

Women's political activism in Montenegro

Public opinion survey

October 2021



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The Survey is a part of an initiative implemented by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy in Montenegro.

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Method and data

Market research agency De Facto Consultancy has been commissioned by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy Montenegro to conduct a survey on public perception of women's activism in Montenegro in September 2021. The main goal of the survey is to inspect influences on the formation of attitudes towards women's participation in public life and politics and to determine the role of family in shaping young women's attitudes towards participation in social and political life. Finally, the survey also explores the respondents' viewpoints on potential opportunities to engage in different areas of public life. The target population of this survey were women aged between 20 and 55.

The results obtained can serve as a presentation of the respondents' views at a single point in time, i.e. September 2021. Of course, these findings can also be viewed as a baseline study that could just as well develop into a longitudinal study in the future, which would allow to keep track of trends and changes in attitudes of Montenegrin citizens when these issues are concerned.

The report emulates the structure of the questionnaire, which is to be discussed in due course, and is divided into five chapters. Following the introduction, which provides information on the method used and the data collected, the findings are systematized in chapters – “Measuring the level of activism and participation in public life” which conveys data on the level of involvement of respondents, be it through civic or political action, “Social environment and family”, where we examine how the respondents' social environment, upbringing and family circumstances influenced their civic and political engagement. Chapter “Perceptions of the opportunities to engage in public life” explores respondents' attitudes about social circumstances that encourage or discourage them from engaging in public life. Finally, the “Conclusions” chapter provides an overview of the survey's key findings.

In order to deliver a more complex analysis, the report will not only present the basic frequencies of respondents' answers – the variables will also be cross-referenced with the main socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, education level, income level, region where respondents live etc.) so as to uncover differences that come up between specific demographic groups. Statistically relevant differences, where applicable, will be indicated and commented upon. Additionally, the report also includes cross-references with other characteristics and responses provided by the respondents, thus contributing to a more comprehensive analysis.

Sample

Quantitative public opinion survey was conducted on a nationally representative sample of 1006 women-only respondents aged 20 to 55. The survey was conducted using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) technique.

A two-step stratification was carried out during the sampling process. In the first step, the general population of Montenegro is divided into three strata corresponding to the geo-economic regions of Montenegro (north, center and south). In the second step, polling places within a single stratum were divided into three groups: large, medium and small, and households to be surveyed were also categorised this way. The selection of households to be surveyed within a sample unit was conducted by means of a random walk method. Only female respondents were considered. When a household had several members that match the targeted criteria, we would select the individual who most recently celebrated their birthday in the household, thus ensuring a random selection of respondents.

In addition to the quantitative, the survey also contains the qualitative part. Namely, focus groups were conducted with women from all the three geo-economic regions of Montenegro, one focus group per region.

The aim of focus groups was not to quantify, but to understand the problems cited. The reader of this report is advised to interpret the views of focus group participants with full awareness of the context in which the data were collected and the nature of the data itself. To that end, we would like to emphasize that the information gathered during focus groups are attitudes, opinions, beliefs, assessments and impressions as voiced by the women we spoke to. These personal accounts do not necessarily fully match the facts on the ground. Again, the purpose of this part of the survey is to provide an in-depth knowledge not only in terms of how respondents perceive certain events or policies, but also why they hold such perceptions.

Each focus group was made up of 6 to 8 participants of different socio-demographic characteristics. Focus groups were conducted online, via Zoom application. Each of the focus groups lasted around 120 minutes and was conducted following a questionnaire-based guide used for quantitative research.

The questionnaire used for conducting quantitative survey was created in cooperation with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy office in Montenegro, and it consisted of several units:

- Measuring the level of civic and political participation of the respondents
- Inspecting the influences
- Role of family in creating attitudes towards participation in public life
- Perception of the opportunities to engage in public life
- Informing
- Demography

Fieldwork

Field surveys were conducted between September 14 and October 1 2021.

Respondents were interviewed in person, using the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) technique. The software used in the survey works in both online and offline mode, allowing the interviewer to better navigate in areas where Internet connection is often not available. The software automatically measures the duration of each question, which is an additional form of control.

Data quality control

The project team applied the following measures to ensure data quality control:

- Daily communication with interviewers: field survey coordinator contacted the interviewers each day and discussed the situation on the ground, the potential problems the interviewer might be facing as well as plans for the following day.
- Checks performed into 20% of the sample via phone – field survey coordinator phone called 200 respondents and checked if they have taken part in the research.
- Interview length check: The CAPI software automatically records the duration of each interview. Field survey coordinator deletes all the surveys lasting less than 80% of the pre-calculated duration of a single interview.
- Logic control performed for each questionnaire loaded: field survey coordinator reads out the answers and checks for consistency.

Survey results

As previously mentioned, survey findings are systematized in chapters - “Measuring the level of activism and participation in public life” which presents data on the level of engagement of respondents, both through civic and political action, “Social environment and family” where we sought to obtain answers to questions about influences that social environment, upbringing and family might have on the respondents’ civic and political engagement. The following chapter, “Perceptions of the opportunities to engage in public life” probes into the respondents’ attitudes towards social circumstances that encourage or discourage them from engaging in public life. Finally, the “Conclusions” chapter provides an overview of the key findings of the survey.

The report combines findings from the quantitative and qualitative part of the survey i.e. focus groups, and an important distinction should be borne in mind herein. Namely, the term respondents refers to survey participants who took part in the quantitative part of the survey, i.e. who were surveyed in the field. On the other hand, the term interlocutors is used to refer to focus group participants, i.e. those women that took part in the qualitative part of the survey.

In addition, it should be emphasized that the research team performed certain interventions with quotes that convey the views and beliefs of the interlocutors, all with the aim of synthesizing data. This is manifested in shortening certain quotes, as well as highlighting and underlining certain segments. These do not necessarily mean that such emphasis was made by interlocutors themselves, but rather reflects the intention of the researchers to underscore certain concepts.

Measuring the level of activism and participation in public life

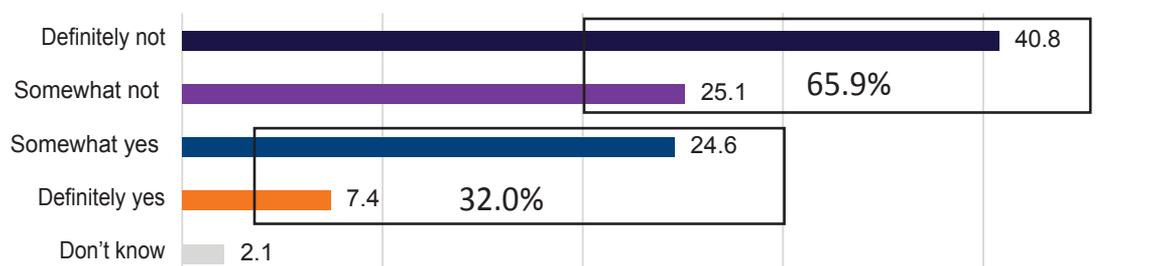
As many as 27.8% of respondents get informed about current political developments on a daily basis, 17.4% do so several times a week and 8.1% once a week. As for membership in political parties, almost one-fifth of the respondents (19.8%) are members of a political party, 11.7% used to be members of a party (but are no longer), while 65.0% of respondents have never been members of any political party.

The introductory question gave the respondents the opportunity to conduct a self-assessment, i.e. to determine the extent to which they perceive themselves as being politically active citizens.

Cumulatively, nearly one-third of respondents, or 32.0%, see themselves as being definitely or somewhat politically active citizens. On the other hand, over three-fifths of respondents do not consider themselves as being politically active – 40.8% definitely do not, while 25.1% gave the “somewhat not” response.

Additionally, a cumulative of almost two-fifths of respondents from the northern region (39.1%) describe themselves as being politically active, as compared against 34.9% of respondents from the south and 25.5% of respondents from the central region.

Unlike the region where respondents come from, no statistically relevant differences were observed in regards to their income-education-age profiles.



Graph 1: Would you describe yourself as a politically active citizen? (N: 1006)

We asked the interlocutors in focus groups about what activism means to them. The most common description cites being involved in decision-making and having an opportunity to influence certain changes.

“For me, activism is a chance for one to fight for a topic that is important to them, whether to place it on the agenda, or to do something a bit more concrete and make things better, or make them move in a desired direction.”
 (N5, Podgorica, 21, Secondary education, Unemployed)

“For me, the term activism means active participation in a sphere of life (...) generally a way to improve the quality of life, first of all our own life, to get ahead and thus actively participate in making some changes to decisions that concern, first of all, the society and the environment we live in, or changes to a particular law or give some sort of contribution to making a change (...).”
 (N3, Mojkovac, 33, BA, Unemployed)

The majority of interlocutors from all the three focus groups point out that activism means starting from small things in everyday life, through helping one’s local community, helping vulnerable groups, advocating for their interests, and the smallest things such as taking care of the environment every day.

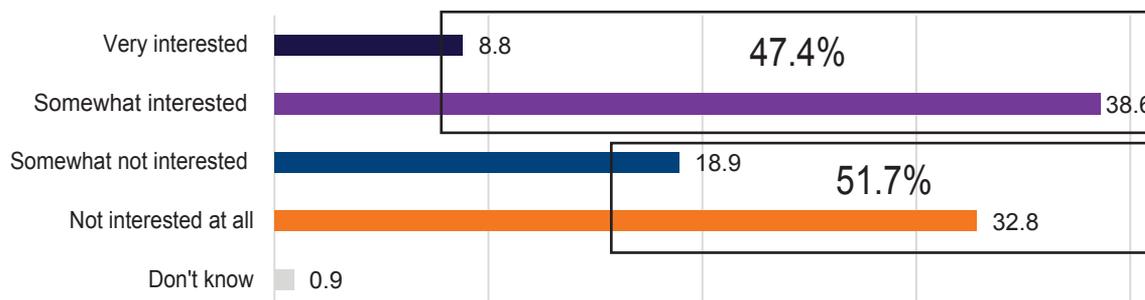
“(...) that is what activism means, getting engaged in something outside of one’s private sphere, every contribution we make, starting from the smallest things, something where people get engaged in helping a school or local community or working and cooperating with an NGO (...).”
 (N1, Bijelo Polje, 53, University degree, Employed)

We asked the respondents about how interested they are in politics, where a cumulative of 47.4% said that they were either very or somewhat interested in politics and political developments, while, slightly more than half of the respondents are not interested in politics and political developments - 51.7%.

Respondents with higher education attainment levels are more likely to show interest in politics - 56.4%, as compared to 52.5% of low-educated respondents, while respondents with secondary education show least interest (42.6%).

Every other respondent from the north claims being either completely or somewhat interested in politics, as do 47.7% of respondents from the south and 45.1% of respondents from the central region.

No statistically significant differences were observed as based on age and income of the respondents.

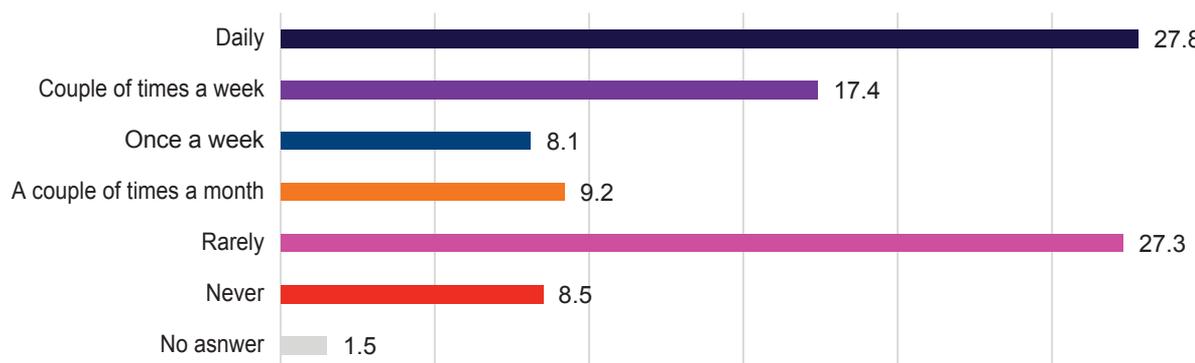


Graph 2: How much would you say that you are interested in politics? (N: 1006)

When it comes to getting informed about current political affairs, 27.8% of respondents are informed on a daily basis, 17.4% several times a week, while 8.1% get informed once a week. On the other hand, 27.3% of respondents rarely get informed, while 8.5% never do so.

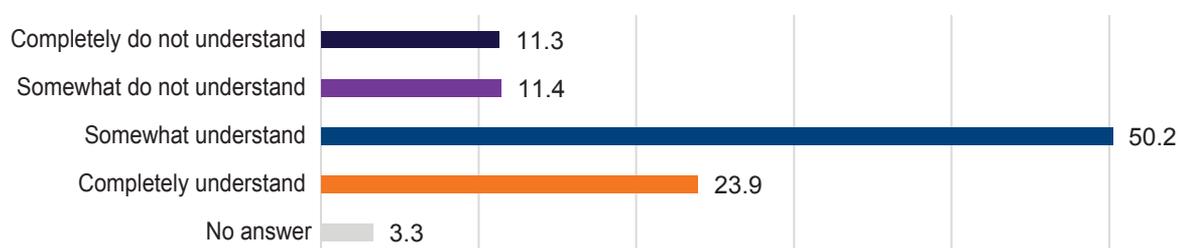
Statistically significant differences occur with regard to a number of socio-demographic characteristics.

Namely, 31.2% of respondents aged 36 to 55 get informed on a daily basis, while the same goes for 23.7% of those aged 20 to 35. We also notice a positive correlation between education and income level of the respondents – the more educated the respondents are and the higher their income, the more frequently they get informed about current political developments. When differences are taken into consideration region-wise, slightly over one-third of respondents from the central region get informed on a daily basis, as compared against 26.8% of those from the south and 20.3% of respondents from the northern region.



Graph 3: How often do you get informed about current political events? (N: 1006)

The respondents were also asked about the extent to which they understand current political developments. Namely, every other respondent claims to understand current political events to a certain extent, while 23.9% understand them fully. Respondents' education level generates a positive correlation – the more educated the respondents, the more likely they are to claim to have a grasp of current events. In addition, 31.9% of respondents from the central region, as well as 19.5% from the north and 14.8% from the southern region, fully understand the current events.



Graph 4: To what extent do you understand current political events in Montenegro? (N: 1006)

The next question measures political participation of the respondents. Namely, the respondents were presented with a series of activities and asked to state whether they had taken part in some of them in the past three years. As expected, the majority of respondents voted in elections (87.1%), while two-fifths signed at least one petition. An additional 30.2% shared their opinions and attitudes on social media, while one-quarter of respondents participated in protests and similar activities.

Respondents of different socio-demographic characteristics cite different levels of participation in these activities.

