Republican Party of Armenia, Prosperous Armenia Party and Rule-of-law Country Party) and two factions of opposition parties (Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutjun and Heritage Party).

As regards the **assessments of and attitudes towards socio-political developments**, the survey findings, while unambiguous, arouse concern. Only 24.6% of the respondents regard the present-day regime in Armenia as democratic. At the same time 25.8% find it to be undemocratic (including 9.2% who qualify it as authoritarian and 13.7% as totalitarian), while 39.3% see it as mixed (i.e. as a regime that combines both democratic and undemocratic forms). Even though there is positive dynamic in comparison with data from some surveys conducted in the past¹⁴, nevertheless, the situation still causes serious concern as the enabling environment and channels for political and civic participations are evolving slowly. This conclusion is supported by responses given to the question “Has the system of civil and political rights and freedoms improved in the past 3 years?” 39.3% of respondents answered that question in the affirmative on the whole, while 30.2% find that the situation has remained the same and 25.9% believe that the situation has on the whole deteriorated.

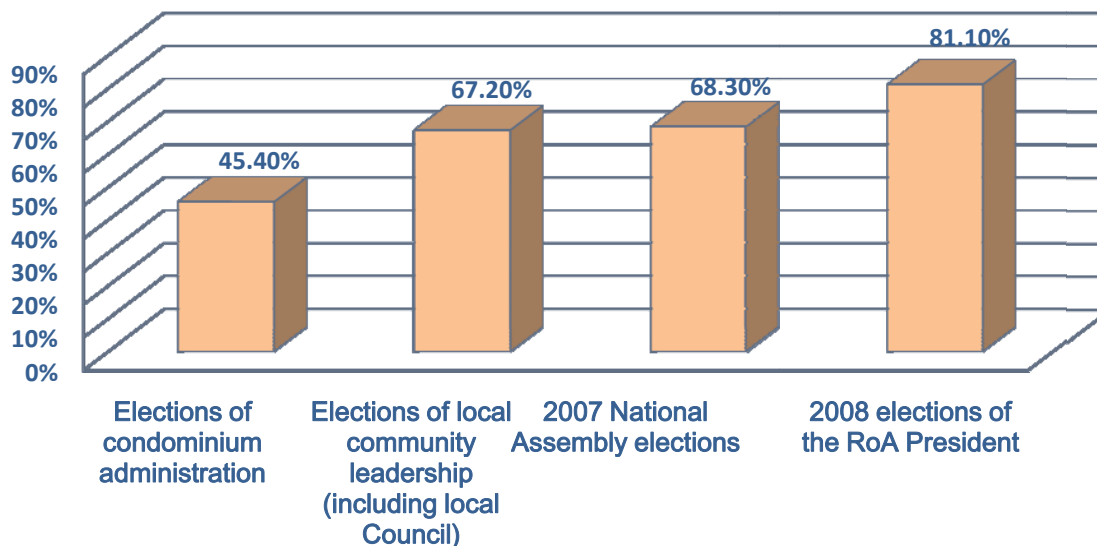
Political parties and powers that be should take bold steps aimed to democratize the inner-party and public life thereby encouraging civic activism and political participation of the society’s members so that the apathy, inertness and nihilism, which pose a threat to the country’s development, will be overcome and that a healthy climate for social partnership will be created.

2. Participation in the elections of various levels

One of the important and central indicators of political and civil activism is participation in elections of powers that be at various levels. Democratic elections that promote citizen participation in the government of a country are an important factor for authorities’ legitimacy.

The survey results suggest that the more important the elections are for the country and for the society at large, the more citizen participation increases¹⁵. **See Figure 5.**

Figure 5. Respondents’ participation in the elections of various levels



¹⁴ See Osipov, V. “Political participation and democratization: The role of NGOs in the transition society.” *Political participation in the transition society: Gender equality dimension*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2006, pp. 59-60.

¹⁵ This trend is also shown by the data provided the RoA Central Electoral Commission. See <http://www.elections.am>

The proportion of women and men taking part in all the above-mentioned elections is almost the same, with that of women being slightly higher. See Table 2.

Table 2. The proportion of women and men taking part in the elections of various levels

Type of Elections	Participation	
	Men	Women
Elections of condominium administration	43.3%	47.2%
Elections of local community leadership (including local Council)	66.0%	68.2%
2007 National Assembly elections	68.5%	68.0%
2008 elections of the RoA President	79.8%	82.2%

American political scientists G. Almond and S. Verba identified three principal types of political participation that are grounded in relevant political culture, viz. a) **parochial culture**, b) **subject, or dependency and subordination culture** and c) **participatory culture**¹⁶.

In the first type of participation, *normative judgments* as well as *knowledge* about political values, events and goals are absent. This style of participation can be seen in all political systems, including the transitional ones, where the narrow-minded views of the majority of citizens are locked within traditional boundaries. **In the second type**, participation is reflected in the behavior model that accepts political leadership basically through the punishment and incentive norms and instructions that have to be obeyed. The underlying psychological motives for that behavior are expectations of a reward and fear of punishment. The participatory culture requires a more complex and conscious model of behavior. This type can be described as social partnership, when State power is regarded not only in the context of norms (that have to be obeyed) and of instructions (that have to be carried out) but also in its role of an entity that provides channels for participation in political decision-making.

Thus, taking into consideration the respondents' low-level, at times inadequate knowledge of the political developments and, on the other hand, quite telling indicators of their participation in the political power elections of various levels (See Appendix, Question 2), a conclusion can be drawn that culture of political and civic participation in Armenia cannot be regarded yet as participatory, i.e. conscious and *free* or *equal-partner* participation. It strikes the eye through competition between the value systems inherent in the "subject" and "participatory" cultures and through the conflict between the old and new value orientations.

The main advantage of participatory democracy is that it overcomes citizens' *alienation* from powers that be, which is often observed even in mature democracies and not infrequently leads to social crises and conflicts. The process of democratic participation culture taking root cannot be accomplished overnight. The processes of transforming the public mind, value orientations and standards of political conduct require efforts and time and, not infrequently, a generational change. Bodies of State power,

¹⁶ See Almond, G. and S. Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton University Press, 1963.

political parties and civil society institutions in Armenia have much to do for the solution of those problems.

3. Membership in non-governmental and political organizations and movements

The survey results suggest that in Armenia the civil society sector has not been sufficiently consolidated yet and that political parties often pursue a strategy of artificially swelling their ranks. It turns out that fewer respondents are members of non-governmental organizations (5.2%) than of political parties (10.7%). The situation is the same in the case of their sympathizers (25.3% and 31.3% respectively). At the same time, it is common knowledge that in a society the people with an active civic stand should outnumber the people who subscribe to a political ideology and that the latter should only be a part of the former.

Nevertheless, women are more represented than men in non-governmental organizations. In political parties, it is the other way round. See **Table 3**.

Table 3. The NGO and political party membership of female and male respondents in the sample

Type of organization	Membership of sampled population			
	Proportion of surveyed men who are members of a	Proportion of surveyed women who are members of a	Share of men among members of a	Share of women among members of a
Non-governmental organization	4.7%	5.5%	41.9 %	58.1%
Political party	13.3%	8.5%	57.0%	43.0%

The survey findings corroborate that both in non-governmental organizations and in political parties women are for the most part the rank-and-file. They are represented only marginally in low- and middle-level leadership positions and are almost entirely absent in top-level positions. The situation is relatively better regarding non-governmental organizations. However, here as well, in terms of career growth, the higher the positions are the fewer women hold them. In non-governmental organizations there are twice as many women than men among the rank and file. Their numbers are almost equal in terms of low- and middle-level leadership positions, while there are three times as many men than women in top-level positions.

According to the survey respondents' opinions, a member's leverage in terms of decision-making is higher in informal civic movements (2.9 points) than in non-governmental organizations (2.1 points) and in political parties (2.0 points)¹⁷. These findings once again underscore the necessity of internal democratization of non-governmental organizations and political parties.

¹⁷ The survey respondents were asked to evaluate, using a five-point response scale, their own influence on the decisions made in their organizations, with "1" labeled as the respondent having no say at all in, while "5" meaning that his or her influence is decisive.

4. Main obstacles to civic and political activism

The phenomenon of civic passivity and political inertness, which exists, albeit to a varying degree, in all societies, is perceived in different ways by experts. Some see it as a threat to society's stability, as an indicator of falling legitimacy of powers that be and of mutual alienation and polarization of citizens and authorities. Others, on the contrary, consider it to be a mainstream phenomenon for a modern society that increases competence in political elections and decision-making due to the involvement of individuals, who understand politics and who are knowledgeable, in those processes¹⁸.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that both populism and ochlocracy as well as wide occurrence of passivity and of the phenomenon of non-participation in political and civic processes have an adverse impact on the society's progress contributing, in the former case, to anarchy and, in the latter case, to centralization of power; both do not agree well with the principles of democracy. It is the activism of the society's members that infuses political processes with democratic content, ruling out as much as possible the seizure and abuse of power by a small group, and that creates favorable conditions for materialization of various social groups' rights and interests. With a view to overcoming citizen apathy and to ensuring a significant level of political participation it is necessary to examine the causes and factors that hinder citizens' activism.

The phenomenon of inertness and apathy towards socio-political processes can have socio-psychological, cultural, institutional, personal psychological, socioeconomic and other underlying reasons. The views of the late-19th-century French sociologist and social psychologist Gabriel Tarde on the pattern of initiative ("innovation") and imitation and on the stages of social events¹⁹ may prove valuable for the analysis of social psychological factors. In nature, there is the cycle of ebb and flow. The same pattern exists in society. Any social movement starts first in the minds of gifted individuals. According to G. Tarde, at the first stage, a creative personality puts forth an idea that looks unusual and absurd at first sight for public at large, goes up against the conservative social environment and is alienated and rejected by the latter. However, determination and consistency yield the anticipated results. At the second stage, the public at large gets gradually captivated by the idea and subscribes to its implementation. Steps are taken to materialize that idea. The end result, however, does not necessarily match the original ideal-idea; unforeseen and undesirable consequences may emerge, too. Re-evaluation of the initial idea takes place in the public mind and in social psychology, and the stage of "disappointment" with and inertness towards the idea arrives. Later on the cycle repeats itself due to creative members of the society.

Our society went through the stage of universal politicization in late 1980s-early 1990s. From mid-1990s on, various social groups demonstrate inertness towards and less interest in political processes. Being pressured by and preoccupied with socioeconomic conditions is among the contributing factors leading to double passivity. No less important is an amorphous state of socially positive and appreciated ideas and of the value systems, with resulting vacuum filled by various ideological and religious subcultures.

The feeling of powerlessness and impossibility of making a change in life plays an important role among psychological factors that hinder civic and political activism. It is significant that 63.1% of the

¹⁸ As stated in Shapaghatian, H. *Current Issues of Political Participation*. Yerevan, 2007, p. 116, in Armenian.

¹⁹ See Tarde, G. *Laws of Imitation*. St. Petersburg, 1892, pp. 11-14, in Russian

respondents agree with the opinion that individual citizen's participation in elections makes no difference because voting results are rigged all the same. 54.9% of the respondents disagree with the idea that an outcome of elections is dependent on individual citizen's participation and voting. See **Table 4** (and for more details see **Appendix, Question 12**).

Table 4. Public attitudes towards the existing stereotypes related to political elections held at different levels

	Statements	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
12.1	Outcome of elections is dependent on individual citizen's participation and voting	39.3%	54.9%	5.8%
12.2	Individual citizen's participation in elections makes no difference because voting results are rigged all the same	63.1%	30.9%	6.0%
12.3	Bad authorities are elected by those "good" citizens who do not take part in elections	51.8%	30.7%	17.6%

Findings of various studies suggest that the well-to-do social group is, as a rule, inclined to maintain stability in contrast to the poor social group that is not alienated yet from a political life and that seeks a change²⁰. However, social vulnerability, too, can cause civic passivity and alienation and even bring forth stressful situations. 22.3% of the respondents pointed out financial difficulties as a factor that hinders participation. It is noteworthy that this factor is of concern for a higher percentage among women (24.2%) than among men (20.7%), while for all age groups it is almost the same.

Socio-political inertness and the phenomenon of absenteeism are also caused by disillusionment brought about by inadequate and inefficient operation of political and public institutions and by loss of trust and confidence in them. 25.6% of the respondents pointed at that disillusionment as a factor that hinders civic and political activism. Virtually the same proportion among women and among men indicated that factor. Family concerns were mentioned as an obstacle to active civic and political participation by 27.7% of the respondents. As expected, this factor is of greater concern for women (34.5%) than men (20.5%). The burden of household chores (19.7%), heavy workload, gender discrimination, unfavorable public opinion about public figures and politicians, lack of relevant knowledge and experience, no desire to engage in such activities as well as age were also mentioned as obstacles to civic and political activism. The factor of age was mentioned exclusively by 61- or more year-old respondents. The factors that are seen as obstacles to political and civic activism are presented in **Table 5** ranked by importance and disaggregated by sex.

²⁰ See Shapaghatian, H. *Current Issues of Political Participation*. Yerevan, 2007, pp. 113-114, in Armenian.

Table 5. Factors that hinder political and civic activism, ranked by importance

Factors	Respondents	Men	Women
Burden of family concerns	27.7%	20.5%	34.7%
No desire to engage in such activities	26.3%	28.3%	25.3%
Disillusionment with political and/or public life	25.6%	25.9%	26.1%
Limited financial resources	22.3%	20.7	24.2%
Burden of household chores	19.7%	14.4%	24.7%
Heavy workload	15.3%	17.4 %	13.9%
Lack of relevant knowledge and experience	9.9%	8.9%	11.1%
Unfavorable public opinion about public figures and politicians	8.7%	9.1%	8.6%
Gender discrimination	5.2%	3.3%	6.9%
Age	2.7%	3.1%	2.3%
Other	2.0%	2.4%	1.7%
No obstacles	9.7%	12.9%	7.2%

Even though some alienation and indifference are observed in various areas of public life, nevertheless, the survey findings give grounds for optimistic forecasts. 51.8% of the respondent in the survey are aware that civic inertness and a passive stand create a fertile ground for arbitrariness and various machinations. They agree with the famous Lichtenberg’s dictum that bad authorities are elected by those “good” citizens who do not take part in elections. The energy of passivity, disillusionment and discontent under certain circumstances can transform either into the energy of protest and revolt²¹ or into conformist mood of timeserving, of pinning one’s hopes on God’s mercy²² or on otherworldly powers. There is also the third option, which is quite typical for the present-day Armenian reality. It is the option of alienating oneself from the phenomena, which give rise to difficulties and discontent, and of choosing emigration. The final offshoot in the national epic, the character of Little Mher, can be seen as a symbolic representation of this part of national psychology. The three options, however, are unpromising from the perspective of the development of a social system.

What matters is to transform the apathy and sometimes disillusionment noticeable in public life not into a riotous or conformist stand or escapist behavior but into constructive and competent participation.

Political power and organizations as well as civil society organizations and mass media have much to do for the solution of this problem.

²¹ The 20th-century French thinker Albert Camus regarded as preferable this mode of overcoming the dullness and absurdity of life. See Камю, А. *Бунтующий человек*. М., 1990. (Camus, A. *The Rebel*. Moscow, 1990, in Russian).

²² Another French philosopher Gabriel Marcel substantiated the idea of transforming the energy of disillusionment with the energy of religious belief. See Marcel G., *Etre et avoir*. Paris, 1935, pp. 112-115.

One of the main scenarios for overcoming sociopolitical passivity is development and methodologically sound operation of a network of civic organizations.

Besides encouraging people, effective operation of civil society organizations can also engage them in societal developments, thereby ensuring a targeted and stable course of social transformation as well as effective citizen participation in public administration. These factors are real guarantees for success of democratization processes and for sustainable development of a social system.

5. Public opinion and principle of establishing quotas for women at various levels of political power

With a view to securing adequate representation of women at various levels of political power a number of countries with established traditions of Western democracy opted for the strategy of establishing women's quotas in legislative and executive branches of government through legislation alongside the formation of a network of women's non-governmental organizations and of other mechanisms aimed to improve the status of women.

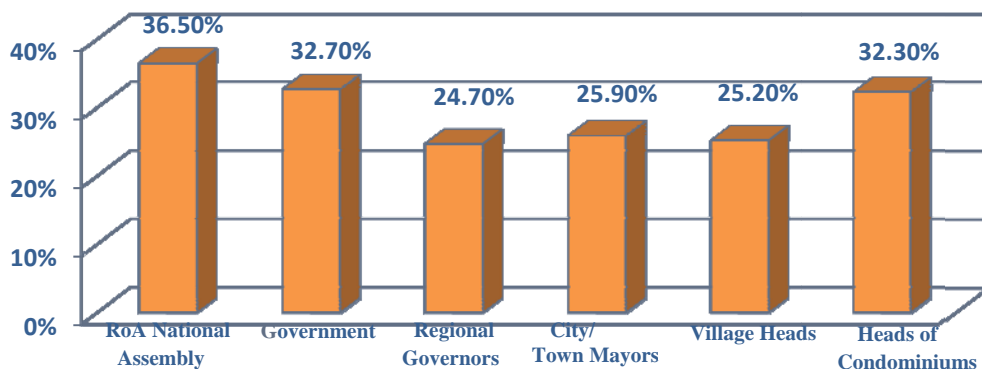
Some Armenian legislators and non-governmental organizations, too, have come up with the idea to introduce quotas.

This study was tasked with probing the public opinion regarding the idea of women's quotas and finding out the extent to which the idea is acceptable in Armenia. It turns out that 57.2% of the respondents have on the whole a positive attitude (with 25.3% having an unequivocally positive and 31.9% mostly positive attitude) to the idea of establishing quotas for women in the bodies of political power. Only 11.2% had a negative response to the idea. 24.3% of the respondents were indifferent to the idea, while 7.2% did not know.

