

WOMEN IN ISLAM, POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

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ISLAM, GOVERNMENT, POLITICS...

- Broad scope!
- Plane for today
 - History
 - Women rights in Islam
 - Feminism
 - Short case studies

HISTORY!

- Mary (Maryam)
- Khadijah
 - Muhammad's first wife, successful businesswoman
- Aisha
 - led the army of Muslims in the battle of the Camel, jurist, scholar
- Umm Salamah
 - Muhammad consulted with her political matters
- Sayyida Nafisa
 - Muhammad descendant, she taught hadith to Imam al-Shafi'i, one of the founders of the four Sunni schools of Islamic law, and at his request prayed the funeral prayer over him

HISTORY!

- Umar ibn al-Khattab's shifting perspective: during his caliphate, he appointed two different women, Samra b. Nuhayk and Shifa b. Abdullah, to fulfill the role of market supervisors.
- Queens of Muslim world
 - Fatima of Nishapur, Arwa of Yemen
- And many more! As Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi documented 8,000 female scholars of hadith

WOMEN AND ISLAM

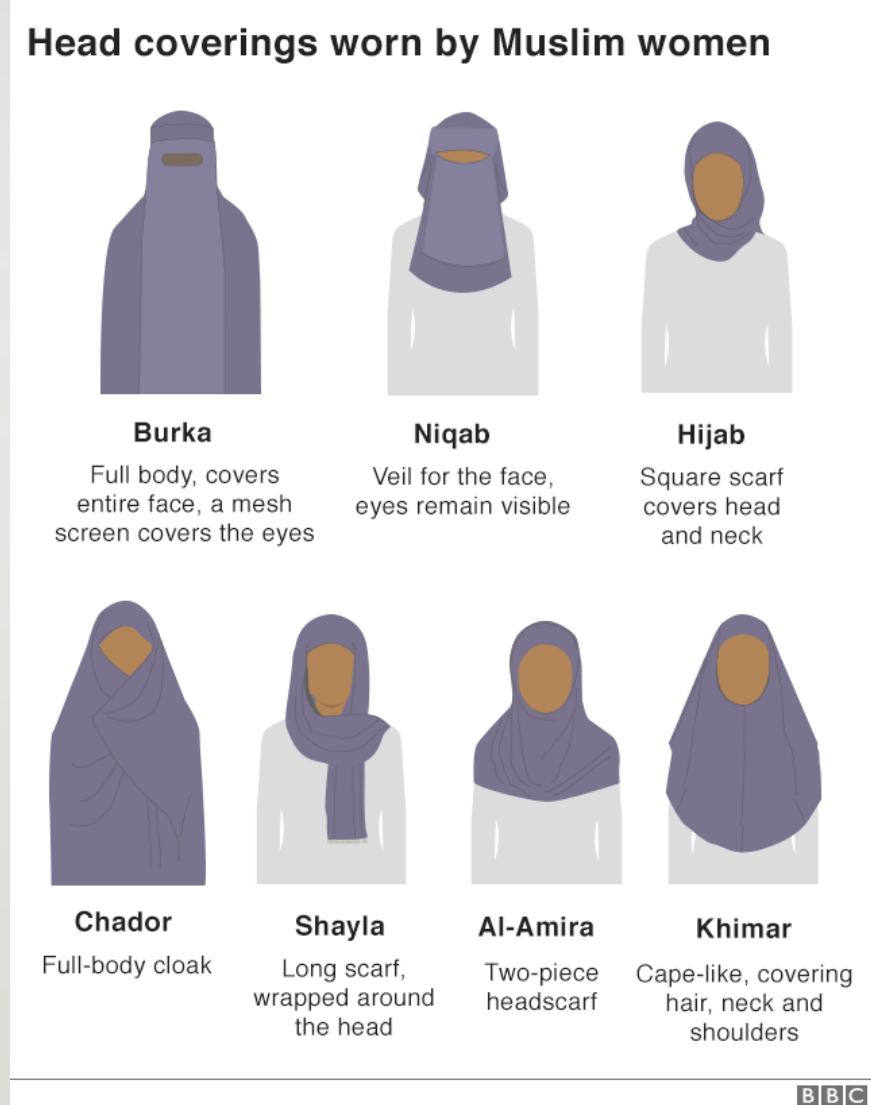
Status, rights and obligations

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Equal education
 - “Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim”. –Ibn Majah, Book I, Hadith: 224
- Social status
 - “Heavens lie under the feet of your mother” –Ahmad, Nisai; Hadith: 34
- Finances; Property and inheritance rights
 - Mahr
- Marriage
 - Right to choose husband, needs to agree with second wife
 - Nikah
- Fighting
 - Existence of mujahidaat: Nusayba bin Ka’ab, Safiyyah bint ‘Abd al-Muttalib, Aisha bint Abu Bakr

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Veiling
 - Legislation prohibiting or limiting face veiling: Belgium, Bulgaria, Austria, France and Germany
 - O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Al-Hilali and Mohamed 1983, verse 33:59–60)



MEN&WOMEN

- Equality in the eyes of God
- Relationship to women
 - “My parting counsel (wasiyya) to you is to treat women with kindness for verily they are your partners and committed helpers” (*Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3367*)
 - “The best of you are those who are best to your women.” (*Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1162*)
 - “Treat your children equally when you give gifts. And if I were to favor anyone over another, I would favor women over men.”
 - “there is to be no harm nor reciprocating of harm.” (*Sunan Ibn Majah, 2341*)
 - “Do not strike the female servants of God” (*Sunan Abi Dawud 2146, Sunan al-Darimi 2122* (included under “Chapter on the prohibition of hitting women”))
 - “Do not hit them and do not revile them.” (*Sunan Abi Dawud 2144*)

