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Public Pulse on Gender: “The Leadership and Participation of Women in Politics”

As part of the project “Enhancing Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding and Post-conflict Planning”, this is the first Public Pulse report that specifically focuses on Gender Issues. The project, more generally, was conducted in collaboration with the EU and UN Women. The UNDP components of the project included: 1) Mapping out the initiatives on Women, Peace and Security in Kosovo during the 1999-2000 period; 2) working closely with local governments; 3) The Public Pulse Report on Gender.

The report chose to focus on women in leadership due to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, which is not a problem exclusively faced by Kosovo, but a widespread global challenge.

The focus of the report lies on Women in Leadership, yet; the information provided in the report goes well beyond that, to cover issues of gender inequality more generally, domestic violence, the labour market and so forth.

The study has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it surveys Kosovans’ perceptions regarding women’s leadership skills and positions, by collecting and analysing the various factors contributing to these perceptions. Secondly, it measures women’s participation in both social and political activities, and analyses the factors that impact women’s participation levels.

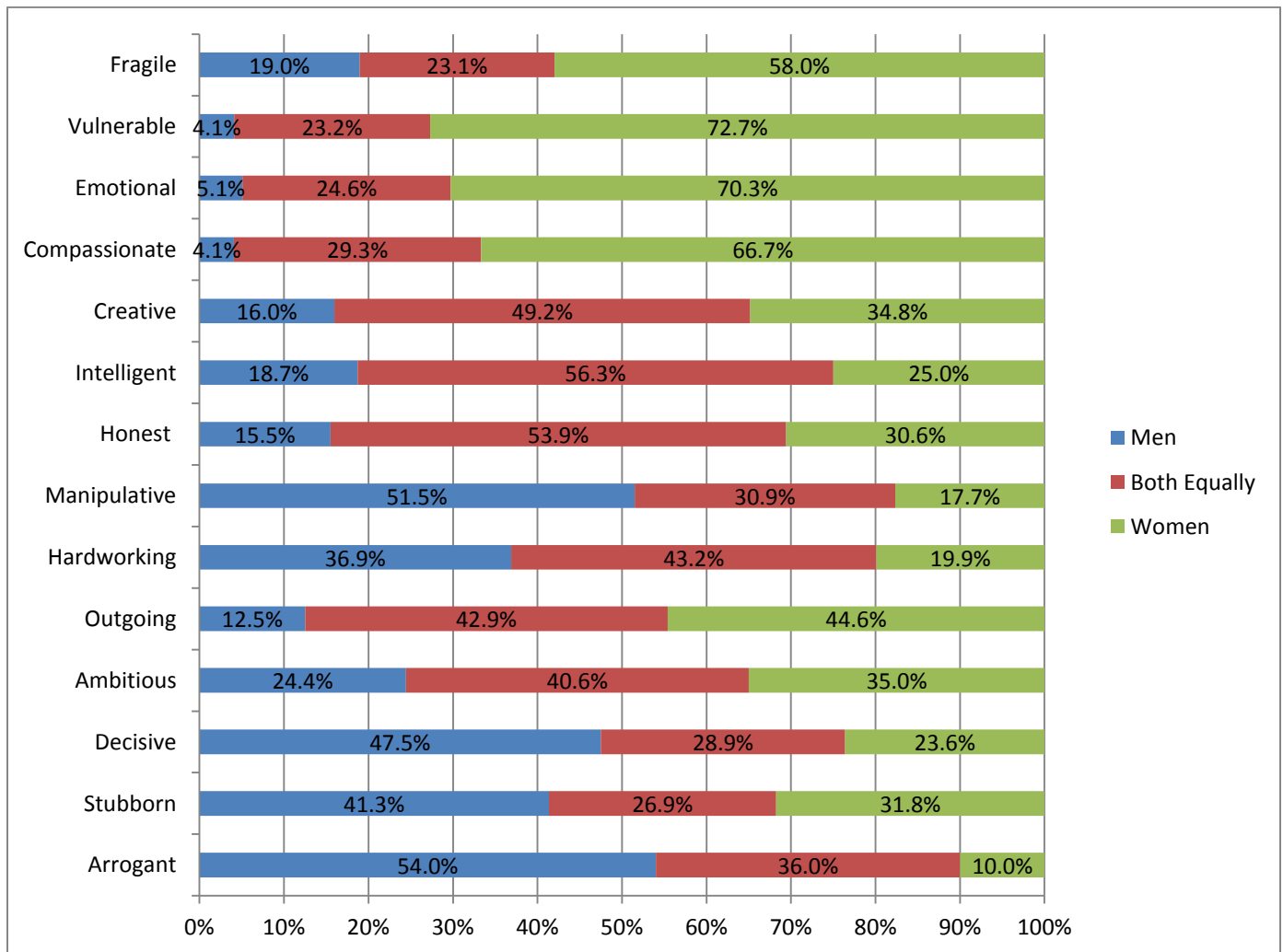
Some of the main findings

1) The results of this study show that gender stereotypes persist among the Kosovan population:

The vast majority of respondents attributed the characteristics that are in sharp contrast with leadership traits, such as vulnerability, fragility, being emotional and compassion to women. While the positive stereotypes usually associated with successful leadership such as hard working, ambitious, and decisiveness were attributed to men.



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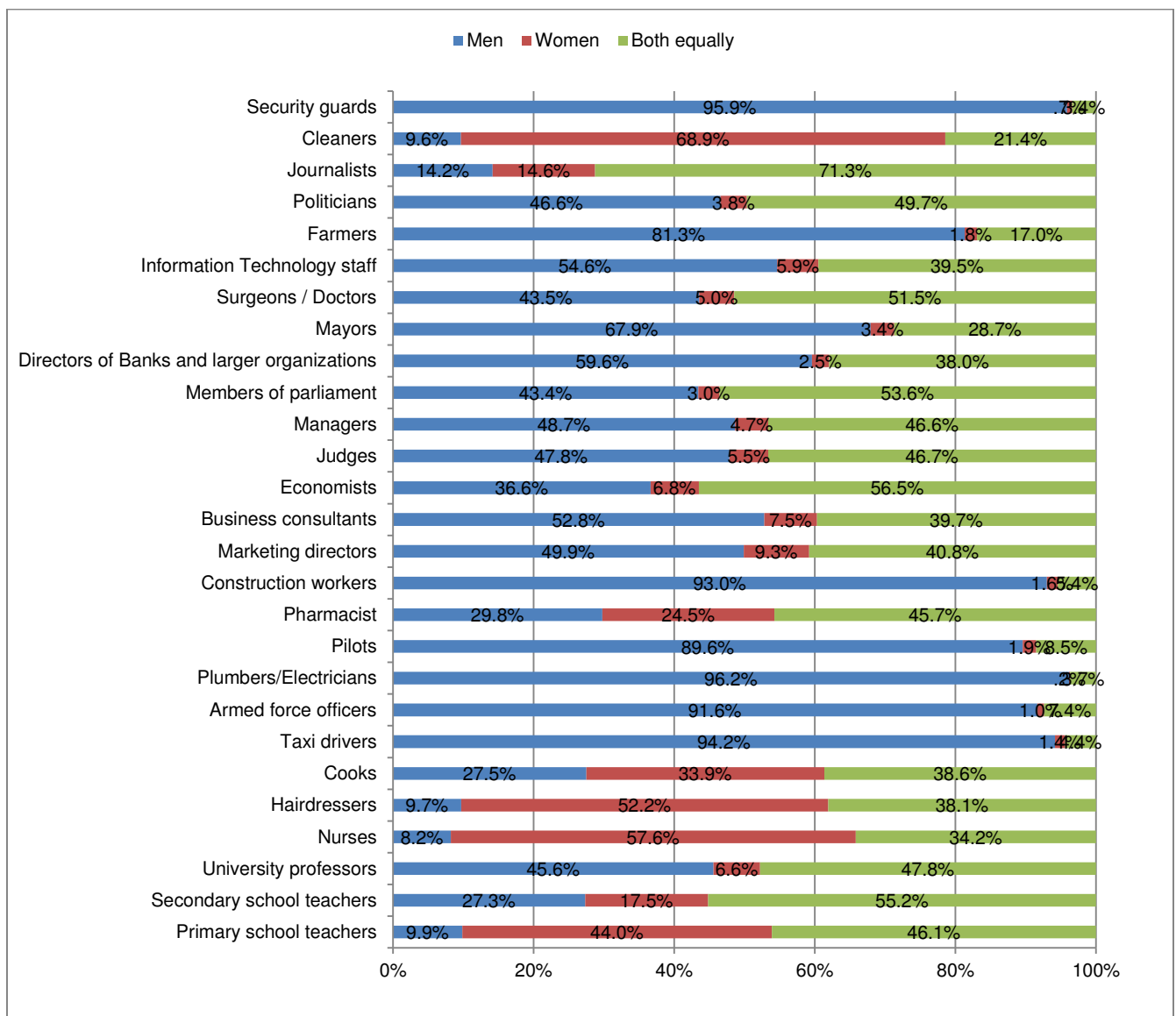