The proportion of those who approve of the idea of introducing quotas for women is particularly high among those who always take an interest in socio-political developments (68.9%), members of non-governmental organizations (67.7%) and members of political parties (65.6%). 60.3% of surveyed women and 53.3% of men support the idea of introduction of women's quotas into the RoA Electoral Code.

Those respondents who approved the introduction of quotas were asked what extent of women's representation at various levels would in their view be optimal. The responses to this question are graphically presented, based on a principle of an arithmetic mean, in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6. Respondents' perceptions of optimal quotas for women's representation in various bodies of power



Thus, considering the necessity of ensuring adequate representation of women in various bodies of public administration, the international commitments of the Armenian authorities and the preparedness of the public opinion and of the public mind, it is advisable that quotas for women should be established by the RoA Electoral Code and appropriate amendments should be made to the RoA *Law on Political Parties*.

Bearing in mind that the RoA Electoral Code contains a provision that 41 members of Parliament are elected through a single-member district plurality voting system, whereas women, as a rule, are less competitive for a number of reasons, 30-percent women's representation on political party lists should be mandated in order to ensure the minimum of 20% women's presence in the National Assembly. Probably it would be justified to introduce also the minimum and maximum thresholds for representation of the sexes, with 30% and 70% being the thresholds for either sex, ruling out the possibility of discrimination against one of the sexes.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

- With a view to improving quantitative and qualitative aspects of participation of general public in socio-political processes it is essential that citizens should be knowledgeable about those processes and developments. This is something that still needs to be improved in our society. Educational and advocacy projects to be implemented by the powers that be and by political organizations as well as, especially, by non-governmental organizations and mass media can be helpful, if used to that end.
- It is important to design procedures that will make it possible to transform the apathy and sometimes disillusionment, which have been noticeable in public life of Armenia since late 1990s, not into an aggressively riotous or conformist stand or escapist behavior but into constructive and competent participation. One of the main scenarios for overcoming sociopolitical passivity, apathy and absenteeism is development and methodologically sound operation of a network of civil society organizations. Besides encouraging people, effective operation of civil society organizations can also engage them in societal developments, thereby ensuring a targeted and stable course of social transformation as well as effective citizen participation in public administration. The development of civil society organizations and expansion of geography of their operation are also important from the perspective of overcoming noticeable mutual alienation and polarization of various social groups and authorities.
- Therefore it is necessary to draw up a conceptual program for the development of civil society institutions in Armenia focusing especially on issues of legal, technical and financial support to non-governmental organizations and of creation of an enabling environment by State entities for the operation of NGOs.
- To ensure gender parity in decision-making it is necessary to establish effective legal mechanisms, which will secure women's presence and involvement, alongside the strengthening of the non-governmental organizations that deal with women's issues.

Considering the gender equality-related international commitments of the Armenian authorities and positive attitudes in the public opinion and in the public mind, it is advisable that quotas for

women should be established in the newly revised RoA Electoral Code and appropriate amendments should be made to the RoA *Law on Political Parties*.

Bearing in mind that the RoA Electoral Code contains a provision that 41 members of Parliament are elected through a single-member district plurality voting system, whereas women, as a rule, are less competitive for a number of reasons, 30-percent women's representation on political party lists should be mandated in order to ensure the minimum of 20% women's presence in the National Assembly. Probably it would be justified to introduce also the minimum and maximum thresholds for representation of the sexes, with 30% and 70% being the thresholds for either sex, ruling out the possibility of discrimination against either of the sexes. Finally, the legislation should lay down the principle of rotation, according to which in the event a women's candidacy is removed from the political party list or female Member of Parliament resigns, she should be replaced by the next woman on the party list.

- One of the important factors for improving civic and political participation, for ensuring a gender balance in those processes and for creating a healthy climate of social partnership should be resolute steps aimed at internal democratization of political parties and non-governmental organizations. Those measures should enable real advancement of women politicians and public figures.

PART II. GENDER ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONAL AND POLITICAL CAREER IN ARMENIA

1. Gender aspects of career against the background of the UN and Council of Europe strategies

Bringing out citizens' talents and skills completely and using them adequately for societal needs are prerequisites for sustainable development of any society.

Career advancement is a planned and purposeful activity on the part of a person to realize certain goals and to achieve success in a professional field. To accomplish that the person should have a certain amount of knowledge, should continuously update and increase it and should develop certain abilities for attaining the goal. All that notwithstanding, there should also be an enabling environment, which can be created by an individual employer or organization or, on a larger scale, by the society at large through the State, which is essentially the main entity that sets down and enforces the rules. In each society the scope of professional growth and career advancement opportunities available to a person is predicated on the society's development level, strategic goals and quality of democracy. It is noteworthy that getting to a decision-making position is regarded as a career peak in both professional and political spheres. Our goal is to identify gender aspects of this issue.

Balanced representation of women and men in decision-making is an important precondition for parity democracy because it makes the ascertaining of the whole range of both sexes' interests and concerns possible. It is beneficial for society since in that case the human resources are used more adequately and effectively. That is the reason why particularly from early 1990s on the progressive international public started paying closer attention to using gender mainstreaming in all spheres of public life as a prerequisite for society's stability and development. As regards gender balance at a decision-making level in the political field, it is a central component of democratic governance and an important incentive for raising the quality of politics and for augmenting a political agenda. Finally, it contributes to the improvement of quality of life and ensures a higher level of democracy. These are the reasons the validity of which was proven time and again in the experience of various countries and that were instrumental in stimulating the international democratic public to create favorable conditions for ensuring equal representation of women and men in politics.

Gender equality in society, i.e. provision of equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men, is a crucial precondition for women's successful careers in professional and political fields.

The Armenian society, too, accepts the necessity of gender equality extremely slowly.

In 1993, the Republic of Armenia ratified the UN *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which makes it incumbent:

- to embody the principle of gender equality in the national constitution or other appropriate legislation;
- to adopt, where appropriate, special measures prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to take all appropriate measures to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

- to ensure to women and men equal access to economic, social, cultural, civil and political resources as well as the same conditions for career.

The principle of equality between the sexes is enshrined in the RoA Constitution. *The National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society in 2004-2010 in the Republic of Armenia* was adopted. The Republic of Armenia acceded to a number of other documents that aim to secure gender equality. Thus, the UN Millennium Declaration-based Goal 3 aims to promote gender equality and empower women. In the context of the Millennium Development Goals the issue of gender equality gained prominence in State policies. It was not incidental that while nationalizing those goals the Republic of Armenia assumed the obligation to “ensure that by 2015 at least twenty-five percents of seats in Armenia’s legislature will be held by women,” while “the proportion of women as community heads will be ten percent²³.” The *Sustainable Development Program*²⁴ envisages poverty reduction and provision of well-being taking into consideration a gender approach. Armenia also ratified the European Social Charter, several Articles of which incorporate a gender equality principle. The RoA Government’s Action Plan for 2008-2012 stressed that targeting the establishment of public solidarity, formation of a social State and embedding of social justice, the Government policy will be directed towards gender equality, i.e. ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities to men and women in public, political and economic spheres.

In the documents adopted by the Council of Europe (“Declaration on gender equality as a fundamental criterion of democracy,” Recommendation on gender mainstreaming,” “Gender Equality: a core issue in changing societies” and “Recommendation on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making”), gender equality is regarded as a social justice issue and a basic premise for societal evolution. The documents aim to ensure equality of opportunity to women and men in all spheres of public life at a decision-making level and to secure equal pay for equal work, which will contribute to women’s economic independence, to the attainment of gender equality on the labor market and to reconciliation of family responsibilities with professional life. They stress that to establish parity threshold legislative reforms should be carried out, i.e. to ensure a certain mandatory number of women and men on the lists of candidates running in local, national and supranational elections. The progressive European public is also consistent in its efforts to secure gender equality in a professional field. It is not surprising that the Council of Europe calls on the States and employers to “promote career development, including promotion possibilities, based on work conditions which harmonize work and parental responsibilities” and points out that governments’ “... strategies should provide for suitable measures – including temporary special measures – aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men – relating to ... access to all professions, occupational advancement and remuneration...”²⁵.

The recommendations contained in the above-mentioned documents are partially reflected in the RoA Concept Note on State Gender Policy, which is intended to integrate a gender equality principle into all

²³ See *Millennium Development Goals: Nationalization and Progress*. National Report 2005, p. 17. (The MDGs derive from the UN Millennium Declaration, which was adopted in 2000 at the Millennium Summit).

²⁴ The Program was adopted by the 30 October 2008 RoA Government Decree N 1207-N.

²⁵ See *Declaration on Equality between Women and Men as a Fundamental Criterion of Democracy*. 4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men (Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997) and *Declaration on Equality of Women and Men* (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 November 1988 at its 83rd session).

spheres and to design and to take “support measures”²⁶ to achieve equality at all levels of political activities and, where appropriate, to use even measures of “positive discrimination”, for instance, quotas. It is in this document that for the first time importance is attached at the State level to the issue of the establishment of a national mechanism for the advancement of women.

The international and domestic research indicates that the fact that women are less represented than men in decision-making positions in politics can be accounted for by unequal distribution of resources between women and men (income, experience of holding a leadership position, etc.). The experience of various countries suggests that as a result of direct and indirect discrimination against women, gender stereotypes, women’s dual burden and other factors women have fewer opportunities than men for professional and political career advancement. The outcomes are, naturally enough, different. The professional and political elites are composed mainly of men.

2. Gender aspects of a professional career

Extensive international experience and surveys conducted in Armenia in recent years²⁷ demonstrate that success in a professional sphere contributes significantly to a political career, especially in the case of women. In Armenia, women and men have equal rights in the field of a professional career. Women’s high level of educational attainment is quite an important positive factor for their careers. However, declaration of *de jure* equality does not mean that equality exists *de facto* because equal opportunities have yet to be mandated by law and to take root in real life. Opportunities are different, as evidenced also by the findings of the present study.

The public opinion on gender aspects of career growth was studied through the following issues addressed in the fieldwork:

- career advancement opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Armenia,
- importance of the career for men and women,
- To what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive to women pursuing careers in various fields?

This sequence of questions enabled us to identify the entire range of gender issues of a professional career. The first question sought to find out whether career opportunities for women and men are equal.

Earlier studies showed that according to some stereotypes in the public opinion, women’s career was not seen as particularly important. In many instances women attached significance to family happiness, homemaker’s responsibilities and raising children. Therefore, our second question aimed to ascertain importance of a career for women and men.

²⁶ “Support measures” encompass the following activities: revision of legislation from the perspective of a gender-sensitive policy, ensuring equal representation of women and men in appointive offices and in governing bodies in mass media, promotion of gender courses at all level of education, monitoring aimed to secure effective solutions to problems, etc.

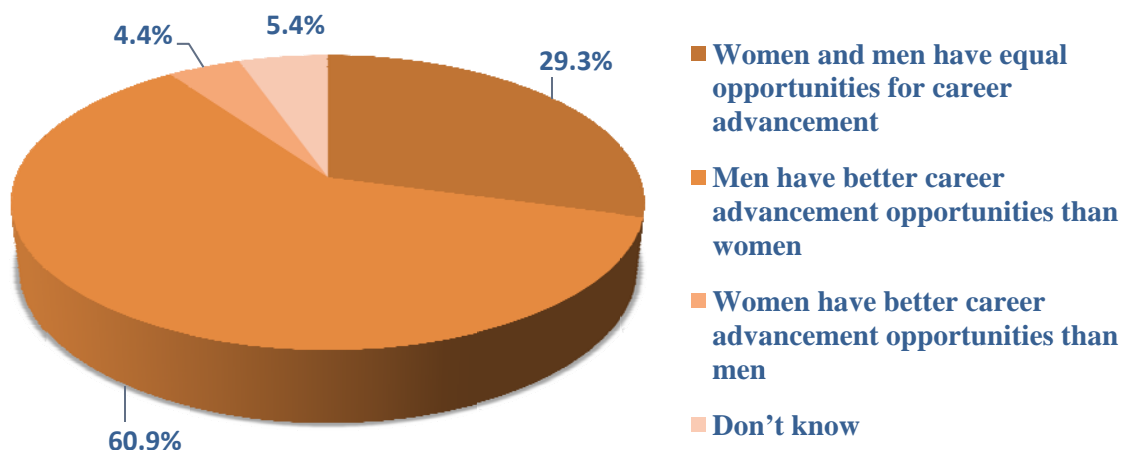
²⁷ *Monitoring of the Implementation of the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Armenia*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies, Armenian NGOs Coalition for Peace. Yerevan, 2006, in Armenian. *Implementation of the CEDAW Convention in the Republic of Armenia in 2002-2007. Alternative Report*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2007. *Women’s political participation in the 2007 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia. Analytical Overview*. Association of Women with University Education. Center for Gender Studies. Yerevan, 2007, in Armenian. *Gender indicators for bodies of local self-government*. Yerevan, 2007, in Armenian.: <http://www.crrc.am/index.php/lo/17/73>. *Study on causes of women’s underrepresentation in decision-making*. RoA National Institute of Labor & Social Research. Yerevan, 2008.

The third question unearths the attitudes in public opinion towards women’s career in different fields, thereby giving an opportunity to study gender stereotypes as well. Career in business and career in politics were taken as specific kinds of careers. They will be addressed in greater detail in the next subsection. Responses to all questions were analyzed through the data disaggregated by sex as well as by age, region and urban/rural residence and education level and, sometimes, by an extent of participation in political processes.

2.1. Career advancement opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Armenia

The field work has demonstrated that two-thirds of the respondents in the sample firmly believe that men have an advantage over women in terms of opportunities. Thus, 60.9% of the respondents pointed out that men have better career advancement opportunities²⁸. At the same time, this is the opinion shared by 63.5% of surveyed men and 58.8% of women. 29.3% of the respondents are confident that women and men have equal opportunities with regard to career advancement. Women were more inclined than men to give an optimistic response to that question. Thus, 31.5% of surveyed women share that opinion, while the proportion among men is 26.7%. Only 4.4% of the sample thought that women have better opportunities. See **Figure 1**

Figure 1. With which of the following statements would you agree?



There is quite a big difference between respondents from rural and urban areas. As compared to rural residents the surveyed urban residents tend to be more optimistic in assessing equal career advancement opportunities for women and men. Thus, 35% of urban respondents and only 18% of rural respondents believe that women and men have equal opportunities for career advancement. As regards the statement that women have better career advancement opportunities, the opinions of urban and rural residents almost coincide. However, the picture is different when data for Yerevan are taken separately. A higher proportion of urban residents from the regions (7%) believe that women have better opportunities and the data differ significantly from those of rural residents. Given the present-day uneven development of various regions of the country, that difference seems natural because cities and towns give more career advancement opportunities to women than villages due to better job choices, to

²⁸ According to the “Study on causes of women’s underrepresentation in decision-making” conducted by the RoA National Institute of Labor & Social Research in 2008, 68% of the respondents mentioned that men have better career advancement opportunities. 27% of the respondents believed that women and men have equal opportunities in that area.

opportunities to get a job adequate to one’s profession and to relatively better provision of social guarantees. However, the picture is totally different, when we look at the responses given by residents of Yerevan. Thus, only 2.2% of the respondents in Yerevan believe that women have better opportunities than men. The proportion is small as compared not only to the towns in the regions but also to villages. True, as a political, economic and cultural center, Yerevan gives more opportunities; however, competition for career advancement is heavier here. Under the circumstances it is felt more acutely that women have limited opportunities in comparison with men.

56% of surveyed urban and 69% of rural residents firmly believe that men have better opportunities.

A look at the responses to this question, when data are disaggregated by age, reveals the following picture.

Table 1. Public opinion about career advancement opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Armenia, by age groups

	18-30-year-olds	31-45-year-olds	46-60-year-olds	61- and more-year-olds
Women and men have equal opportunities for career advancement	32%	31%	27%	26%
Men have better career advancement opportunities than women	60%	60%	61%	64%
Women have better career advancement opportunities than men	4%	4%	5%	5%
Don’t know	4%	5%	7%	5%

As the table data suggest, the belief that men have better career advancement opportunities grows with age and, on the contrary, decreases the proportion of those who believe that women and men have equal opportunities for career advancement. Experience is gained with age, as is an ability to assess the reality more prudently. That is the reason why the older the respondents are the lower the percentage is among them of those who believe that women and men have equal career advancement opportunities.

The differences are even greater between regions. Thus, while in Yerevan and Gegharkunik 36% and 34% of respondents respectively believe that women and men have equal career advancement opportunities, in Syunik and Shirak the proportions are 28% and 25% respectively and in Armavir merely 18%. The higher proportion of respondents in Shirak (68%), Armavir (65%) and Syunik (63%) and relatively lower percentage in Yerevan (57%) and Gegharkunik (55%) hold the view that men have better career advancement opportunities. Such differences of opinion between regions can be accounted for by a number of facts, including a socioeconomic situation of a region, prevalence of borderline localities in a region, very unhealthy political atmosphere, a scope of migration and the resulting problems, prevalence of “female” or “male” sectors of the economy, poverty level, gender profile of unemployment, etc. As a rule, in those regions (for instance, Gegharkunik), where the proportion of the respondents who believe that women and men have equal opportunities for career advancement is relatively high, the areas for men’s work in the post-Soviet period declined dramatically, men’s unemployment and out-migration are quite high, whereas career opportunities for men diminished.

The gender system²⁹ underwent a radical transformation in the post-Soviet period. Socioeconomic difficulties of the society in transition have made a deep impact on the women's and men's place and role in the family and in the society and on their social status. It should be noted that those changes were equivocal and contradictory. Against the background of unprecedented unemployment and migration the men's role as breadwinners declined in families, and that burden was to a large extent shifted onto women's shoulders. At the same time, these gender stereotypes "lead to women often being offered employment that is precarious, badly paid, without any possibility of career advancement and not gratifying, as it does not allow for the full development of their abilities. Women are often excluded from informal networks and channels of communication (the "old boys' network"). In addition, some of them suffer from an unfriendly corporate culture and can become victims of moral and sexual harassment, bullying and mobbing. ... (F)amily responsibilities (housework, childcare, looking after elderly relatives) are not equally shared between women and men, leading to additional barriers which prevent women from entering and staying in the workforce and having a career³⁰."

