

# **POLLING DAHIYEH**

## **A Hayya Bina Project**

---

**August 2014**

**[www.hayyabina.org](http://www.hayyabina.org)**

## Polling Dahiyeh Achieving an Open, Quantitative and Community-Based Understanding of Lebanon's Shia Community

As Hezbollah's military, political and organizational capabilities continued to rise, the Lebanese Shia community seemed to fade! And while that outcome may seem contradictory, rather like being unable to see the forest for the trees, it deserves appropriate consideration in light of the regional maelstrom from which it is becoming increasingly evident that Lebanon cannot escape.

As we begin, let's forget about the Shia-born Lebanese (as defined by the Lebanese confessional system) that—at least in principle—reject any political movement driven by religion. Let's also ignore the members of Lebanon's Shia community who oppose Hezbollah for political reasons. Instead, let's refresh our minds by remembering that once upon a time, Hezbollah did not exist. Back then, the Lebanese Shia scene was essentially dominated (albeit for a short period) by the Amal Movement! But while

Amal was destined to handle a substantial portion of the Shia pie in Lebanon's confessional system thanks to the Syrian-Iranian appreciation of their mutual influence over that community, from the 1980s on, Lebanese Shia were not usually identified with Amal *and* Hezbollah. Rather, they were seen as synonymous with Hezbollah alone. Over time, impromptu conversation ceased making any distinction between the two and began to use "Hezbollah" and "Shia" interchangeably. Today, even the community itself has adopted that commutable identity.

Despite Hezbollah having asserted its "representation" of large sectors of the Lebanese Shia community (although in this context, the very notion of representation must be deconstructed—and not just from an electoral or political viewpoint), the mutual identity of the organization and the community was usually misinterpreted despite numerous attempts by observers of Lebanese and Shia

# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014

issues to define that symbiosis. Essentially, those results can only be likened to “color blindness.” That myopic tendency even affected the scholarly milieu, which also attempted to understand the behavior of the Lebanese Shia community *from Hezbollah’s perspective*, including the community’s voluntary adherence to that organization. Unfortunately, they neglected to assess the situation from the other perspective: *that of the people involved!* Of course, that “color blindness” was exacerbated over time by the secretive seclusion Hezbollah imposed on the Lebanese Shia community, which effectively stymied any attempt to assess the true conditions within the Lebanese Shia community by equating such efforts to breaches of security that could impair the cohesion of the mythical “People of the Resistance.” This predilection with “security” has indeed become an organic feature of daily life in most of the areas Hezbollah controls.

In view of these and similar challenges, through Hayya Bina’s efforts to constantly refresh its fieldwork and analyses, our organization continues to believe that the community of Lebanese Shia have a great deal more on their minds than what Hezbollah (and/or Amal) may

say *on their behalf* or what election results may suggest as being *their will*. Accordingly, Hayya Bina commenced a project in 2013 titled “Polling Dahiyeh.” So far, that initiative has consisted of two public opinion polls intended to get a firsthand idea of where members of the community stand on a series of important issues.

The ability to acquire and disseminate a quantitative, community-based wealth of information about Lebanon’s Shia community is tantamount to recognizing that demographic as a diverse and evolving body. At the same time, it compels us to cease regarding that community as a monolith that is unaffected by the passage of time. Ultimately, these data should convince us to stop viewing the Lebanese Shia community from an *ideological perspective*, whether that viewpoint relates to Hezbollah or any of its opponents.

Considering the benefits of this initiative, it is easy to understand the importance of repeating the exercise. It is also imperative that it be applied to other Lebanese communities, as the data these assessments yield become increasingly important at a time when Lebanon’s political/security turmoil is being described more often than not as an “existential crisis.”

# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014

As mentioned above, this is the second Dahiye poll Hayya Bina has conducted (along with a specialized company) since that neighborhood can be construed as representative of the various Lebanese Shia political, social and economic profiles and sensitivities<sup>1</sup>. The first poll took place in February 2013 and the most recent was conducted in March of this year. While both polls indicated that as a collective, the Lebanese Shia community is in the ascent, the chief contrast between them is that in the intervening 14 months, Shia opinions have been shaped less by domestic Lebanese considerations than by the Syrian “factor.” Specifically, Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian conflict was responsible for having created new living conditions characterized by the prevalence of security measures, an escalation of Shia-Sunni sectarian strife and a dramatic downturn in the local economy.