When inquired about which professions they associate with men or women, respondents associated all leadership, managerial and decision-making positions much more with men than with women; these include marketing directors, business consultants, judges, politicians, members of parliament, mayors, surgeons, doctors, information technology staff, university professors, directors of banks and larger organizations. (approximately 45% of all respondents associated parliamentary professions with men compared to 3% association with women. There is a similar difference in responses concerning the position of Mayor; 67.36% of all respondents associated the position of Mayor with men, whereas only 2.87% associated it with women. Responses concerning gender association of directors of banks and



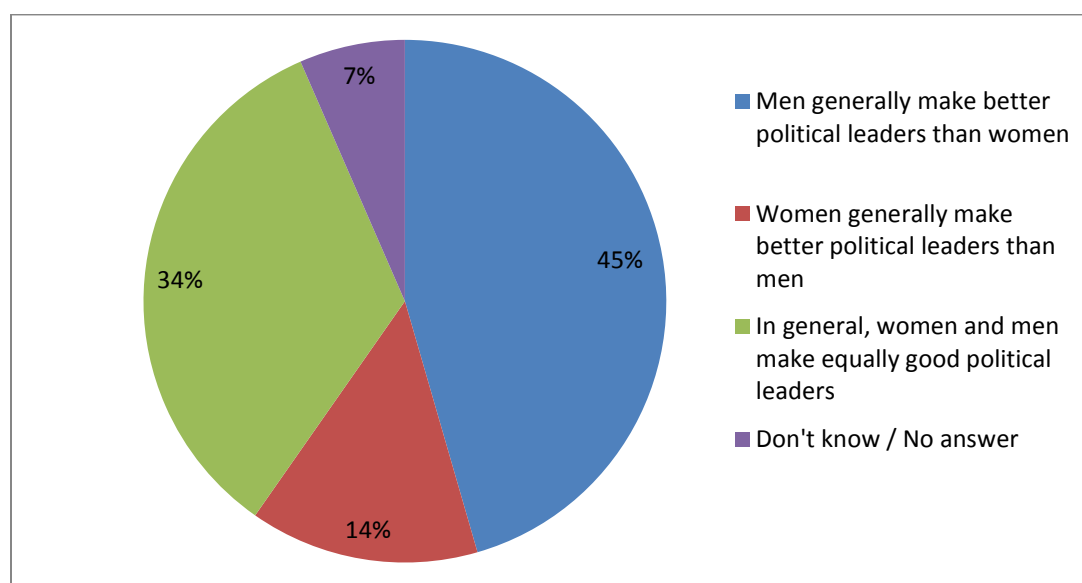
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larger organizations indicate that 57% of all participants associated these positions with men, compared to 3% who associated these with women. Similarly, 43% of all respondents associated the position of university professors with men and only 2% with women)



2) Responses to questions specifically targeting perceptions of political leadership skills indicate rather skewed perceptions that men are generally better leaders compared to women.

General opinion of respondents indicated that men (46%) are better political leaders than women (14%) while approximately 34% of respondents stated that men and women are equally good political leaders.