MEN&WOMEN

- But
 - 4:34
 - Men are in charge of [are guardians of/are superior to/ have authority over/ are protectors and maintainers of]women (al-rijalu qawamuna 'ala l-nisa') because God has endowed one with more [because God has preferred some of them over others](bi-ma fadala Allahu ba'dahum 'ala ba'din) and because they spend of their means (wa-bi-ma anfaqu min amwalihim). Therefore the righteous women are obedient [devout/virtuous](qanitat), guarding in secret that which God has guarded. As to those from whom you fear rebellion [disloyalty/ ill-conduct/ haughtiness/ desertion/ aversion](nushuzahuna), admonish them and banish them to separate beds, and beat them [go to bed with them when they are willing]. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. For God is Exalted, Great' (Qur'an verse 4:34)

MEN&WOMEN

- Or
 - „people who appoint a woman to run their affairs shall never succeed” (Al-Bukhari 1422H, vol. 6, 88, hadith no 4428; al-Tirmidhi 1998, vol. 4, 97, hadith 2262)
 - Thus: „woman is not permitted to hold positions of ruling such as Khalifa (vicegerent) as Mu’awin (assistant), Wali (governor), ‘Amil (Major)“ (Muhibbu-Din 2019)

ISLAM, GOVERNMENT, POLITICS...

- We need to understand dichotomy of "public" and "private" spheres
 - Private = domestic, within the premises of house and family
 - Public = social and political sphere
- Some scholars denounced women from public
 - “And stay in your house, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance” (Quran 33:33)
- Others claim that if she can take care of the family, there is nothing in the authentic sources of Islam that prevents her from running for political offices
 - But: „ Here, it must be stressed at all times that Islam considers a woman’s role as a mother to be the noblest duty she can ever perform; nothing else can replace it.“ (Mohan 2008).
- Women expected to give bay’ah (allegiance) to the Caliph -> women are allowed to participate in electoral politics (Muhibbu-Din 2019)
- Patriarchy vs religion vs ethnicity

FEMINISM

- Contra patriarchy
- Difference between Islam and society conditions
- Rejection of the idea that the Islam is primary determinant of the status and conditions of women
- Islamic feminism
 - Feminist interpretation of Islamic faith
 - Liberal view of Islam and attempts to adopt the religion to modern time
 - Patriarchal view of Islam is not necessary an "authentic Islam"
 - Fatima Mernissi a Azitah Al-Hibri

FEMINISM II

- Attempts to rethink some of traditional concepts
 - Musawah and project on *qiwamah* and *wilayah*
 - Barlas on veiling

FATIMA MERNISI

- Moroccan sociologist
- Studies on sexual politics of Islamic Scripture
- One of the primary ways of manipulation of women was control of the physical space that women are allowed to occupy
 - Criticism over western matters of sexual politics too
- *“If women’s rights are a problem for some modern Muslim men, it is neither because of the Quran nor the Prophet, nor the Islamic tradition, but simply because those rights conflict with the interests of a male elite,”*
 - *“The Veil and the Male Elite.”*

-
- *„Why, they ask, should the way that 10th-century Baghdadi men read the Quran dictate the rights of a 21st-century woman?“*
 - Important question – what about feminism? Does it belong to Middle East? Is it just a Western concept? Do you accept Islam feminism?

WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY

- Case studies limitation
 - Data shortage
 - Especially on local level
 - Biases
- Women representation in parliament in Arab States: 19%
- Concepts of „State feminism“ and it's critique
 - Illusion of willingness to democratize
 - Repression of civil society-led pushes
 - Beneficial only for bourgeois and upper-class women

WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY

- We can categorize political activity into three types (Gibson 2014)
 - Political discourse and community
 - affiliated activities such as meetings
 - Political protests and demonstrations
 - Palestinian women in Lebanon during the civil war (75-91) and in the west bank during the first intifada
 - Holding public office
 - Women representation in parliaments
- Individual vs community

WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY: BARRIERS (ESCWA 2017)

Sociocultural barriers

- Gender-specific roles and representation
- Perception of politics as an unsafe space for women
- Conservative interpretation of religion
 - Women in a conservative religious environment are, on average, less likely to seek to participate in politics, owing to their own preferences or those of their male relatives
- Islamist parties less likely to include women on their electoral list

Institutional barriers

- Enduring legal discrimination
- Low rates of political and economic participation for women
- Gender-blind institutions and processes
- Absence of an enabling environment for civil society organizations
- Male dominance over political parties