At this point, the impact the Syrian war has made on the Lebanese Shia community seems immeasurable and therefore comparable only to the deleterious effects the community experienced due to the July War of 2006. In contrast to the aftermath of that war when Hezbollah’s propaganda machine ascribed to the Lebanese Shia community an almost biblical sense of prowess by characterizing the outcome of that conflict as a “Divine Victory” (a dramatization the community largely chose to believe), the Syrian war appears to be rectifying that communal hubris. By August 2014, it has become clear that the era of the “swollen ego” has passed. Today, the Lebanese Shia community—Hassan Nasrallah included—is steadily moving away from that self-professed divinity and rediscovering the inescapable principles of *reality*. In doing so, the community is experiencing every example of the trauma such a shift imposes<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The results of “Polling Dahiye 2013” are available for review at: [www.ShiaWatch.com](http://www.ShiaWatch.com)

<sup>2</sup> To commemorate the eighth anniversary of the July 2006 war, *al-Akhbar* published a rambling, two-part interview with Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. For the first time, many of the questions asked were personal and family oriented. Quite obviously, the interview was intended to bolster Hezbollah’s image as a “human” organization, since its tone helped distinguish Hezbollah from other organizations considered to adhere to an “inhuman” form of Islam.

## Why Dahiyeh?

In spring 2013, Hayya Bina conducted the first in a series of polls that examine attitudes among Lebanese Shia on a range of sociopolitical/socioeconomic issues. In that first survey, the sample was culled exclusively from the southern suburbs of Beirut, an area referred to collectively as Dahiyeh.

Due to internal displacement and migrations since the 1970s, Dahiyeh has become broadly representative of Lebanon's Shia and serves as the political hub for the community's leading political institution, Hezbollah. Thus, Dahiyeh is an ideal setting for quantitative examination of this important population.

In the year since the initial survey, a number of developments, both national and regional, have directly implicated Lebanon's Shia, specifically those living in Dahiyeh. These include:

- Hezbollah's increased involvement in the Syrian conflict, including its role in the Assad regime's war efforts such as the recapture of the strategic region of Qalamoun
- The reemergence of car bombs and suicide bombers in Beirut, the majority of which have targeted Dahiyeh and its outskirts since 2013
- The "fortification" of Dahiyeh by state security institutions—in concert with Hezbollah—to contain threats to the Shia community for which Dahiyeh is a conspicuous symbol

# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014

- Economic paralysis in Dahiyeh due to the security situation
- Marked rise in Sunni-Shia tensions in Lebanon due to respective communal sentiments towards the crisis in neighboring Syria and the impact being felt across Lebanon (which manifests itself in the ongoing strife in Tripoli, instability along the border region where hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees are sheltering, and the bombings in Dahiyeh itself).

To gauge the overall impact of these developments on Shia attitudes in Lebanon, Hayya Bina again polled Dahiyeh residents in March 2014.