It is not surprising that the absolute majority of the respondents are confident that men have better career advancement opportunities than women.

According to the official statistics, at present, over one-third of households in Armenia are headed by women³¹, which is a new phenomenon for the Armenian society. However, this high proportion is not a result of women's emancipation or greater activism or of the expansion of their career opportunities. Furthermore, in 2009, the average monthly wage size per capita by sex of household head was 22,613.9 AMD for men and 9,211.1 for women (i.e. 40.7%)³². Consequently, the said high proportion is more precisely a result of destitution and men's migration from the country. Back in 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action called attention to the fact that "female-maintained households are very often among the poorest because of wage discrimination, occupational segregation patterns in the labor market and other gender-based barriers. Family disintegration, population movements between urban and rural areas within countries, international migration, war and internal displacements are factors contributing to the rise of female-headed households³³."

At the same time, the woman's traditional role has changed in many families and households. By the inertia of traditions, men are still regarded as head of the family; however, that often is a mere formality, and gradually in family decision-making the leadership is taken over by the family member who secures the family's financial and social status.

2.2. Importance attached to women's and men's career

Socioeconomic changes have led to a transformation of gender stereotypes. In a new situation it is becoming progressively difficult for one-income family to survive, and it becomes more important that family should have a dual income. When both parents have successful careers, the family stands a better chance of improving its well-being and social status. In other words, there is a conflict between a

²⁹ Gender system is a sum total of relations between men and women, which incorporates perceptions, formal and informal norms and rules, which are determined by the position and place held by men and women in the society and by their goals.

³⁰ PACE Recommendation 1700 (2005) "Discrimination against women in the workforce and the workplace.

³¹ See the "Households by sex of the head of household" data in *Women and Men in Armenia 2010 Statistical Booklet*. Yerevan, 2010.

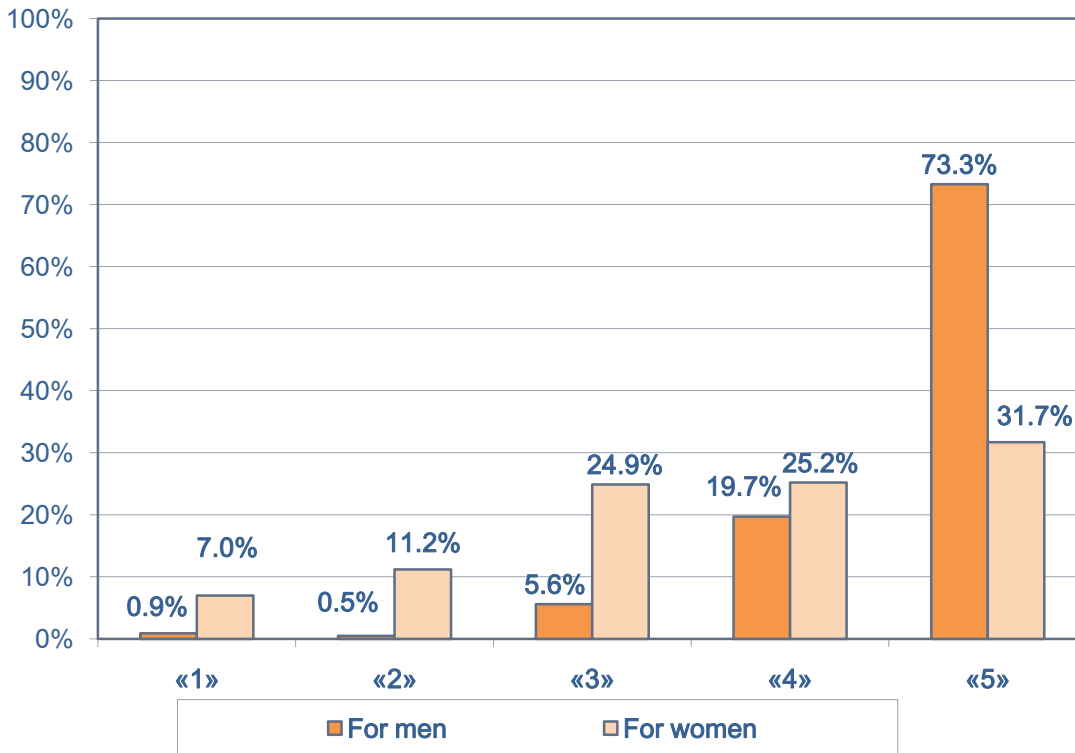
³² See the "The average wage size by sex of household head, per capita, monthly, in AMD" in *Women and Men in Armenia 2010 Statistical Booklet*. Yerevan, 2010.

³³ Beijing Platform for Action (15 September 1995).

woman’s traditional role and the social needs brought forth by new realities. That is the reason why notwithstanding the fact that the necessity of a career for man is still deemed important by public perceptions, there is a growing realization of the necessity of woman’s career as well.

Thus, when asked “*How important is career to a man and to a woman?*”, the respondents ranked the importance of a career for women and men on a five-point scale, with “1” labeled as “not important at all,” “2” as “mostly unimportant,” “3” as “(it) would not be amiss,” “4” as “mostly important,” and “5” as “very important.” The distribution of the responses was as follows, see **Figure 2**.

Figure 2.*How important is career to a man and to a woman?*



93% of respondents think that career is important for men and 57% for women. At the same time, 73% pointed out that career is very important for men (this view was shared by 76% of male and 71% of female respondents), and only 32% indicated that career is very important for women (with 25% of male and 37% of female respondents holding that view). Divorced respondents placed more emphasis on man’s career, while woman’s career was emphasized particularly by the respondents who are single or divorced. A conclusion might be drawn that a man’s career as well as that of a woman is seen as important, particularly when problems emerge in family life. The matter concerns here only prioritization. It is not surprising that 56% of married respondents regarded woman’s career as important and 25% noted that “(it) would not be amiss” (the respective percentages for men’s career are 93% and 5%).

It is noteworthy that the proportion of those who have a negative attitude towards women’s career is higher among men than women. Thus, that attitude was expressed by 10% of male respondents and only by 4% of female respondents. Consequently, women attach more importance to woman’s career.

Men have harder time changing their stereotypical perceptions and getting adjusted to new realities of the society in transformation.

Also noteworthy is the fact that 24.9% of respondents indicated that woman’s career “would not be amiss.” These are, perhaps, those respondents who have to get along with woman’s career because of new social realities, while the awareness of its importance is still at a nascent stage (let me note, for the sake of comparison, that the same opinion about man’s career was voiced by 5.6% of respondents). Career is seen as more important by urban than by rural respondents. 94% of surveyed urban and 90% of rural residents thought that career is important to men; as regards the importance of career to women, the percentages are 65% and 41% respectively. Besides, career was regarded as extremely important to men by 79% of respondents in Yerevan, 71% in regional towns and 69% in villages. In the case of importance of career for women, the percentages are 36%, 34% and 25% respectively.

Both “male” and “female” sectors of the economy sustained huge losses in the post-Soviet period. As mentioned earlier, loss of qualification, unemployment as well as monopolization and criminalization of the entrepreneurship field, all being the result of a long socioeconomic decline, gave rise to a serious conflict between the earlier firmly-established role of a “breadwinner” and a new situation on a labor market. Unemployment drove some men to emigration. Horizontal and vertical segregation became even more pronounced in the workforce. Against the background of existing gender stereotypes and the absence of equal opportunities, women ended up holding jobs in informal economy and in poorly-paid segments of the labor market, as they were pushed out of the sectors that secure higher incomes. As a rule, men outnumber women by far in sectors with relatively high-paid jobs, in the administrative systems of professional fields and in political, economic, financial and scientific elites.

On the whole, women’s average salary is about 60% of that of men, even though women’s level of educational attainment is higher. Thus, according to the RoA National Statistical Service data, women constitute 53% among persons with higher and post-tertiary education. Women’s average salaries are lower than those of men even in those sectors where women are a vast majority. Most women work in education, health and culture.

Table 2. The employed, by certain types of economic activities and average monthly income, year 2009³⁴

	Share of the total		Distribution in the sector, by sex		Women’s to men’s average monthly salary ratio, by sector	Average monthly income, by sector
	W	M	W	M		
					Women/Men, %	AMD
Financial sector	1.3	1.0	52.8	47.2	44.2	100,925
Mining & quarrying	0.4	1.2	22.1	77.9	55.1	94,907
Construction	0.3	13.1	2.1	97.9	76.0	92,937
Public administration	4.7	8.5	32.3	67.7	66.3	92,051
Transportation and communications	1.9	8.8	16.2	83.8	76.5	80,801

³⁴ The Table is based on the *Women and Men in Armenia 2010 Statistical Booklet*. Yerevan, 2010.

Education	16.2	3.3	80.9	19.1	82.9	60,778
Health care and provision of social services	9.6	1.7	83.4	16.6	71.2	55,132
Agriculture, hunting, forestry	45.7	34.0	53.9	46.1	86.9	38623

As the table data suggest, as a rule, the higher the income is in a sector, the higher is the proportion of men there. The financial sector is an exception; however, attention should be paid to the fact that the ratio of women’s average monthly salary size to that of men is the lowest and constitutes 44.2%. It means that vertical segregation is particularly acute. In other words, while salaries in the sector are high and women account for 52.8% of employees, they are at the bottom of a gender pyramid in this sector, where careers cannot be made. Vertical segregation exists even in such sectors as education and health care, where women numerically predominate.

Horizontal and vertical gender segregation has a number of underlying causes. First of all, those include discrimination against women on the labor market, the power of tradition, gender culture and stereotypes; and, on the other hand, women’s more modest career advancement aspirations as a result of those factors. Women’s career growth is impeded by dual burden³⁵ and reproductive function-related temporary interruptions in the career as well as by obstacles put by family members. Usually, women start planning their professional career advancement later than men. More often, woman contents herself with her husband’s successful career and she no longer strives for professional growth. Women often perceive career as just a factor for growth, self-assertion and self-realization, whereas for men career is primarily equated with career advancement. Informal “men’s networks” contribute significantly to men’s career advancement, while women have only limited access to those. When women are few, they are more visible; and stereotypical perceptions are widespread. As a rule, public at large is much more demanding of women in senior positions. The society’s more reserved attitude towards women’s career forces them to give more hours to work in order to constantly prove that they are good employees. Even when successful, women sometimes develop a “feeling of guilt” as their families suffer because of their work. Quite naturally, all those factors bring psychological pressure to bear on women. It is not incidental that factors that impede women’s careers include “sticky floor”, i.e. psychological obstacles that are strengthened by the impact of gender stereotypes and that also hinder women’s advancement.

2.3. To what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive about women pursuing careers in various fields?

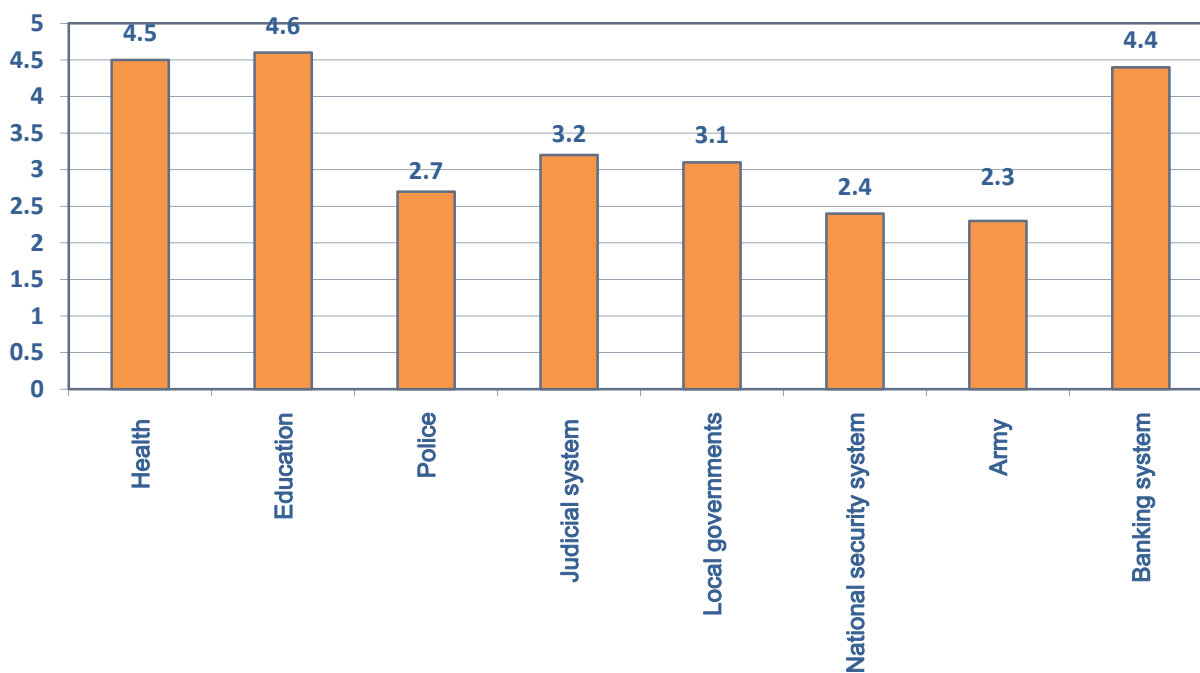
The analysis of the survey responses has demonstrated that attitudes towards a woman’s career do not particularly inspire hope, especially when the matter concerns “male” sectors. However, the respondents’ attitudes change in the case of such “female sectors” as health and education. Thus, replying to the question, “***In your view, to what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive to women pursuing careers in various fields?***”, 87% of respondents regard that opinion as positive in general (“for the most part” or “unequivocally”) in health sector and 90% in education sector. As Table 2 data

³⁵ For the sake of comparison let me note that according to the *Women and Men in Armenia 2010 Statistical Booklet* data, on average women spend on housework and family care daily 5 hours 12 minutes and men 1 hour 3 minutes.

suggest, the opinions are in line with gender segregation existing on the labor market. It is interesting that banking was regarded in Soviet times as a women’s sphere; now, it is a men’s sphere. The study of the public opinion has revealed that a positive attitude towards women working in that sphere has remained. Thus, 86% of respondents find that public opinion about women working in that sphere is positive. According to the respondents, public opinion is most negative about women who entered on a career in defense and law-enforcement agencies: in the army (61%), in the national security system (58%) and in police (41%). As to the respondents, public opinion is more tolerant of the careers that women make in the judicial system (positive – 41%, negative – 29% and indifferent – 27%) and in local governments (positive – 40%, negative – 32% and indifferent – 26%).

The overall picture is presented in **Figure 3**, where public opinion with regard to individual spheres is reflected in average assessments done on a five-point scale, where “1” designates “unequivocally negative” and “5” “unequivocally positive” opinion.

Figure 3. To what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive about women pursuing careers in various fields (the attitude was evaluated on a 5-point scale, where “1” stands for “unequivocally negative” and “5” stands for “unequivocally positive”)



As data in Figure 3 suggest, the public opinion is most positive in the case of women making careers in health sector, education and banking system. However, the public opinion still retains the division of sectors into “women’s” and “men’s”. Segregation on the labor market does not contribute to elimination of stereotypes. The obligations assumed by the Republic of Armenia notwithstanding, projects are not yet implemented at a State level to eliminate gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, in recent years a positive dynamic has been observed in public opinion. Thus, the attitude towards women’s careers in “men’s” sectors has become relatively more tolerant. While woman’s career in the judicial system and in local governments is seen as less desirable than in “women’s” sectors bur as more acceptable than in such defense and law-enforcement agencies as police, national security system or

army. A smaller segment of the general public is favorably disposed to women’s careers in the sphere of defense and law-enforcement agencies.

The biggest differences with regard to responses to the question are observed between regions. See **Table 3**.

Table 3. To what extent (“for the most part” or “unequivocally”) is public opinion positive about women pursuing careers in various fields? by region, %

	Yerevan	Armavir	Shirak	Gegharkunik	Syunik
Health	90	91	95	88	59
Education	93	96	97	92	60
Police	21	18	35	39	36
Judicial system	34	22	58	57	48
Local governments	40	21	44	51	48
National security system	16	14	24	32	39
Army	15	18	30	23	44
Banking system	89	87	85	85	81

As the table data suggest, in the respondents’ estimation, public opinion is most positive in the case of women making careers in health sector, education and banking system. That view was expressed by over 80% of respondents in the sample. The only exception is Syunik region where public opinion is more reserved with regard to women making a career in health and education sectors. However, instead, public opinion in Syunik is much more positive than the nationwide average in the case of women making careers in defense and law-enforcement agencies, *viz.* in the army and in the national security system. Probably, the fact that there is a State border in region and the horrors of the Karabakh war experienced first-hand may have had their impact on the perceptions of this issue. As compared to Yerevan, public opinion in Gegharkunik, Syunik and Shirak is more positive of women making a career in the police.

3. Gender aspects of political and business careers

3.1. Gender issues of a political career

While obstacles to women’s political careers vary from society to society, there are, however, factors that are common to almost all societies. As a rule, the underlying causes are direct or indirect discrimination against women, women’s lack of political experience and financial resources, women’s dual burden of combining work with family responsibilities, etc. A set of obstacles, which is called a “glass ceiling”, can be found almost everywhere. It effectively blocks women’s advancement beyond certain levels of power. As a result, women’s and men’s representation in senior positions in the political field is not balanced.