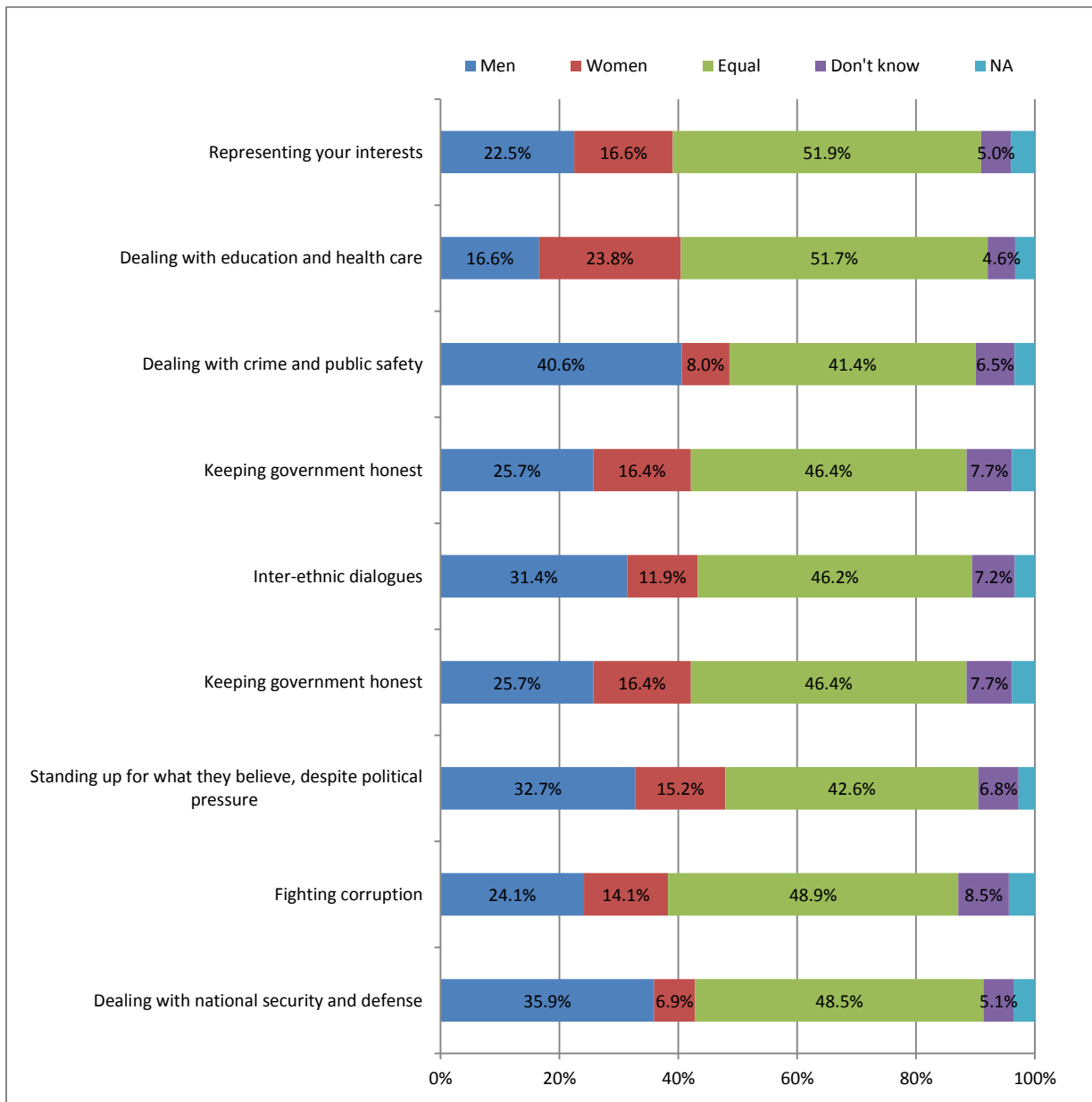


When respondents were asked what they thought the traits of a good leader were, 33.1% believed that being a man was essential.

A very high percentage of all respondents, regardless of gender, reported that men are much better political candidates for managing “crime and public safety,” “national security and defence,” “standing up for what they believe in despite political pressure,” “fighting corruption” and “inter-ethnic dialogue.” The only area women are perceived as being more skilled political leaders by both men and women respondents is concerning education and health care related issues. In addition to “dealing with education and healthcare,” women respondents indicated that women are better at “representing their interests,” and “keeping the government honest.”