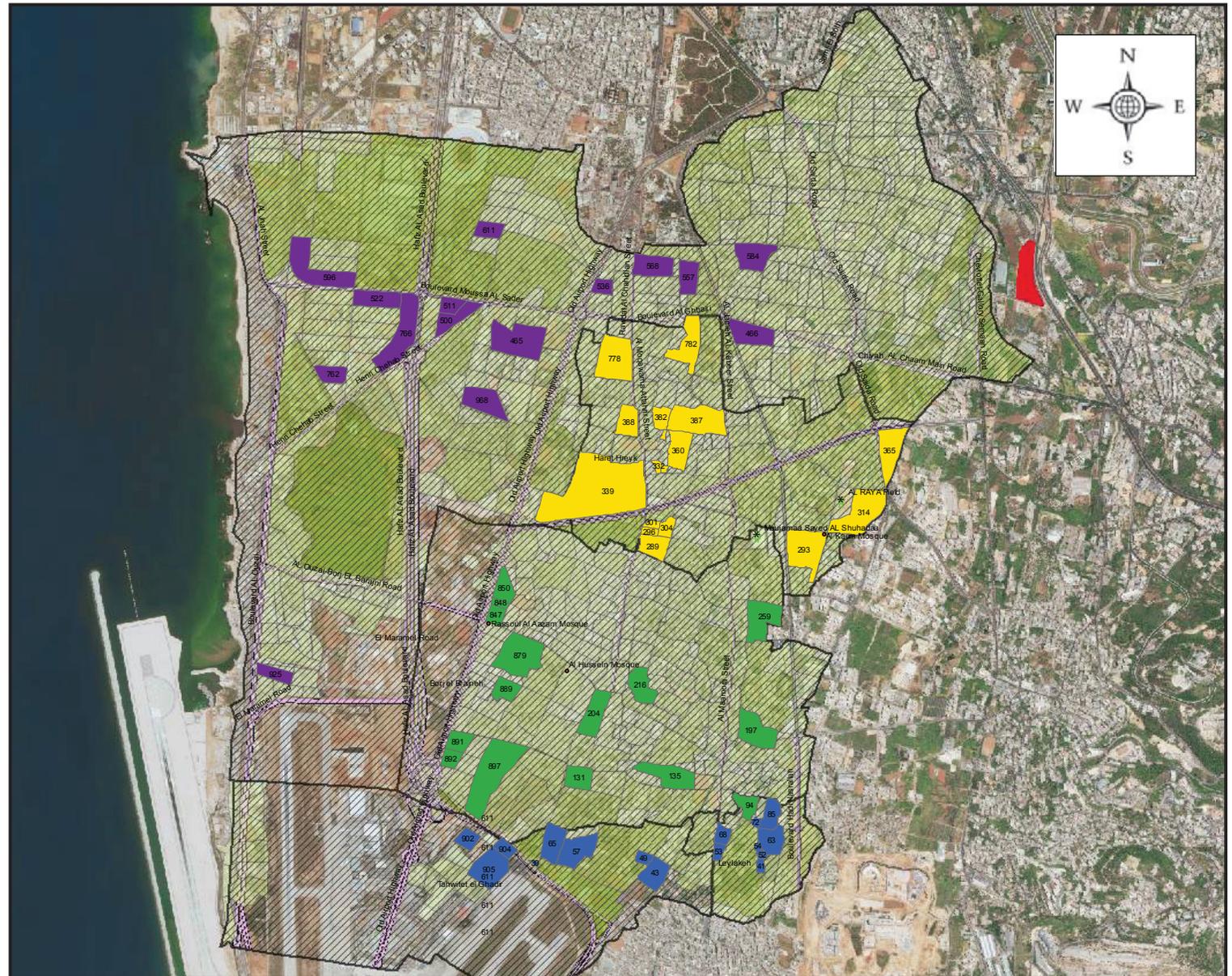
## METHODOLOGY

- The survey was overseen by Hayya Bina, which also provided the analysis and presentation. Fieldwork was conducted by a regional research company, and was administered by 20 field workers.
- The survey was conducted March 18 to March 31, 2014
- The sample size was 600 men and women (50/50) over the age of 18, which was identical to Hayya Bina's 2013 poll
- The sample by neighborhood and frequency: Chiyah-Ghobeiry: 150 (25%); Haret Hreik: 150 (25%); Bourj al-Barajneh:150 (25%), Hay al-Selloum:150 (25%)
- The sample was drawn using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling technique
- Interviews were conducted face-to-face
- Statistical data analysis was conducted using SPSS 21
- Calculated margin of error: +/-4.9%
- Response rate for this survey was 48% (compared to 65% for the 2013 survey)
- Figures in charts or tables may not add up to 100% due to rounding

# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Haya Bina Project

August 2014



-  Chiyah-Ghobeiry clusters  
(Including Bir Hassan)
-  Haret Hreik clusters
-  Hay al-Selloum clusters  
(Including Laylake-Tahwit al-Ghadir)
-  Bourj al-Barajneh clusters

## Selective timeline

October 2013 – March 2014

### October 2013

- 4** A new security plan for Tripoli is announced
- 8** In an effort to ease tensions between Sunni and Shia, Hezbollah announces the dissolution of its Saida branch of the “Resistance Brigades”
- 10** The Special Tribunal for Lebanon accuses a fifth Hezbollah member of involvement in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri
- 13** A car bomb is dismantled in Dahiyeh
- 19** The Lebanese Shia kidnapped in northern Syria and the Turkish pilots are released.

### November 2013

- 5** Ali Eid, the leader of Lebanon’s Alawi community, is accused of involvement in the bombing of two Sunni mosques in Tripoli
- 12** A member of the pro-Hezbollah “Islamic Action Front” is assassinated in Tripoli
- 19** A pair of suicide bombings target the Iranian Embassy located in Beirut’s southern suburb
- 23** A car bomb is discovered near Baalbek
- 25** Clashes erupt between Christian and Hezbollah-affiliated students at Université Saint-Joseph
- 30** Another round of violence begins in Tripoli.

