



OBSTACLES TO THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

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Obstacles to the Participation of Women in Decision-making Positions

A survey was carried out by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on behalf of the National Council of Women (NCW). The main scope of this study was to investigate perceptions and opinions among the general public with regard to the participation of women in decision-making positions.

NCW Vice-President, Grace Attard, who worked with the NSO on the Study, stated that the findings are crucial to the formulation of focused strategies towards increasing the participation rates of women in decision-making positions. The role of education in addressing stereotype attitudes is one of the key areas that require particular attention. Later on this year, the NCW will be holding a conference where the results of the Study will be discussed with all stakeholders. Proposals towards bringing about the necessary changes will also be made.

Survey Methodology

The Survey was conducted among a sample of 1,432 persons aged 18 years and over and had a response rate of 83 per cent. Fifty-one per cent of respondents were women while around 50 per cent of respondents were gainfully occupied.

A number of topics relating to women in the work-place were covered in the questionnaire. These included:

- prospects for promotion;
- obstacles to promotion;
- gender balance in decision-making institutions;
- childcare.

All the information from this survey has been cross-tabulated with a number of demographics that include: age; sex; educational level; civil status; and others. This report provides an overview of the main findings. More detailed tables will be published in a forthcoming publication.

When asked about decision-making power in the course of their job, 33 per cent of women against 26 per cent of men responded that they wield considerable levels. With regard to high levels of power in decision making, the percentages were somewhat reversed, with 34 per cent of men against 28 per cent of women.

Prospects for promotion

Overall, men showed more interest than women in being promoted at work. On a civil-status basis, 57 per cent of married men expressed an interest in promotion against 49 per cent of married women. A finding of this part of the Survey was that interest in work-place promotion increases with the level of education attained, but flags with years of experience in the same line of work, and with age. In fact, 31 per cent of persons aged 55 years and over thought that they would be getting a promotion, as opposed to 55 per cent in the 18-24 and 68 per cent in the 25-34 age brackets.

With regard to reasons for desiring a promotion, 69 per cent of respondents indicated an increase in salary, the percentage of men citing this reason being greater. Women tend to seek more job satisfaction than men, with 36 per cent of women giving this reason for wanting a promotion in contrast to 23 per cent of men.

When asked about future prospects of promotion in their current job, 35 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women thought that this was likely. On a civil-status basis, questions on the chances of promotion brought positive responses from 43 per cent of single individuals against 30 per cent of married ones. As regards the latter group, 32 per cent of men and 27 per cent of women thought that they had good chances of promotion, albeit a considerable proportion could not give a definite period as to when this would be likely to come about.

Obstacles to promotion

Thirty per cent of all respondents felt that the fact of being a woman would place an individual at a disadvantage in the prospect of obtaining a decision-making or managerial post. A majority of woman respondents – 76 per cent – cited long hours as an obstacle to such a prospect, while a higher percentage of women than men – 46 per cent against 38 per cent – cited age. Another obstacle given was lack of support from partner and/or family, although more women than men identified this as a potential barrier.

Gender balance in decision-making institutions

The percentages of respondents returned by the Survey who think that there should be a gender balance in parliamentary and local-council representation are similar – 74 per cent with regard to Parliament and 76 per cent with regard to local councils. Of the proportion of men who returned a negative response, the percentage who do not think a balance should be struck between male and female representatives in Parliament is higher than its counterpart regarding representation on local councils by some 4 per cent. Significant also is the percentage with no opinion on gender balance in both institutions – 18 per cent.

Of the persons who believe that there should be a balance between male and female representatives in Parliament, 41 per cent said that it is the right of both sexes; this answer was given by 45 per cent of men and 37 per cent of women. A further 29 per cent of respondents said that men and women complement each other, while another reason given – more prevalent with women – is that women have leadership skills. The main reason for not believing in a gender balance as regards parliamentary representation is that men are more suitable. There is no pronounced gender divide as regards the latter response – it was given by 47 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women who are sceptical about a gender balance in decision-making bodies.

More respondents felt that there should be a balance between the number of men and women in local councils than in Parliament; this was mainly due to a shift in the answers given by male respondents. The reasons given for believing in a gender balance in local-council representation were the same as those for Parliament, namely, that it is the right of both sexes – 43 per cent; and men and women complement each other – 29 per cent. As in the case of parliamentary representation, the largest proportion who said that they do not believe in such a balance gave the men-are-more-suitable reason.