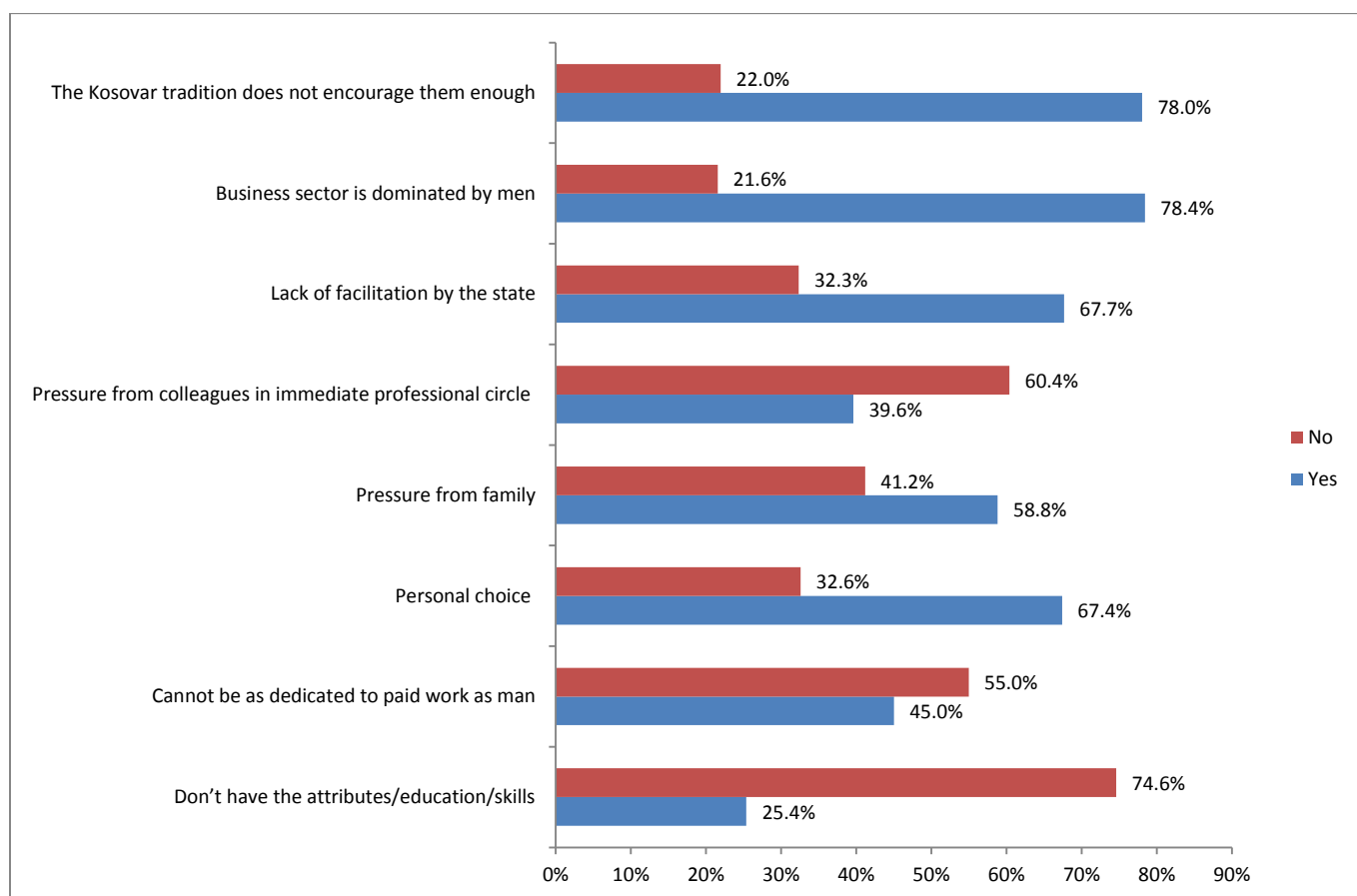


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A high number of respondents think that “women do not make as good of leaders as men,” with more than 48% of men respondents citing this as a reason for the lack of women in top positions.