### December 2013

- 2** The LAF is given a new mandate to pacify Tripoli  
An explosion in the Ayn el-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp kills one and injures four

- 4** Hezbollah accuses Israel of having assassinated one of its top security officer in Beirut’s southern suburb
- 6** Clashes in Tripoli between Sunni groups and the LAF
- 15** A soldier is killed in a suicide attack at an LAF checkpoint near Saida
- 17** An explosion rocks a Hezbollah camp in the Bekaa
- 22** A random altercation between two families evolves into Sunni-Shia fighting in the west Bekaa village of Sawire
- 27** Former minister Mohammed Shatah is assassinated by a car bomb in downtown Beirut
- 29** President Michel Suleiman announces that Saudi Arabia has offered the LAF \$3 billion worth of equipment from France
- 30** LAF fires on Syrian aircraft over Arsal.

### January 2014

- 1** LAF intelligence arrests Saudi national Majed al-Majed accused of masterminding the Qaeda-affiliated Abdullah Azzam Brigades
- 2** Suicide bombing in Haret Hreik
- 4** The LAF announces the death of Majed al-Majed  
Burning of Tripoli’s historical bookshop “as-Saeh,” which belongs to a Greek Orthodox cleric
- 15** LAF intelligence arrests another senior member of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades in the Sunni Bekaa west
- 16** The STL officially convenes sessions in The Hague  
Suicide bombing in Hermel
- 17** Heavy shelling occurs in Arsal killing seven people
- 21** Suicide bombing in Haret Hreik.

# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014

## February 2014

- 1** Suicide bombing at a gas station in Hermel
  - 3** Suicide bombing in Shoueifat (south of Dahiyeh) of a minibus headed to Dahiyeh
  - 4** Shia residents of Hermel warn Arsal residents who do not support the takfiri to leave the village within 48 hours
  - 12** In Beirut, LAF intelligence agents arrest Naim Abbas, who is accused of being an explosives expert working for radical Islamist groups
- The LAF intercepts a car laden with explosives as it departs Arsal—three female passengers were in the vehicle
- 15** Eleven months and three weeks after the resignation of Najib Mikati's government, Tammam Salam succeeds in forming a new Lebanese government
  - 16** Shelling in Arsal kills eight and wounds 15
  - 19** Twin suicide bombing of the Iranian Cultural Center (Dahiyeh)
  - 20** Assassination of a senior Alawi figure in Tripoli
  - 23** Suicide attack at an LAF checkpoint in Hermel
  - 24** An investigation judge of the military court sentences Alawi leader Ali Eid to death for the role he played in the twin bombings that targeted Sunni mosques in Tripoli in August 2013
  - 28** An investigation judge of the military court sentences Sheikh Ahmad al Assir and 56 others to death

A raid is conducted against a Hezbollah position along the Lebanese-Syrian border.

## March 2014

- 1** President Michel Suleiman describes Hezbollah's motto ("Army, People, Resistance") of being a hollow stereotype, which prompts harsh responses from Hezbollah and its affiliates
- The "nuns of Maaloula" (Qalamoun) are freed thanks to Qatari intercession which was assisted by Lebanese General Abbas Ibrahim (director general of the General Security office)
- 11** A senior Palestinian officer is assassinated in the Ain el-Helwe camp
  - 13** A new round of violence erupts in Tripoli
  - 14** A roadside bomb hits an Israeli patrol in the Shebaa Farms area
  - 15** The Syrian army, assisted by Hezbollah, takes over the city of Yabrood (Qalamoun)
- Several rockets hit Shia villages near Arsal
- 16** Suicide attack against a Hezbollah patrol in Nabi Sheet (Northern Bekaa)
  - 20** Tammam Salam's cabinet passes the confidence vote
  - 23** An armed clash takes place between Hezbollah and radical Islamists near Beirut Stadium
  - 29** Suicide bombing of an LAF outpost in Arsal Heights killing three
  - 31** The National Dialogue Table meets at the presidential palace without Hezbollah participation.

## MAIN FINDINGS

- Country headed in the wrong direction:** 59% of Dahiyeh's residents believe that Lebanon is heading in the "wrong direction." Additionally, 74% say that their financial situation is worse than it was a year ago.
- Shia identity on the rise:** Results indicate a rising strength of "Shia" identity with 46% of respondents saying that it is their greatest source of pride. Self-identification with being Shia was strongest among respondents aged 18-29.
- Support for Political Leaders:** 53% of respondents say Hassan Nasrallah is the leader they trust most, followed by Nabih Berri at 18% – a boost for both from a year ago.
- Shia-Sunni tensions running high:** 59% view their community's relationship with Sunnis as "bad" or "very bad." Significantly, 90% of those queried view "decreasing sectarianism" as a national priority for the coming 10 years. In comparison, 76% of those polled see the relationship with the Christian community as good.
- Shia seek a bigger piece of the power-sharing pie:** 86% believe the Taif Agreement needs to be revisited.
- Support for Elections:** 75% of Dahiyeh's residents say they would like to see parliamentary elections held this year.
- Support for Hezbollah in Syria:** While 75% of respondents say they know someone killed in the fighting in Syria, 95% say the community supports Hezbollah's

involvement there. Respondents also believe Hezbollah's intervention has made them more secure (83%), and a majority (66%) believe that Hezbollah is fighting in Syria on behalf of Lebanon.