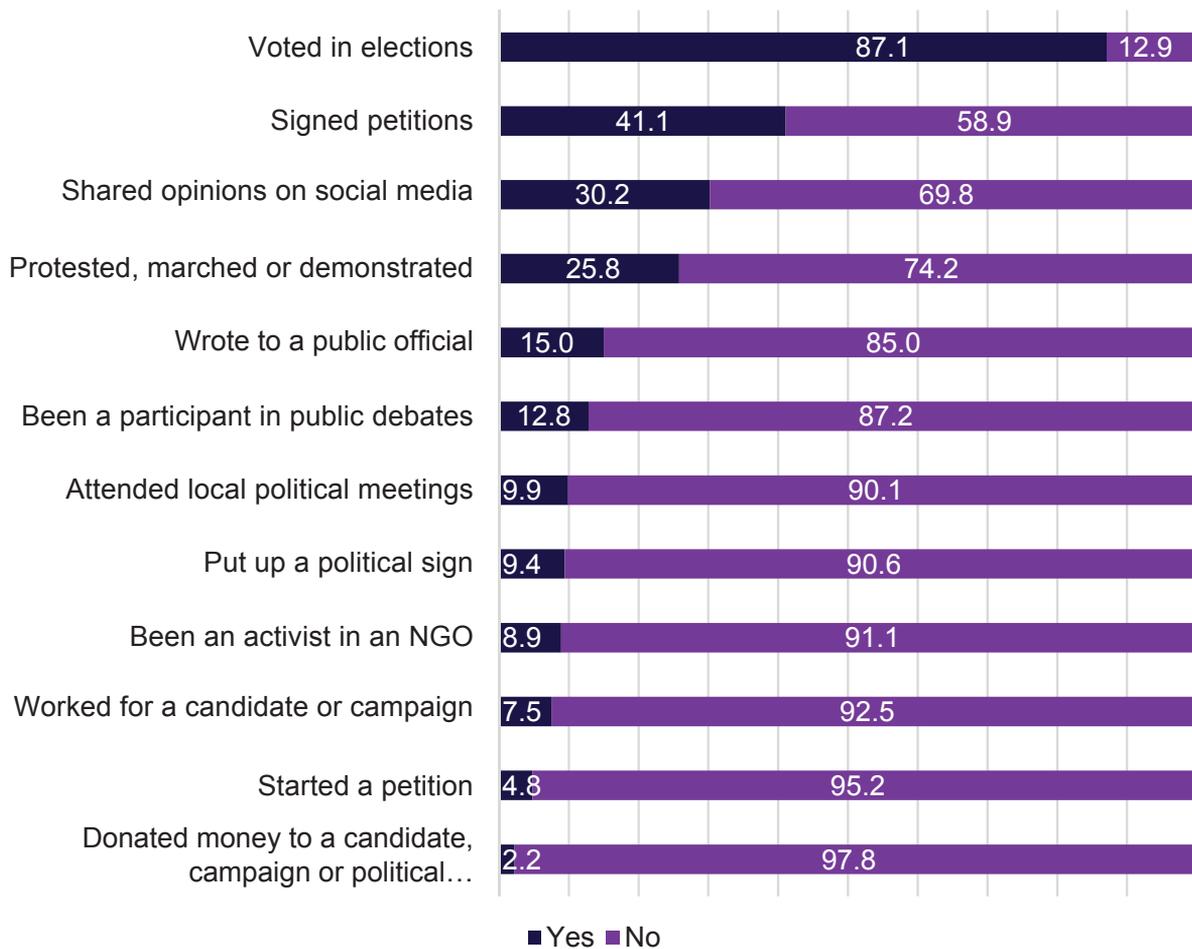
When it comes to voting in elections, we observe a positive correlation with regard to

respondents' education attainment level – the higher the education level, the more likely they are to confirm having voted in elections. In addition, going from the south to the north of the country, we notice yet another positive correlation, in that respondents from the south are least likely to cite having voted (82.4%), while respondents from the north most frequently cite going to the polls and casting their vote in the past three years (90.1%).

More than half of the highly educated respondents (55.0%) signed a petition, as did 35.9% of respondents with primary and 34.2% of respondents with secondary education. Additionally, almost half of high-income respondents (49.4%) signed a petition, as compared to 38.6% of low-income and 35.8% of middle-income respondents.

When it comes to sharing one's opinions on social media, we yet again notice a positive correlation education-wise, as it is most often the highly educated respondents that turn to this type of social activation and participation.

One-third of respondents from the north protested (33.1%), as did 27.1% of respondents from the central region and 15.6% of respondents from the south. A positive correlation is also present with regard to education of the respondents.



Graph 5: Thinking about the last three years, were you involved in the following activities: (answer “I don’t want to answer” is exempt)

- N as follows: 989, 987, 986, 985, 985, 979, 982, 980, 984, 982, 977, 988

In order to display other differences in a more efficient way, we have created a composite variable¹ made up of activities listed above, so as to measure the political

¹ Composite variables are usually an effective way of presenting complex ideas and concepts in the form of a new, single variable. Composite variables are created by combining two or more individual variables. Being derived from individual, one-dimensional variables, they can provide new and more comprehensive insights into respondents' data and opinions

participation index. The new variable was created by recoding the cited responses², whereby 0 means that they did not participate in any of these activities, while a score of 1 indicates participation in all of these activities, i.e. their level of political participation is displayed as ranging between 0 and 100%.

A total index score of 0.21 was recorded on a 0-1 scale. We notice a positive correlation region-wise with certain socio-demographic subcategories, i.e. the further up north we go, the higher the civic participation index of the respondents. Also, respondents with a college or university degree record a higher civic participation index (0.27) than respondents with secondary or primary education (0.18).

Political participation index		
TOTAL		0.21
Age	20-35	0.22
	36-55	0.20
Region	South	0.18
	Center	0.20
	North	0.24
Income	Low	0.20
	Middle	0.18
	High	0.23
Education level	Primary level	0.18
	Secondary level	0.18
	Tertiary level	0.27

Table 1: Political participation index crosstab with socio-demographic characteristics

As for membership in political parties, almost one-fifth of respondents (19.8%) claim that are members of a political party, 11.7% used to be, but no longer are, while 65.0% of respondents have never been members of a political party. If we compare the results with the research conducted by the De Facto for the needs of the NGO Civic Alliance during 2015 and 2017³, we see the continuation of a significant growth trend of self-registered membership in political parties. Such a high level of self-registered membership may indicate increased mobilization of Montenegrin citizens and the fact that respondents under “membership” may mean e.g. a high level of agreement with the policies of the party close to them before formal membership expressed through the possession of a membership card or participation in the work of the party organization.

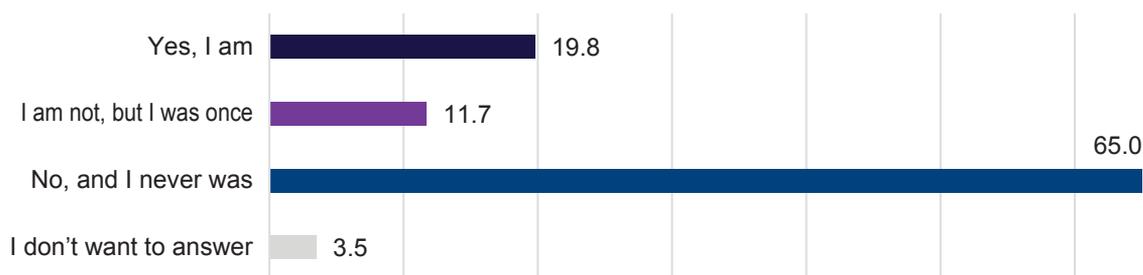
The statistically significant differences have come up age-wise, so slightly over one-fifth of respondents aged 36 to 55 confirm being members of a political party, while the same is said by 17.4% of those aged 20 to 35.

In addition, 21.5% of respondents from the north hold a party membership card, as do

² Excluding the “I don’t know / no answer” options

³ In the survey dedicated to civic participation in Montenegro, the number of respondents who registered their membership in a political party in 2015 was 11.7%, and in 2017 that number grew to 15.4%. It is worth noting that these results are representative of the entire (including male) population of Montenegro. This further indicates the importance of the given change since there is a (rebuttable) assumption that women are less likely to be members of political parties than men. More information about the 2017 survey is available via the link: <https://gamn.org/images/docs/cg/gradjanska-participacija-u-crnoj-gori-2017.pdf>

21.3% of respondents from the south and 17.9% from the central region. As many as 13.1% of respondents from the north, 12.1% from the central and 9.5% of respondents from the southern region used to have a membership card, but not any longer.



Graph 6: Are you a member of a political party? (N: 1006)

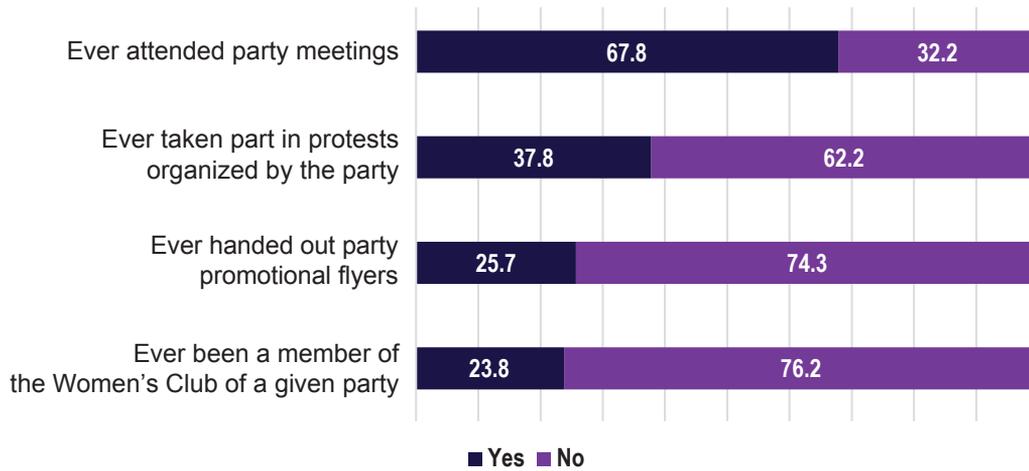
It is interesting to cross the data on membership in political parties and interest in politics. Namely, we would expect that the respondents who are members of political parties are very or at least somewhat interested in politics. However, by crossing these two variables, we learn that 82.4% of self-registered members of a political party from our research are very or somewhat interested in politics. The remaining 17.6% are not interested, so the question of motivation of every sixth member of political parties in Montenegro is raised if it is not interest in politics.

Given the above facts, it should come as no surprise that only two-thirds of respondents who claim to be members or used to be members of political parties, attended at least one party meeting, while almost two-fifths participated in protests organized by the given party. In addition, slightly more than one-quarter of respondents handed out party promotional flyers, while 23.8% were members of the women's club of their party.

In terms of attendance at party meetings, the only statistically relevant difference was observed with respondents' education level. A positive correlation has come to light, and the more educated the respondents, the more often they claim to have attended such meetings.

Political party promotional flyers and leaflets were distributed by 37.6% of the highly educated, one-third of the low-educated and 18.2% of respondents with secondary education. Age-wise, 37.8% of the respondents aged 20 to 35 distributed flyers and leaflets, as did 18.9% of the respondents aged 36 to 55. The same was said by slightly more than one-third of respondents from the north, 27.2% of respondents from the south and 18.0% of respondents from the central region.

As many as 35.0% of the highly educated respondents, one-third of the low-educated and 16.7% of respondents with secondary education have confirmed former / current membership in women's club of a given party. Additionally, a little over one-third of the respondents aged 20 to 35 either are or used to be members of a women's club of a given party (34.2%), and the same goes for 18.0% of the respondents between the age of 36 and 55.

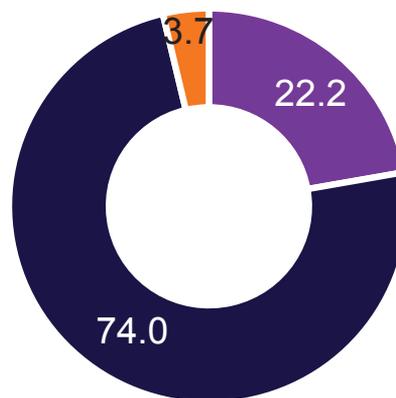


Graph 7: Have you ever: (only respondents who are currently, or once were a member of a political party) (N: 319)

We also asked the respondents about whether they had been contacted in any way by any political party or party candidate in the past 12 months. As many as 22.2% of them answered in the affirmative, unlike 74.0% of respondents who denied have been contacted. Additionally, 3.7% of respondents chose not to answer this question.

We observe statistically significant differences in terms of education level and region that respondents are coming from. Namely, 31.8% of highly educated respondents were contacted in the past 12 months, as were 18.0% of respondents with secondary education and 12.5% of those with primary education.

In addition, 27.7% of respondents from the north were contacted by a party / candidate, as compared to 24.0% of respondents from the south and 17.7% of those from the central region.

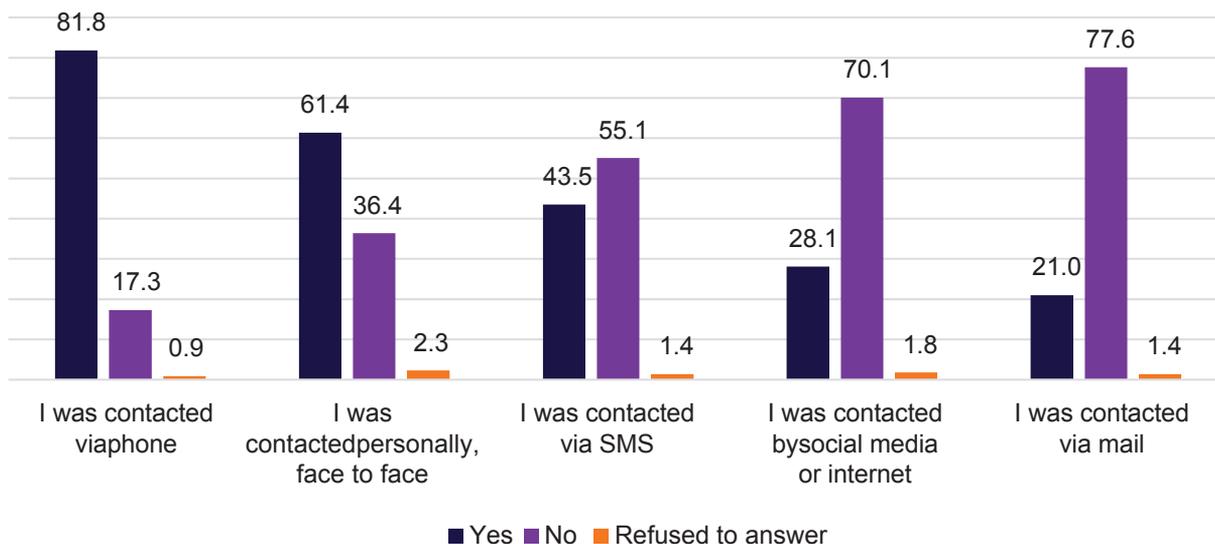


■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't want to answer

Graph 8: Have you been contacted in any way by a political party or a party candidate in the last 12 months? (N: 1006)

The respondents who had been contacted were asked to specify how. The major portion of respondents were contacted by phone (81.8%), slightly more than three-fifths were contacted in person (face-to-face), while 43.5% were contacted via an

SMS. Additionally, 28.1% of respondents were contacted through social media, while they were least contacted via e-mail (21.0%).