Three-quarters of respondents are indifferent to whether a man or a woman becomes the next President of Malta. Nine per cent expressed a preference for a man and 15 per cent, for a woman. One-fifth of the latter respondents are of the opinion that women should be given the opportunity.

TABLES

Table 1. Level of decision-making power, by sex

Level of decision-making power	Men	Women	Total
	% total		
Very little	16.4	18.6	17.1
Considerable	25.9	32.9	28.2
High	34.2	28.0	32.2
No power at all	21.4	18.6	20.5
Do not know / refused	2.1	1.9	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2. Interest in being promoted, by sex

Interest in being promoted	Men	Women	Total
	% total		
Interested	57.9	53.9	56.5
Not interested	28.1	34.4	30.3
Do not know / refused	14.0	11.7	13.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

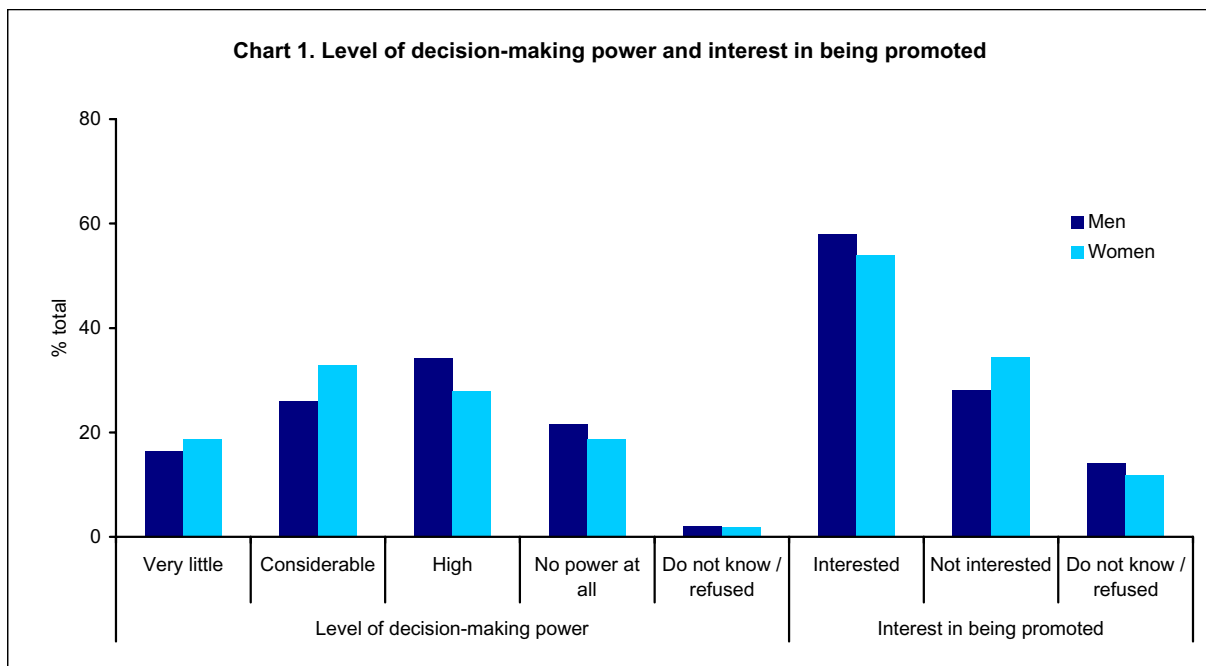


Table 3. Persons wanting a promotion by main reason and perceived chance of promotion, by sex

		Men	Women	Total
		% total		
Reason for wanting a promotion	Better salary	76.3	64.3	69.0
	Job satisfaction	23.1	35.7	30.6
	In the interest of colleagues	0.6	-	0.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Chance of promotion	With chance	35.3	32.5	34.3
	With no chance	44.2	46.1	44.8
	Do not know / refused	20.5	21.4	20.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