- **Iran-U.S. Dialogue:** 62% of respondents believe that the Shia community will benefit from dialogue between Iran and the U.S. while 37% believe otherwise.
  
- **Lebanese state and “Resistance” both play an important security role:** 44.9% of respondents said Lebanese state institutions were providing security in their area while 52.6% identified Hezbollah as playing that role. Although attitudes toward the LAF were highly favorable (83%), Hezbollah security received a higher job performance rating (86.6% vs. 60.9%). Nevertheless, the majority of respondents view security as the responsibility of the Lebanese state.
  
- **Sizable diversity of opinion on a range of issues:** Respondents demonstrated widely contrasting viewpoints on most of the questions when disaggregated by area.

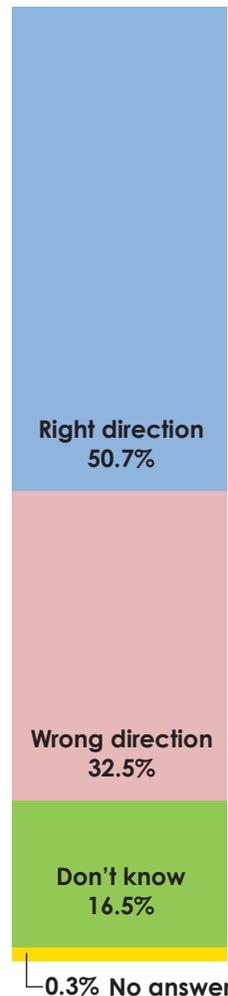
# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014

## 1.1 Do you feel that things are going in the right direction in your neighborhood?

50.7% “Right Direction”...



Just over half (50.7%) of all respondents believe that “things are going in the right direction in their neighborhood.” This represents an increase from last year’s results, when only 37.8% felt the same way.

These results are interesting since security conditions deteriorated significantly in the months before the poll; however, when the poll was being taken, Dahiyeh had not experienced a bombing for several weeks. As a result, the perceived improvement in the overall security situation may have influenced respondents to adopt a more positive outlook.

It should be noted that when categorized by area, only 35.3% of the respondents from Haret Hreik (the lowest results posted) felt that things were moving in the right direction in their neighborhood. That outcome may be explained by the fact that Haret Hreik was targeted most often by car bombings.

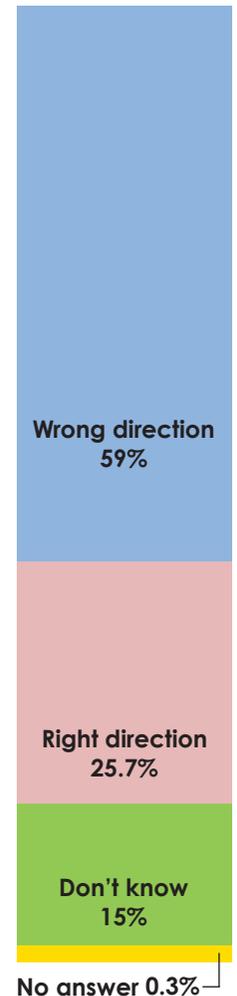
Nevertheless, these results must be considered in comparison to another poll question: “Do you think the country is headed in the right direction?”

Interestingly, 59% of the respondents indicated “No.”

The distinction apparent between the right direction being indicated on the local

## 1.2 Do you think the country is headed in the right direction?

59% “Wrong Direction”...



# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014

scale and the wrong direction being indicated on the national scale reflects a prevailing, community oriented, quasi-autonomous feeling of belonging to a larger body.