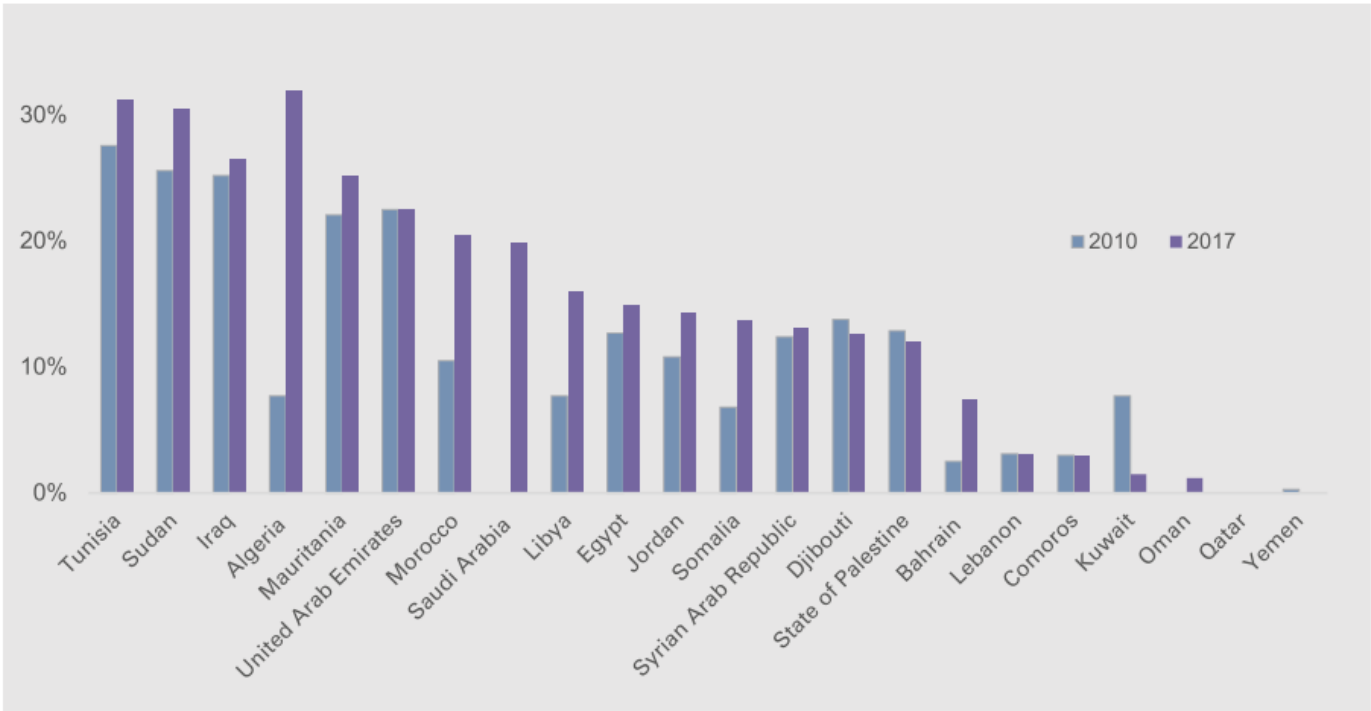
ARAB REGION AND NUMBERS

Country	Year of suffrage
Lebanon	1952
Syrian Arab Republic	1949 (vote); 1953 (suffrage)
Comoros	1956
Egypt	1956
Somalia	1956
Tunisia	1957 (vote in municipal elections); 1959 (suffrage)
Mauritania	1961
Algeria	1962
Morocco	1963
Libya	1964
Sudan	1964
Yemen	1970
Jordan	1974 (exercised for the first time in 1989)
Iraq	1980
Djibouti	1946 (vote); 1986 (suffrage)
State of Palestine	1994 ^a
Oman	1997
Qatar	1999
Bahrain	2002
Kuwait	2005
United Arab Emirates	2006
Saudi Arabia	2011 (exercised for the first time in 2015)

Source: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm#Note3> and
http://www.suffrage.org/?page_id=68

ARAB REGION AND NUMBERS

Figure 1. Percentage of women in lower or single houses of parliament



Source: Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU).

QUESTIONS FOR YOU!

- Do you have any experiences with the topic you wanna share?
 - From your travels? Family? Community?
- The overall position of women – patriarchy, culture or religion?
 - "Which narrative surrounds you? What is your bubble echoing about women in Islam?"
- Is a „state feminism“ the way? Why? Why not?
- Are quotas the way? Why? Why not?

MOROCCO

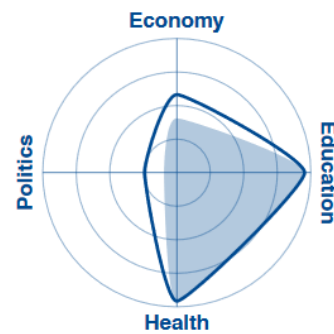
- Year women received right to vote: 1959
- 2002 – 10% quota
 - Before two waves of women activism
 - 1970´-80´: socio- economic advances and modernization, combined with increasing education for young women and professional opportunities for graduates
 - 99/00 - demands for change from population -> reforming conservative family code
- Post-Arab spring reforms
 - From 30 seats to 60 seats quota for women
- 2017 - highest number ever reached of women in cabinet (9 out of 39 members), although only one was a minister the remaining eight held State minister positions

MOROCCO 2020

Morocco

rank
out of 153 countries **143**

score
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity **0.605**



— Morocco score
— average score

Global Gender Gap Index

Economic participation and opportunity
Educational attainment
Health and survival
Political empowerment

	2006 score	2020 score	
107	0.583	143	0.605
102	0.461	146	0.405
99	0.848	115	0.956
90	0.968	138	0.963
92	0.053	123	0.095

MOROCCO 2020

- Women in parliament: 20.5%
- Women in ministerial position: 5.6%
- Unemployed: 10.23%



KUWAIT

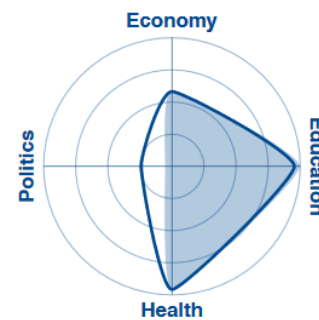
- Sunni majority, around 70%, being administrative and political elite
- Since 90´ protests, 2004 protesting inside the parliament hall
- 2005: Women can vote; run for parliamentary and municipal offices
- Survey (2002, data from 1994)
 - older, more educated Sunnis and those who live outside of Kuwait City did not support increasing women's political rights
 - Sunni men were significantly more supportive of women's rights than Sunni women
 - Sunnis who belonged to volunteer organizations supported women's rights and those who supported Islamic movements abroad did not
 - Orthodox respondents firmly supported including women, but those who cherished Islamic appearance codes did not
 - All of the Gulf War experiences negated inclusive attitudes towards women.