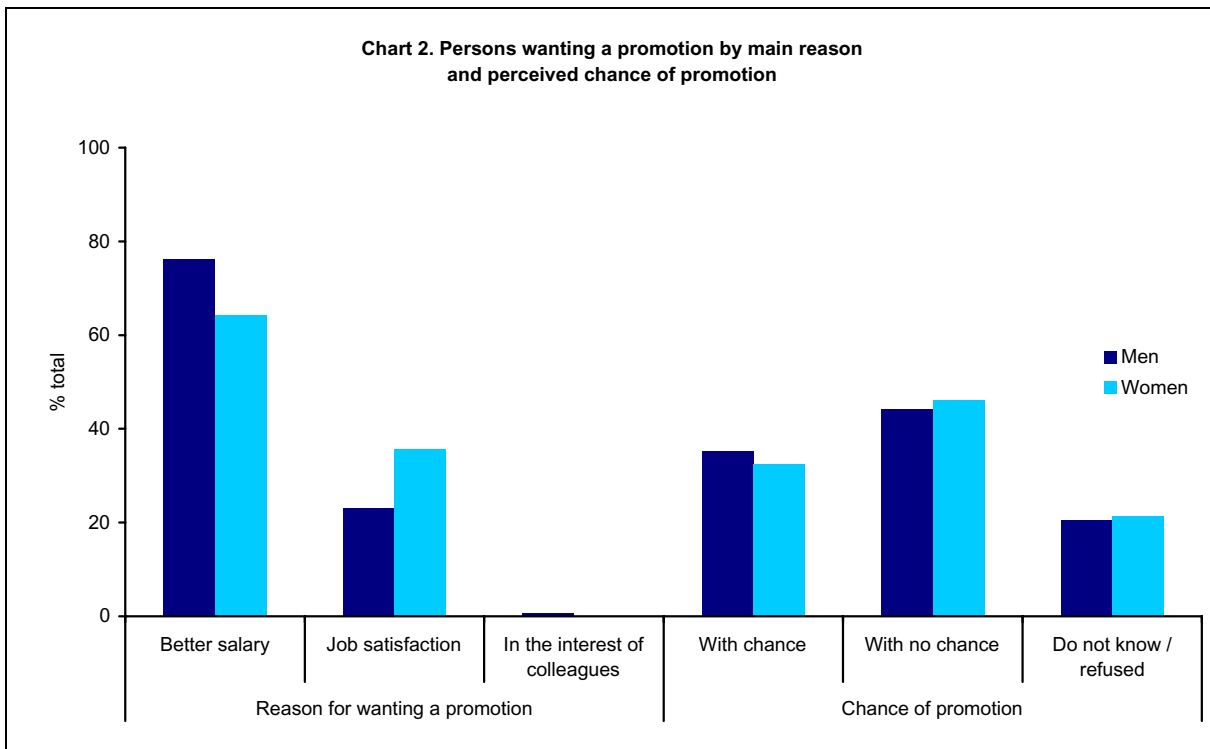


Table 4. Perceived obstacles to women in obtaining a decision-making/managerial post, by sex

Obstacle	Men	Women	Total
	% total		
Age	38.0	45.5	41.8
Qualifications	71.5	71.1	71.3
Competition	67.9	68.8	68.3
Long hours	69.1	75.8	72.5
Gender	27.4	32.6	30.1
Child responsibilities	84.1	83.2	83.7
Elderly responsibilities	72.4	71.3	71.8
Family responsibilities	76.0	74.2	75.1
Lack of partner support	81.3	82.6	82.0
Lack of support from family	69.1	72.3	70.7