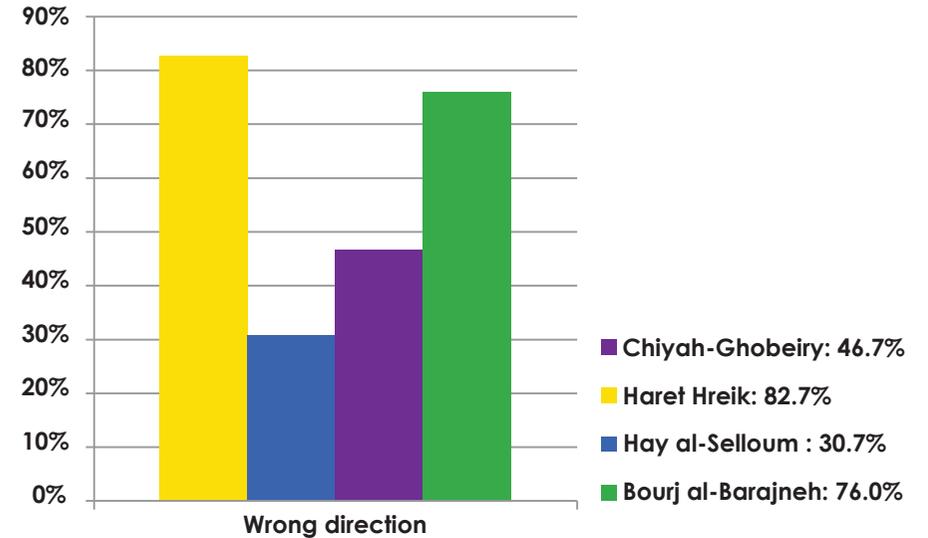
Still, the wrong direction being indicated on the nation scale mirrors the results displayed later in the poll (Q1.6). 73.7% report that their economic situation is worse than last year.

In terms of sectarian tension, the mood is also negative. 58.8% of those polled described the relationship between their community and their Sunni counterparts as "bad." Furthermore, 62% described their relationship with the Palestinians in much the same way. Overall, this outcome should not be surprising given the sustained Sunni-Shia sectarian polarization of the country.

## 1.2 Do you think the country is headed in the “right direction?” Breakdown by area and age

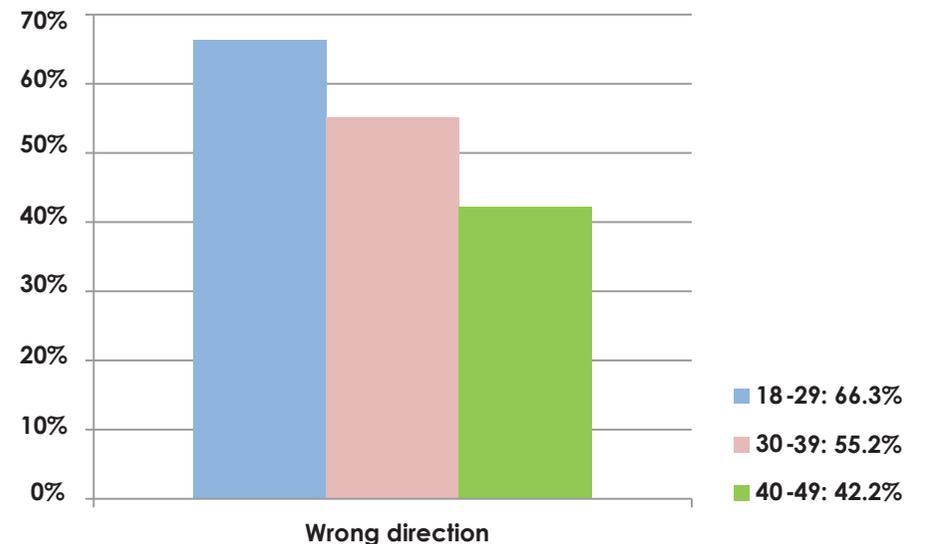
### ■ Breakdown by area

When broken down by area, respondents from Haret Hreik indicated the most negative outlook: 82.7% stated that the country is heading in the wrong direction.



### ■ Breakdown by age

When broken down by age, younger (18-29) respondents had a more negative opinion about the direction in which the country is heading. Aside from contributing social factors (especially unemployment), the youth are at the forefront, symbolically and physically, of the sectarian “confrontations” occurring in Lebanon and Syria. The results posted about the state of sectarian tensions substantiate that assertion.