KUWAIT 2020

Kuwait

rank **122**
out of 153 countries

score **0.650**
0.00 = parity
1.00 = parity



— Kuwait score
— average score

	2006 score	2006 score	2020 score	2020 score
Global Gender Gap Index	86	0.634	122	0.650
Economic participation and opportunity	72	0.577	120	0.589
Educational attainment	41	0.993	57	0.997
Health and survival	105	0.961	143	0.961
Political empowerment	114	0.005	142	0.053

KUWAIT 2020


- Women in parliament: 4.6%
- Women in ministerial position: 13.3%
- Unemployed: 5.84%



IRAN, THE SHIA EXAMPLE

- Iran - International women days is not celebrated; but the day of Prophet's daughter is
- Year women received right to vote: 1963 (before regional neighbours)
- Women supported Iranian revolution

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN DAY

 r/islam


Posts

↑ Posted by u/BouncyFunction 1 month ago
0
↓

Celebrating International Women's day is Haaram.

islamqa.org/hanafi...

Islamic Study / Article



21 Comments Give Award Share Save Hide Report

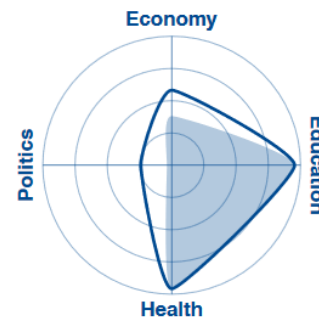
34% Upvoted

IRAN 2020

Iran, Islamic Rep.

rank **148**
out of 153 countries

score **0.584**
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity



Iran, Islamic Rep. score
average score

Global Gender Gap Index

	2006 score	2020 score
Global Gender Gap Index	108	148
Economic participation and opportunity	0.359	0.381
Educational attainment	80	118
Health and survival	52	130
Political empowerment	109	145

IRAN 2020

- Women in parliament: 19.9%
- Women in ministerial position: 0
- Unemployed: 22.58%



BANGLADESH

- Muslim political identity claimed 1947
- 1971 independence, new constitution, secular character
- Year women revived right to vote: 2005
- Women
- Barriers (2005-2014)

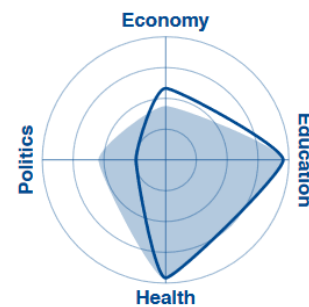
A woman should not be concerned with a man's world. She is supposed to take care of her man's home. But nowadays it is a fashion among both men and women to talk about politics. Our women are voters now and they are also conscious about their voting power. The laws of this country are taking our women out of our homes. This is bad. What a woman is going to do with her voting power; she does not know whom she cast her vote for. It is, in fact, a man's world. He precisely knows whom he should cast his vote for. A woman chooses a candidate whom her husband suggests her to choose. Thus, a man nowadays has double voting power, one of his own and the other of his wife's, as his wife always depend on his decision and support.

BANGLADESH 2020 BE LIKE...

Bangladesh

rank **50**
out of 153 countries

score **0.726**
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity



— Bangladesh score
— average score

Global Gender Gap Index

	2006 score	2020 score
Global Gender Gap Index	91	50
Economic participation and opportunity	107	141
Educational attainment	95	120
Health and survival	113	119
Political empowerment	17	7

BANGLADESH 2020 BE LIKE...

- Women in parliament: 20.6%
- Women in ministerial position: 8%
- Unemployed: 6.78%



SAUDI ARABIA

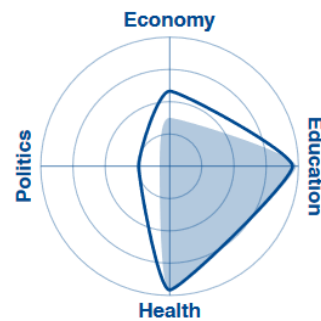
- Reforms
 - Driving
 - Kindergartens
 - Police
- Reasons
 - Economical boost
 - Flattering the demographic line
- But, still arresting women activists
- Year women received right to vote: 2015

SAUDI ARABIA 2020

Saudi Arabia

rank **146**
out of 153 countries

score **0.599**
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity



— Saudi Arabia score
— average score

Global Gender Gap Index

Economic participation and opportunity
Educational attainment
Health and survival
Political empowerment

	2006 score	2020 score	
114	0.524	146	0.599
115	0.240	148	0.375
93	0.880	92	0.983
54	0.977	139	0.963
115	0.000	136	0.077

SAUDI ARABIA 2020

- Women in parliament: 19.9%
- Women in ministerial position: 0
- Unemployed: 22.58%



PAKISTAN

- Year women received right to vote: 1947 (reaffirmed in 1956)
- Raising number in female voters
- Election Act 2017 – 5% for women (Sidiqa 2018)
- Election Commission of Pakistan in 2017 - 10 percent of women had to vote in a constituency for the vote to be valid (Sidiqa 2018)



Ten years of campaigning is finally bearing fruit for activist Naheeda Abbasi

Naheeda Abbasi holds a banner which reads "The vote is your power, your future depends on it" as she explains the electoral process to the gathered women.