Women comprise only 8.4% of the members of the Armenian National Assembly. There is not a single woman in 4 out of 12 Standing Committees. According to the 2009 data, women constituted merely 10 percent of holders of top-level positions in the RoA Civil Service. Women’s and men’s representation in political and discretionary positions in the executive branch of government is not balanced either. Data for 2010 indicate that only 9.6% of Ministers and Deputy Ministers are women. Out of 18

Ministers only 2 and out of 65 Deputy Ministers only 6 are women. There is not a single female Regional Governor in the country, and only one Deputy Regional Governor is a woman. There are no women among 48 Mayors and there is only one woman among Deputy Mayors. Women constitute 6.2% of Council members in local governments. Only 24 rural communities are headed by women, i.e. 2.8% of rural local governments.

International experience demonstrates that to redress this situation and to level the field for women and men it is necessary to use various mechanisms. Some of those mechanisms should focus on elimination of gender stereotypes, which are primary obstacles today for women’s political careers. Among those stereotypes are such as “Politics is not a proper occupation for women” or “Women’s emotionality prevents them from making correct decisions”, etc. Therefore the survey questionnaire contained questions that would enable us to ascertain the extent to which Armenian public opinion is positive of women making a political career and whether it differs from the attitudes towards men making a political career as well as questions that were to be instrumental in identifying gender stereotypes. As expected, the fieldwork showed that there are significant differences in public opinion of women and men.

Table 4. The extent to which public opinion in Armenia is positive about women and men making a political career, according to the respondents

	Of women	Of men
Unequivocally negative	7.8%	0.9%
For the most part negative	19.2%	1.5%
Indifferent	22.4%	8.8%
For the most part positive	35.0%	25.1%
Unequivocally positive	11.5%	60.4%
Don’t know	4.1%	3.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Summing up, it should be noted that 85.5% of the respondents believe that Armenian public opinion is positive about men’s political career and 46.5% about women’s political career. As suggested by the table data, a significant proportion of the respondents believe that public opinion is either indifferent (22.4%) or negative (27.0%) about women’s political career, whereas regarding men’s career the proportions are 8.8% and 2.4% respectively. As the Table shows, 60.4% of the respondents indicated that public opinion is unequivocally positive about men’s political career and only 11.5% did so regarding women’s political career. In some cases, probably with regard to some concrete women, the public, according to the respondents, is prepared to make an exception. It is not surprising that while women’s political career is not accepted unambiguously, nevertheless, according to the respondents, public opinion is for the most part positive of women (35.0%). It is noteworthy that when disaggregated by sex, the responses to this question show that women are more optimistically inclined than men. Thus, women constitute 60.1% among those who believe that public opinion is unequivocally positive about women’s political career.

When broken down by urban/rural residence, the data show that a sizeable proportion of urban residents believe that public opinion is unequivocally positive (57%) or for the most part positive (29%) about men’s political career, whereas regarding women’s political career, 41% believe that attitudes are for the most part positive and 21% indifferent. Most of rural residents believe that public opinion is unequivocally positive (67%) or for the most part positive (18%) about men’s political career, whereas regarding women’s political career, 24% believe that attitudes are for the most part positive and 25% indifferent. Gender stereotypes are more pronounced in villages than in towns or cities. It is not surprising that 35% of rural residents (in contrast to 23% of urban residents) believe that public opinion is negative about women’s political career. Only 2% among both rural and urban residents indicated that public opinion is negative about men’s political career.

3.2. Gender aspects of a business career

Almost the same proportions are displayed in the attitudes towards women and men who went into business.

Thus, the distribution of responses to the question, “*In your view, to what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive to businesswomen and businessmen?*” can be presented in the following way:

Table 5. The extent to which public opinion in Armenia is positive about women and men who went into business, according to the respondents

	About businesswomen	About businessmen
Unequivocally negative	6.8%	0.6%
For the most part negative	17.4%	0.8%
Indifferent	19.3%	6.4%
For the most part positive	34.4%	21.4%
Unequivocally positive	18.3%	68.3%
Don’t know	3.8%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The difference of opinion between women and men regarding this issue is negligible and it deviates only a little from the trend shown by the data presented in the above table. The differences are bigger, when data is broken down by urban-vs.-rural residence. Thus, 25% of rural respondents believe that public opinion is indifferent, 32% that is negative and 40% that it is positive about businesswomen. The percentages with regard to attitudes towards businessmen are for rural respondents 7%, 2% and 90% respectively. 16% of urban respondents believe that public opinion is indifferent, 20% that is negative and 60% that it is positive about businesswomen. The percentages with regard to attitudes towards businessmen are for urban respondents 1%, 6% and 90% respectively. It is noteworthy that according to the survey data, public opinion is more positive about businesswomen (52.6%) than about women politicians (46.5%).

3.3. Public opinion about women engaged in politics or business

The responses to the following questions support the above conclusions.

Table 6. “Do you agree with the following statements?”

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Do not know
There is something wrong in personal life of a woman engaged in politics.	44%	49%	7%
There is something wrong in personal life of a woman engaged in business (private entrepreneurship).	37%	57%	6%
First of all women themselves distrust women politicians or candidates.	44%	46%	10%
Woman should not go into politics. Family and children should be her sole occupation.	36%	61%	3%
Woman should not be concerned about business or solution to financial problems of her family. Family and children should be her sole occupation.	34%	64%	2%
Husband’s prestige and status of the family suffer as a result of the woman’s career.	33%	61%	6%
Women do not have qualities that are necessary for holding high-ranking positions in politics.	24%	72%	4%
Women do not have abilities that are necessary for being a business person.	22%	74%	4%
Politics is a “dirty” business; therefore women should keep clear of it.	46%	45%	9%
Woman’s successful career has a positive impact on her family’s social status and prestige.	67%	24%	9%

When disaggregated by sex, the data show the following picture: 53% of surveyed women and 45% of men disagreed with the statement that there is something wrong in the personal life of a woman engaged in politics. On the contrary, 48% of surveyed men and 39% of surveyed women agreed with that sexist statement. Over a half of respondents (56%) in Yerevan, 39% of respondents in regional towns and cities and 36% of rural respondents agreed with that statement. Both sexes are more positive to women engaged in business than in politics. Thus, 60% of surveyed women and 53% of surveyed men disagreed with the stereotypes that there is something wrong in the personal life of a woman engaged in business (private entrepreneurship).

Two-thirds of the respondents disagree with the statements that woman should not go into politics or be concerned about business and about solutions to financial problems of her family and that family and children should be her sole occupation. Over two-thirds of the respondents are of the opinion that woman's successful career has a positive impact on her family's social status and prestige. At the same time, one-third of the respondents believe that husband's prestige and status of the family suffer as a result of the woman's career. Therefore the stereotype that husband's social status should be higher than that of his wife is still deep-rooted. However, positive trends are also observed. Thus, over 70% of the respondents disagree with the statements that women do not have qualities that are necessary for holding high-ranking positions in politics or for going into business or private entrepreneurship. It is noteworthy that the level of the respondents' socio-political activism had almost no impact on their responses. Consequently, political or NGO membership does not mean being gender sensitive. The only difference underscored by correlations is gender-based and shown by sex-disaggregated data. As a rule, stereotypical perceptions of women are more typical of men than women. Thus, 68% of surveyed women and 54% of surveyed men disagreed with the statement "Woman should not go into politics. Family and children should be her sole occupation." Or 68% of women and 57% of men in the sample disagreed with the statement "Woman should not be concerned about business or solution to financial problems of her family. Family and children should be her sole occupation." 38% of men and 28% of women share the view that husband's prestige and status of the family suffer as a result of the woman's career. 50% of men and 43% of women agreed with the statement "Politics is a "dirty" business; therefore women should keep clear of it." 69% of women and 64% of men point out that "Woman's successful career has a positive impact on her family's social status and prestige."

The survey findings suggest that due to the impact of new socio-political realities and the European integration-related processes the existing gender stereotypes change gradually and a larger segment of the society is already psychologically prepared to see women in business as well as in politics. Women's advancement becomes more acceptable for the public at large, especially if the family benefits from it both financially and in terms of social status.

4. Causes of women's relative passivity in the area of political career

Quite reassuring Table 5 data on public opinion about women's political career notwithstanding, very few women make a successful career in politics and reach the height of the political Olympus. With a view to identifying the underlying reasons for that a number of questions were included in the questionnaire.

The respondents pointed out the following factors that caused women's relative passivity in the area of political career:

1. women's primary focus on family (45%),
2. women's low self-confidence (35%),
3. lack of public trust and confidence in women politicians (33%),
4. absence of mechanisms that would advance women (e.g. inadequate representation of women on political party lists in elections) (29%),
5. negative attitude of close relatives (husband, parents) (28%).

Also mentioned were women's inadequate level of educational attainment (15%), women's concern about their reputation and prestige because the perception that politics is a "dirty business" is quite widespread (13%), inadequate support from women's non-governmental organizations (13%), absence of an active political position and initiative on the part of women (11%), women's lack of experience in and knowledge of political processes (10%), absence of support from mass media (4%) and acts of violence against women in Armenia (4%). The responses tend to indicate that women's passivity can be accounted for more by psychological barriers than by the absence of institutional mechanisms. Such powerful factors as mechanisms for advancement and elimination of gender stereotypes by mass media have yet to take root in public mind. The awareness of the danger posed by violence against women is not adequate yet in Armenia.

The review of the responses data through various correlations has not revealed significant differences. The only exceptions were instances when data were broken down by rural/urban residence and by regions. However, the differences were limited to the different ranking of the same factors. That was, for instance, the case of the Armavir residents' opinion who explained women's passivity primarily by women's low self-confidence and mentioned women's primary focus on family as the least important factor. However, respondents from other regions mentioned family first and only then other factors, ranking them in different ways. The comparison of responses given by residents of Yerevan and by residents of cities and towns in the regions is noteworthy. The residents from regions favored the first, third and fourth options of the responses as almost equal (each option got 33-37%). In their view, low self-confidence is a less important factor (26%). The respondents from Yerevan stressed first of all women's primary focus on family (49%), whereas absence of mechanisms for the advancement of women was mentioned only in 17% of responses. Respondents from rural areas saw all the factors as having virtually equal relevance.

It is not difficult to spot the family factor in the first ("women's primary focus on family") and fifth ("negative attitude of close relatives (husband, parents)") response options. However, in reality there is a considerable difference between those two options. The former underscores woman's commitment to her family and her free choice. The latter stresses the family members' negative attitude and obstacles. Therefore the next question raised in the course of the study aimed to probe public opinion about the role of the family in the issue of woman's career.

To the question "*Is family an obstacle for woman to engage in politics or business?*" 48.1% of the respondents replied in the affirmative and 39.8% in the negative.

The affirmative answers provided several justifications. Thus, 74.5% of respondents believe that in the case woman goes into politics or business her family and children suffer from lack of attention (45.3% of those respondents who think so are men and 54.7% are women). 56.4% of respondents hold the opinion that family and household responsibilities do not leave time for woman to make a political or business career (men constitute 42.9% and women 57.1% of those who think so). 33.1% of respondents (41.4% are men and 58.6% are women) noted that the husband and relatives do not encourage woman's political and business career. 23.9% of respondents (39.9% are men and 60.1% are women) selected the response option "The husband's career is regarded as more important and woman has to be concerned about the issue of supporting her husband's career." 23.2% of respondents (45.5% are men and 54.5% are women) believe that the husband of the woman who has a successful political or business career feels humiliated. As we can see, the proportion of women who subscribe to those opinions is higher

than that of men. It looks like women are trying to use family as a reason “justifying” their passivity. That, however, conflicts with the above-mentioned opinion that woman’s successful career has a positive impact on her family’s social status and prestige. I would like to mention by way of a reminder that over two-thirds of respondents expressed that opinion. Consequently, a conclusion can be drawn that family responsibilities indeed pose quite a formidable obstacle to woman’s career. Nevertheless, there already is a perceived social need of more women’s activism and that if woman succeeds in reconciling career with family life her family only benefits from that.

It should also be borne in mind that only 10% of respondents mentioned women’s lack of experience in and knowledge of political processes as a cause of women’s passivity. Therefore we tried to get an answer to yet another question, *viz.* whether respondents would like to deepen their knowledge and if yes, in what areas. It turned out that 35% of respondents do not wish to get knowledge. It is quite high percentage, if we consider the fact that deepening one’s knowledge is extremely important for promotion. It means that one-third of respondents do not pin their hopes of promotion on knowledge. Legal knowledge is in great demand. 43% of respondents expressed a wish to get legal knowledge, 26% leadership skills and 14% skills to conduct social events and capacity to raise funds for implementation of projects. The proportion of those who wish to get legal knowledge and leadership skills is higher among NGO and political party members. The lowest proportion of those who wish to get legal knowledge is among pensioners (24% of them) and the highest proportion is among students (64%) and persons with disability (58%). Women more than men show interest in knowledge. Thus, 47% of women and 38% of men expressed a wish to get knowledge. The highest proportion of those who wish to get knowledge is among the 18-30-year-old respondents. Age is inversely correlated with the desire to get knowledge.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

- Some positive dynamic and the adoption of the “Concept Note on State Gender Policy” notwithstanding, the Armenian Government’s policies are still gender neutral. The steps that have been taken so far to ensure equal opportunities to women and men are not sufficient.
- The division of the labor market into “women’s” and “men’s” spheres still remains in public opinion because of gender stereotypes and of horizontal and vertical segregation on the labor market. The policies pursued by the Armenian authorities in that area are extremely unsatisfactory and are not conducive to a positive change.
- With regard to advancement in a political career in Armenia, women do not have equal opportunities with men. Men’s advantages in political and business careers are obvious; however, public opinion shows a trend of gradually shifting to a more positive attitude towards women’s careers in those fields. Public opinion is more positive to women who make a career in business than to women who make it in politics.
- The number of those who believe that woman’s successful career has a positive impact on her family’s social status and prestige has increased. At the same time, one-third of respondents are nevertheless of the opinion that husband’s prestige and status of the family suffer as a result of the woman’s career. Women’s passivity with regard to a career is related more to their burden of family problems and to their psychological complexes than to the absence of institutional mechanisms and to State policies.

- Implementation of principles of participatory and representative democracy in the Republic of Armenia requires that measures envisaged by the “Concept Note on RoA State Gender Policy” should be taken. That entails first of all the establishment of effective national machinery and the adoption of a law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.
- The quota and “support measures” mechanisms should be made an extensive use of. The Government should apply leverage on political parties because it was proven beyond doubt that political parties are the most efficient institute for getting women to decision-making positions.
- It is important that training courses on gender issues should be organized not only for women but also for men in the context of advocacy and educational projects and that mass media should be used to pursue gender stereotypes elimination strategies and strategies of shaping a positive image of women in leadership positions.
- The Government should adopt and implement legislation against any form of gender-based discrimination on the labor market and should encourage those employers who will take measures to increase the number of women in high-ranking positions in their businesses and to help women reconcile family responsibilities with professional life, including introduction of flexible working hours.
- It is important that the public administration sphere, bodies in the executive branch of government should set an example in securing balanced representation of women and men in leadership positions and in providing equal opportunities for career advancement.

PART III. PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES: FACTORS, OBSTACLES AND ATTITUDES

1. Has discrimination against women been eliminated in Armenia?

The issue of discrimination is of primary importance for assessing a gender situation. In 1993, Armenia ratified the UN *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW). Thus, the Convention became a part of the national legislation, while the State assumed concrete obligations to eliminate gender-based discrimination and to prevent it from happening in the future. The Armenian Constitution (Article 14.1) bans any discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of sex.

While it is hard to overestimate the significance of a legislative provision that bans discrimination against women, nevertheless, discrimination, especially its indirect and hidden forms, may manifest itself in real life.

Findings of sociological surveys and public opinion polls, the examination of the de facto situation through various methods, collection of statistical data, review of Governments' reports and alternative reports by the CEDAW Committee, etc., tend to indicate that discrimination against women has not been entirely eliminated in any country. Armenia is no exception. Data from numerous studies, surveys, monitoring exercises, official statistics, media publications, etc. clearly suggest that there is a gap between de jure and de facto equality and that women do not have equal opportunities with men.

However, countries differ significantly in terms of scale and forms of discrimination against women, frequency of its manifestations and measures taken to eliminate it.

In any case political will is required. It has to materialize in consistent efforts and concrete measures aimed to eliminate discrimination against women and to create an enabling social environment for the advancement of women³⁶. It is not surprising therefore that the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged Armenia “to enact appropriate national legislation containing prohibition of discrimination against women..., encompassing both direct and indirect discrimination ... and to accelerate the adoption of the proposed law on gender equality and to embody the principle of equality of women and men in the proposed law on gender equality.”³⁷

One of the important methods of studying the scope of gender discrimination is a sociological survey because it allows finding out various social groups' opinions about the existence and the degree of acuteness of the phenomenon and about the spheres where discrimination is practiced more often and/or more openly, etc.

Therefore it was quite interesting to turn to respondents' opinions in the survey conducted by our team. It should be borne in mind, however, that quite a few respondents have anything but an adequate notion of what discrimination against women is. Unfortunately, the Armenia legislation has not so far provided

³⁶ The OSCE document stresses that “political will is necessary to give effect and set in motion concrete measures enforcing the existing action plans for advancing gender equality.” See *Participation of women in public and economic life. Consolidated Summary*. OSCE Human Dimension Seminar. Warsaw, 2003, p. 14. Political will is also necessary for implementation of the international and domestic legislation. For a more detailed treatment of this issue see *Marcos legales internacionales: género y gobernabilidad democrática*. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW, 2009, p. 31.