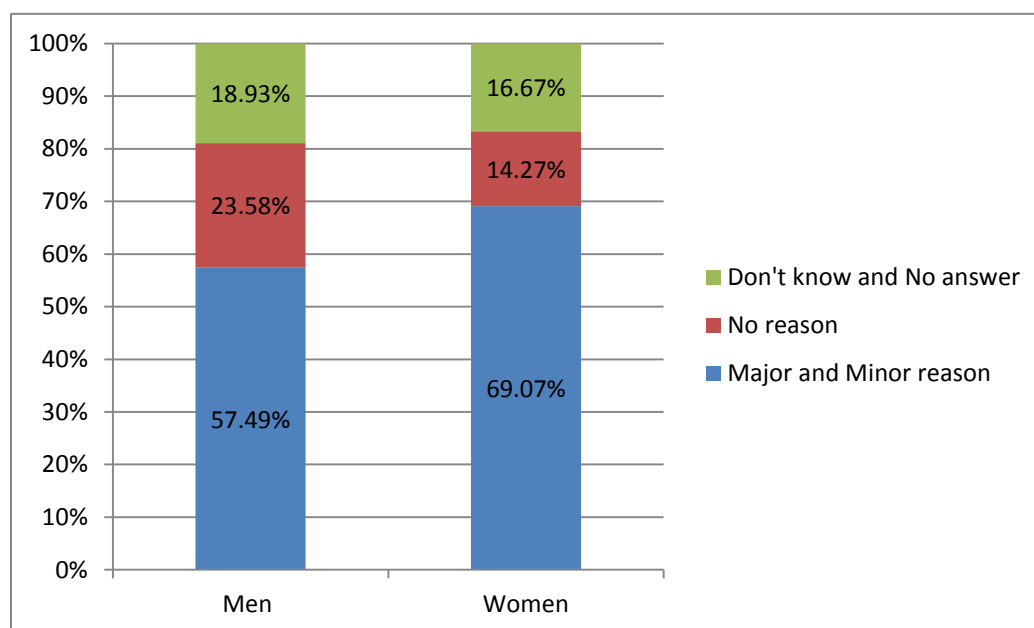
Respondents cite Kosovan tradition, business sector dominated by men, lack of support by the state, pressure from family and personal choice as the main factors hindering women in their career.



3) The results show that awareness on gender inequality is much lower among men respondents.

The majority of women respondents believed discrimination against women to be a major reason why there are fewer women in top positions in governmental institutions (43%), while only 27% of men respondents agreed. Similarly, the majority of women respondents (31%) believed that “women who are active in political parties get held back by men” to be a major reason why there are fewer women in high-ranking positions within governmental institutions. The majority of men respondents believed that this is only a minor reason (32%), while only 4.6% believe it is a major reason.

Women face discrimination on all areas of life, politics is no exception



Some of the recommendations:

Based on the findings, UNDP makes the following recommendations:

- 1) The results of this study show that gender stereotypes persist among the Kosovan population.

Thus, different campaigns to combat gender stereotypes ought to be taken:

- Review the representation of gender roles in children’s books and primary, middle and high school curricula. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should conduct



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a study to review the stereotypical representation of women and men in children's books and school texts, and take action to rewrite or delete problematic parts with the aim of decreasing instances of this stereotypical representation.

- Include chapters on gender equality/gender stereotypes in the curricula of Civic Education at all levels of schooling.

2) Results show that awareness on gender inequality is much lower among men respondents.

This calls for actions targeting men and boys that may include:

- Equal representation of men and women in gender-equality related roundtables and discussions, which are currently overwhelmingly attended by women only.
- Inclusion of more men in the Gender Equality Agency, Municipal Gender Equality Offices and Ministerial Gender Equality Offices.
- Awareness campaigns on gender inequality and sexism targeting men.

3) Results show that professions are still perceived through gender lenses; some professions are perceived exclusively as "male professions" and others as "female professions."



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- Launch a “Careers Have No Gender” campaign depicting real life men and women doing “non-traditional” jobs, such as: women construction workers, men cleaners, men nurses, women armed force officers, etc.