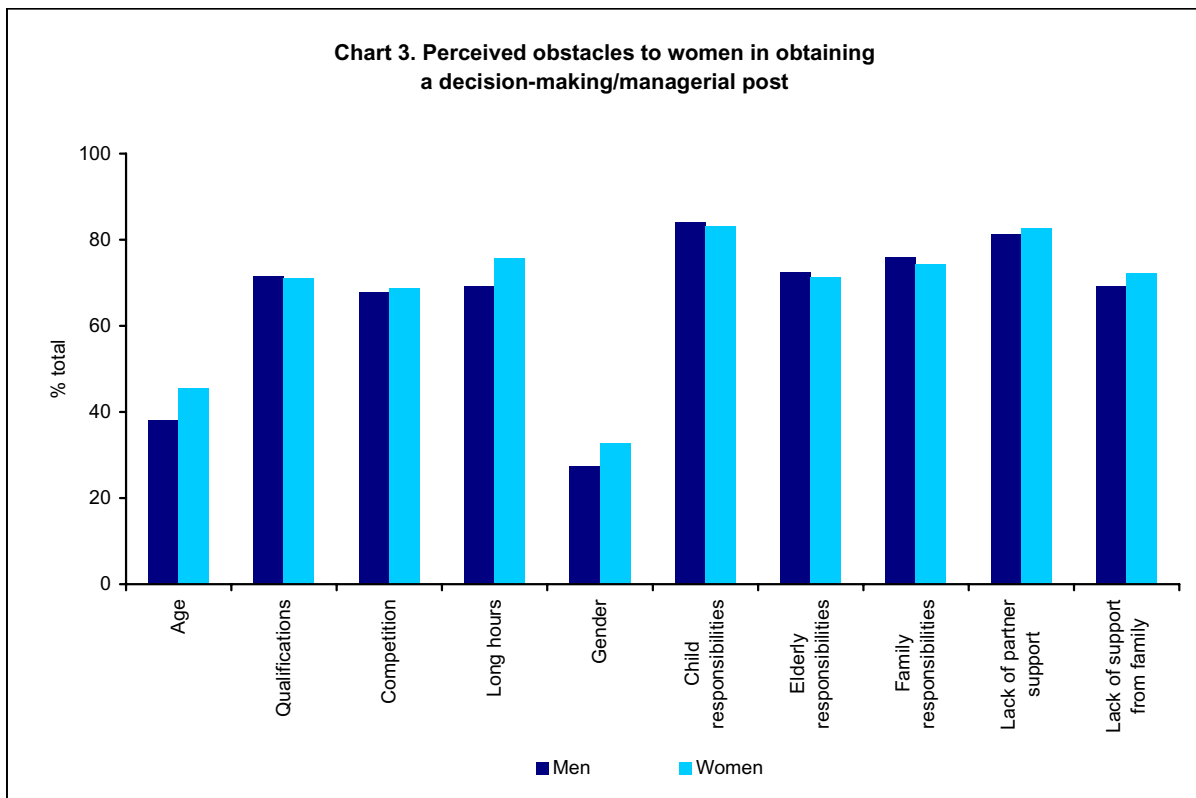


Table 5. Opinions on a gender balance in parliamentary and local-council representation, by sex of respondents

Opinion	Parliament			Local councils		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	% total					
Balance	66.5	81.4	74.1	70.3	82.0	76.3
No balance	12.2	4.1	8.1	8.3	3.9	6.1
Do not know	21.3	14.5	17.8	21.3	14.1	17.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

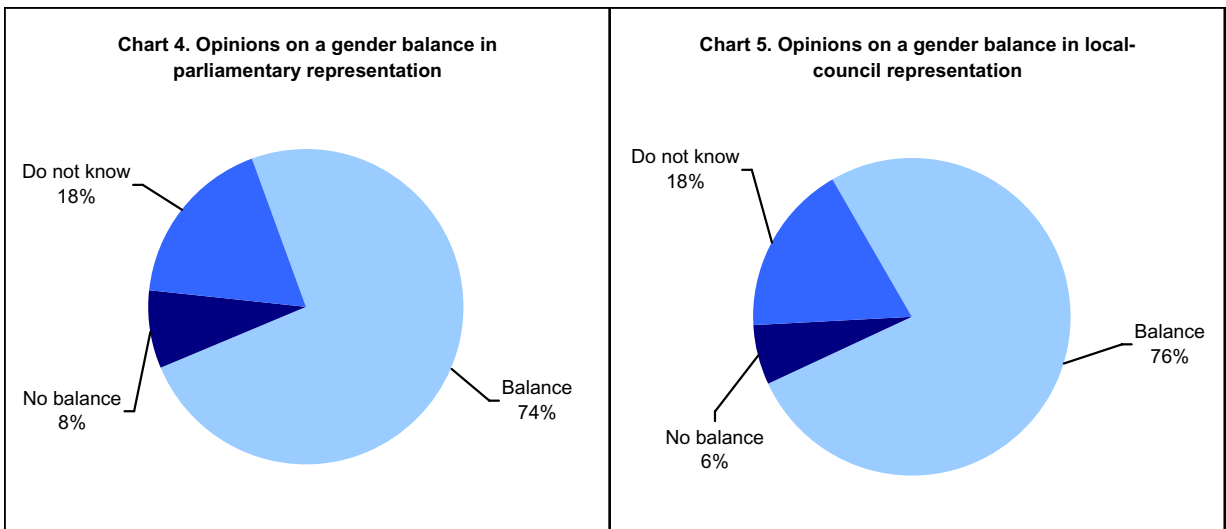


Table 6. Respondents who believe in a gender balance in parliamentary and local-council representation, by main reason and sex

Reason	Parliament			Local councils		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	% total					
It is the right of both sexes	44.6	37.4	40.6	48.3	38.6	43.0
Women and men complement each other	28.4	29.0	28.8	26.9	30.7	29.0
Women have leadership skills	22.9	25.4	24.3	21.7	22.1	21.9
Women are more sensitive	1.5	4.8	3.4	1.4	5.5	3.7
Women can solve problems more peacefully than men	1.8	2.2	2.0	0.6	1.9	1.3
Other reasons / refused	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.2	1.2	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 7. Respondents who do not believe in a gender balance in parliamentary and local-council representation, by main reason and sex