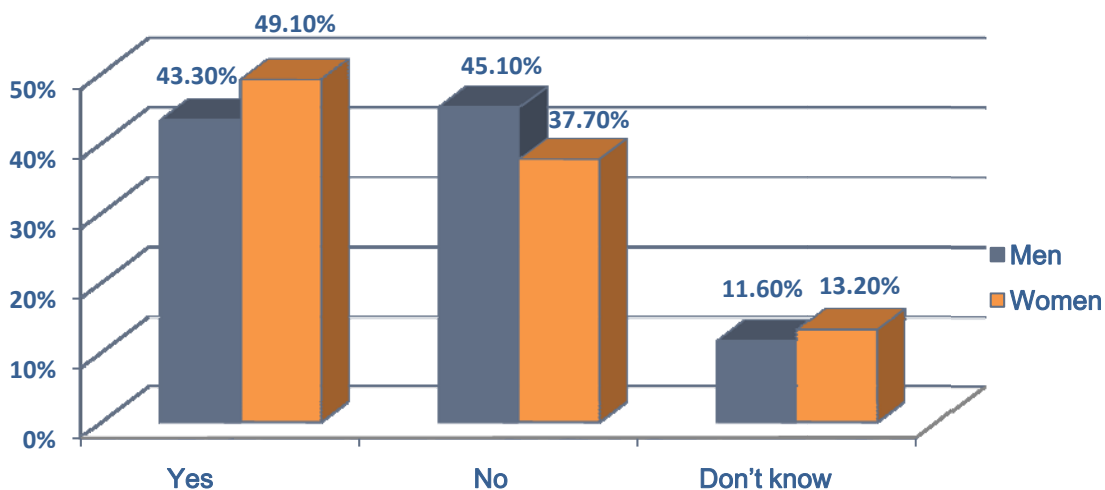
³⁷ *Concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee*. Document CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1 (2 February 2009), p. 3.

definition of the phenomenon³⁸. For fairness' sake, it should be noted that, as shown by the study of the legislations and practices in the implementation of the CEDAW conducted by the UNFPA experts, “few countries in eastern Europe and Central Asia provide a concrete legal definition of the term ‘discrimination against women’³⁹.”

It can be safely assumed that most respondents had in mind first of all unequal treatment, unequal attitude and unequal opportunities.

When asked “*Is there discrimination against women in the Republic of Armenia?*” 46.4% of all respondents in the samples answered in the affirmative, 41.1% in the negative and 12.5% did not know. As could have been expected, the proportion of those who believe that there is discrimination is clearly higher among women than among men (49.1% and 43.3% respectively, and the proportion of those who believe that discrimination does not exist in this country is lower among women than among men (37.7% and 45.1% respectively). While for men it is rather a theoretical (if not an abstract) question, many women look at it through the prism of their own experience, which is far from always being positive. Even though women’s opinion in this case seems more informed and considered, it should be noted that in principle the differences are not significant (about 6-7 percentage points). In other words, the factor of gender is not a definitive “predictor,” which predetermines the answer to that question. See **Figure 1**

Figure 1. “*Is there discrimination against women in the Republic of Armenia?*”



When the matter concerns inequality of opportunity (which is, in fact, discrimination), a considerably higher percentage of the respondents note that such inequality exists in various spheres (e.g. in career

³⁸ In its *Concluding observations* regarding the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Armenia, which were considered at the 43rd session of the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women held in January-February 2009, the Committee, expressed regret over “the absence of an explicit and comprehensive definition of discrimination against women, both direct and indirect, in line with article 1 of the Convention within the State party’s legislation. See *Concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee*. Document CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1 (2 February 2009), p. 3.

³⁹ *Advancing Equal Rights for Women and Girls: The Status of CEDAW Legislative Compliance in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*. New York, UNFPA, 2009, p. 9.

advancement: 60.9% of the respondents believe that men have more opportunities, while only 29.3% think that opportunities in that field are equal for men and women).

It is noteworthy, and quite unexpected, that, according to the survey data, the **education** factor does not make a clear-cut impact on respondents' opinions. According to the working hypothesis, the level of awareness and critical assessment of the women's rights situation, including discrimination against women, would have to be directly correlated with the respondents' level of educational attainment. This trend was partially inconsistent in our study. The point is that the highest percentage of the respondents, who answered in the affirmative, when asked about discrimination against women in Armenia, is among persons with incomplete secondary education (54.7%). But in the case of other groups the usual trend is not only discernible but is also marked. The proportions of the respondents among persons with complete secondary, incomplete higher and higher education who answered "yes" to that question are 41.3%, 47.9% and 51.0% respectively.

A number of factors have affected this quite unusual manifestation of the trend. The fact of a still high level of educational attainment of the Armenian population (by the worldwide standards) may have played a significant role. Persons with incomplete secondary education constitute only 4.4% of the respondents in the sample, while persons with complete secondary education constitute 44.6% and with higher education 37.4%. In case of such a limited subset the probability of random distortions significantly increases.

On the other hand, persons with lower educational level are, as a rule, employed in sectors with less social protection (e.g. in the informal sector of economy) and more often witness or experience firsthand discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of sex.

As regards the **age** factor, the picture is as follows. While the percentage of those who answered that question in the affirmative is virtually the same among the three age groups of 31-45-, 46-60-, and 61- or more year-old respondents (44.5%, 45.9% and 44.0% respectively), the percentage is clearly higher (50.0%) among the of respondents aged 18-30, i.e. among the youngest group. It is unlikely that the youngest respondents have come across discrimination more often than others. It can be tentatively assumed that individuals in this group are less inclined to put up with gender stereotypes and inequality, with patriarchal division of gender roles, etc. The fact, which should also be taken into account, is that due to the efforts of international organizations (principally UNIFEM, UNDP and UNFPA as well as Council of Europe, USAID, etc.) within the past 7-8 years numerous campaigns have been carried on, educational and awareness-raising projects implemented and other events staged, which targeted first of all young people, primarily students. Institutionalization of gender education in the system of higher education has been done and gender topics have been gradually introduced into secondary schools through the efforts of Association of Women with University Education (AWUE) NGO supported by the RoA Ministry of Education & Science.

All those factors could not but affect younger people to a greater extent as they are more actively engaged in social networks and are more open to present-day progressive ideas and trends.

It is a well-known fact that **place of residence** is an important factor that affects respondents' opinions. As a rule, well-informed, progressive and even radical respondents are usually from urban areas. The data from the present survey also identified and confirmed this pattern. Thus, while 36.1% of rural residents held that there is discrimination against women in this country (and 45.9% held that there is

no discrimination), urban areas (other than Yerevan) the proportions are 43.5% and 45.4% respectively. In Yerevan, 59.5% of respondents said that there is (and a much lower percentage, 32.3%, said that there is no) discrimination.

It is also worth reviewing the data from the perspective of the *employment* factor. According to the data from the present survey, a quite significant difference exists not only between those who are gainfully employed (45.4% of them believe that in Armenia there is discrimination against women) and the unemployed (53.6% of this group of respondents shares that view) but also between the unemployed and other groups of the respondents who do not have gainful employment. Among the latter, the percentage of those who think that there is discrimination against women in this country is slightly lower among persons with disability (41.7%) and students (39.6%). The percentage of surveyed pensioners and housewives who share that view (46.5% and 44.3% respectively) essentially coincides with the proportion of those who think so among gainfully employed respondents.

In all likelihood, it can be assumed that the unemployed are more “gender sensitive” and aware with regard to this issue and that therefore the percentage of those who answered in the affirmative to the above question is higher among them. It is no secret that women are subjected to discrimination on the labor market, especially in hiring, more often and to a greater extent than men. It should be borne in mind that in the sample the percentage of gainfully employed respondents is 1.5 times lower among women than among men (34.3% and 51.3% respectively) and that while formally the percentage of the unemployed is higher among men than among women (25.1% and 16.9%), in reality the percentage of the unemployed is higher among women in terms of hidden unemployment. Thus, only 0.7% of all men in the sample are engaged in unpaid work in the household, while the percentage of women who are thus engaged is 30.3%. It is obvious that if there were available jobs, many of those women would take a paid job because only 3.0% of those women have a **monthly family income** of over 200,000 AMD but not more than 400,000 AMD (in the entire sample only 7.1% respondents have a **monthly family income** of over 200,000 AMD), while over 70% of families in the sample have 4 or more family members and 88.1% of the respondents engaged in unpaid household work (98.0% of them are women) are married, i.e. they have their own family. In other words, an overwhelming majority of families face a problem of securing at least minimum living conditions; hence, there is an acute need for most women to have paid employment. Total lack of paid jobs or of decent jobs (i.e. jobs outside informal economy, jobs with adequate wages and an opportunity to combine work and family responsibilities, etc.) compels women to engage exclusively in housework, i.e. in unpaid work.

Therefore, a high percentage of those who believe there is discrimination against women in Armenia among the unemployed and persons engaged in household work (as well as among pensioners) can be accounted for to a great extent by the fact that women constitute a higher proportion than men in those groups.

Thus, it turns out that essentially there is not a single factor that would determine unequivocally a respondent’s position on that issue. Rather, it is a combination of factors, in which, however, different factors have different “weight” in terms of their impact.

The fact that gender-based discrimination has an adverse impact on various aspects of individual persons’ lives should also be acknowledged. Thus, widespread discrimination against women was, for instance, mentioned among factors that undermine their effective participation in political and public

life at all levels⁴⁰. That factor accounted for 3.0% of all responses to the said question, which is not little, considering the fact that each of other factor received less than 10.0%, with only burden of family responsibilities accounting for the maximum percent (15.8%).

This discrimination affects men and women in a different way (it is not incidental that it was named ‘gender discrimination’). Among the respondents who mentioned this factor the percentage of women is 2.5 times higher than that of men (71.0% and 29.0% respectively).

At the same time, various forms and manifestations of gender discrimination have different “weight” in different spheres of private and public life. Thus, for example, such an outrageous and glaring manifestation of gender discrimination as violence against women is not, in the opinion of the overwhelming majority of respondents, is a not a cause of women’s relative passivity in the area of a political career. (Violence accounts for only 1.5% of the responses for all factors).

Thus, summing up this section, the following two conclusions can be made:

- (1) The survey data suggest that gender discrimination is on the whole an acute social problem. In other words, there is a clear perception that there is a problem and that it should be solved.
- (2) The majority in the society are prepared psychologically and ideologically to serious codification and consistent implementation of the principle of **non-discrimination**.

2. In what spheres discrimination against women is manifested to the greatest extent?

Since the plurality of respondents said that there is discrimination against women in Armenia, it makes sense to address the question of the spheres, where, in their view, discrimination manifests itself most.

According to the survey data, the “leaders” among the spheres of public life are undoubtedly the system of political elections and the sphere of public administration (23.8% and 23.7% of all responses respectively). Political parties and employment account for 13.6% and 11.6% respectively. Quite a few respondents believe that discrimination manifests itself in all spheres (11.4% of all responses).

It is noteworthy that according to the respondents, discrimination in the sphere of private entrepreneurship (7.3%) is manifested 3 times less frequently than in the system of political elections and in the sphere of public administration and 2 times less frequently than in political parties.

The NGOs and the education sphere account for a small percentages of responses (3.9% and 2.5% respectively).

Women’s and **men’s** opinions for the most part coincide, with a minor exception of the political elections and public administration, with the proportion of the respondents who mentioned discrimination in those spheres is higher among women than among men by 4-5 percentage points. At the same time, the proportion of those who think so is higher among male than among female members of political parties by 5 percentage points. This alignment of opinions is not surprising because it is a well-known fact that in most political parties men make no haste in discarding discriminatory practices in terms of both nominating women to leadership positions and placing them at the top of party lists in elections.

⁴⁰ See *Women’s participation in political and public life*. Decision No. 7/09. OSCE. Ministerial Council. Athens, 2009. Document MC.DEC/7/09. 2 December 2009, p. 1.

Other background characteristics (education, age, place of residence, *including a region*, and NGO or political party membership) have a varying impact on different spheres.

The survey data suggest that with regard to the public spheres, where there is discrimination against women, the **employment** factor does not have a uniform impact on respondents' opinions. Thus, in the case of five spheres (elections, political parties, NGOs, private entrepreneurship and employment) the opinions of gainfully employed respondents and of the unemployed virtually coincide. In the case of three other spheres the difference is about 5-6 percentage points, with the percentage of those who indicated discrimination in education and in all spheres being higher among the unemployed and of those who pointed at public administration sphere being higher among the employed.

The **NGO members'** and non-members' opinions with regard to this question for the most part coincide. In those rare cases when there are differences (the spheres of elections and private entrepreneurship) those are insignificant (about 4 percentage points), with the percentage being higher among NGO members.

The **political party membership** factor makes a more significant impact: the differences are minimal (about 2-3 percentage points) regarding three spheres (private entrepreneurship, political parties and "all spheres"). The differences are more pronounced between political party members and non-members than in the case of NGO membership. Thus, the proportion of the respondents who pointed out discrimination against women in the elections and public administration spheres is higher by 8-10 percentage points among party members, while the proportion is higher among non-party members in the case of employment, education and NGO sectors by 4-5 percentage points.

The analysis of the above data leads to a conclusion that according to the respondents' opinions, discrimination against women in Armenia is manifested **most of all in the political sphere and in the sphere of public administration, to a lesser extent in employment and minimally in education and NGO sectors.**

Another conclusion can be drawn from the above analysis: demographic characteristics, as a rule, rarely affect respondent's opinions significantly, and their impact is not uniform and not unambiguous as it varies depending on the sphere of the public life and on an individual demographic characteristic.

3. Obstacles to gender equality

The commitment to the goal of attaining gender equality, as declared by the country's Government, legislation and main political forces, entails first of all **elimination** of discrimination on the grounds of sex, **provision** of equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men and gradual **securing** of equality of results, i.e. complementing formal-legal (de jure) equality with de facto equality and – in the future – with substantive equality. That, in its turn, requires changes in current legislation (including the adoption of temporary special measures) as well as formulation and implementation of an overall policy and of concrete strategies for various spheres of public life, including identification of important tasks, establishment of priorities and formulation of short- and medium-term action plans and programs for a long haul.

It is obvious that quite a few objective and subjective problems, complications and obstacles arise in the process. Politicians and officials as well as experts, practitioners and activists need to know well all those negative factors and their perception by various social groups in order to organize effective

activities to mould positive public opinion about gender equality, to raise people’s awareness and to eliminate patriarchal gender stereotypes.

In the course of the survey, respondents were asked what specific factors hinder the attainment of gender equality in the public life in Armenia.

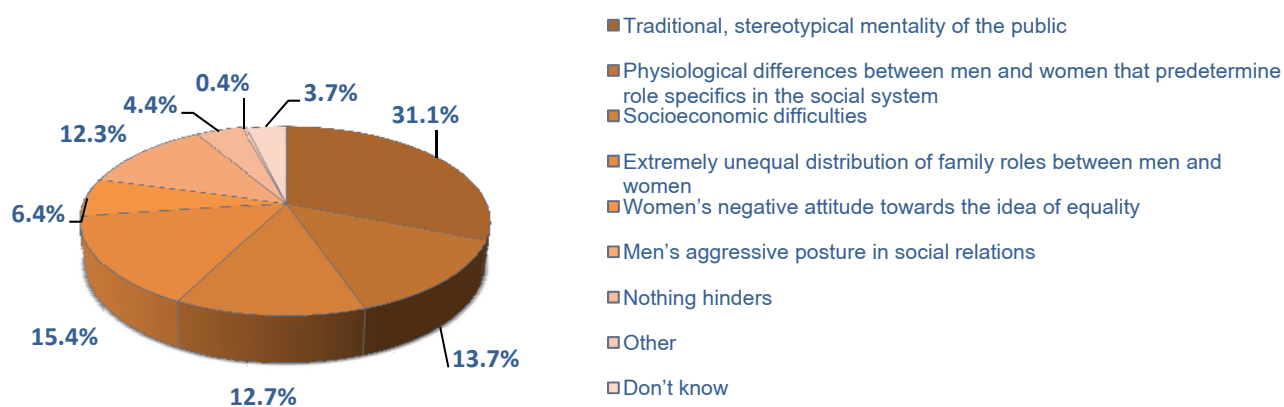
Respondents could choose up to 4 responses. It should be noted first of all that the “nothing hinders gender equality” option was selected only in 4.4% of responses⁴¹.

On the average, respondents mentioned two what they thought most important factors that hinder the attainment of gender equality in this society. According to the survey findings, those factors can be clustered into three groups. The first one is made up of traditional, stereotypical mentality of the society⁴². Its share is 31.1% of all responses.

The second group includes factors, each of which got 2-2.5 times smaller percentage than the “leader” factor. Those are such factors as extremely unequal division of roles in the family between men and women (15.4%)⁴³, specificity of social roles grounded in physiological differences between women and men (13.7%), socioeconomic difficulties (unemployment, poverty, etc.) (12.7%) and men’s aggressive stand in social relations (12.3%).

The third group is made up of the “women’s negative attitude to the idea of gender equality.” This factor accounts for merely 6.4% of all responses. In other words, its relative “weight” is 2-2.5 times smaller than that of the factors from the second group and nearly 5 times smaller than that of the “leader” factor. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. “What factors hinder the attainment of equality between women and men in public life?”



⁴¹ The “don’t know” option got 3.7%, while “other” 0.4%.

⁴² Many researchers discovered that social and cultural factors are among the main causes of women’s underrepresentation in decision-making in the political field (See *Equality in Politics*. Geneva: IPU, 2008, p. 19) and that gender stereotypes, cultural traditions and patriarchal attitudes are among obstacles to women’s political participation (See Duban. E. From Cairo to Beijing and Beyond: the Unfinished Agenda on Gender Equality in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. *Background Paper*. New York, UNFPA, October 2010, p. 28). A survey of 272 parliamentarians from 110 countries confirmed that “prejudice and cultural perceptions about the role of women ... frequently hinder women’s access to political life.” *Equality in Politics*. A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments. An Overview of Key Findings. Geneva: IPU, 2008, p. 4.)

⁴³ Many experts stress that without effective elimination of women’s unequal situation in a number of spheres it will be difficult to achieve an “engendered political agenda” and qualitative changes in politics and to move closer to gender equality. *Engendering the Political Agenda: The Role of the State, Women’s Organizations and the International Community*. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW, 2000, p. 7. Ashworth, G. *Gendered Governance: an Agenda for Change*. New York: UNDP, 1996.