One of the veiled women challenges her.

"All our needs are honourably met. Men say we don't have to go out and get disgraced," says the woman.

"With so many men hanging out at polling stations on election day, we'd be better staying at home."

Naheeda Abbasi listens intently and tells her that the Election Commission will set up separate polling stations for women in conservative areas like Dhurnal.

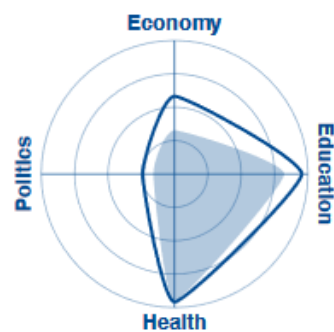
(Jaffery 2018)

PAKISTAN

Pakistan

rank **151**
out of 153 countries

score **0.564**
0.00 = imparity
1.00 = parity

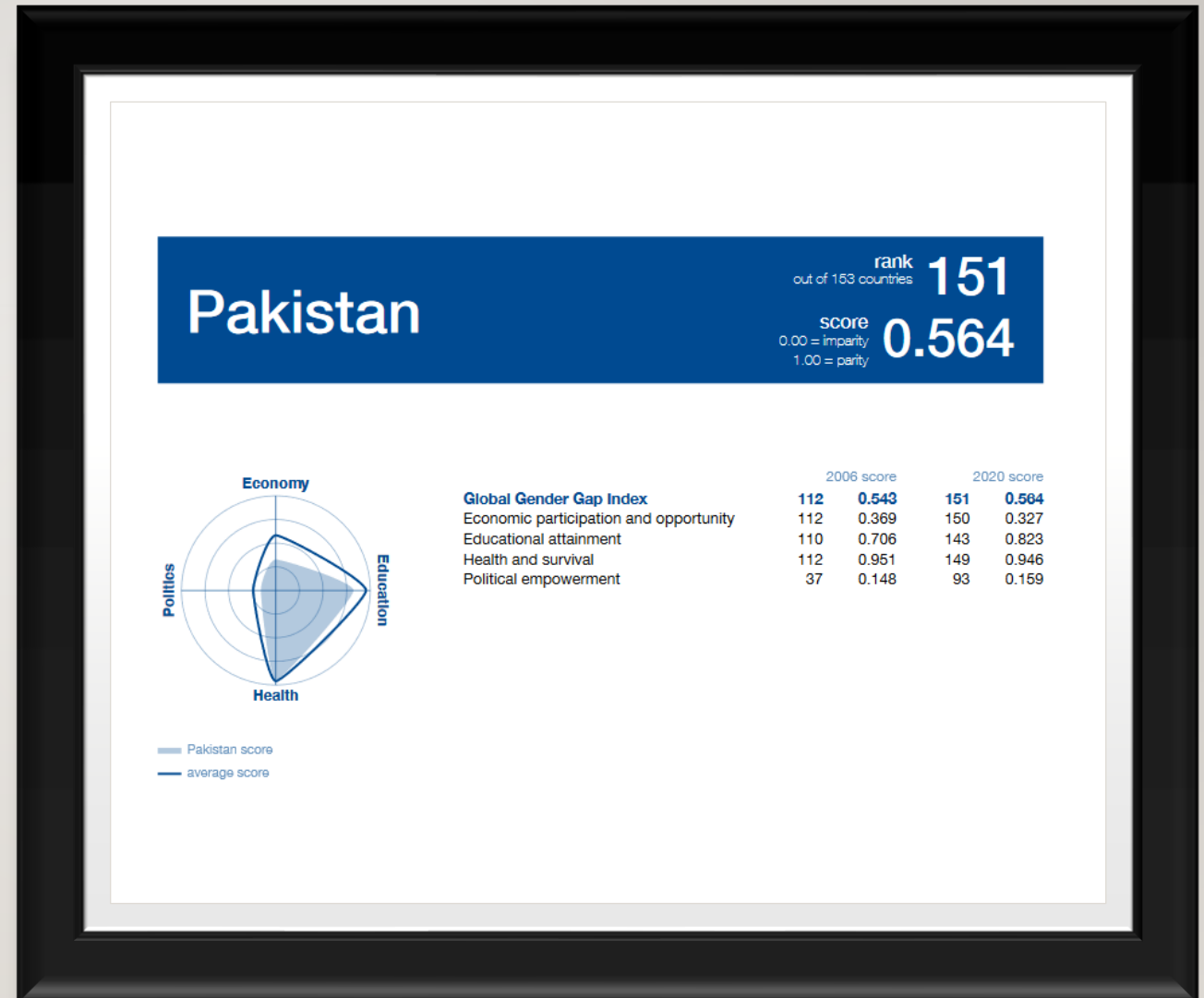


— Pakistan score
— average score

	2006 score		2020 score	
Global Gender Gap Index	112	0.543	151	0.564
Economic participation and opportunity	112	0.369	150	0.327
Educational attainment	110	0.706	143	0.823
Health and survival	112	0.951	149	0.946
Political empowerment	37	0.148	93	0.159