Graph 9: If yes, how did it happen? (N: 222)

During the focus groups, we also talked to our interlocutors about women in politics. We were interested in what they think about the extent of women’s involvement in politics, as well as about what they consider to be potential obstacles and problems. Some of the interlocutors were optimistic, saying that the situation has improved, with an increasing number of women becoming politically active, but adding that this is still not sufficient and that prejudices are still common in our society.

“(…) I can safely say that, compared to 15 years ago, I see a lot of improvement and women are much more active in politics and in their careers, those times have gone when women were just mothers and housewives and that was it, they became really active in everything having to do with politics and society as a whole (…) and I just wanted to give one example, it’s almost always the case that many prejudices come up whenever women appear, the very fact that you are a woman makes them immediately look at you differently, for example, our company had a job opening for a lawyer and a woman, lady lawyer appeared, and on the other hand there was a male lawyer candidate, and there was, as always, this prejudice, such as, what could a woman possibly do and contribute, a man will always do the job better, and for this reason they hire men for these jobs (…)”
 (N1, Bijelo Polje, 53, Secondary education, Employed)



Furthermore, the interlocutors point out that politics is still considered a male profession, and that women are often not supported in choosing this line of work, they are not respected and their point of view is disregarded.

“I think it’s these things we have been mentioning that are holding them back, so, tradition, patriarchal upbringing, like: what’s a woman to do in politics, and now we are talking specifically about politics, a colleague once told me: how could a woman possibly be active in politics when it’s men who watch the assembly, so she says ‘my father-in-law changes the channel whenever he sees a woman speaking in the assembly’.”
 (N6, Ulcinj, 47, Secondary education, Employed)



“I think that those who have the support are active, as someone said before me, those that have the support of their family, where house chores are split evenly, such a woman can be active, now whether it’s 90% or 100% active, it doesn’t matter, this digital activism is also important nowadays (...).”
(N4, Kotor, 35, Spec, Employed)

.....

Some of the interlocutors also mention electoral gender quotas, believing that these “do not help women too much”. Even those interlocutors who do realize the benefits of the quotas say that they are not effective, as women are forced to blindly follow party program and are unable to give their contribution and have a certain amount of independent action.

“I will go back to what I said at the beginning, unfortunately, the number itself is not high enough as it should be, I am not sure now and correct me if I am wrong, but there should be some 30% of women when making these candidate lists, both for councilor and MP lists, and I think this is where women are most abused, because we simply come up as a number or a piece of statistics which helps them formally meet the legal requirement (...).” (N3, Mojkovac, 33, Ba, Unemployed)

.....

“Ok, maybe first the issue of politics that we raised, Montenegro has, in my opinion, an okay system. The quota system. So, one in three are women, every third MP must be a woman. We had the first female presidential candidate two or three years ago. I don’t think this is helping women much because these women only comply with the political agenda.”
(N5, Podgorica, 27, Spec, Employed)

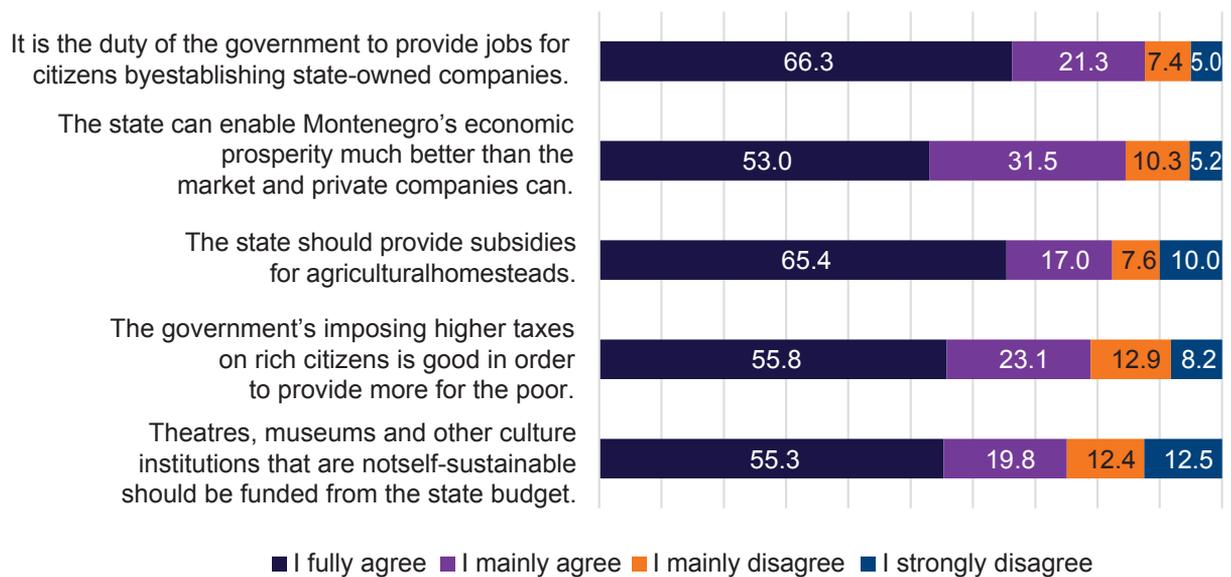
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In politics, there are frequent references to division between left and right, stemming from the underlying theory of the political model using the political compass so that political ideology may be better measured along two separate, independent axes. For the purposes of this survey, we used only the economic axis. The economic (left-right) axis measures one’s opinion on how the economy should be run: the simplest explanation is that “left” is to be defined as the desire to have the economy run by the state, i.e. a preference for state interventionism, while “right” is defined as the desire to let the economy be run by the free market, minimizing the level of state influence.

At the very end of the section that aims to gauge the level of social and political participation of the respondents, we presented them with five claims and positioned them on the economic axis as based on their responses, so as to conduct a more extensive analysis.

Thus, cumulatively 87.6% of respondents fully or partially agree with the claim that it is the duty of the government to create jobs for citizens by setting up state-owned companies, while 84.5% fully or partially agree with the claim that the state can better ensure economic prosperity of citizens than the free market and privately-owned companies.

In addition, cumulatively 82.4% of respondents believe that the state should provide subsidies for agricultural homesteads, while 78.9% believe that higher taxes should be imposed on the wealthy, so as to support the poor. Finally, 75.1% of respondents believe that theaters and museums should be funded from state budget.



Graph 10: To what extent would you agree with the following statements: (answers “I don’t know/no answer” are excluded) – N: 981, 980, 972, 975, 971

To better present the results, we created a composite variable that measures the left-right division index on the economic axis, where 0 denotes the economic left and 1 denotes the economic right, i.e. 0 represents the far left, which advocates the central role of the state in running the economy, while 1 is the extreme right, i.e. it represents those advocating the free market.

A total index score of 0.22 was recorded on a 0-1 scale.⁴

We observe a negative correlation with some of the socio-demographic subcategories. This time it comes up as based on age of the respondents i.e. the older the respondents, the more they tend to lean towards the strict economic left. Furthermore, we notice that the respondents from the south are more inclined towards the moderate left, as compared to respondents from the central region, leaning more towards the strict left.

⁴ This finding, i.e. the inclination of the population towards the left, further confirms the findings of the survey conducted by the De Facto Agency in August 2019 as commissioned by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (Youth perceptions and attitudes towards politics in Montenegro), where the data also pointed to citizens’ inclination towards the economic left, with the total score 0.30 for the youth population. More information available on the link: <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Youth-perceptions-and-attitudes-towards-politics-in-MNE-1.pdf>

The left-right division index		
	TOTAL	0.22
Age	20-35	0.24
	36-55	0.20
Region	South	0.28
	Center	0.17
	North	0.24
Income	Low	0.22
	Middle	0.23
	High	0.20
Education level	Primary level	0.31
	Secondary level	0.22
	Tertiary level	0.20

Table 2: The left-right division index crosstabbed with socio-demographic characteristics

Interestingly enough, the score for low-educated respondents is at 0.31, i.e. coming close to the moderate left, whereas, for example, the score for those with a high level of education is at 0.20.

Social environment and family

According to the data, the highest percentage of respondents (73.3%) agree with their partner's voting choice, be it the very same or a party of similar orientation, while 71.8% of respondents share their mother's voting choice. As many as 69.4% of respondents have the same or similar voting choices as their father, while 47.3% vote for the same political option as their best friend.

As for membership in a political party, 51.0% of respondents who used to talk to their parents about politics are either current or former members of a political party, which goes for 28.9% of respondents who did not discuss politics with their parents.

Additionally, 54.1% of respondents whose parents followed political news when they were young are either somewhat or very interested in politics, compared to 40.0% of those whose parents did not follow such news.

We talked to our focus group interlocutors about the numerous influences on formation of women's attitudes towards activism and participation in public life.

Among other things, we talked about their upbringing and family life, and how the social environment influences young girls as they grow up.

Some of the interlocutors make a point of women being brought up in a patriarchal society that teaches women about male primacy in many activities, which largely discourages women's activation and prevents them from becoming aware that their voice matters and that what they have to say counts. The interlocutors explain that this negative influence comes not only from the father, but also from the mother, which people often tend to forget, as it is actually mothers that raise their daughters to prioritize certain aspects of life over the others.

"I would just like to add, although I think (...) that basically, the most important thing for women is to have the support of their family as they grow up and then later in

life, and the biggest problem is in other women who totally bring you down, first of all, by their own example and then by giving advice such ‘yes, you are going to get married’... for example, I know a lot of girls who got married at the age of 17-18 whose parents, especially mothers, used to tell them ‘get married right away, you don’t need to study, why would you study at all’, they were simply never taught to be ambitious, first of all, not by their parents, and not by other women in their environment.” (N8, Cetinje, 24, BA, Employed)

.....

“It’s all down to upbringing, I can only say that, we have been brought up from childhood to be Montenegrin women, no you can’t do that, he is the man, unfortunately, my late mother used to say ‘the very fact that he is a man means that he worths more’. They didn’t raise us to believe that we can do the same things as men, I realized that late in life, but I’m still here and alive, so I can give my contribution by telling my daughter-in-law and my daughter that they do not have to do everything as they are told, because when you have your own opinion and there is something watching over you and telling you ‘let’s take a step forward now’, then this might be a small step for someone, but, then again, that’s how changes start.” (N2, Bar, 50, University degree, Employed)

.....

We talked about the social environment for women once they reach adulthood. According to interlocutors, women need the support of their families, spouses, parents and children in order to be active in public life, and they often lack such support.

“(...) I think that women are quite discouraged from getting involved in politics by not having the support from their own families. I think women need a lot of support from their family, their partner, and I believe that a lot of married women will hardly ever be supported by their partner to get actively engaged in politics, so a lot of work needs to be done in this respect as well.” (N3, Mojkovac, 33, BA, Unemployed)

.....

We wanted to explore to which extent the respondents’ political views are actually affected by people from their environment, specifically, their parents, partners, friends and employers.

Namely, in addition to the “yes”, “no”, “I don’t know” and “I don’t want to answer” options, the respondents were also offered the “not applicable” option which they can opt for in case they do not have such a person in their environment, fro example due to a death case. The “not applicable” and “I don’t want to answer” options have not been factored in the analysis presented In the graph below.

The data show that the largest portion of respondents (73.3%) share their partner’s voting choices, be it the very same political party or a party with similar platform, while 71.8% of respondents agree with the choices of their mothers. As many as 69.4% of respondents vote for the same or similar party as their father, while 47.3% of them vote as their best friend. Finally, 27.3% of respondents vote for the very same or party of similar orientation as their employer / superior. However, we should also take into account the fact that the highest percentage of respondents say that they do not know whether they are voting for the same party as their employer – this was said by 49.5% of respondents, i.e. almost every other respondent does not know who her superior votes for.

When it comes to respondents who vote for the very same or party of similar platform as their partner, the data show that this is more often the case with respondents aged 36 to 55 (76.8%), while 67.5% of respondents aged 20 to 35 make the same or similar

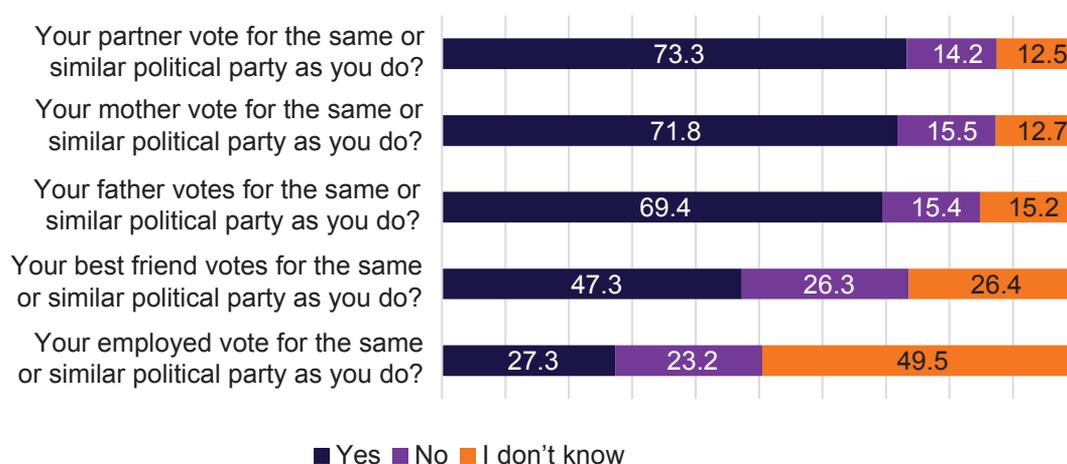
voting choices as their partner. Additionally, 76.0% of respondents from the south make the same voting choices as their partner, as do 75.0% of respondents from the north and 70.4% from the central region.

Almost four-fifths of respondents from the north (78.7%) make the same voting choices as their mothers, while the same is said by 70.4% of respondents from the south and 67.8% of respondents from the central region. In addition, respondents aged 20 to 35 are more likely to vote as their mother (77.5%) than 65.6% of those aged 36 to 55.

Respondents from the north are more likely to vote as their fathers (73.7%), and the same is for 69.1% of respondents from the south and 66.3% of respondents from the central region.

When it comes to voting for the same or similar party as their best friend, slightly more than half of the respondents from the north (53.2%) choose this answer option, as do 48.6% of respondents from the central region and 38.4% of respondents from the south.