The data clearly indicate the necessity of developing a new gender culture in the present-day Armenian society. The State entities as well as international organizations and local non-governmental organizations, which formulate and implement action plans aimed at attaining gender equality, should pay serious attention to the respondents' opinions, to how the facts are ranked and to what should be set as priorities for their activities.

It is obvious that efforts to develop a democratic gender culture through educational and awareness-raising projects, advocacy and engagement of women in civic activities should be intensified. Attention should also be paid to the fact that reflecting the perceptions prevalent in the society, a sizeable group of the respondents attached unfoundedly great significance to physiological differences between women and men in explaining the specifics of social roles. Of course, physiological differences do exist and make a certain real impact. However, as prompted by the historical evidence, many gender roles are grounded merely in traditional perceptions and expectations and do not have underlying physiological differences. Many social and professional roles, which for centuries were regarded as exclusively male ones (e.g. in health and education), gradually became gender neutral in many societies, while the spheres not infrequently grew feminized. The science and societal practice have demonstrated that one of the central tenets of Freudianism that "anatomy is destiny" is not valid.

At the same time, the significance of all those efforts notwithstanding, they will have limited effect unless a gender perspective is integrated into political and socioeconomic development programs⁴⁴. Social inequality, including gender inequality, is reproduced through asymmetrical power relations. It can be overcome only through empowerment, in this case women's empowerment, and through women's involvement in political and economic activities.

4. Attitudes towards women's growing political leverage

Gender equality is a legal norm, a fundamental human right, a top-priority democratic value and a prerequisite for sustainable political and economic development and social progress⁴⁵ as well as a precondition for attaining social justice. Thus, while gender equality is a value in and of itself, it also has an instrumental dimension. In other words, the society at large benefits from efforts aimed to achieve gender equality.

In the course of the survey we made an effort to find out what such a step towards gender equality as increasing the number of women at the highest level of public administration can produce (and to what extent).

To begin with, it should be noted that the share of skeptics ("nothing will change", 8.0%) and pessimists ("will lead to negative changes", merely 2.8%) is less than 11.0% of all responses. It is also symptomatic that the proportion of those who did not know accounts for a very low percentage (only

⁴⁴ As a result of the study that they had conducted, experts of the UN Development Programme concluded that "the integration of gender perspectives in policy formulation processes has been insufficient and ineffective" not only in the CIS but also in Eastern and Central Europe. See *Enhancing Women's Political Participation: A Policy Note for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Bratislava, UNDP RBEC, 2010, p. 1.

⁴⁵ "Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development." See "Concepts and definitions." UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

3.9% of all responses). In other words, the overwhelming majority of respondents firmly believe that increased representation of women at the top level of public administration will yield positive results.

Those results are ranked according to preferences of the respondents, each of whom selected, on the average, two response options. Tentatively, four groups of responses can be singled out by the degree of the “popularity” with the respondents.

The statement that the increased number of women at the highest level of public administration will result in greater social justice for women is an undisputed “leader” with 21.1% of all responses.

The statement that politicians will become more reserved and strained political relations will improve accounts for quite high percentage of all responses (17.4%).

The next group is made up of the opinions that politics will become more moral and humanistic (13.9%) and that political structures will gain more public trust (13.0%).

At the bottom of the list there is a statement that increased representation of women at a decision-making level in public administration will contribute, firstly, to the principles of compromise and tolerance taking root in a political dialogue (10.5%) and, secondly, to corruption going down in the system (9.0%).

Quite predictably, women’s and men’s opinions differ on most points (with the exception of the assessment of the impact the increased number of women will have on improving strained political relations, on reducing corruption in the public administration system and – to a lesser extent – on growing public trust in political parties). The proportion of skeptics and pessimists among women (14.0% and 4.5% respectively) is perceptibly lower than among men (20.0% and 7.3% respectively).

In all other cases women are more inclined to assess positively the impact that an increase in the number of women in the top-level positions in public administration will have. The gap is most visible with regard to response options “(will) result in greater social justice for women” (selected by 47.5% of female respondents and by 39.6% of male respondents) and “politics will become more moral and humanistic” (32.5% and 24.9% respectively).

The survey data suggest that the *age* factor virtually does not make an impact on respondents’ attitudes and standpoints: the differences in percentages are not merely insignificant, they do not even go beyond the margin of error. The only exception is the fact that among the youngest group (18-30-year-olds) the proportion of skeptics who believe that greater representation of women at the highest level of public administration will change nothing is significantly lower (12.6%) than in three other age groups (17.0% among 31-45-year-olds, 19.6% among 46-60-year-olds and 19.7% among the respondents who are 61 or older).

As regards *education*, its level does not make a uniform impact on respondents’ opinions: no pattern is discernible in the impact of that factor.

With regard to *urban* and *rural respondents*, the proportion of those who stress a positive impact is consistently higher among the latter by 10-15 percentage points than among urban respondents, with the exception of the principles of compromise and tolerance in a political dialogue, where the percentage of those who positively assess the impact is virtually the same (about 22.0%).

The *NGO* or *political party membership* factor is explicitly related to a positive opinion of the above-mentioned impact. Among NGO or political party members and among NGO sympathizers the percentage of those who hold a positive opinion is (5-13 percentage points) higher than among non-members of NGOs (with a slight exception with regard to the corruption issue).

Thus, 53.2% and 53.0% among NGO members and sympathizers respectively believe that the increased number of women at the highest level of public administration will result in greater social justice for women, whereas the proportion of those who think so among non-members of NGOs is 39.9%. (For political party members, sympathizers and non-members the proportions are 48.4%, 53.1% and 38.2% respectively.)

29.0% of NGO members and 38.8% of NGO sympathizers believe that more women in positions of power will result in more public trust in political parties, while the proportion of those non-NGO-members who think so is 22.7%. (The proportions among members of political parties, party sympathizers and non-members are 30.5%, 39.7% and 19.7% respectively).

This identified trend is also corroborated by data on “pessimists” (who believe that more women in the upper echelons of power “will lead to negative changes”) and “skeptics” (who think that “nothing will change” as a result).

The proportions of respondents, who share the former view, among NGO members, sympathizers and non-members are 4.8%, 3.9% and 6.5% (in the case of political party members, sympathizers and non-members the proportions are 3.1%, 4.3% and 7.0% respectively).

The proportions of respondents, who share the latter view, among NGO members, sympathizers and non-members are 12.9%, 8.9% and 19.9% (in the case of political party members, sympathizers and non-members the proportions are 15.6%, 9.9% and 20.6% respectively).

In other words, the share of “skeptics” and “pessimists” among NGO or political party members or sympathizers is 1.5-2 times smaller than among the respondents who are not members of NGOs or political parties.

Thus, on the whole, quite a sizeable group of respondents believe that broader representation of women in positions of power in public administration will have positive social and political consequences. As mentioned above, neutral or negative opinions account for less than 11.0% of all responses. A conclusion can be drawn that a significant segment (and sometimes a plurality) of respondents are for increasing the number of women at the level where political and other decisions are made in this country.

At the same time, not everything is so simple and straightforward. It turns out that while quite a significant proportion of the respondents indeed support the idea of greater representation of women in top-level positions in public administration, nevertheless, that does not hold true for all positions. Respondents take a very differentiating approach, when answering the question of the leadership positions that they would like to see held by women.

Table 1. The degree of acceptability (desirability) of women to hold various positions

	Yes	No
RoA President	28.7%	71.3%
Speaker of the National Assembly	45.1%	54.9%
Prime Minister	34.0%	66.0%
Member of the National Assembly	82.2%	17.8%
RoA Minister	76.8%	23.2%
Regional Governor	46.3%	53.8%
City/Town Mayor	48.6%	51.4%
Village Head	47.9%	52.1%
Head of Condominium	67.3%	32.8%

As we can see, the positions stated in the Table are broken down into three groups by the extent of acceptability (desirability), from the respondents' perspective, for women to hold them.

For the first group (one-third or less of all respondents), it is acceptable that woman should hold the position of the country's President or Prime Minister.

The second group (almost a half of respondents) is prepared to see woman holding the position of a City/Town Mayor, Village Head, Regional Governor and even Speaker of the National Assembly.

The third group would like to see woman holding a position of the Head of Condominium (the majority of respondents) and even Minister or Member of the National Assembly (overwhelming majority of respondents).

In other words, for a clear majority of respondents women do not "qualify" only for the highest positions in the executive branch of government. At the same time, the position of a Minister is an important exception, while holding of a number of positions in the executive branch by women is no longer unacceptable for a half of respondents. Thus, there exists a substantial potential of social support for the policy of advancement towards gender balance in political and public administration as a whole, including in the legislative and executive branches of government. An interesting (in order not to say "paradoxical") situation has emerged, when the society at large is on the whole more progressive and less conservative than the greater part of the political "elite." Such a situation would be impossible in a more democratic polity, where powers that be are accountable to the general public and, accordingly, are more sensitive to public opinion and to the views held by citizens.

An attempt was made in the study to further specify the respondents' general perceptions and opinions by giving them a chance to project those onto their own families. It is one thing when respondents merely speculate (which is purely verbal behavior) and a totally different thing when they model a situation as applied to themselves (it is a step towards real behavior). Therefore, they were asked a question whether they would recommend their female family member (wife, mother, sister or daughter) to run for an elective office from the list below.

Table 2. Would you recommend to a female member of your family (wife, mother, sister or daughter) to be nominated for an elective office from the list below?

	Yes	No	Don't know
RoA President	34.3%	60.2%	5.6%
Member of the National Assembly	53.4%	41.6%	5.0%
Head of Local Self-Government Body	48.0%	46.2%	5.8%
Head of Condominium	49.5%	41.3%	9.2%

Comparing data on responses to this and previous questions, one could contend that respondents' opinion coincide only in the case of the position of a Head of Local Self-Government Body (i.e. City/Town Mayor or Village Head). It is not an easy task to explain an almost 6-percentage- point increase in the proportion of the respondents who would support their female family member to run for the country's presidency⁴⁶. It is the highest position in the country, and even putting aside the issue of holding free and fair elections in the country (during the entire period since independence was gained there was not a single instance of free and fair elections in Armenia), it is absolutely clear that extensive political and professional experience as well as broad political and financial support are required for running for that position. One of possible explanations of the contradiction can be a hypothesis that a long train of unsuccessful elections and even less successful appointments at various levels have led to the resurgence of the simplistic ideas that "any female cook should be able to run the country." If that is actually the case (even if partly), that bodes no good for the country and the society in terms of democratization, sustainable development and social justice as well as of the achievement of gender equality.

Less attractiveness of the position of a Head of Condominium for the family member than for an abstract woman can be accounted for by the fact that while in the latter case the matter concerns nothing more than support of the principle of equality and social justice, in the former case the situation is very concrete. Besides the fact that a Head of Condominium needs knowledge and personal qualities (sociability, flexibility, spirit of enterprise, etc.), the position is very time- and effort-consuming. It also is fraught with numerous corruption risks.

The same holds true basically for a Member of the National Assembly. In this case there is also additional apprehension that the female family member will become a target and, possibly, a victim of dirty methods of political struggle, thereby affecting other family members.

Nevertheless, there are grounds to contend that at least the groundwork has been laid for democratic gender culture, which already pushes traditional patriarchal views aside. However, despite some clear progress, the process has been unfolding quite inconsistently and contradictorily.

Thus, answering the question of who they would vote for, man or woman, if candidates for a position in the system of political administration had equal qualities, 19.2% of respondents said they vote for a

⁴⁶ The gap can be accounted for, first of all, by a significantly higher percentage of female respondents (37.7%) who are prepared to recommend to a woman from their family to run for presidency and who, perhaps, reacted somewhat more emotionally to the question. Men make a more realistic assessment of the situation and among them the share of the respondents who answered the question in the affirmative (30.2%) actually coincides with the average percentage for the entire sample for responses to the previous question (28.8%).

woman and 48.1%, i.e. 2.5 times more, for a man. It should be noted, however, that quite a high percentage of respondents (27.9%) said that it does not make any difference for them to vote for a woman or man. In other words, about three out of ten respondents in the sample take a gender neutral position, which in and of itself is a positive symptom.

A not particularly high percentage of the respondents who would want to see women at top-level positions in the executive branch of government and who would definitely vote for women in the case the candidates for a position in the system of political administration have equal qualities can, probably, be accounted for to some extent by the fact that realities of life make adjustments. Thus, many respondents do not see such women in this society who could hold the above-mentioned top-level positions.

Thus, 83.6% of respondents could not name a single woman who, in their view, would be qualified to hold a position of the country's President. 12.1% of respondents named one woman and 4.3% named two women. The situation is almost the same in the case of the "nomination" in the parliamentary elections (82.3%, 12.0% and 5.8% respectively). The situation is even more deplorable in the case of the nomination for the position of a member of the Government (Minister) (87.8%, 10.7% and 1.6% respectively).

At first glance, it may seem that respondents have a hypercritical attitude towards women and therefore they do not see worthy candidates. However, that is not always the case.

To begin with, according to the above data, a large group of respondents is not only well-disposed towards women's presence in top-level positions in public administration and in political system but is also inclined to help the advancement of women in political and administrative spheres.

Secondly, the situation is almost identical with regard to men with the exception of candidates for presidency. In the case of the candidates for presidency the proportions are 57.2%, 27.8% and 15.0% respectively, for MP 80.4%, 12.9% and 6.7% respectively and for member of the Government 80.4%, 10.1% and 4.0% respectively.

Thirdly, in political parties, in NGOs and in the society at large there are quite a few active, experienced and knowledgeable persons who have the potential to become prominent statesmen and/or politicians. However, as a rule, that does not happen.

A conclusion suggests itself that the main reason is an anachronistic, non-democratic political system, being eroded by corruption, nepotism, protectionism, clientelism and a spoils system, when appointments are made not on the basis of professional and personal merits and qualities but based on the principles of personal allegiance, political party or clan membership, etc. In such environment it is especially difficult for women to realize themselves and to rise from the ranks because the Government-controlled ideological state apparatus discredits women activists and politicians from potential counter-elites, while the Government does not promote them to political and discretionary positions. Women in the ruling elite have to keep a low profile and content themselves with very modest roles.

Respondents' skepticism is not surprising therefore against that background, especially if they are suspicious of politicians and statesmen since those many a time disappointed them and betrayed their trust.

Until the “rules” in the political field have been changed radically, in other words until true rather than make-believe democratization of the polity⁴⁷ and of public life has occurred, it will be very difficult men and especially for women to realize their potential and to earn good reputation.

These conclusions are corroborated also by striking similarity of respondents’ opinions in most cases with regard to qualities that women and men politicians should have. For instance, the opinion that male politicians should be endowed with prominent intellectual abilities is shared by 92.8% of respondents and with regard to female politicians, by 90.7% of respondents; or sufficient experience of work in public administration bodies (75.4% and 72.2% respectively); as well as integrity and adherence to one’s principles (77.8% and 77.3% respectively). Even when a certain quality or social status does not look important to respondents (for example, that a politician should be a practicing believer, young, married, financially well-off, etc.) because on the average only about 30.0%, rarely 40.0% and in one case about 50.0% of respondents thought those qualities important, the difference for male and female politicians is minimal.

When they exist, the differences highlight women’s secondary position in politics. Thus, while an *ability* to rise above group and clan interests and to approach issues from the perspective prioritizing State interests was regarded as important for male politicians by 74.7% of respondents and for female politicians by 69.0% of respondents, organizational abilities (82.0% and 75.3% respectively), experience of political struggle (75.3% and 65.4% respectively), an ability to reach a compromise and to display flexibility (78.5% and 74.3% respectively) and being a good speaker (71.3% and 65.0%).

This trend is reflected even in case of those negative phenomena and spheres that are beyond a normal political system and morally healthy as well as politically and civically mature society. Thus, the necessity of close ties to heads of organized crime for men was indicated by 30.8%, whereas for women by 13.6% of respondents, and to mafia and clan groups – by 23.7% and 7.4% respectively.

In all likelihood, the line of reasoning is as follows: since women do not play a crucial role and since they are not decision-makers, they need the above qualities to a much lesser extent than men.

The style and nature of the present-day Armenian political field and the overall level of a political culture are further characterized by the fact that the necessity of charming good looks and attractive manners is indicated for women by 70.2% of respondents and for men by merely 52.4% of respondents. In other words, female politicians should attract, say, voters with their charm and nice manners, while that is not a *sine qua non* for male politicians since he will talk business and since he has leverage. This is a manifestation of a masculine political culture, which has a particularly adverse impact on women, forcing them to play by the rules, which are alien to them and essentially anachronistic (from the perspective of modern civilized societies), and to internalize non-democratic norms and standards and ideas that are foreign to them and to try to comply. It is no wonder that under the circumstances it is not easy for female politicians to realize themselves adequately and to demonstrate their abilities, experience, knowledge, skills and qualities.

⁴⁷ The UNIFEM Report stresses that “political parties play a determinant role in changing attitudes to women’s leadership.” *Who answers to women? Gender & Accountability*. N.Y., UNIFEM, 2008, p. 21.

5. Factors that promote women's political participation

The attainment of gender equality is undoubtedly dependent to a large extent on State policies.

Certain steps have already been taken in that direction. On 11 February 2010, the Armenian Government approved the "RoA Concept Note on State Gender Policy." The RoA *Law on ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities to women and men* and the RoA *Law on family violence* have been drafted. The Government pays considerable attention to issues of combating gender-based violence as one of flagrant violations of human rights of women and as obstacle to gender equality. On 30 March 2010, the National Inter-Agency Committee to Combat Gender-Based Violence was established as per a decree of the Armenian Prime Minister. At present, the experts from the Work Group of the Committee are finalizing the National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for years 2011-2015 (with detailed plans for each year).