Reason	Parliament			Local councils		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	% total					
Men are more suitable	46.7	42.9	45.7	34.1	30.0	32.8
Women do not have the time	10.0	14.3	11.1	17.1	15.0	16.4
Women are not good leaders	5.0	-	3.7	4.9	-	3.3
Women should look after the family	15.0	4.8	12.3	14.6	15.0	14.8
Other reasons / refused	23.3	38.1	27.2	29.3	40.0	32.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 8. Respondents by gender preference for the next president of Malta, by sex

Gender preference	Men	Women	Total
	% total		
Man	10.4	7.6	9.0
Woman	9.1	19.7	14.5
Gender not considered an issue	78.7	70.7	74.6
No answer / refused	1.8	2.0	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chart 6. Respondents by gender preference for the next president of Malta

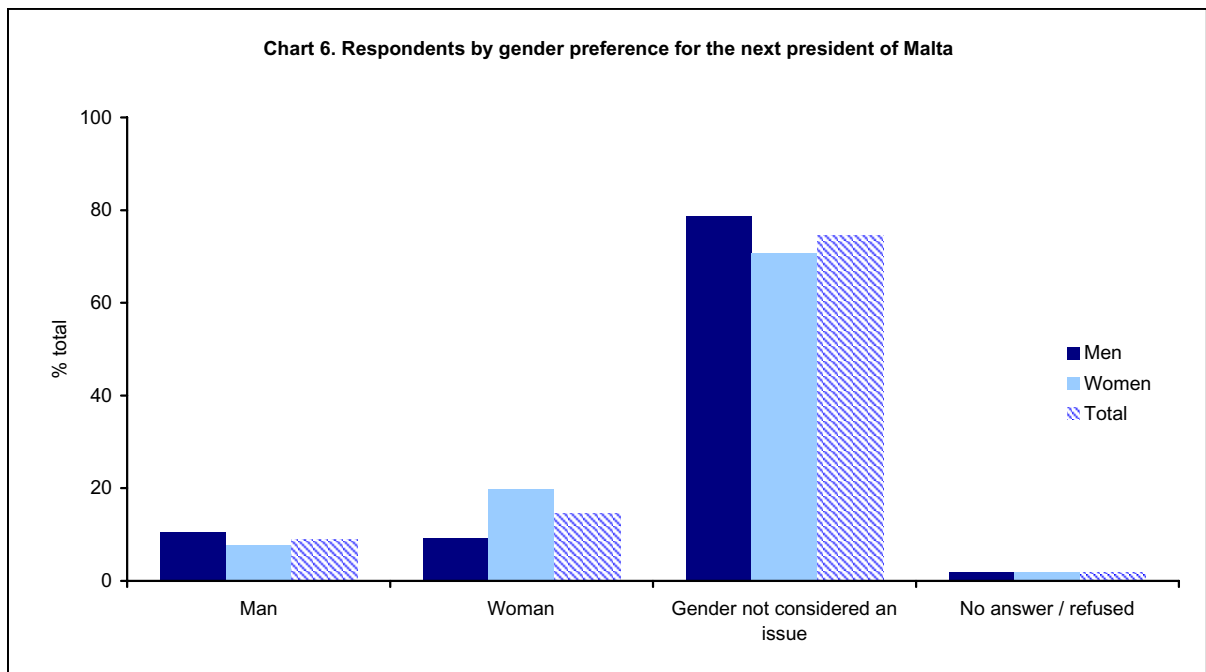


Table 9. Respondents with a preference for a man as the next president of Malta, by main reason and sex

Reason	Men	Women	Total
	% total		
Men are more suitable for the post	96.1	94.9	95.6
Currently there is no suitable woman	-	2.6	1.1
Women do not have the time	2.0	2.6	2.2
Women are not good leaders	2.0	-	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10. Respondents with a preference for a woman as the next president of Malta, by main reason and sex

Reason	Men	Women	Total
	% total		
Women are just as capable as men	55.6	57.4	56.8
Women should be given the opportunity	20.0	21.8	21.2
It is the right of both sexes	-	9.9	6.8
Women have leadership skills	11.1	5.9	7.5
Other reasons / refused	13.3	5.0	7.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