Finally, when it comes to voting for the same or similar party as their employer, slightly more than every third respondent from the south, 30.9% of respondents from the north and 20.8% of respondents from the central region choose this answer option. On the other hand, 63.9% of respondents from the central region do not know whether they vote for the same party / candidate as their employer, while the same is said by 47.4% of respondents from the north and 27.5% of respondents from the southern region.



Graph 11: Does: (N as follows: 744, 781, 655, 929, 598)

Respondents were asked to reflect on the period when they were 14 years old and to rank the extent to which the claims below applied to them when they were at that age. Cumulatively, 30.2% of respondents said that they did, to some extent, talk to their parents / guardians about politics at that time they were 14 – 5.2% say that the statement describes them faithfully, 7.8% say it describes them to some extent, and 17.2% say that it describes them slightly. On the other hand, 66.3% of respondents say there were no family political discussions in their household.

With this question, we also find a number of statistically relevant and interesting differences. Namely, by cross-referencing this question with the questions from the beginning of the survey, i.e. the questions where the respondents were asked if they consider themselves politically active citizens, how interested they are in politics and whether they are a member of a political party.

Namely, 29.4% of respondents who talked to their parents about politics describe themselves as definitely being an active citizen, while 79.5% of respondents who talked to their parents about politics from an early age describe themselves as somewhat active. On the other hand, of the respondents who say they had no such family discussions, only 6.9% describe themselves as definitely active, and 20.6% as partially active citizens.

Furthermore, 27.5% of the respondents who talked to their parents about politics when they were at a young age (the “yes, very much” option) cite being very interested in politics, whereas only 6.8% of respondents who did not use to discuss politics with their parents say the same.

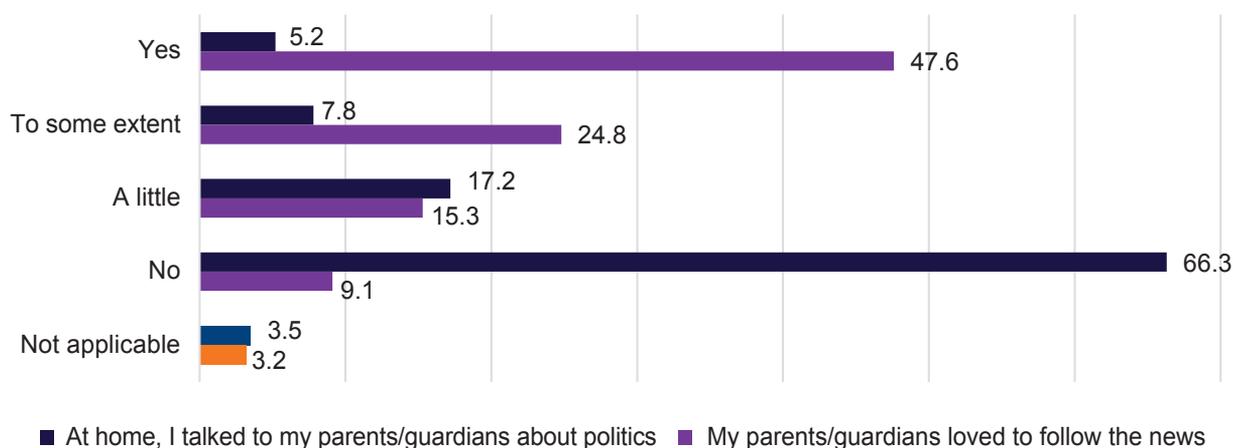
When it comes to political party membership, 51.0% of respondents who used to discuss politics with their parents are currently or used to be member of a political party, as compared to only 28.9% of respondents who did not use to talk to their parents about politics.

When it comes to the respondents’ parents following the news, 47.6% of respondents say this claim is very much applicable to their parents / guardians, i.e. that they like to follow the news. Additionally, 24.8% of respondents say the claim is partially true of their parents, and 15.3% say that it is slightly applicable to their family.

Again, statistically significant differences come up when this question is cross-referenced with the three previously mentioned questions. Namely, 37.4% of respondents whose parents liked to follow the news (the “yes, very much” response) describe themselves as an active citizen, compared to 26.6% of respondents whose parents did not like to follow the news.

Additionally, 54.1% of respondents whose parents followed the news are either somewhat or very interested in politics, compared to 40.0% of those whose parents did not follow the news.

Finally, 37.6% of respondents whose parents followed the news are either current or former members of a political party, compared to 32.2% of those whose parents did not like to follow the news.



Graph 12: When you think of your parents / guardians at the time you were 14, can you tell if these claims describe them faithfully? (N: 979, 982) - answer “I don’t want to answer” is excluded

The statistically significant differences also come to light once this question is cross-referenced with socio-demographic characteristics.

Namely, we notice a negative correlation age-wise – younger respondents (20-35 years) are more likely to confirm having talked to their parents about politics when they were 14, than those over the age of 35. In addition, respondents from the central region are more likely to say that their parents liked to follow the news (55.2%), than 43.0% of respondents from the south and 39.9% of respondents from the northern region.

We also asked the respondents if their parents / guardians were members of a political party. For 7.8% of respondents, it is the case with both parents, while 12.0% of respondents say that only one of their parents / guardians is a member of a political party. Additionally, 11.5% of respondents say that their parents used to be, but are no longer members of a political party. Thus, the data indicate that cumulatively 31.3% of

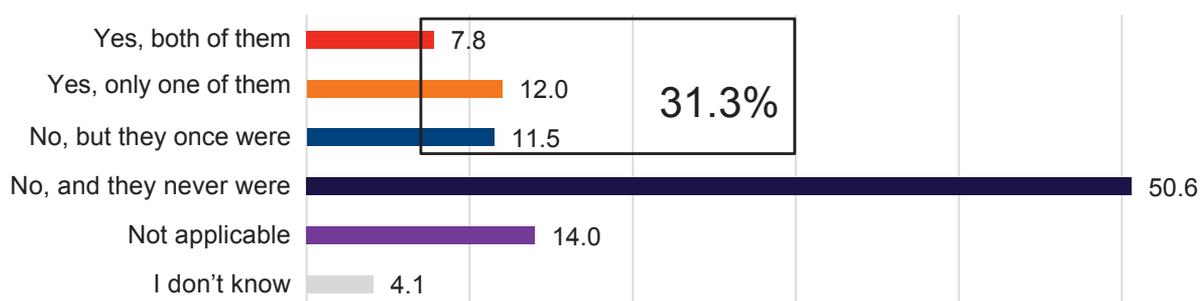
respondents have parents who either were or still are members of a political party.

As for the observed statistically relevant differences, we notice a negative correlation between the age of respondents and whether their parents / guardians are current or former members of a political party – younger respondents are more likely to say their parents are or used to be members of a political party, compared to those aged between 36 and 55.

The statistically significant differences show up once this question is cross-referenced with questions such as whether the respondents describe themselves as politically active citizens, whether they are interested in politics and whether they are members of a party. Namely, 38.9% of respondents, whose parents are (or were) members of a political party, perceive themselves as politically active citizens, while the same is said by only 5.1% of respondents whose parents were never members of any party.

As many as 43.2% of respondents whose parents / guardians are or used to be politically active cite being very much interested in politics, compared to 6.9% of those whose parents were never members of any party.

Finally, 59.0% of respondents whose both parents are / were members of a political party claim to also be party members themselves, compared to 9.2% of those whose parents never joined any political party.

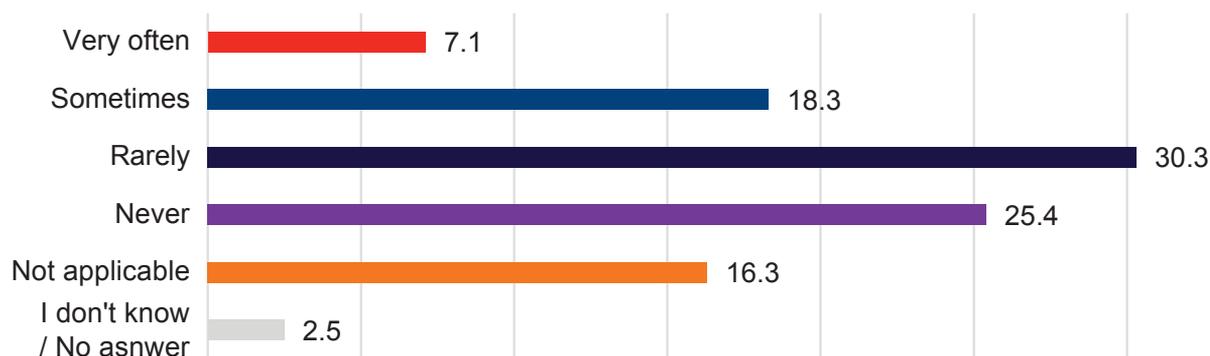


Graph 13: Are your parents/guardians members of a political party? (N: 1006)

We also asked the respondents about how often they talk to their parents about politics at this point. As many as 7.1% do so very often, 18.3% sometimes, while 30.3% of respondents rarely do so. Additionally, one-quarter of respondents never discuss politics with their parents.

The data also indicate that 42.3% of respondents who often talk to their parents about politics are currently members of a political party, while the same goes for 27.2% of respondents who sometimes discuss politics with their parents, 17.7% of those who rarely do so and 11.3% of those who never do so.

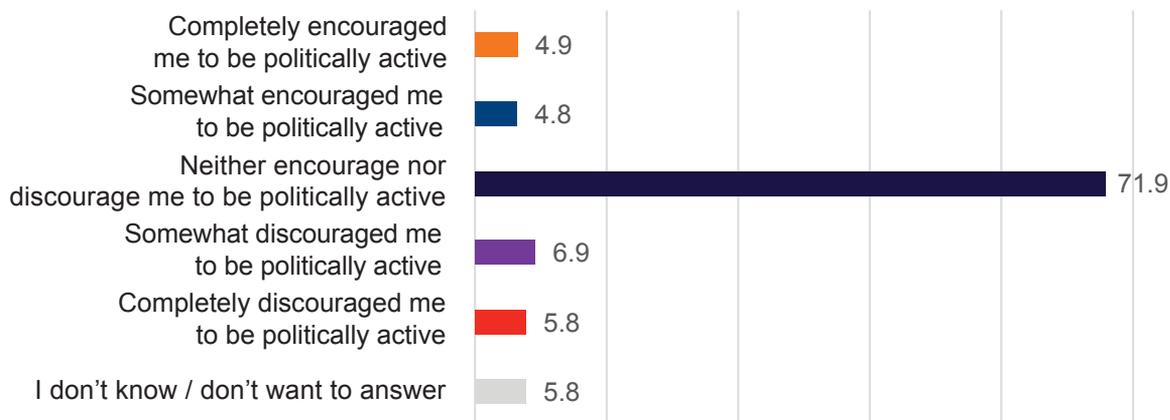
We also observe a positive correlation as based on education profile of the respondents. Namely, the more educated the respondents, the more likely they are to discuss political issues with their parents.



Graph 14: How often do you talk with your parents / guardians about politics? (N: 1006)

We also directly asked the respondents whether their parents encouraged them to be politically active. As many as 71.9% of respondents stated having been neither encouraged nor discouraged from being politically active. Cumulatively 9.7% of respondents were encouraged either to some extent or completely, while cumulatively 12.7% of respondents cite having been discouraged to some extent or else completely.

A cumulative of 20.3% of respondents from the north say that their parents had either completely or to a certain extent discouraged them from being politically active, while the same is said by 11.5% of respondents from the south, as well as by 8.3% of respondents from the central region.



Graph 15: My parents/guardians have: (N: 1006)

Perception of the opportunities to engage in public life

As many as 67.4% of respondents say there is nothing that could motivate them to get involved in the political life of Montenegro.

Two-fifths of respondents say that an increased percentage of women in decision-making positions would motivate them to engage in political activities, while 54.1% of respondents agree with the claim that a clear division of gender roles in Montenegrin society is what discourages women from participating in political activities.

As many as 42.8% of respondents believe that women are equally engaged in the NGO sector and in politics, while an almost equal percentage (42.4%) believe that women are more often engaged in the NGO sector than in politics.

We start off this topic with our interlocutors by asking them how much they believe the citizens of Montenegro in general, and especially women, to be active and involved in public life. The interlocutors mostly agree that citizens in general are not active, and women in particular. They cite numerous reasons, ranging from lack of time, being demotivated by the mentality, to lack of support and fear of public exposure.

“As far as women are concerned, unfortunately, I don’t think that women’s activism is so present in Montenegro, unfortunately, because of the environment and the history of Montenegro, the way politics is conducted. Unfortunately, this is somehow considered a male job in Montenegro, while women are quite marginalized, which in my opinion is really tragic.”

(N3, Mojkovac, 33, BA, Unemployed)

.....

“No, they are not, but I hope they will be soon. I mean, some women may not have the time. Just Imagine, having to work until 4 and you don’t have time to join a protest or start petitions, I don’t know, I think some women really don’t have the time.”
(N1, Bar, 37, Secondary education, Employed)

.....

“I was brought up that way, in that spirit, and I think most of the things you can see come from the way people were brought up. Our spirit, our climate, not only in Montenegro but in the whole of Balkans, where such spirit rules, where we were raised to believe a woman is assigned one role, the role of a mother and simply should not go beyond this role (...).” (N3, Bar, 29, BA, Unemployed)

.....

Some of the interlocutors, however, notice certain changes in society, saying that an increasing number of young people, including young women, are becoming more active. The interlocutors note that women often work from “behind the scenes”, as they say, they are not so much exposed in public, but they contribute to certain changes, especially through the NGO sector.

“I think that, lately, young people have started to become active, especially women, and I think that young girls have finally realized that their voice matters, that it can affect some changes, so I’m really happy with the current activism. I think it could be better, but I see that it has started to get better and that young people have started to become active and I like that. So, I have a positive attitude.”
(N1, Nikšić, 20, Secondary education, Unemployed)

.....

“I think that the situation is much better than it used to be and it all depends on the subject matter. It doesn’t always have to be, say, politics, where women need to be 100% active. In a way, women were always active but from behind the scenes maybe. They don’t have to be directly involved in any discussions, protests or additional organizations. A lot of them worked this way, they were not seen, but I’m sure they are very much involved, especially today, there is nothing stopping them.”
(N2, Podgorica, 32, BA, Employed)

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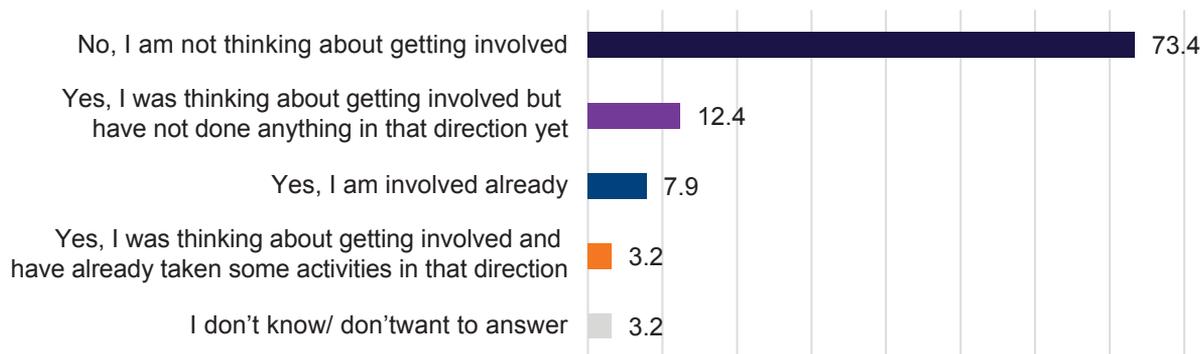
We started probing the respondents’ perceptions of the opportunities for engaging in public life by asking whether they themselves are thinking about getting engaged in the political life of Montenegro. As many as 73.4% of respondents are not considering such engagement, while 12.4% of respondents are considering it but are not taking any action, while only 3.2% have already taken certain actions towards getting engaged.