The gender equality policy and measures for its implementation are very important not only in a substantive but also in a formal aspect. Even purely symbolic steps and statements, and public discussions even more so, national action plans and programs gradually acquire social inertia, change people's mentality and contribute to new ideas and perceptions taking root in public mind. Due to routinization of social practices and introduction of new social experiences the society gets gradually accustomed to the idea that gender equality is a norm in the life of a civilized society and that it boils down to securing equal rights and equal opportunities (and, in the future, equal results) for each person regardless of their gender. But setting all one's hopes on paternalistic care provided by the State and political parties is an erroneous strategy, in my view. That holds true for all social groups, including women as a big socio-demographic group. No one will express, present and defend their interests better than they themselves. Historical experience clearly demonstrates the necessity of social and political activism of women to that end. Only in that case change will occur faster and will become irreversible, while the steps taken by the State will be more consistent and effective.

Therefore it seems useful to examine the respondents' opinions about *what factors can best contribute to increasing and expanding women's political participation*.

First of all, it should be noted that quite a significant part of respondents (in fact, every fifth respondent in the sample – 20.4%) chose the "Don't know" option. It should also be pointed out that background characteristics of the respondents made a strong impact. The proportion of the respondents who chose the "Don't know" option is higher among men than women (23.3% and 18.0% respectively), among older respondents than younger ones (27.5% among 61- or more-year-olds, 22.2% among 46-60-year-olds, 17.5% among 31-45-year-olds and 17.6% among 18-30-year-olds), among persons with incomplete secondary with complete higher education (24.5% and 18.0% respectively) and among urban residents than rural ones (23.1% and 13.2% respectively).

It is small wonder that women as well as younger and better educated respondents are more knowledgeable or that they gave thought to that question and, perhaps, looked for and got answers. A considerable gap of 10 percentage points between urban and rural respondents is not particularly clear. The assumption that rural residents more often come across the objective and subjective factors that limit women's political participation and that therefore they are more concerned about the problem and possible ways for its solution seems quite plausible.

Judging by respondents' preferences, all factors can tentatively be ranked into 5 groups. In their view, first of all, legislation needs to be harmonized with the gender equality principle⁴⁸ (20.9% of all responses).

The second most important factor is establishment of women's political organizations (parties) (13.4% of all responses).

The third group includes: (a) introduction of quotas for women into the election law (10.9%)⁴⁹, (b) establishment of new women's NGOs (9.4%), (c) increasing representation and status of women in political parties (9.1%)⁵⁰ and (d) consolidation of women's NGOs (8.8% of all responses).

The fourth group includes 2 factors: (a) conducting educational projects to develop women's leadership qualities (7.6%) and (b) creating a positive image of women politicians and businesswomen (6.0% of all responses).

Finally, the fifth group consists of one factor: staging mass protest actions against gender-based violence and discrimination (3.8% of all responses).

Commenting on these findings, it should be first of all stressed that with regard to a number of factors the opinions of various socio-demographic groups coincide or are quite close, while in other cases they, on the contrary, differ considerably. It is not surprising because even among experts there is no agreement of opinion about the significance of each of the above factors.

In any case, one cannot help agreeing that adequate legislation plays a crucial role. It seems that the adoption of the above-mentioned law on equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men is in high demand and can make a positive impact. As regards quotas, the proposal made by the ruling political elite to raise a current 15%-quota (as per Article 100 of the RoA Electoral Code) to 20% on political party lists in the RoA parliamentary elections has been subjected to serious criticisms by women's and human rights organizations. These NGOs demand, first, that the percentage be raised at least to 30% (so as to ensure a minimum critical mass) and, secondly, that the percentage be ensured not merely on political party lists but also among elected MPs⁵¹.

A considerable support to the idea of establishing women's political organizations (parties) is noteworthy. It seems like the negative experience of *Shamiram*, a puppet women's political party, is being gradually forgotten. Indeed, in many countries women's political organizations were instrumental in energizing women and in enhancing their political participation. Serious consideration should also be

⁴⁸ It is indeed a very important factor. In the above-mentioned UN study the experts noted that "harmonizing national laws with ... international standards promoting and advancing gender equality, as well as implementing the recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is instrumental for strengthened legal and institutional frameworks for women's political participation." *Enhancing Women's Political Participation: A Policy Note for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Bratislava, UNDP RBEC, 2010, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Experts emphasize that while gender quotas do not solve all problems for women in politics, they can "successfully and rapidly alter a situation of women's underrepresentation." *Is Parliament Open to Women? An Appraisal*. Geneva: IPU, 2010, p.22.

⁵⁰ As stated in the Global Action Plan to strengthen political parties, women's political participation will enhance accountability, transparency and moral maturity of political parties. *Global Action Plan. Win with Women. Strengthen Political Parties*. Washington, DC: NDI, 2004, p. 5.

⁵¹ In doing that they cite, and with a good reason at that, paragraph 17 of the Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with regard to the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Armenia (2 February 2009, Document CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1).

given to the idea that necessity has arisen to increase women's representation and status in political parties, especially in leading and influential parties.

Respondents have good grounds to emphasize a key role of women's non-governmental organizations. Indeed, to become a political force and to be able to contribute effectively to expanding women's political participation there should be more women's NGOs and they should be consolidated through networks, alliances and forums into a single broad-based social movement.

No less important are educational programs for nurturing women's leadership qualities, for transferring knowledge to them and for teaching them new social and information technologies. At least two women's non-governmental organizations in Armenia established Women's Leadership Schools and work closely with women activists from political parties or NGOs.

As regards a positive image, the coverage of gender issues in Armenia media has definitely improved due to efforts of many non-governmental organizations, including journalists' NGOs, supported by international foundations and other entities⁵². However, opportunistic political preferences, thinly-veiled instructions and attitudes of persons who set policies of a given media outlet still prevail in coverage of activities of female public figures or politicians and to a lesser extent of women engaged in business (as they are still too few). Not infrequently, low-quality PR actions or black PR takes the place of balanced, comprehensive and substantive coverage of the activities of a female politician, thereby causing harm in the end to all parties concerned.

While the staging of mass protest actions against gender-based violence and discrimination is at the bottom of the factors list, it should be noted, nevertheless, that 3.8% of all responses in reality mean that the answer was given by 8.4% of all respondents (the proportion is even higher among women, 9.4%, and among the respondents in rural areas, 11.1%). In other words, even though this factor is not a principal one, nevertheless, respondents do not disregard it. And that makes sense considering a protest potential existing in the society and the fact that staging mass protest actions is an important component in a politician's experience and one of the most active forms of political participation.

6. Levels of civic and political activism

Civic and political activism is an important component in the society's life. Consolidation of democracy, sustainable development and attainment of a rule-of-law and social State are possible only, if there is active citizen participation of both men and women. To assess the level of development and of a real situation of the society it is necessary to have adequate knowledge of how active the citizens are. The present study focuses only on a small segment of civic and political activism that boils down to a very limited number of forms, and for the most part the protest forms at that. Respondents were asked whether they had taken or could have taken part in the following civic or political actions: the signing of collective petitions, participation in authorized rallies, participation in unauthorized rallies and participation in picketing of Government buildings.

⁵² Nevertheless, instances of inadequate or even plainly ignorant treatment of gender issues by some reporters and media outlets are still far from being a rare occurrence.

Table 3. Have they taken or could they take part in the following civic and political actions?

	Have taken part	Could have taken part	Would never participate
Signing of collective petitions	35.2%	30.3%	34.6%
Participation in authorized rallies	21.9%	28.5%	49.6%
Participation in unauthorized rallies	6.0%	18.3%	75.8%
Participation in picketing of Government buildings	2.3%	15.8%	82.0%

The survey data have clearly identified the following trend: *the more radical the action is, the lower is the percentage of respondents who took part in it or who would be prepared, at least hypothetically, to take part.* This conclusion holds true for all socio-demographic groups of respondents, when the sample data is disaggregated by sex, age, education level, region and place of residence and even NGO or political party membership.

According to the survey data, the proportion of **women** who took or could have taken part in the above confrontational forms of political or civic activism is considerably smaller than among **men**. (Among women, the percentage is slightly higher in the case of the signing of collective petitions). Thus, while 27.1% of men took part in authorized rallies and 8.2% in unauthorized rallies, only 17.5% of women took part in authorized rallies and 4.2% in unauthorized rallies.

Quite unexpected was an identified trend of direct correlation between participation in those actions and respondents' age. In other words, the older the respondents, the higher the proportion of them who took part in those actions.

Table 4. The percentage of the respondents in the age groups who took part in the actions indicated below

	Age groups			
	18-30-year-olds	31-45-year-olds	46-60-year-olds	61- and more-year-olds
Signing of collective petitions	22.8%	35.6%	43.3%	45.0%
Participation in authorized rallies	14.6%	21.6%	24.1%	32.1%
Participation in unauthorized rallies	4.1%	5.2%	6.3%	10.1%
Participation in picketing of Government buildings	1.1%	2.6%	3.0%	2.9%

A conclusion suggests itself that *young persons are not as active as older persons.* In fact, the youngest age group (which, in theory, would seem to be the most active civically and politically) is twice less active as the oldest age group. If the trend of civic inertness and political passivity is corroborated for

the whole range of participation and at least in a medium-term perspective, that does not bode well for the society. In the present-day world it is the young persons who initiate, support and implement the process of reforms and other progressive changes.

Not a single consistent trend has been identified of the correlation of participation with the above actions with the respondents' **education level** or **region of residence**.

As regards the correlation between participation and respondents' place of residence, the proportion of the respondents taking part in those actions is considerably higher in Yerevan and in other urban areas than in villages. The difference between the residents of Yerevan and of other towns and cities is negligible, with the exception of unauthorized rallies, as 8.5% of respondents from Yerevan took part in them vs. 5.9% of respondents from other urban areas (and 3.6% of respondents from rural areas). The difference can, in all likelihood, be explained by the fact that in recent years on the days the opposition stages rallies in most cases the Yerevan-bound traffic is blocked (there was no public transportation, road police officers forced persons driving cars to turn and go back without getting to Yerevan, police at roadblocks would turn away those people who would try to walk to Yerevan from nearby communities, etc.) This conclusion is also corroborated by the fact that 20.7% of respondents from urban areas other than Yerevan and 19.7% of the respondents from rural areas did not participate in unauthorized rallies but could have taken part, if they had a chance perhaps.

Quite predictably a clear correlation has been identified between NGO or political party membership and likelihood of participation in the above actions. Thus, while the proportion of the respondents who took part in signing collective petitions as well as in authorized and unauthorized rallies is among NGO members 51.6%, 37.1% and 12.9% respectively, the proportion among the respondents who are not members of NGOs is 33.9%, 20.1% and 6.2% respectively. In other words, the former group is 1.5-2 times more active than the latter group.

The same trend displays itself (albeit in a less pronounced fashion) in comparison of activism of the respondents who are members of political parties and those who are not. Thus, while the proportion of the respondents who are members of political parties and who took part in signing collective petitions as well as in authorized and unauthorized rallies is 38.3%, 30.5% and 10.2% respectively, the proportion among the respondents who are not members of political parties is 33.0%, 18.3% and 5.6% respectively.

The survey findings also point to new, quite unexpected trends identified in the present-day Armenian society. To begin with, the number of members of political parties exceeds the number of members of non-governmental organizations (10.7% and 5.2% respectively) for the first time, to the best of my knowledge, in a sociological survey conducted in Armenia within the last 10-12 years. The trend clearly indicates growing politicization of the present-day Armenian society. Other, no less unexpected data, too, tend to suggest that growing politicization is indeed a trend in the present-day Armenian society. Comparison of the above data demonstrates compellingly that the level of political activism is higher than that of political party members (only in the case of picketing the level is virtually the same: 3.2% among the former and 3.9% among the latter).

Thus, the proportion of the respondents who are NGO members and who took part in authorized rallies is 37.1%, while among political party members is lower by almost 7 percentage points (30.5%) and in unauthorized rallies is 12.9% and 10.2% respectively.

In the case of such form of activism as the signing of collective petitions (which can be both a form of civic as well as of political participation depending on concrete circumstances and the context) the gap is even bigger. 51.6% of the respondents who are NGO members took part in that action vs. 38.3% of the respondents who are political party members.

Summing up, a contention can be made that there has been certain growth in civic and especially political activism in the society.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the analysis of the study findings the following conclusions and recommendations can be made for State agencies, interested civil society institutions and international organizations.

- Implementation of principles of participatory and representative democracy in this country requires certain changes in the field of legislation and sub-legislation, in particular, the adoption of a relevant law on gender equality, the analysis of the national legislation from the perspective of gender sensitivity and of international norms and standards and the adoption of appropriate amendments to the existing laws based on the findings of that analysis.
- The scope and scale of temporary special measures for encouraging women's political participation should be expanded and effective measures should be taken to implement the Recommendation Rec(2003) 3 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making.
- Nomination of women by political parties and through civic initiatives in the elections of all levels should be encouraged. Also supported should be development of the potential of the existing human resources through teaching women the methods of political activities and developing their leadership and organizational skills.
- An enabling environment should be created for the establishment of associations and alliances of women's non-governmental organizations and assistance should be provided to them to consolidate into a women's movement.
- Targeted projects that promote gender equality should be implemented.
- At this stage in the emergence of a gender parity democracy, a national mechanism for gender equality should be set up with a view to exercising control over and monitoring of project implementation and to assisting the Government in designing strategies and in undertaking gender mainstreaming.

SUMMARY

A scope of *protection* for the interests, needs, rights and freedoms of a society's members and of *opportunities* for their implementation is a composite indicator of any society's development. Numerous models were used to that end in the course of the civilization's development. However, only democracy stood the test. Democracy is not a dogma but rather a process that has a great potential for development and improvement.

The present-day notions of democracy tend to attach importance and to implement *models* of representative, parity and participatory democracy and the *idea* of civil society. It is the *application* of those principles and *active participation* of the society's members that infuse truly democratic content into political and civic processes, ruling out as much as possible the usurpation and abuse of power by a narrow group of people and creating favorable conditions for materializing the rights and interests of broad segments of the society.

At the same time, the expansion of political and civic participation, particularly gender-balanced representation at a decision-making level is an important factor for overcoming a "democratic deficit" in a political system of transition societies.

The process of democratic participation culture taking root cannot be accomplished overnight. The processes of transforming the public mind, value orientations and standards of political conduct require efforts and time and, not infrequently, a generational change. The assimilation, correct localization and comparison of the positive experience of established democratic traditions in the context of one's own country's historical and cultural value system are indispensable.

Effectiveness of the reforms carried out in a society depends significantly on how well they are grounded in sound methodologies and should be based on findings of analytical research projects that monitor the existing realities and trends. That is the only way to avoid the bad practices of trial and error that cast a shadow on the idea of reforms and that entail huge costs.

The authors of the present study are hopeful that the survey data and the conclusions and recommendations, which are based on the data, can prove *valuable* from the perspective of democratization as well as of gender policies formulation and implementation processes in Armenia and *useful* for those State, party and non-governmental entities and organizations that are interested in those processes.

The authors will gratefully receive any comments, criticisms and suggestions regarding the study and its findings.

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APPENDIX

The questionnaire used in the *Gender Dimension of Civic and Political Participation in Armenia* sociological study (univariate data included)

Hello, my name is _____; I represent *Kovkas* Social Studies Center.

Together with United Nations Population Fund, we are conducting the “*Gender Dimension of Civic and Political Participation in Armenia*” sociological study and your opinion is very important to us. We request you to spare 20-25 minutes of your time.

Contact information sheet

	Visit date	Hour	Interviewee’s address	Result (Put code)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Visit results

1. Nobody at home – 16.2%
2. Refused to be interviewed -19.4%
3. Asked to come at another time – 1.8%
4. Interviewee was not accessible at the time of fieldwork – 2.6%
5. Other reasons – 4.0%
6. Interview conducted – 56.0%

1. Please, say how interested are you in socio-political developments? (ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- always interested -13.2%
- interested in general – 36.7%
- not particularly interested (interested from time to time) - 33.7%
- not interested at all – 16.5%

2. Did you vote in the condominium administration, community administration (Community Head, Community Council), 2007 National Assembly and the 2008 RoA presidential elections? (ONE ANSWER ON EACH LINE)

Type of elections	Yes	No
Condominium administration	45.4%	54.6%
Community Head and Community Council elections	67.2%	32.8%
2007 National Assembly elections	68.3%	31.7%
2008 RoA presidential elections	81.1%	18.9%

3. Have you ever filed your candidacy in the condominium administration, community administration (Community Head, Community Council) and in the 2007 National Assembly elections?