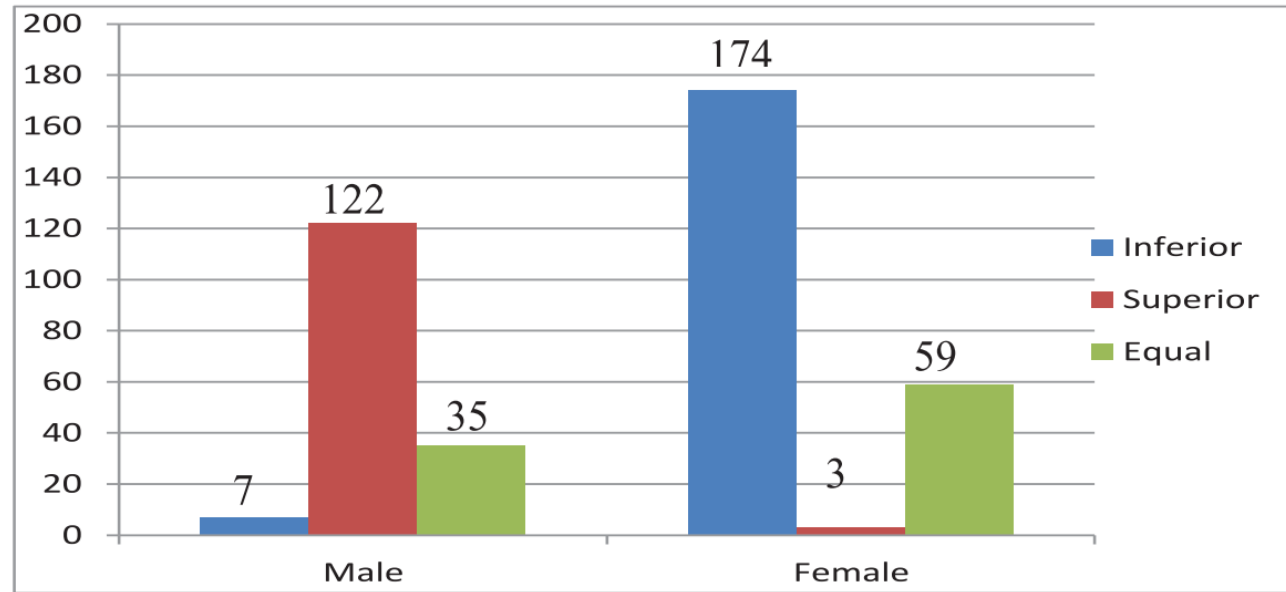
PAKISTAN

- Women in parliament: 20.2%
- Women in ministerial position: 12%
- Unemployed: 4.5%



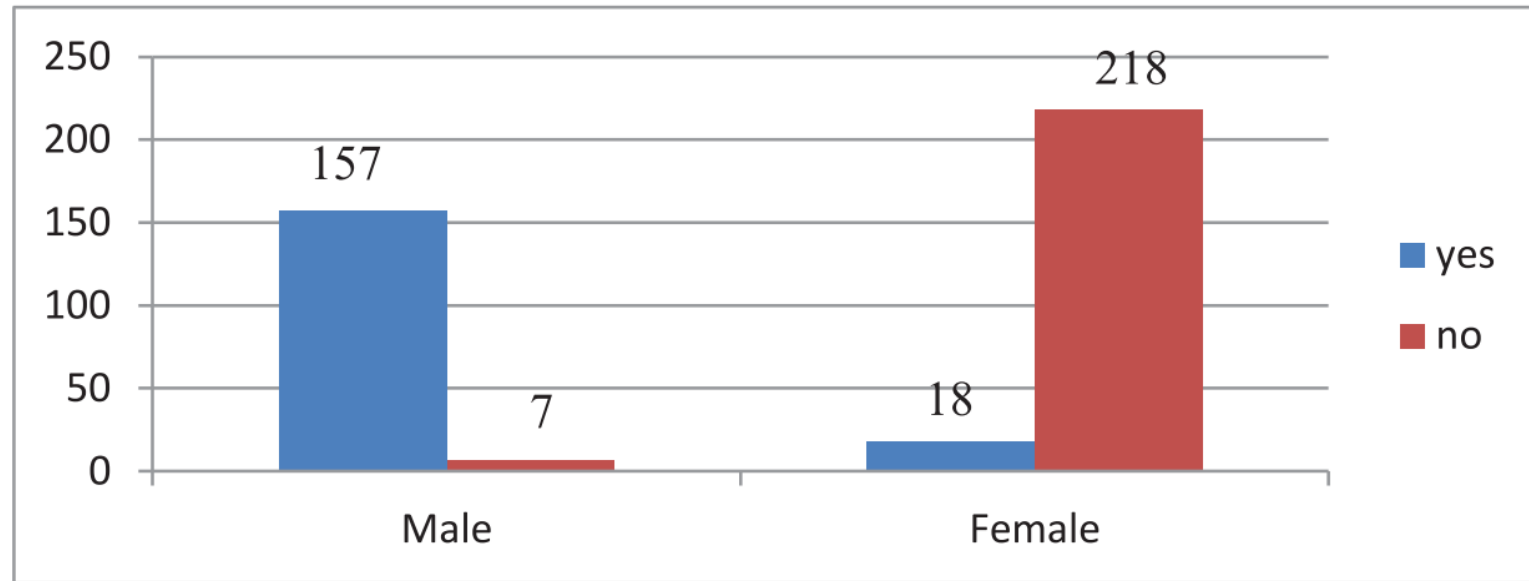
NORTH NIGERIA

Figure 2: Perception of respondents on how existing political structures in their community make them feel about the other gender