Only 7.9% of respondents are already politically engaged. However, it should be recalled that, at the very beginning of the survey, 19.8% of respondents said they were members of a political party, so we can observe the resulting mismatch in the two percentages. We might explain this discrepancy by the fact that not all-party members are actively engaged, as some simply own a membership card, which is precisely the information we got by crosstabbing the data about their interest in politics and self-reported level of party membership.

The statistically significant differences also emerge in relation to a number of socio-demographic characteristics.

If we observe the respondents who are not considering getting involved in the political life, we notice that this option is more often chosen by respondents from the central region (78.3%), as compared to 71.1% of respondents from the south and 68.0% from the northern region. This answer sparks a negative correlation education-wise – the more educated the respondents, the less they choose the no-engagement option, or simply put, the greater is their interest in getting involved in political life.

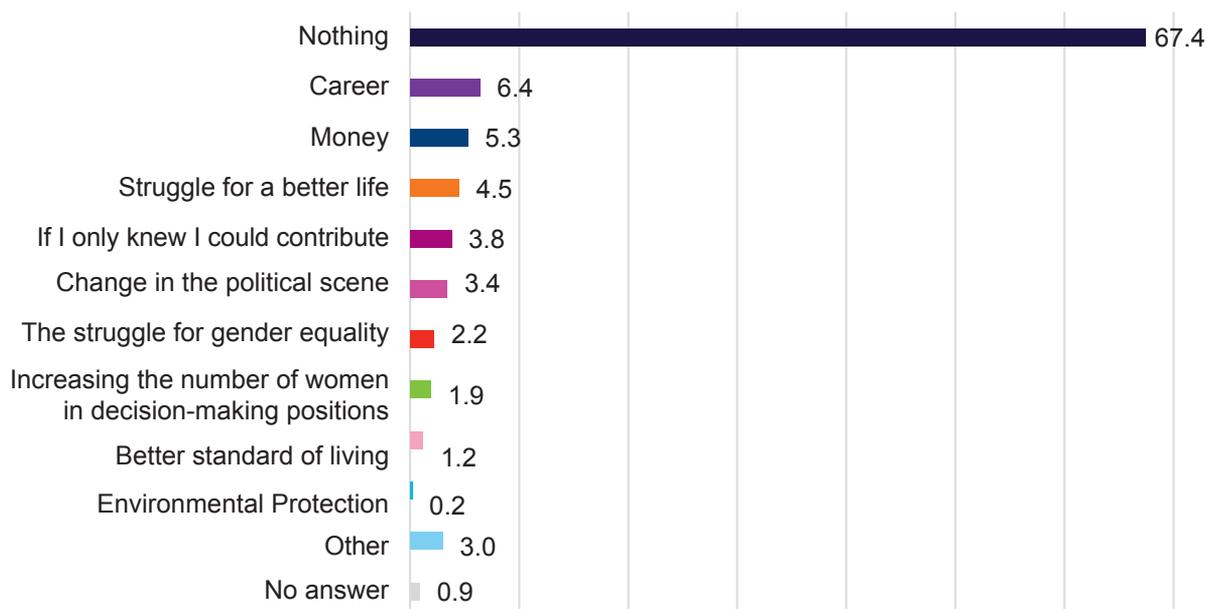
As many as 14.8% of respondents from the south, 14.1% of respondents from the north and 9.8% from the central region are considering getting engaged (but have not taken any steps in that direction). The same answer was cited by 15.4% of respondents with lower education level, 13.9% with higher education, as well as by 11.5% respondents with secondary education.



Graph 16: Were you thinking about getting involved in political life in Montenegro? (N: 1006)

In addition, regardless of whether the respondents are already active or not, we wanted to explore what motivates them to get involved in political life through an open-ended question. The most frequently cited answers were recoded into the categories presented in the graph below. It took a minimum of three repetitions for a particular answer to be qualified as a separate category.

Namely, 67.4% of respondents point out that there is nothing that could motivate them to get involved in the political life of Montenegro. On the other hand, 6.4% of respondents find motivation in a career, 5.3% in money, while 4.5% cite the struggle for a better life as their main driver.

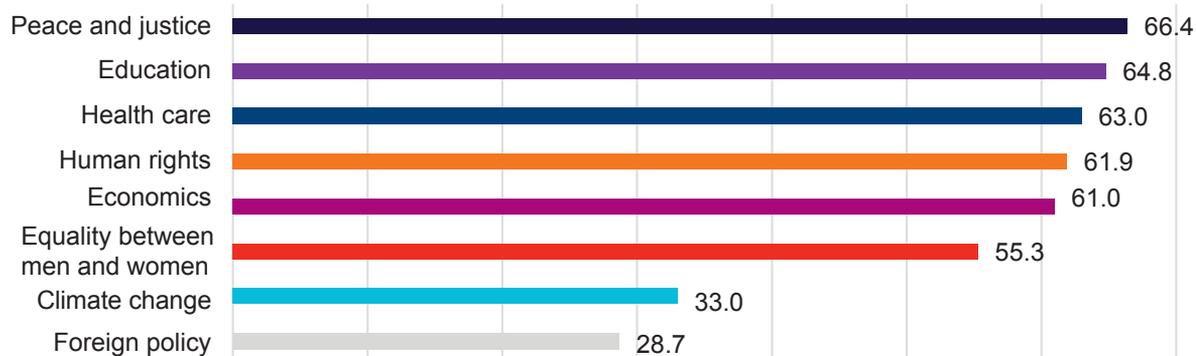


Graph 17: What would motivate you to get involved in the political life of Montenegro? (N: 1006)

We also asked the respondents to specify the areas they would want to dedicate their work to should they become politically active. Approximately equal percentages of respondents single out justice and peacebuilding (66.4%), education (64.8%), health care (63.0%), human rights (61.9%) and the economy (61.0%). Slightly more than half of the respondents would work in the area of gender equality, while only 28.7% of respondents would opt for foreign policy issues.

Among statistically significant differences, we notice that 75.6% of respondents from the north would be active in the area of peacebuilding and justice, as would 65.9% of respondents from the south and 30.3% from the central region. In addition, we notice a positive correlation with the education level and age of the respondents – the more educated or older the respondents, the more often they cite issues of peacebuilding and justice as a possible priority of their actions.

Slightly over three-fifths of highly educated respondents (62.7%) would become engaged in education, as would 41.0% of those with secondary education and 32.5% of those with lower education level. In addition, three-fifths of respondents from the north, two-fifths from the center, and 37.3% from the southern region would become engaged in health care.

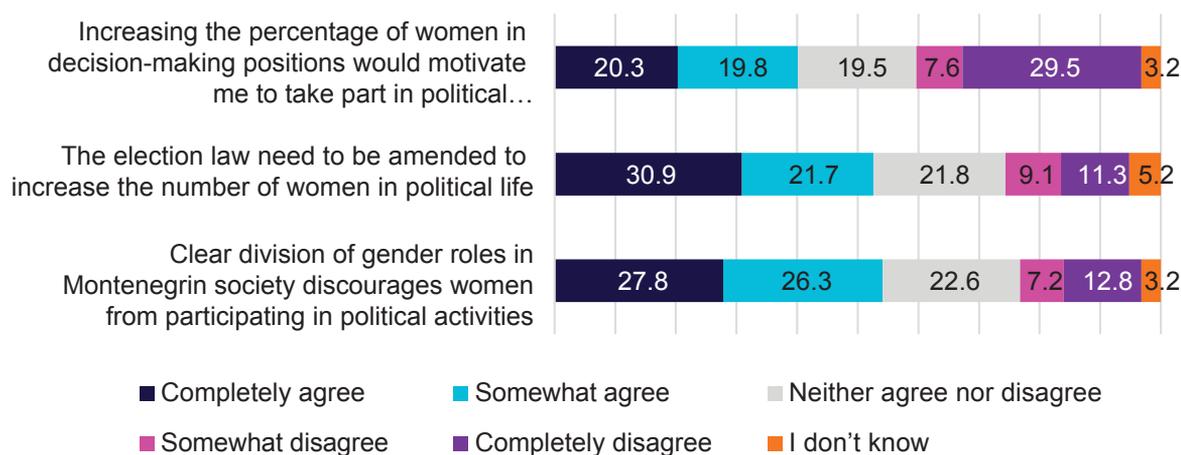


Graph 18: In case you become politically active, which area would you want to dedicate your work to? (showing only the percentage of respondents that would deal with these topics)

Two-fifths of respondents point out that a higher percentage of women in decision-making positions would motivate them to engage in political activities, while 54.1% of respondents agree with the claim that a clear division of gender roles in Montenegrin society is what discourages women from participating in political activities.

In addition, more than half of the respondents agree with the claim that electoral legislation amendments are needed in order to increase the number of women in political life.

We detect a positive correlation between the education level of respondents and their agreement with the need to amend the election law, and so, the more educated women are, the more likely they are to share this view. In addition, respondents from the central region are more likely to believe that such amendments are necessary – 57.7% of them say so, compared to 52.0% of respondents from the north and 45.3% of respondents from the southern region.



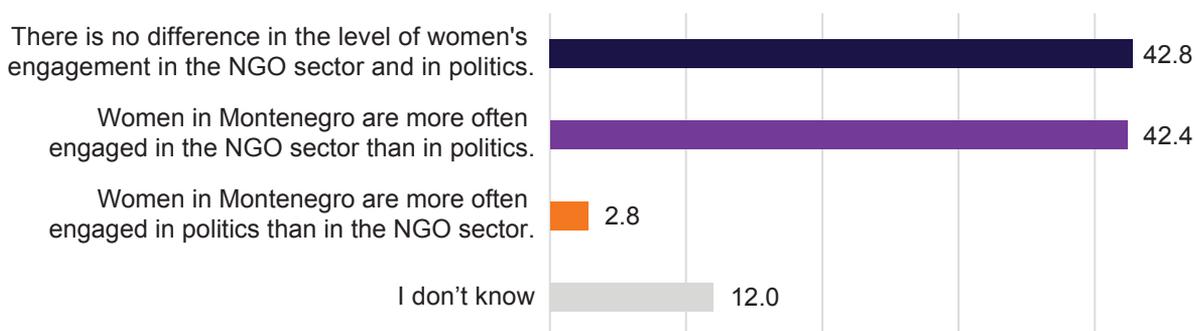
Graph 19: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely disagree and 5 completely agree, please express how much you agree with the following statements: (N: 1006)

Focus group interlocutors find that young women need to be given more considerable room for action within political parties, to be in the spotlight more, to feel their voice is being heard and that they themselves are part of the process. They also believe that this would potentially motivate other young women to become active, as they would be able to follow in the footsteps of successful women on the public scene.

“I believe that if a woman would be able to see so many women in those parties, especially young women, whose voice may not be heard, if they were to get more media space, become more active, as they probably have some ideas of their own, and when she would see all of this, she herself might become more and more active, she might think to herself, ‘maybe I could get involved, maybe I could become active,’ but they would need a concrete, real-life example, since when it comes to political parties, it’s mostly men that are given preference. Maybe women are active, but not to a great extent, and maybe they deserve more space, if more women are seen as getting involved, maybe more women would become motivated to get involved as well.” (N5, Bijelo Polje, 25, MA, Unemployed)

We presented the respondents with three claims pertaining to women’s involvement in Montenegro’s political sphere and in the non-governmental sector, and asked them to rate which one they agree with the most. Respondents hold opposing views, namely, 42.8% of respondents believe that there is no difference in the level of women’s engagement in the NGO sector and in politics, while an almost equal percentage (42.4%) believe that women are more often engaged in the NGO sector than in politics. Only 2.8% of respondents believe that there are more women in politics compared to the NGO sector.

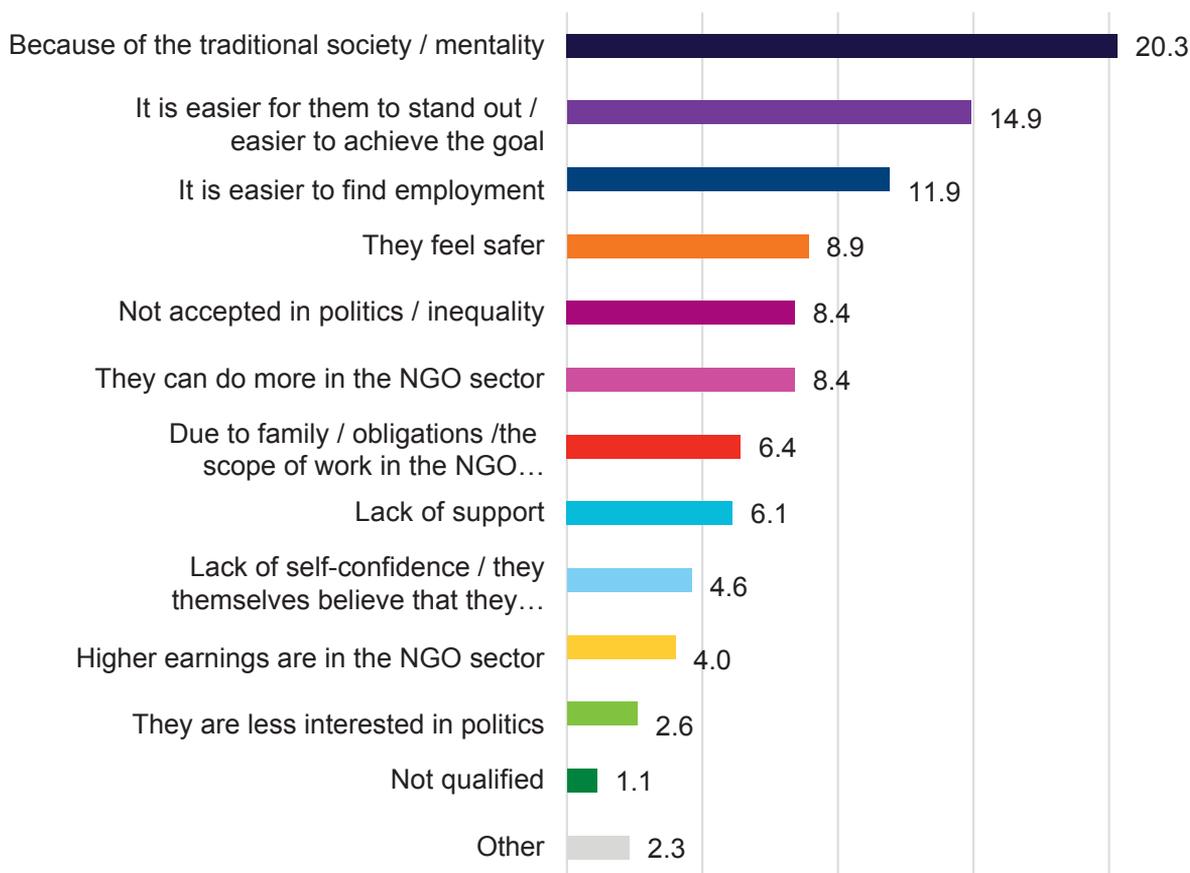
Slightly over half of the respondents from the southern region, 46.7% from the north and 35.7% from the central region, believe that there is no difference in the level of engagement. As many as 52.0% of respondents from the central region, one-third of respondents from the north and 36.1% of respondents from the south of Montenegro believe that women are more often engaged in the non-governmental sector. We also notice a positive correlation with regard to education and income level of the respondents – the more educated women are and the higher their income, the more likely they are to believe that women are more engaged in the non-governmental sector.