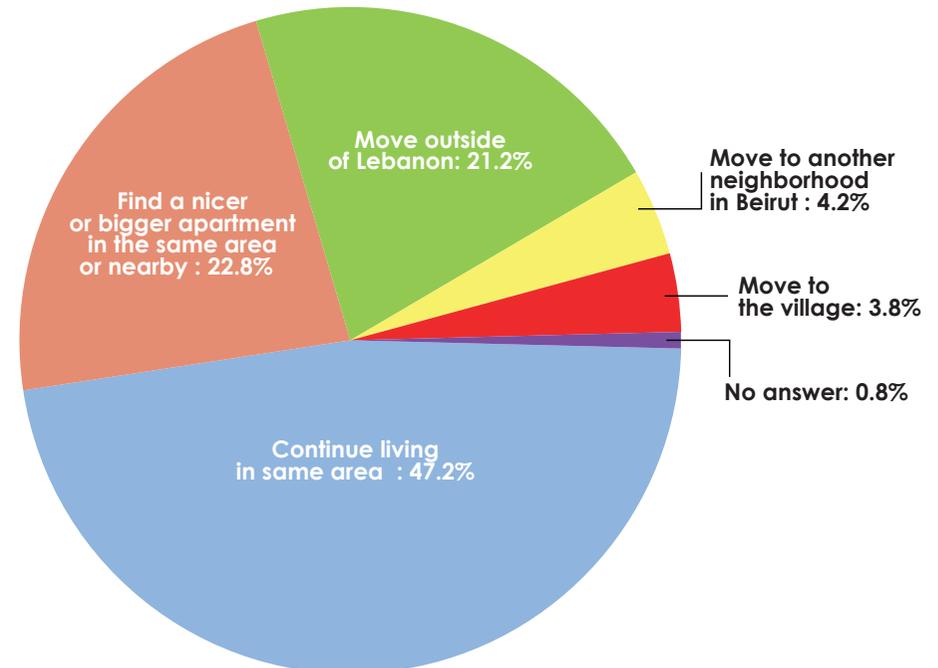
According to figures published recently by the Lebanese Labor Ministry, “the unemployment rate ranges between [...] 22 – 23% and rises to 33% amongst the youth.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.weeportal.lb.org/content/minister-labor-lebanon%E2%80%99s-unemployment-rate-exceeds-23-amidst-poor-estimates-and-limited>

## 1.3 What are your plans for the next 5 years?

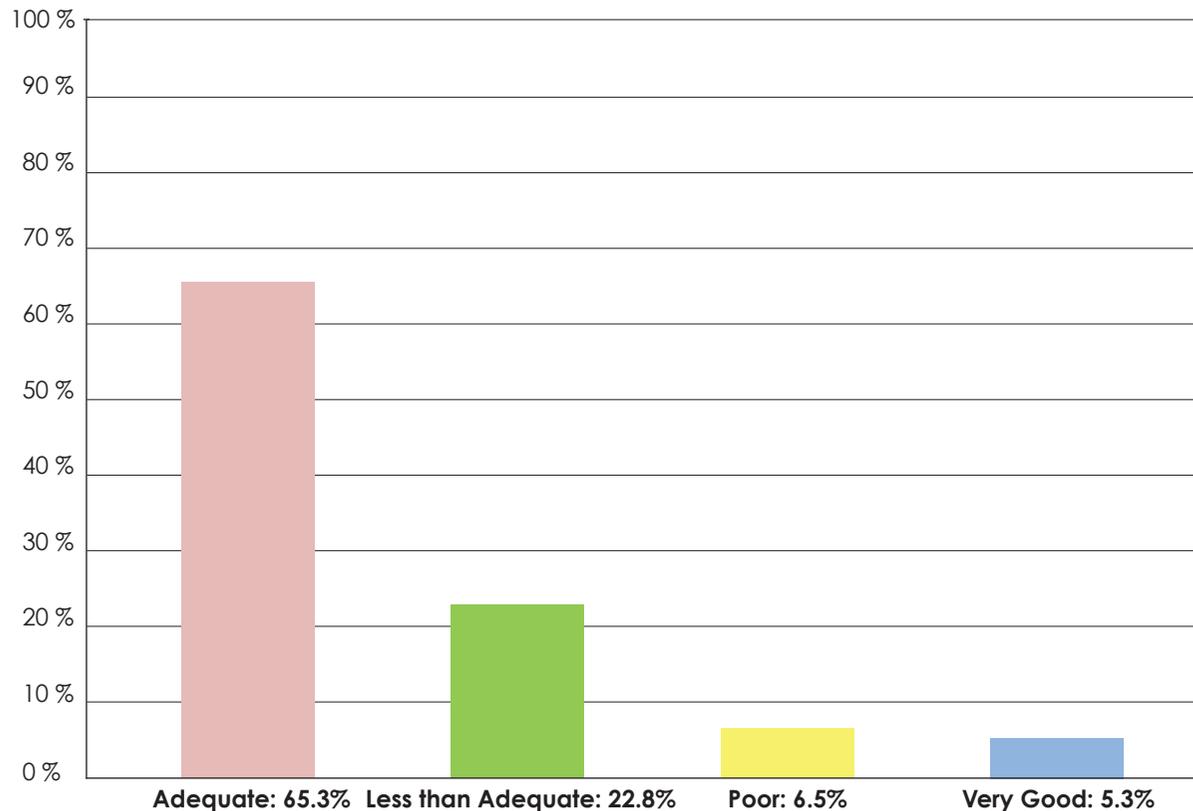
### A suburb in limbo...