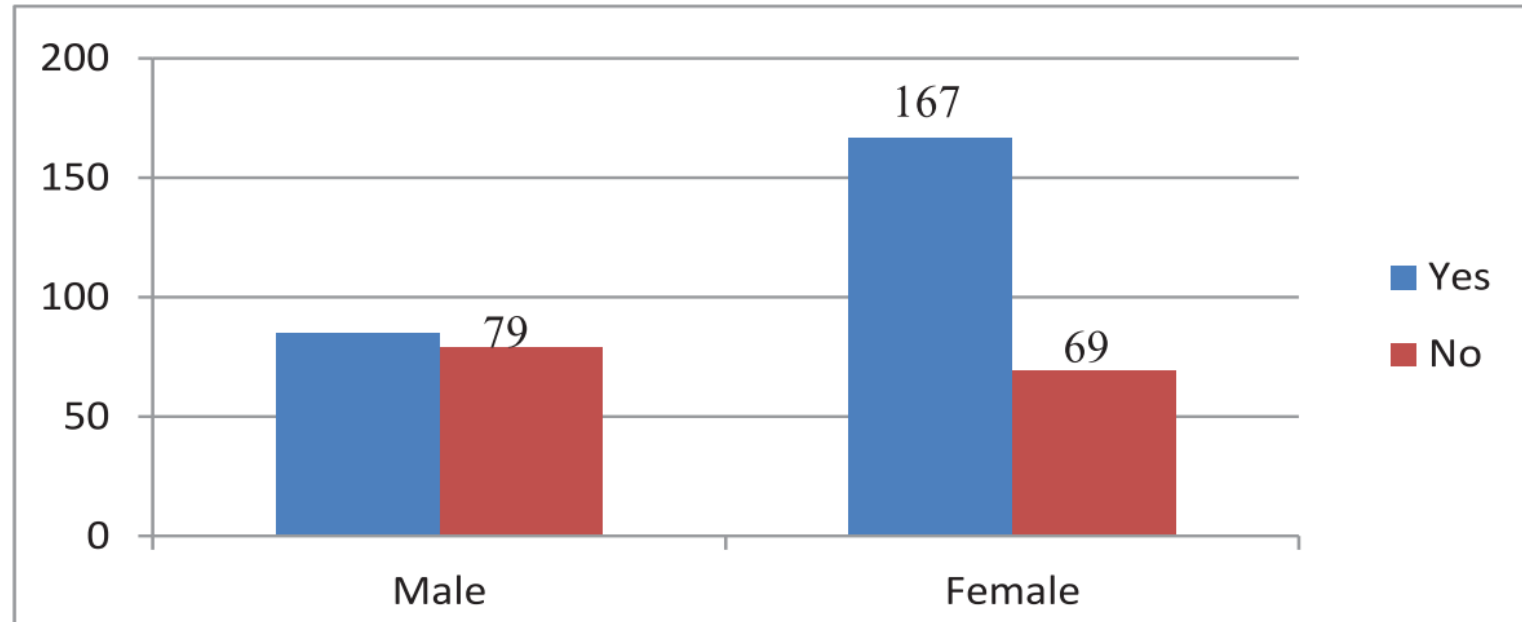
NORTH NIGERIA

Figure 3: Respondents' opinion on whether they can contest for any political office without criticism from the people on the basis of their gender.



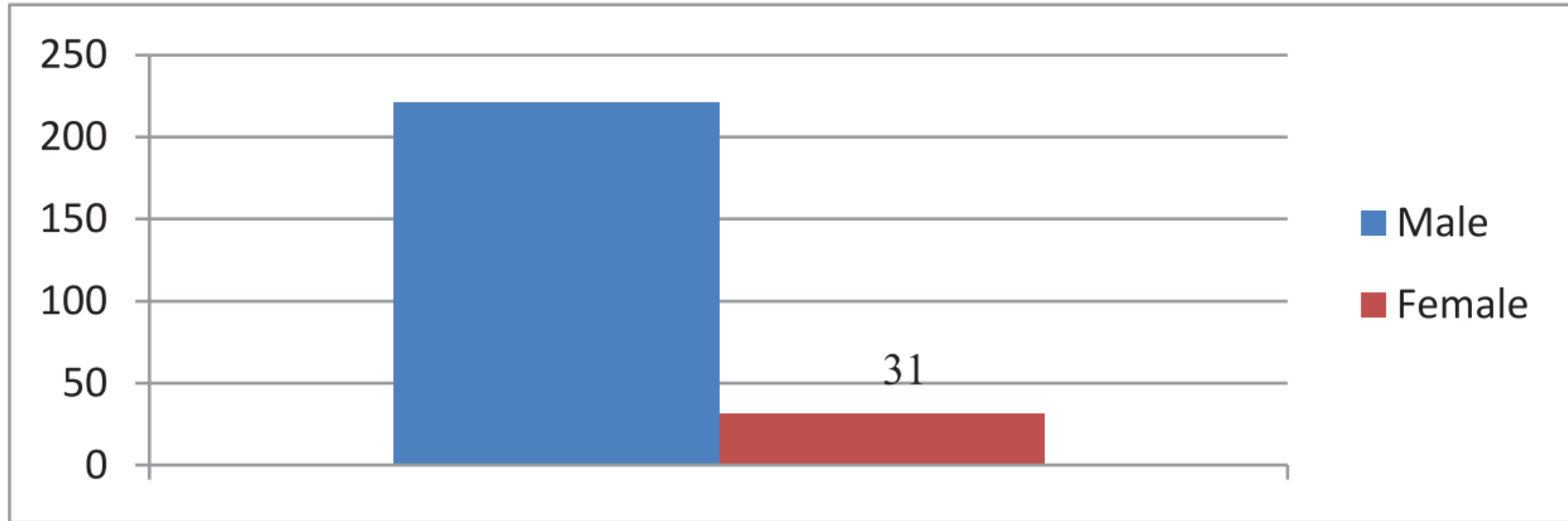
NORTH NIGERIA

Figure 4: Do you think there is gender discrimination in your community?