Graph 20: Please state with which of the following statements you agree the most: (N: 1006)

Respondents who believe that women are more engaged in the non-governmental sector were presented with an open-ended question – a question with no pre-specified answer options, thus allowing them to use their own words in further explaining their view. The responses provided were then recoded into the most frequently cited answers and it took a minimum of three repetitions for a particular answer to be qualified as a separate category.

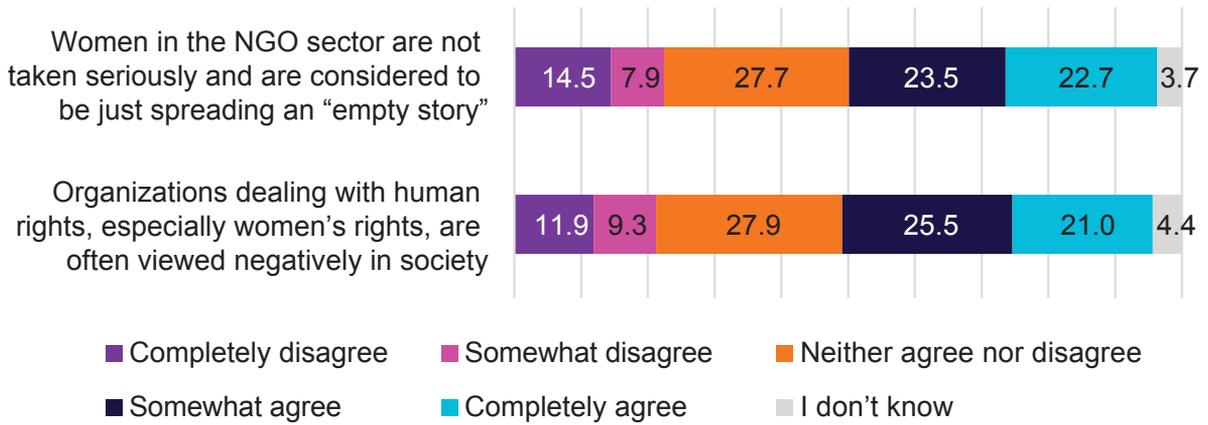
One-fifth of respondents believe that the reason lies in the traditional society, marked by a mentality where women are taught they have no place in politics, as politics is a “male job”, which is why they often end up choosing the NGO sector. As many as 14.9% of respondents think that women find it easier to come into prominence and achieve their goals, while 11.9% believe it is easier for women to find a job in the NGO sector. In addition, 8.9% of respondents point out safety as a factor, believing that the NGO sector gives women a greater sense of safety, with less public exposure.



Graph 21: In your opinion, why is the situation like this? Can you explain, please? (N: 346) - respondents who believe that women are more often engaged in the NGO sector, answer “I don’t know” is exempt

We also presented two additional NGO-related claims to the respondents, and asked them to say whether they agree with them, and to which extent. A cumulative 46.2% of respondents think that women working in the NGO sector are not taken seriously and are considered to be “all talk and no action”.

As many as 46.5% of respondents cumulatively agree with the claim that NGOs championing human rights, especially women’s rights, are often negatively perceived by the society.



Graph 22: On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely disagree and 5 completely agree, please express how much you agree with the following statements: (N: 1006)

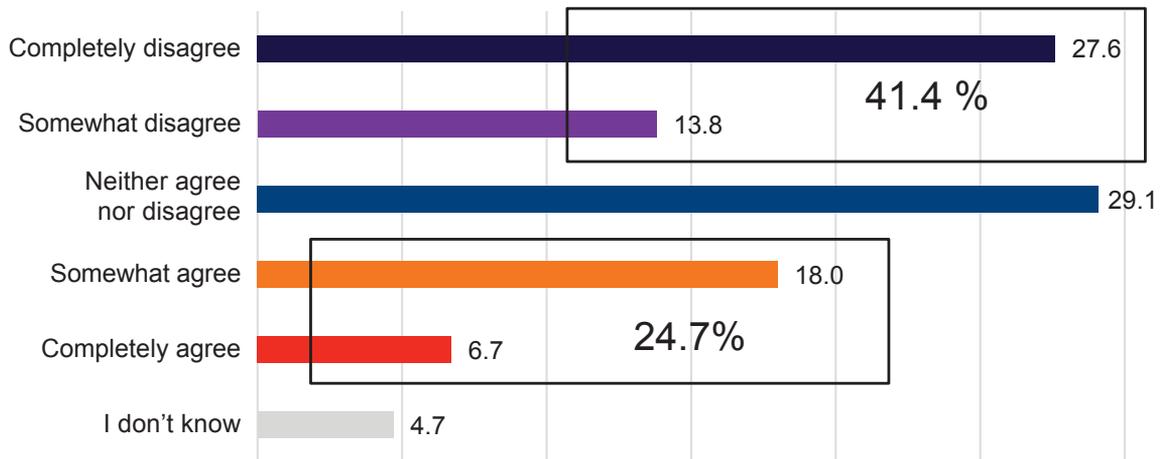
We also asked focus group interlocutors to comment on whether women are more active in the NGO sector, and if so, to state the reason. Namely, the interlocutors point out that the NGO sector enables women to act “from behind the scenes”, i.e. to be less exposed and have more space to advocate the cause they believe in. In addition, interlocutors explain that working in the NGO sector gives women a sense of satisfaction, because they believe they are actually contributing to making a change, while some of the interlocutors find that women feel safer working in the NGO sector.

“I can’t remember which of you said they are working from behind the scenes, I forgot, but I believe this to be the case and that the NGO sector is protecting them in a way. I think they don’t expose themselves publicly, but they are trying to take action.” (N6, Danilovgrad, 45, Secondary education, Unemployed)

“Because they are working from behind the scenes, you know, they are not in the focus of attention, the center of events. They do the work, but they are not there, they do not have TV appearances, you know, and it does matter, indeed, precisely because, as one of the participants said, there are a couple of women in the assembly who get up and say their piece, the others are just sitting. It’s as if you were talking to just one or two of us and the other ones are just sitting there.” (N2, Bar, 50, Secondary education, Employed)

“Well, I think that the NGO sector is more appealing to women because it’s always smaller groups of people and not so much media coverage, so they, sort of, have more freedom (...) the NGO sector is not perceived as a political party, so when you say someone works in an NGO, it counts as a job, sure, but it’s not the same as doing politics, you don’t go out in public, you don’t have to be careful with every word you say, you can still make a mistake and still not get exposed and, God forbid, be subjected to ridicule or anything like that, unlike with politics, where they hold on to every single word you say and can use it against you, so I think that’s why women more often opt for the NGO sector rather than engaging in politics and political parties, and that’s about it, I think that’s the main reason.” (N3, Mojkovac, 33, BA, Unemployed)

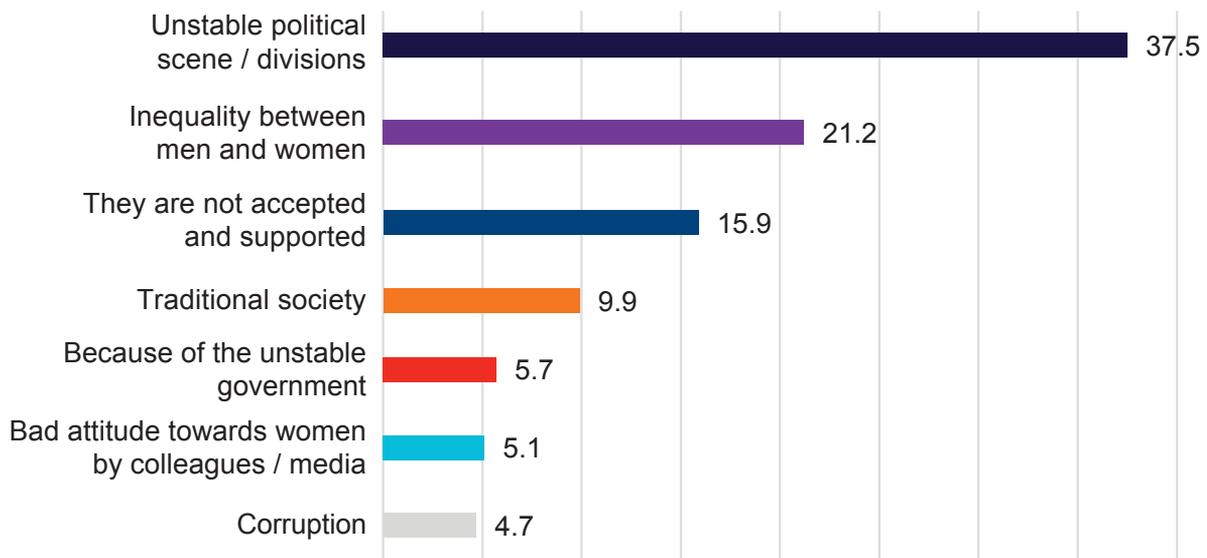
We also presented the respondents with a claim about political climate in Montenegro being encouraging for women’s political engagement, and asked them to rate their level of agreement with the given claim. Up to two-fifths of respondents (41.4%) cumulatively think that the political atmosphere is not encouraging, while almost one-quarter of respondents (24.7%) believe the opposite, stating that the political climate is an encouraging one.



Graph 23: Please state to which extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Political climate in the country encourages women to take part in political activities.” (N: 1006)

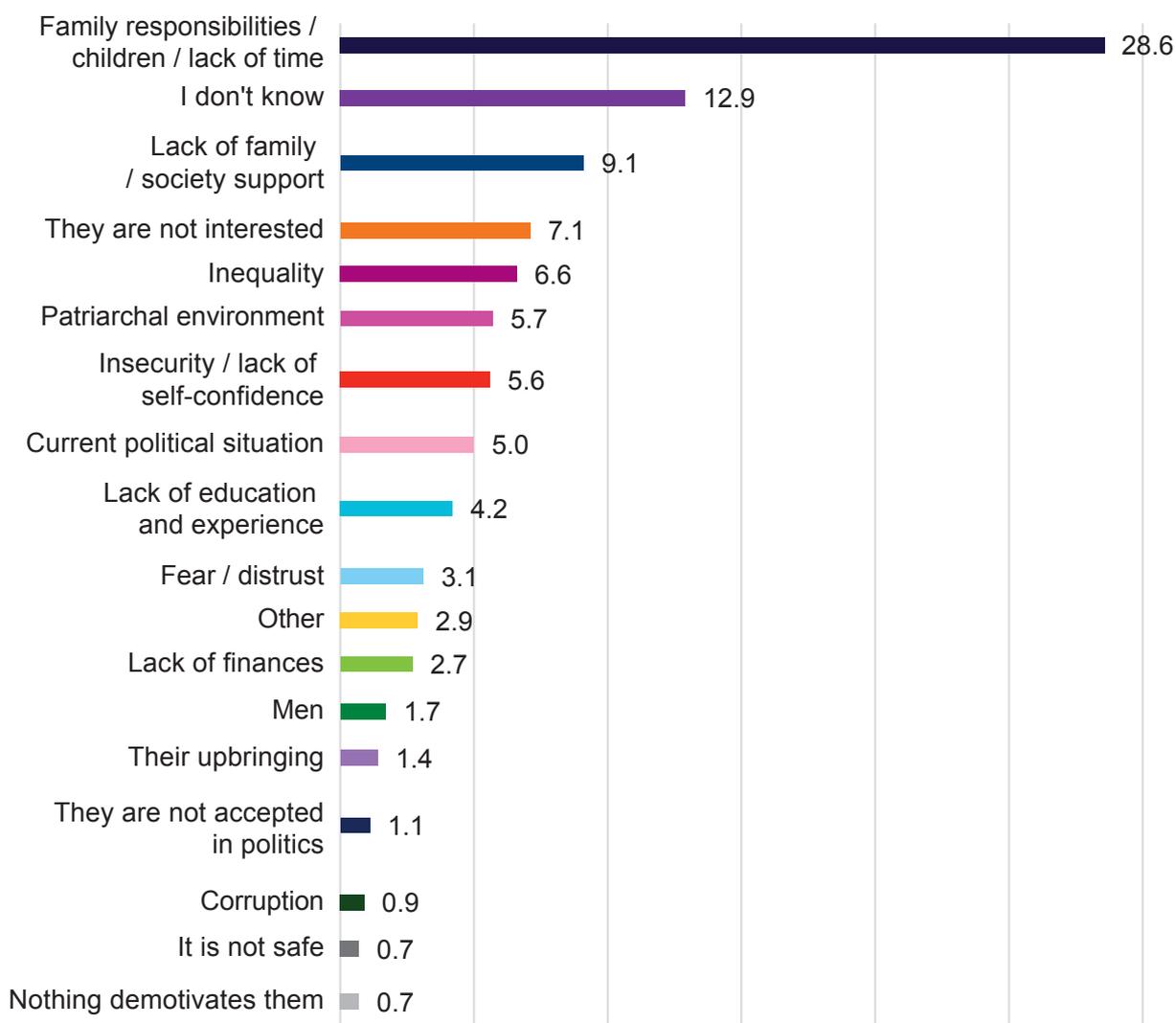
The respondents who either completely or partially disagree with the said claim, and believe that the political climate in the country is not encouraging for women, were asked to explain why they believe this to be the case through an open-ended question.

Almost two-fifths – 37.5% of them, believe that the reason lies in the unstable political scene and divisions in the society, while some explain that the situation is not encouraging for men either, let alone women. Slightly over one-fifth of the respondents believe that the reason lies in gender inequality, i.e. that women are in an unenviable position. In addition, 15.9% of respondents believe that women are not accepted and supported by their family, colleagues and society in general, and that the political scene, being as it is, rejects and marginalizes them.