Type of elections	Yes	No
For position in condominium administration	1.8%	98.2%
For position of Community Head or Community Council member	4.7%	95.3%
For position of member of the National Assembly	1.7%	98.3%

4. In your view, what type of a political regime has become consolidated in today's Armenia? (ONE ANSWER ONLY. SHOW CARD # 4)

- democratic – 24.6%
- authoritarian – 9.2%
- totalitarian – 13.7%
- mixed – 39.3%
- other (put down) - 2.9%
- don't know – 10.3%

5. Has the system of civil and political rights and freedoms improved in the past 3 years? (ONE ANSWER ONLY. SHOW CARD # 5)

- improved much – 1.9%
- somewhat improved - 37.3%
- remained the same – 30.2%
- somewhat deteriorated - 15.4%
- deteriorated much – 10.5%
- don't know – 4.7%

6. According to you, what is the current form of government in the Republic of Armenia? (ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- presidential – 47.9%
- parliamentary – 6.2%
- semi-presidential – 31.2%
- other (put down) – 2.1%
- don't know – 12.6%

7. Can you say how many factions are there in the RoA National Assembly?

- correct answer – 27.7%
- wrong answer - 24.2%
- don't know – 48.1%

8. Are you a member or sympathizer of any civic and/or political organization or movement of the type mentioned below?

(IN THE CASE OF CODE 1 GO TO QUESTIONS 9 AND 10, PUTTING THE ANSWERS IN OTHER COLUMNS OF THE SAME TABLE. IN THE CASE OF CODES 2 OR 3 GO TO QUESTION 11)

9. What is your status in that organization?

10. How influential is your voice in decision-making in that organization? Evaluate your influence on decision-making on a 5-score scale, where “1” stands for “Your voice carries no weight” and “5” stands for “It is decisive.” (SHOW CARD # 10)

Question 8. Membership or sympathy			Question 9. Status			Question 10
Type of organization	I am a	I am not a	I am neither	Rank-	in low- or	in top-

	member	member but sympathizer	member nor sympathizer	and-file member	middle-level leadership	level leadership	
Non-governmental organization	5.2%	25.3%	69.5%	2.8%	1.4%	1.0%	2.05
Political party	10.7%	31.1%	58.2%	9.7%	0.9%	0.1%	2.02
Civic movement	1.1%	19.3%	79.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	2.9
Political movement	1.1%	16.9%	82.0%	0.9%	0.2%	0%	2.0
Informal (not officially registered) organization	0.6%	11.4%	88.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	2.3

11. What factors hinder your active political and civic participation? (UP TO 4 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 11)

	%, of the total number of responses	%, of the total number of respondents
Limited financial resources	12.7%	22.3%
Heavy workload	8.7%	15.3%
Burden of family concerns	15.8%	27.7%
Burden of household chores	11.3%	19.7%
Gender discrimination	3.0%	5.2%
Unfavorable public opinion about public figures and politicians	5.0%	8.7%
Disillusionment with political and/or public life	14.6%	25.6%
Lack of relevant knowledge and experience	5.7%	9.9%
No desire to engage in such activities	15.0%	26.3%
No obstacles	5.5%	9.7%
Other response (put down)	2.7%	4.7%

12. Public opinion encompasses various attitudes and manifestations of mentality towards political elections held at different levels. To what extent do you agree with the following attitudes?

Statements	Agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Outcome of elections is dependent on individual citizen's participation and voting	18.3%	21.0%	27.5%	27.4%	5.8%
Individual citizen's participation in elections makes no difference because voting results are rigged all the same	36.8%	26.3%	22.3%	8.6%	6.0%
Bad authorities are elected by those "good" citizens who do not take part in elections	29.3%	22.5%	17.2%	13.5%	17.6%

GENDER ISSUES

13. With which of the following statements do you agree? (ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- Women and men have equal opportunities for career advancement - 29.3%
- Men have better career advancement opportunities than women - 60.9%
- Women have better career advancement opportunities than men - 4.4%
- Don't know - 5.3%

14. and 15. To what extent is career important to man and woman? Use a 5-point scale to give your answer, where “1” stands for “not important at all” and “5” stands for “very important” (SHOW CARDS # 14 AND 15)

		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
14.	For man	0.9%	0.5%	5.6%	19.7%	73.3%	4.64
15.	For woman	7.0%	11.2%	24.9%	25.3%	31.7%	3.63

16. and 17. In your view, to what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive about women and men making a political career? (SHOW CARDS # 16-20)

	16. of women	17. of men
Unequivocally negative	7.8%	0.8%
For the most part negative	19.2%	1.5%
Indifferent	22.4%	8.8%
For the most part positive	35.0%	25.1%
Unequivocally positive	11.5%	60.4%
Don't know	4.1%	3.5%

18. and 19. In your view, to what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive about women and men making a career in business? (SHOW CARDS # 16-20)

	18. of women	19. of men
Unequivocally negative	6.8%	0.6%
For the most part negative	17.4%	0.8%
Indifferent	19.3%	6.4%
For the most part positive	34.4%	21.4%
Unequivocally positive	18.3%	68.3%
Don't know	3.8%	2.5%

20. In your view, to what extent is public opinion in Armenia positive about women pursuing careers in the following fields? Use a 6-point scale to give your answer, where “1” stands for “*unequivocally* negative,” “5” stands for “*unequivocally positive*” and “6” is used for the “Don't know” option (SHOW CARDS # 16-20)

Fields	1	2	3	4	5	6
Health	2.5	2.7	5.4	21.9	65.5	2.0
Education	1.4	2.3	3.7	17.8	72.7	2.3
Police	20.3	24.3	25.6	15.8	12.1	1.9
Judicial system	12.3	16.4	27.4	26.3	15.1	2.6
Local governments	13.8	17.8	25.8	26.8	13.3	2.7
National security system	33.3	24.7	16.4	14.2	8.1	3.3
Army	40.7	20.1	14.5	14.7	8.5	1.6
Banking system	1.6	2.3	7.8	34.0	52.4	1.8

21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Statements	Agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Disagree	Don't know
There is something wrong in personal life of a woman engaged in politics.	23.8%	19.8%	20.5%	28.8%	7.0%
There is something wrong in personal life of a woman engaged in business (private entrepreneurship).	17.7%	19.3%	25.0%	31.8%	6.3%
First of all women themselves distrust women politicians or candidates.	24.2%	20.3%	19.8%	26.0%	9.8%

Woman should not go into politics. Family and children should be her sole occupation.	18.1%	17.6%	31.3%	30.3%	2.8%
Woman should not be concerned about business or solution to financial problems of her family. Family and children should be her sole occupation.	15.3%	18.4%	31.7%	32.0%	2.6%
Husband's prestige and status of the family suffer as a result of the woman's career.	14.8%	17.8%	27.7%	33.3%	6.3%
Women do not have qualities that are necessary for holding high-ranking positions in politics.	10.1%	14.2%	26.6%	44.9%	4.3%
Women do not have abilities that are necessary for being a business person.	7.2%	15.1%	27.4%	46.2%	4.2%
Politics is a "dirty" business; therefore women should keep clear of it.	20.2%	26.2%	23.3%	21.5%	8.8%
Woman's successful career has a positive impact on her family's social status and prestige.	34.0%	32.8%	15.6%	8.9%	8.8%

22. In your view, is there discrimination against women in Armenia?

- Yes - 46.6%
- No (GO TO QUESTION 24)- 41.1%
- Don't know (GO TO QUESTION 24) – 12.5%

23. If yes, in what of the below spheres discrimination against women is manifested to the greatest extent? (UP TO 4 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 23)

	Of the total number of respondents	Of the number of the respondents who chose answer 22.1
In the system of political elections	23.3 %	50.1 %
In the sphere of public administration	23.1 %	49.7 %
In education sphere	2.4 %	5.2 %
In political parties	13.3 %	28.5 %
In non-governmental organizations	3.8 %	8.3 %
In private businesses	7.2 %	15.4 %
In employment	11.3 %	24.4 %
In all spheres	11.1 %	23.9 %
Other (put down)	0.3 %	0.5 %
Don't know	1.9 %	4.1 %

24. What factors in the Armenian reality hinder the attainment of equality between men and women in public life? (UP TO 4 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 24)

	Of the total number of respondents	Of the total number of responses
Traditional, stereotypical mentality of the public	63.5%	31.1%
Physiological differences between men and women that predetermine role specifics in the social system	28.1%	13.7%

Socioeconomic difficulties (unemployment, poverty, etc.)	26.0%	12.7%
Extremely unequal distribution of family roles between men and women	31.4%	15.4%
Women's negative attitude towards the idea of equality	13.1%	6.4%
Men's aggressive posture in social relations	25.1%	12.3%
Nothing hinders	8.9%	4.4%
Other (put down) _____	0.8%	0.4%
Don't know	7.6%	3.7%

25. In your view, what factors cause women's relative passivity in the area of a political career? (UP TO 4 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 25)

	Of the total number of respondents	of the total number of responses
women's low self-confidence	35.1%	14.5%
lack of public trust and confidence in women politicians	33.5%	13.8%
absence of mechanisms that would advance women (e.g. inadequate representation of women on political party lists in elections)	29.2%	12.1%
women's inadequate level of educational attainment	15.4%	6.3%
women's primary focus on family	45.2%	18.7%
inadequate support from women's non-governmental organizations	12.6%	5.2%
negative attitude of close relatives (husband, parents)	28.3%	11.7%
absence of an active political position and initiative on the part of women	11.4%	4.7%
women's concern about their reputation and prestige because the perception that politics is a "dirty business" is quite widespread	12.9%	5.3%
women's lack of experience in and knowledge of political processes	9.8%	4.0%
absence of support from mass media	4.3%	1.8%
acts of violence against women in Armenia	3.6%	1.5%
Other responses	1.3%	0.5%

26. A new version of the RoA Electoral Code, which is still being discussed, envisions quotas for women in the proportional representation elections to the RoA National Assembly.

What is your attitude towards the idea of introducing quotas for women at various levels in political and public administration?

- unequivocally positive – 25.3%
- mostly positive – 31.9%
- I don't care (GO TO QUESTION 28) – 24.3%
- mostly negative (GO TO QUESTION 28) – 6.9%
- unequivocally negative (GO TO QUESTION 28) – 4.3%
- don't know (GO TO QUESTION 28) – 7.2%

27. If you have a positive attitude towards the idea of introducing quotas for women's representation in various administrative bodies, what percentage for women's representation in the RoA National Assembly would, in your view, be optimal?

	%
RoA National Assembly	36.53%
Government	32.73%
Regional Governors	24.70%
City/Town Mayors	25.87%
Village Heads	25.21%
Heads of Condominiums	32.32%

28. In the case that candidates have equal qualities, who would you vote for, woman or man, for a position in the system of political administration?

- For woman – 19.2%
- For man – 48.1%
- Doesn't matter - 27.9%
- Don't know – 4.8%

29. Is family an obstacle for woman to engage in politics or business?

- yes – 48.1% (577)
- no (GO TO QUESTION 31) – 39.8% (477)
- don't know (GO TO QUESTION 31) -12.1% (146)

30. If yes, why, in your view, the family does not support and encourage women to make a career in politics or in a business sphere? (UP TO 3 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 30)

	Of the total number of respondents	Of the total number of responses
family and children suffer from lack of attention	74.5%	34.7%
family and household responsibilities do not leave time for woman to make a political or business career	56.4%	26.3%
husband of the woman who has a successful political or business career feels humiliated	23.2%	10.8%
husband and relatives do not encourage woman's political and business career	33.1%	15.4%
the husband's career is regarded as more important and woman has to be concerned about the issue of supporting her husband's career	23.9%	11.1%
other factors	1.0%	0.5%
don't know	2.3 %	1.1%

31. What qualities do you think female and male politicians should have?

	Female	Male
prominent intellectual abilities	90.7%	92.8%
an ability to reach a compromise and to display flexibility	74.3%	78.5%
organizational abilities of a leader	75.3%	82.0%
charming good looks and attractive manners	70.2%	52.4%
experience of political struggle	65.4%	75.3%
sufficient experience of work in public administration bodies	72.2%	75.4%
being a good speaker	65.0%	71.3%
integrity and adherence to one's principles	77.3%	77.8%
close ties to heads of organized crime	13.6%	30.8%
financially well-off	47.7%	51.7%
practicing believer	30.5%	28.3%
being a married person	39.4%	38.2%
being a young person	34.6%	29.9%
close ties to mafia and clan groups	7.4%	23.7%
an ability to rise above group and clan interests and to approach issues from the perspective prioritizing State interests	69.0%	74.7%
other	1.6%	1.7%

32. Name two female public figures who are qualified to hold a position of the

RoA President	1. 12.1%	2. 4.3%	3. No response - 83.6%
Member of the RoA National Assembly	1. 12.0%	2. 5.8%	3. No response - 82.3%
Member of the RoA Government (Minister)	1. 10.7%	2. 1.6%	3. No response – 87.7%

33. Name two male public figures who are qualified to hold a position of the

RoA President	1. 27.8%	2. 15.0%	3. No response – 57.2%
Member of the RoA National Assembly	1. 12.9%	2. 6.7%	3. No response – 80.4%
Member of the RoA Government (Minister)	1. 10.1%	2. 4.0%	3. No response – 85.9%

34. On what positions would you like to see women and on what positions you would not like to see them?

	Yes	No
RoA President	28.7%	71.3%
Speaker of the National Assembly	45.1%	54.9%
Prime Minister	34.0%	66.0%
Member of the National Assembly	82.2%	17.8%
RoA Minister	76.8%	23.2%
Regional Governor	46.3%	53.8%
City/Town Mayor	48.6%	51.4%
Village Head	47.9%	52.1%
Head of Condominium	67.3%	32.8%

35. What results do you think can an increased number of women at the highest level of public administration produce? (UP TO 4 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 35)

	Of the total number of respondents	of the total number of responses
will result in greater social justice for women	43.9%	21.1%
politicians will become more reserved and strained political relations will improve	36.2%	17.4%
political structures will gain more public trust	27.1%	13.0%
politics will become more moral and humanistic	29.0%	13.9%
will contribute to reduction of corruption in the public administration system	18.8%	9.0%
will contribute to the principles of compromise and tolerance taking root in a political dialogue	21.8%	10.5%
will lead to negative changes	5.8%	2.8%
nothing will change	16.8%	8.0%
other response	0.9%	0.4%
don't know	8.2%	3.9%

36. What factors can best contribute to increasing and expanding women's political participation? (UP TO 4 ANSWERS. SHOW CARD # 36)

	Of the total number of respondents	Of the total number of responses
legislation needs to be harmonized with the gender equality principle	45.8%	20.9%
establishment of women's political organizations (parties)	29.3%	13.4%
establishment of new women's NGOs	20.7%	9.4%
consolidation of women's NGOs	19.3%	8.8%
introduction of quotas for women into the election law	23.8%	10.9%
mass protest actions against gender-based violence and discrimination	8.3%	3.8%
increasing representation and status of women in political parties	19.9%	9.1%
conducting educational projects to develop women's leadership qualities	16.8%	7.6%
creating a positive image of women politicians and businesswomen through media	13.3%	6.0%
other (put down)	1.8%	0.8%
don't know	20.4%	9.3%

37. Would you recommend to a female member of your family (wife, mother, sister or daughter) to be nominated for the following elective offices?

	Yes	No	Don't know
RoA President	34.3%	60.2%	5.6%
Member of the National Assembly	53.4%	41.6%	5.0%
Head of Local Self-Government Body	48.0%	46.2%	5.8%
Head of Condominium	49.5%	41.3%	9.2%

38. Please, say, have you ever taken or could you take part in the civic and political actions mentioned below?

	I have taken part	I could take part	Will never participate
Signing of collective petitions	35.2%	30.3%	34.6%
Participation in authorized rallies	21.9%	28.5%	49.6%
Participation in unauthorized rallies	6.0%	18.3%	75.8%
Participation in picketing of Government buildings	2.3%	15.8%	82.0%

40. With regard to what issues would you like to get knowledge? (MORE THAN ONE ANSWER CAN BE MADE)

	Of the total number of respondents	Of the total number of responses
leadership skills	26.1%	14.6%
skills to conduct social events	14.3%	8.0%
public speech skills	10.8%	6.1%
skills to organize political activities	10.6%	5.9%
legal knowledge	42.8%	24.0%
strategic planning of organizations	8.3%	4.6%
work with media	9.6%	5.4%
skills of cooperation with other organizations	5.3%	3.0%
skills to raise funds for implementation of projects	14.0%	7.9%
other	1.1%	0.6%
no such desire	35.5%	19.9%

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

40. Do you have at present any work or occupation that generate income?

- yes – 42.1%
- no, I am unemployed - 20.7%
- no, but they do not regard themselves as unemployed (CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE OPTION BELOW. GO TO QUESTION 43)
- pensioner - 13.3%
- housewife - 16.8%
- student – 4.4%
- person with disability -1.0%
- other -1.8%

41. What kind of work do you have?

- Is it a stable, permanent job or is it temporary, seasonal work?
- Do you work in a State or private institution?

Nature of work					
stable, permanent work			Not stable (temporary, seasonal) work		
1. works in a State institution	2. works in a non-State, private institution, etc.	3. individual entrepreneur, individual farm	4. works in a State institution	5. works in a non-State, private institution, etc.	6. individual entrepreneur, individual farm
1. – 17.3%	2. – 8.2%	3. – 3.1%	4. – 1.5%	5. – 6.4%	6. – 53%
42. Average monthly income (wages) in AMD					
59 316,43	84 264.71	65 833,33	53 266,67	47 512,20	44 188,52

43. Number of your family members

(Write the mean) 4. 39

44. What is your family's average monthly income?

(SHOW CARD # 44)

- Up to 33,000 AMD - 12.6%
- 34,000 – 70,000 AMD – 25.6%
- 71,000 - 100,000 AMD – 18.1%
- 101,000 - 150,000 AMD – 15.9%
- 151,000 - 200,000 AMD – 8.9%
- 201,000 – 300,000 AMD – 4.6%
- 301,000 – 400,000 AMD – 1.2%
- 401,000 – 500,000 AMD – 1.0%
- 501 000 AMD or more – 0.3%
- No answer – 11.9%

45. Your marital status

- single – 17.8%
- married – 71.3%
- divorced – 2.1%
- widow/widower – 8.8%

46. Sex

- Male – 45.8%
- Female – 54.2%

47. Age

- 18-30 – 30.3%
- 31-45 – 29.0%
- 46-60 – 22.5%
- 61 or older – 18.2%

48. Education

- incomplete secondary – 4.4%
- secondary – 44.6%
- incomplete higher – 13.6%
- higher – 37.4%

DATA ON INTERVIEWEE

49. Region

- Yerevan – 34.3%
- Armavir – 19.1%
- Shirak – 19.6%
- Gegharkunik – 16.4%
- Syunik – 10.6%

50. Locality

- City/town (other than Yerevan) – 31.4%
- Village (put the name) - 34.3%
- Yerevan - 34.3%

51. Interviewee's contact information

Telephone _____

Interviewee's first/last name _____

Date of birth _____

**THANK YOU
FOR TAKING PART IN THE SURVEY**