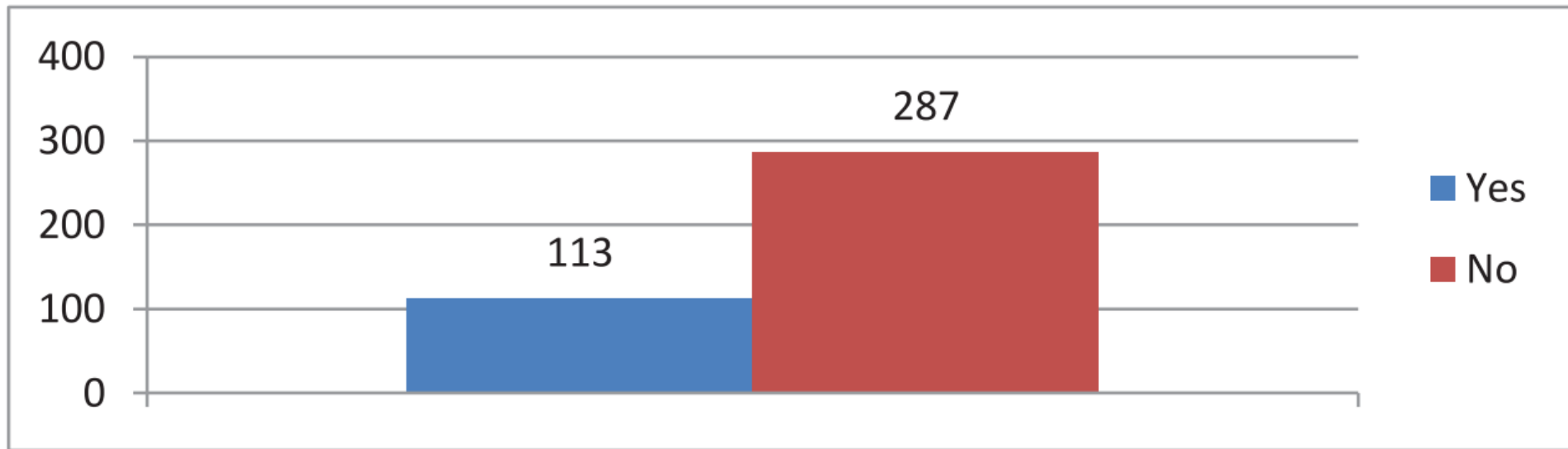
NORTH NIGERIA

Figure 5: Which gender is considered superior in your community?



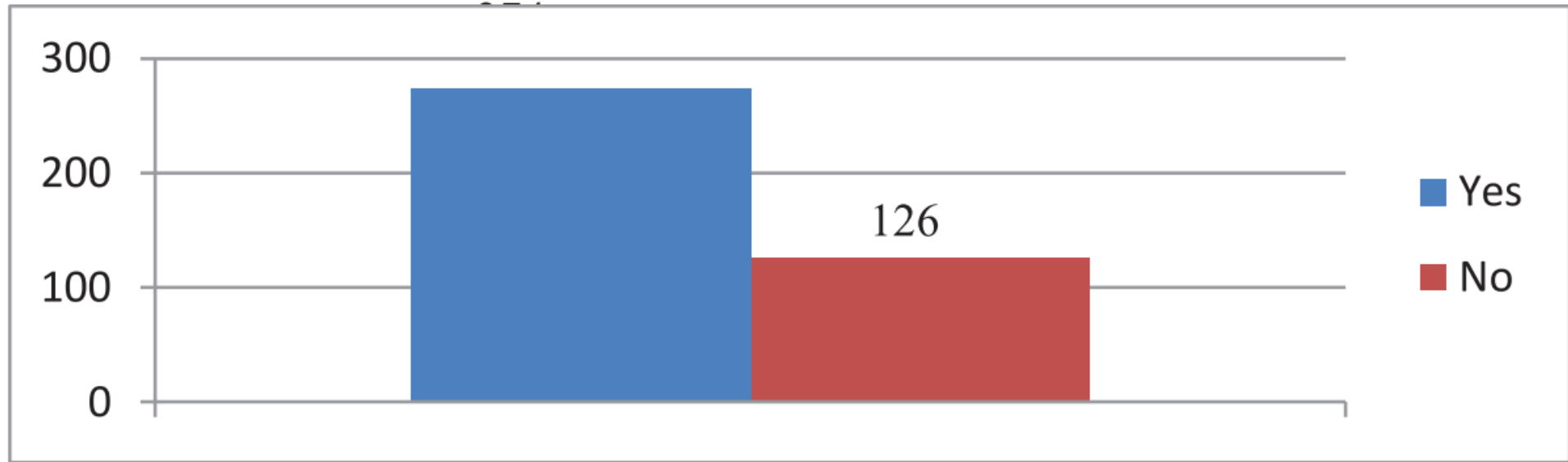
NORTH NIGERIA

Figure 6: Perception of respondents on whether their religion allows for Women participation in politics



NORTH NIGERIA

Figure 7: Do you think women should be allowed to participate in politics?



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- Global Gender Gap Report. 2020.
(http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf)
 - Jaffery, Shumaila. 2018. Change in Pakistan as women seize right to vote
(<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44901521>)
 - Siddiqā, Arhama. 2018. The complex state of women's suffrage in Pakistan
(<https://theasiadialogue.com/2018/09/17/the-complex-state-of-womens-suffrage-in-pakistan/>)