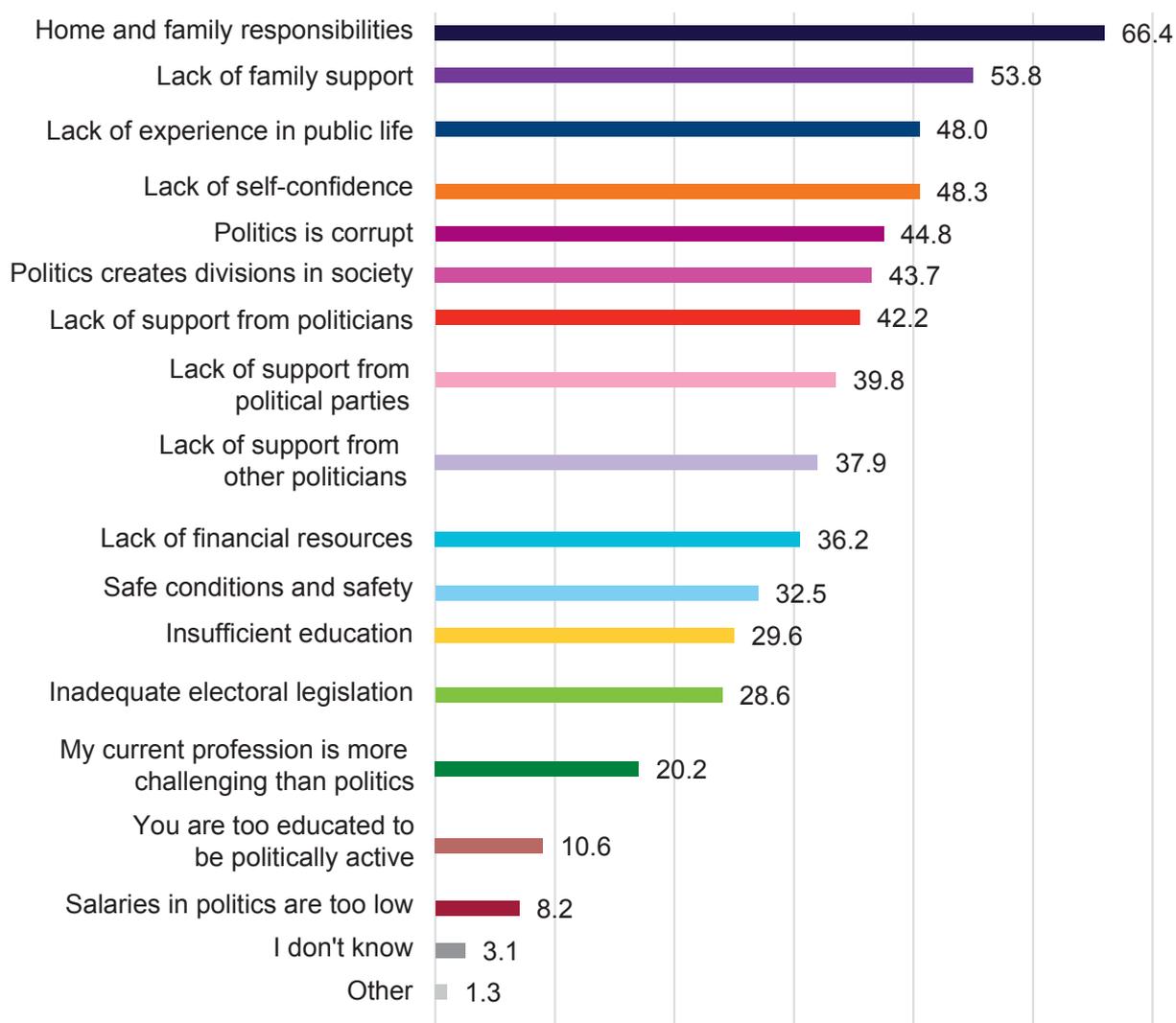
Graph 24: Can you explain, please? (N: 311) - - only respondents who assessed that they did not agree at all or to some extent with the statement that the political climate in the country is encouraging for women, the answer “I don't know” was excluded

We then asked the respondents (through an open-ended question) about the main challenge / factor that demotivates women in Montenegro from engaging in politics. Parenting and domestic responsibilities and an overall lack of time were cited as factors by 28.6% of respondents. Lack of support from family, society or political party was pinpointed as the main factor by 9.1% of respondents, while 7.1% of respondents cite lack of interest.



Graph 25: In your opinion, what is the main challenge / factor that demotivates women to take part in political activities? (N: 1006)

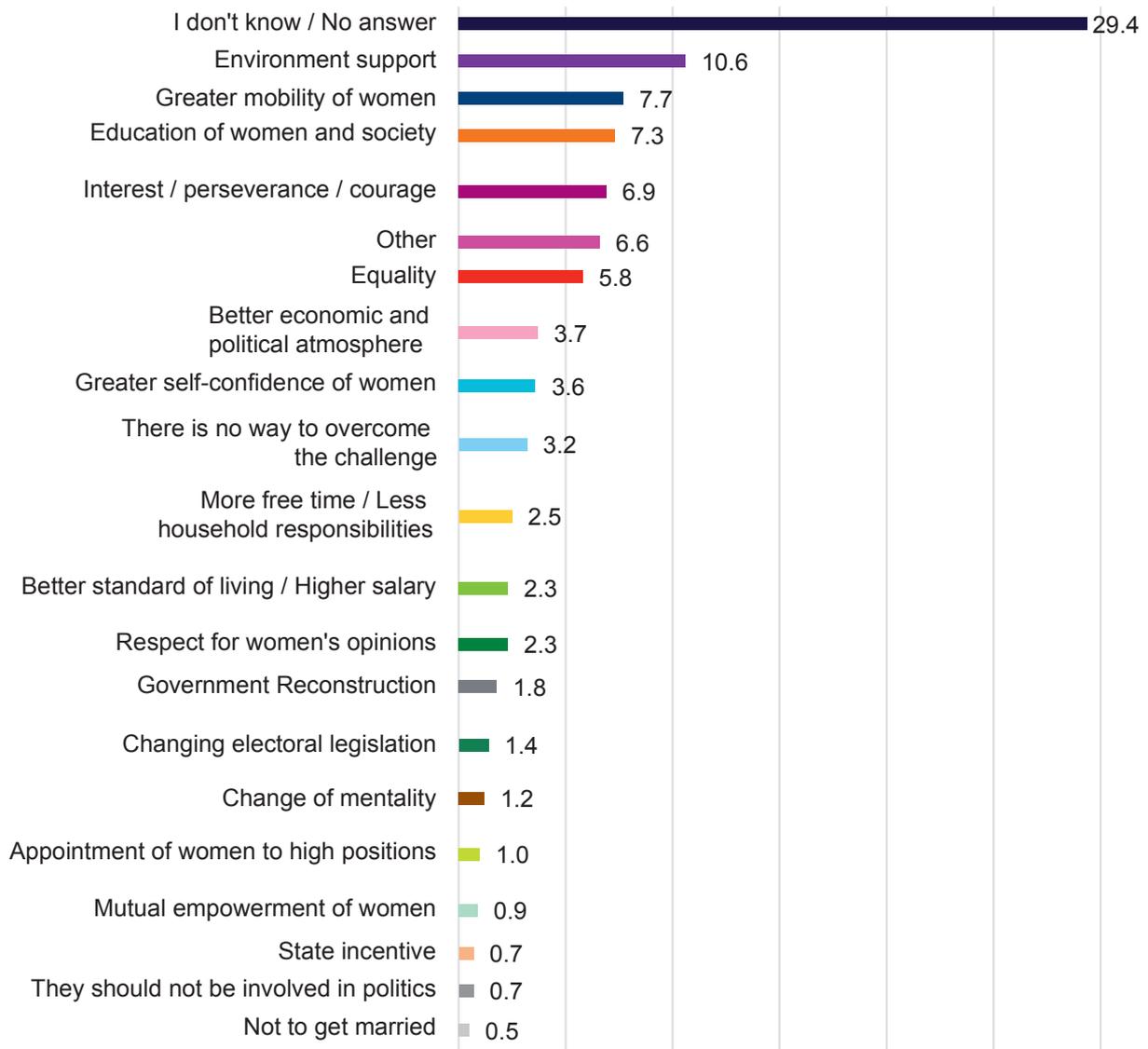
Following the open-ended question, we posed the same question but in a closed-ended format, by presenting the respondents with a series of claims and asking them to choose all the factors that they consider as being demotivational for women's engagement in politics. First of all, we notice that the percentage of the "I don't know" answer options has seen a major drop compared to the previous question.



Graph 26: Please, from the list below choose all challenges/ factors that demotivate women to take part in political activities in Montenegro? (N: 1006)

Additionally, 66.4% of respondents choose domestic and family responsibilities as one of the factors, while 53.8% chose the lack of family support.

Yet another open-ended question was meant to stimulate the respondents' suggestions for possible solutions to the challenges mentioned. As many as 29.4% gave the "I don't know" response, or did not answer the question. Additionally, 10.6% of respondents mentioned the support of the social environment as a solution.



Graph 27: In your opinion, what is the best solution to overcome this challenge / factor? (N: 1006)

Focus group interlocutors mention the importance of development of an infrastructure to support women, as this would increase their involvement and political engagement. They explain that the pandemic laid bare the lack of elementary infrastructural support, i.e. the lack of extended day care centers and kindergartens, forcing one of the parents, usually a woman, to stay at home. They also mentioned workplace daycare as arrangements that would significantly benefit women.

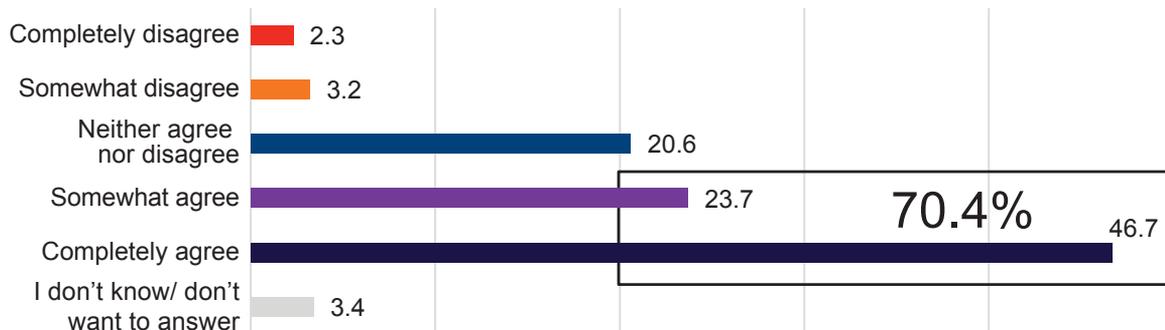
“What is meant by infrastructure, well, during this pandemic we have seen how much we lack this infrastructure, we don’t have extended daycare, we don’t have kindergartens working afternoon shifts, so it’s all down to who will come first to pick up the child, most often it’s the men who stay to attend some meetings, party meetings, this is why they take business trips and have much higher income, why is it that men and women do the same job and a man gets a salary that is twice as high, women get lower salaries because men get to go to seminars, trainings, study visits and meetings outside office hours, while women go to take care of the house, children and family.”

(N1, Bijelo Polje, 53, Secondary school, Employed)

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We were interested in finding out how many respondents believe that women can make a change by participating in public life, and we asked them to assess the extent to which they agree with this claim. Namely, cumulatively 70.4% of respondents believe that women can make a real change by participating in public life, while 5.5% of women take the opposite view. In addition, 20.6% of respondents neither agree nor disagree with this claim, and are somewhere in the middle of the two previously mentioned groups.

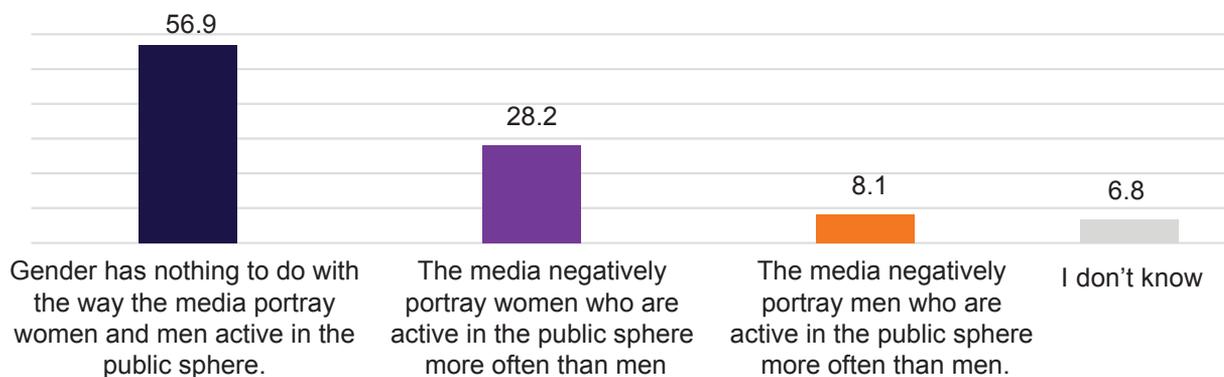
The statistically significant differences have been observed between respondents of different education-income-region profiles. Namely, the more educated respondents, as well as those with higher incomes, are more likely to find that women’s participation can make a change. Additionally, 75.6% of respondents from the central region, compared to 70.4% from the north and 61.6% of women from the southern region, believe that women can make a change by participating in the political life of Montenegro.



Graph 28: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “Women can make real changes in society by participating in public life”? (N: 1006)

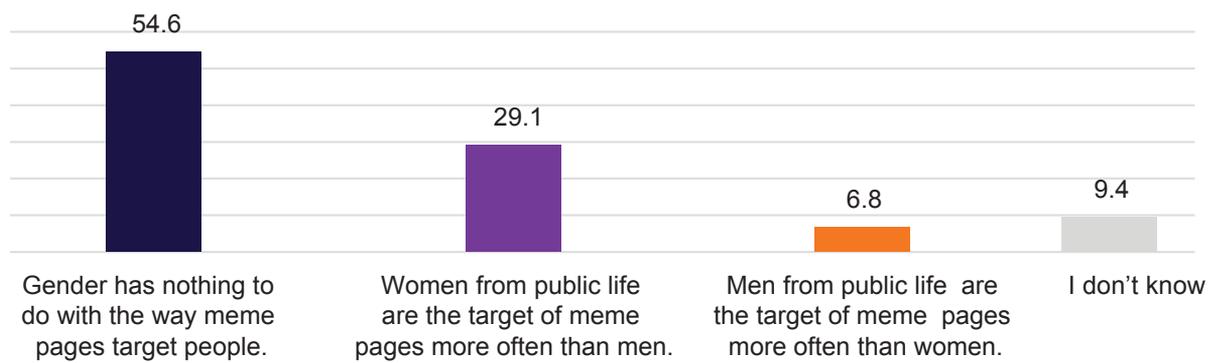
There are frequent examples of women politicians getting negative media coverage in certain Montenegro-based media. We posed a set of questions to examine the respondents’ take on portrayal of women activists and politicians by the media.

We asked the respondents to state which of the three claims they agree with the most. As many as 56.9% of respondents believe that gender has nothing to do with the way the media portray public figures. On the other hand, 28.2% of respondents find that women get more bad press.



Graph 29: Please state with which of the following statements you agree the most: (N: 1006)

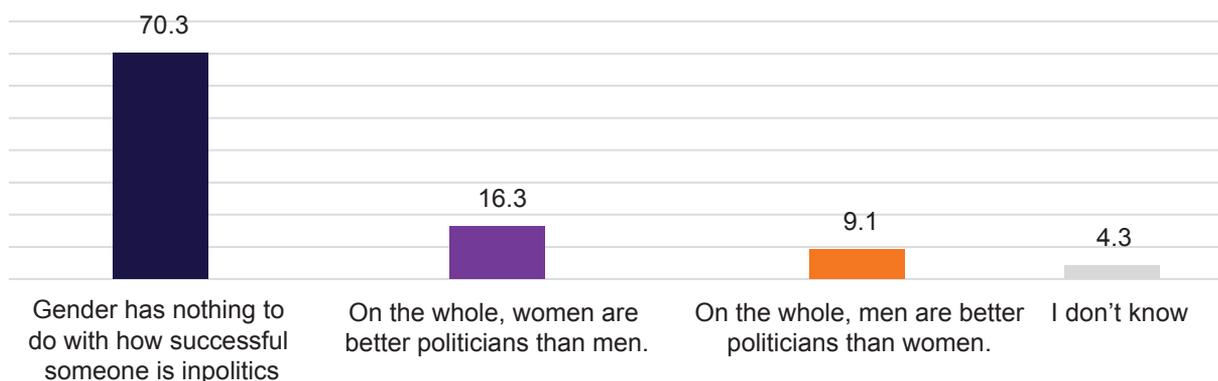
We were interested in exploring the respondents’ perception of how Meme pages portray women in relation to men. We see that the percentages are similar to those recorded with the previous media-related question. Namely, 54.6% of respondents believe that gender has nothing to do with the way Meme pages target public figures. On the other hand, 29.1% of respondents believe that women are more targeted than men. Respondents from the north are most likely of all to share this view - 32.4%, with equal percentage recorded among respondents from the south and the central region - 27.8% each.



Graph 30: Please state with which of the following statements you agree the most: (N: 1006)

As for being successful in politics, 70.3% of respondents find that gender has nothing to do with one's political success. In addition, 16.3% of respondents believe that women are more successful in this respect, while 9.1% believe that men are better at politics.

Certain statistically relevant differences were observed region-wise. Namely, respondents from the central (77.4%) and southern region (71.2%) are more likely to claim that gender has nothing to do with one's success in politics, compared to 59.1% of respondents from the north. Additionally, 21.3% of respondents from the north believe that women are better politicians, compared to a slightly lower percentage of women from the other two regions - 17.8% of respondents from the south and 12.1% from the central region.



Graph 31: Please state with which of the following statements you agree the most: (N: 1006)

We also covered this topic with our focus group interlocutors. The majority agree with the claim that the media are often harsher on women politicians, as numerous media reports revolve around their physical appearance, the way they are dressed etc., but can also be quite cruel in commenting on their work performance.

In addition, some of the interlocutors believe that the media could be playing a positive role in promoting gender equality, but many do not, and instead choose the path of objectifying women in the media.

“(…) I remember when the new government took office, one of the most widely read daily paper and web portal published an article with comments about what each female politician was wearing, not a male politician, but only what female MPs were wearing. And women are a lot more targeted on those meme pages, as far as I’ve noticed, at least. We all remember too well how Minister Bratic was portrayed, and someone else as well, I don’t know who it was, someone from the opposition, from the DPS, they were shown in a bad light just because they are women, so yes, it seems to me that women are criticized a little more often on account of their physical appearance (…)” (N5, Podgorica, 27, Spec, Employed)

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“I don’t think we really have normal media, normal journalists, with some exceptions of course, no offence to anyone. I think that for a media outlet or a portal, or whatever you call it, it is like a rock bottom to publish a photo with a caption “the minister took her shoes off in the office while welcoming so-and-so”. I’ve never seen such a mention of any male politician from any political party. I think, as far as the media are concerned, that this is terrible, a catastrophe of sorts. And I said it a million times, those reporters are a disgrace to the otherwise decent journalistic profession. We as a country are the definition of how these things are not to be done.”

(N4, Podgorica, 29, BA, Employed)

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Conclusions

In order to display the level of civic and political activism of the surveyed respondents, it would be meaningful to start off by sharing relevant data about the participants. Almost one-fifth of participants are members of a political party, i.e. they hold a membership card (19.8%). However, only 7.9% of respondents describe themselves as being involved in political life. The mismatch in these percentages can be explained by the fact that a certain percentage of women only hold on to party membership card for one reason or another, but are not actually politically engaged. In addition, 32.0% of respondents perceive themselves as politically active citizens (which may include different lines of action, ranging from party membership and active engagement, to activism that is reflected in petitioning, protesting etc.). As many as 27.8% of respondents get informed about current political developments on a daily basis, while only 23.9% have a complete understanding of current political events. Slightly over one-fifth of respondents (22.2%) have been contacted by a political party or candidate in the past 12 months, most often by phone (81.8%).

The most common forms of women’s activism are voting in elections (87.1%), signing petitions (41.1%) and sharing one’s views on social media (30.2%). The index of political participation of respondents totals 0.21 on a 0-1 scale, where a score of 0 indicates that they did not participate in any of these activities, whereas a score of 1 indicates that they took part in all of the activities that make up the index.

In exploring the possible influences on civic and political engagement of the respondents, we focused on how they are affected by their social environment, upbringing, family, political atmosphere etc.

The data indicate that the highest percentage of respondents make the same or similar voting choices as their partner (73.3%), as their mother (71.8%) and father (69.4%). The majority of respondents do not know who their employer votes for, while 27.3% vote the same as their superiors.

Respondents who used to discuss politics with their parents in their childhood / adolescence, and whose parents liked to follow current political events, are more likely to describe themselves as currently being politically active or members of political parties, as compared against respondents who did not have such situation in their family (they did not use to have family political discussions and their parents were not well-informed). Respondents whose parents were (or still are) members of a political party are more likely to currently be politically active or party members themselves, as compared to respondents whose parents are / were not active in this area.

We also directly asked the respondents whether their parents encourage their political activism. As many as 71.9% of respondents cite being neither encouraged nor discouraged from being politically active. Cumulatively, 9.7% of respondents are either fully or partially encouraged, while a cumulative of 12.7% of respondents cite being discouraged, be it completely or to a certain extent.

Only 9.7% of respondents were encouraged by their families to pursue political activism, while 71.9% were neither encouraged nor discouraged.

An analysis into women's perception of opportunities for engaging in the political life of Montenegro requires a two-fold approach – seeking to find what motivates or could motivate women to get involved in political life on the one hand, and what demotivates or discourages their engagement on the other.

In discussing sources of motivation for their potential engagement, 67.4% of respondents say that there is nothing that could motivate them to get engaged in political life. The remaining percentage is evenly distributed across a multitude of sources of motivation, such as a job opportunity (6.4%), money (5.3%) and many other sources. This was an open-ended question, so the respondents were free to quote sources of motivation on their own. Based on this question, we might conclude that there is no single and specific prevailing motivator or factor that would encourage the participants to become politically active. However, in the second question, we asked the respondents whether and to what extent an increased number of women in decision-making positions would motivate them to get engaged in political activities, to which 40.1% of respondents say they would find this motivational. Such comments were also cited within the qualitative part of the survey, i.e. during focus groups. Namely, the interlocutors also say that women need to have a greater public presence, as this would motivate other women, especially young women, and show them that they too have their place in politics. The respondent's potential line of action mainly revolves around several areas of interest, such as: peacebuilding and justice, education, health care, human rights and the economy.

On the other hand, it is also important to consider the demotivating factors for women's political action. In discussing the political climate in Montenegro, slightly more than two-fifths of the respondents find the climate to be either partially or very discouraging for women. Reasons as listed by the participants shed more light on such a finding, and those include the unstable political scene and divisions in society (which is not encouraging for neither women nor men), gender inequality and women not getting enough public recognition.

Aside from factors such as political climate, there are also mentions of family care responsibilities and a general lack of time (as cited by 28.6% of respondents). Support of family and social environment is also the recurring factor that crops up both in the quantitative part of the survey and during focus groups. In addition, 54.1% of respondents believe that a clear division of gender roles in Montenegrin society discourages women from participating in political activities. One-fifth of respondents were not able to offer solutions for improving women's status in politics and their level of involvement, while the remaining percentage is distributed along a series of solutions: support of social environment, education, economic empowerment,

infrastructure support (kindergartens, day care centers, workplace daycare etc.). Also, over half of the respondents (52.6%) believe that electoral legislation amendments are needed in order to increase the number of women in political life.

Women's activities in the NGO sector were a separate topic that ran through both the quantitative and qualitative part of the survey. Respondents (42.4% of them) believe that women are more often active in the NGO sector, with numerous reasons cited (traditional society that teaches women they have no place in politics; it is easier to get a job in an NGO; safety, less public exposure etc.). It was pointed out that, within the NGO sector, women can act "from behind the scenes", so they do not need that much public exposure and can have a greater sense of safety and more opportunities for action.

Finally, the influence of the media plays a major part in the story of women in politics, especially in Montenegro. Slightly more than one-quarter of respondents (28.2%) believe that the media give more negative coverage to female than male politicians. Almost identical percentage of respondents (29.1%) believe that women politicians are more likely to be targeted by Meme pages than their male colleagues. Focus group interlocutors cite a whole series of examples of bad press for women politicians in both media and meme pages. Interlocutors explain that these media tend to focus on physical appearance of women politicians, quoting concrete posts and examples of bad coverage.

All things considered, it should be noted that as many as 70.4% of respondents believe that women can make a real change by engaging in public life.

Annexes

Annexe 1 – Focus group discussion guide

Notes for Moderator:

The moderator should emphasize the importance of free and open exchanges. The discussion should be as free and spontaneous as possible. The moderator may also assist the participants if they need help getting started. However, the moderator should allow participants to start the discussion in a free-flowing manner.

The moderator should strive to obtain concrete and detailed answers by asking follow-up questions, as well as to encourage a sincere exchange of views between the participants. It is important for the moderator to be guiding a group discussion, not a group interview.

1. Introduction

A tour de table for the moderator and participants (ask them to use only their first name or nickname so as to ensure their privacy).

Explaining the purpose of convening the group: We invited you here today to discuss women's activism in Montenegro, and the factors that affect their social engagement.

Explaining how the material is going to be used: A report will be drawn up based on

what you say. Your views will go into the report, but nothing you say will be attributed to you personally, so feel at ease and speak freely and openly.

Explaining “ground rules” for discussion:

- Be critical – constructive criticism and negative views are just as important as positive comments and words of praise,
- Try not to cross-talk – one person at a time,
- Be as specific as possible, with concrete examples wherever possible.

2. Definitions

- What does the word activism mean to you?

Explanation: Activism consists of efforts to promote, impede, direct, or intervene in social, political, economic or environmental reform with the desire to bring about change in society for the greater good.

- Which forms of activism are you aware of?

Explanation: Forms of activism range from mandate building in the community, petitioning elected officials, running or contributing to a political campaign, preferential patronage (or boycott) of businesses, and demonstrative forms of activism like rallies, street marches, strikes, sit-ins, or hunger strikes.

3. Women, activism, participation

- Speaking of voting in elections, petitioning, protesting and similar, how active are Montenegrins in this area, in your opinion? How many women in Montenegro are active in this sphere and are they facing any obstacles?
- Speaking of direct participation of women in politics, such as party membership, participation in rallies, campaigns, running for office and participation in public life, how active do you think Montenegrin women are?
- What are the potential obstacles? Is there something that demotivates them?
- How can women’s participation in political parties be increased? Any suggestions?
- What would motivate/ encourage you or women in Montenegro to get involved in political life?
- Why are women more active in the NGO sector than in politics?
- How much do you think a woman’s environment affects her decision to be or not to be politically active? (Influence of friends, children, spouse, family, colleagues)
- How much do you think the environment in which a woman grew up affects how activated she would later be in all the spheres mentioned? To what extent do you think that the existing gender roles in our society influence whether a woman will engage in activism or get involved in political life? (Inquire about attitudes such as that women lack time, that they should take care of children, that they are not educated...)
- Ask which is the case more often – that women do not want to be politically active (salaries in politics are low, politics is an ugly profession) or they cannot / do not have the time?



- Are the media harsher towards women politicians than their male colleagues? Get them to talk about media often giving women politicians bad press, memes that discredit female politicians / activists etc. See what they think about it.

4. Information channels

- What are your main information channels? How do you get informed about everyday topics and events on the political scene?
- How do you form attitudes about politics? Whose attitudes resemble yours more – your parents’ (if so, which parent, the father?) or your spouse’s, that of the society?
- Is there an activist / politician whose activities you particularly keep informed on?

5. Closing remarks

Is there anything you would like to add in relation to today’s topic? Any additional comments / suggestions / criticisms?

Thank the participants and wrap up the discussion.

Annexe 2 – Focus group participant profile

FG	Code	City	Age	Education	Ethnicity	Employment
South	N1	Bar	37	Secondary	Serbian	Employed
South	N2	Bar	50	Secondary	Montenegrin	Employed
South	N3	Bar	29	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Unemployed
South	N4	Kotor	35	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Employed
South	N5	Bar	37	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Unemployed
South	N6	Ulcinj	47	Tertiary	Albanian	Employed
South	N7	Herceg Novi	23	Tertiary	Serbian	Unemployed
Center	N1	Nikšić	20	Secondary	Serbian	Unemployed
Center	N2	Podgorica	32	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Employed
Center	N3	Podgorica	52	Tertiary	Srpkinja	Unemployed
Center	N4	Podgorica	29	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Employed
Center	N5	Podgorica	27	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Employed
Center	N6	Danilovgrad	45	Secondary	Montenegrin	Unemployed
Center	N7	Podgorica	21	Secondary	Montenegrin	Unemployed
Center	N8	Cetinje	24	Tertiary	Serbian	Employed
North	N1	Bijelo Polje	53	Tertiary	Muslim	Employed
North	N2	Bijelo Polje	37	Secondary	Bosniak	Unemployed
North	N3	Mojkovac	33	Tertiary	Serbian	Unemployed
North	N4	Gusinja	24	Tertiary	Bosniak	Unemployed
North	N5	Bijelo Polje	25	Tertiary	Montenegrin	Unemployed

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