Less than half of all respondents (47.2%) indicated the belief that they will continue to live in the same area during the next 5 years, an outcome down from over 60% in the 2013 poll. A further 22.8% also expressed plans to move. In fact, many have moved to “safer” areas on the periphery of Dahiyeh or to adjacent neighborhoods such as Ein al-Roumaneh and Hadath (historically Christian regions to the east). It is important to note that during the poll, a significant number of Dahiyeh residents had already left the area due to the situation. Accordingly, the results could actually be more dramatic. The observation concerning people who have departed the area was made by the polling teams, who noticed that the locations they visited the previous year had been deserted. For those who indicated a desire to move outside of Lebanon, the top three preferred destinations are Germany, Canada and the USA.



## 1.4 How would you describe your personal/household financial situation?

**Dahiyeh: hardly a slum...**



Although Dahiyeh is often stereotyped as an impoverished ghetto, its residents are generally comfortable with their financial situation. In reality, Dahiyeh is comprised of a range of neighborhoods that vary from multimillion-dollar apartments to makeshift dwellings. Haret Hreik, Dahiyeh's "downtown" and former location of Hezbollah's security square, is home to largely middle class residents, and it is the area's economic hub.

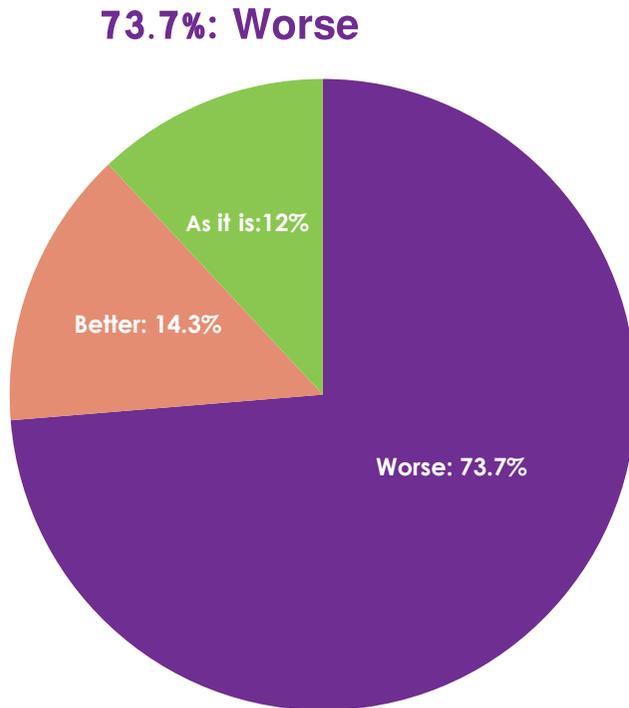
In contrast to the stereotypical image created and maintained for Dahiyeh, this real estate project in Bir Hassan describes itself as:

"Offering the comfort and modernity of a hassle-free 21st

century lifestyle, Mercury Residence is in a prime location in the center of the Bir Hassan district of Beirut. Twelve apartments, ranging from 240 to 400 square meters in size, are built over five floors, each featuring all the conveniences and amenities necessary for high-end living."



## 1.5 Is your financial situation better or worse since last year?



73.7% reported that their financial situation was worse than the year before. That finding is consistent with the number of respondents who view the country as going in the “wrong direction” (1.2).

To help convey an atmosphere of normalcy to Dahiyeh’s residents and restart its economy (more specifically that of Haret Hreik), the Haret Hreik municipality organized what it called a “shopping festival” during May and June 2014. Comprised of activities focused on youths, music and entertainment, the general motto of the event was “Meet us in Hara and shop smartly.” To ensure success, municipality and area leaders mobilized the many components of its “civil society wing.” The running joke was that more than anything else, the shopping event became an opportunity for Hezbollah to deploy and showcase its civilian and commercial strength.



Haret Hreik Municipality officials flank a Hezbollah MP and cut the symbolic ribbon to open the second shopping festival.

مهرجان التسوق الثاني  
للحارة و الحارة و التسوق بشطحة

عدد الهدايا	اسم المؤسسة	عدد الهدايا	اسم المؤسسة
هداياين	Gravity	50 هدية	AVA bag
هدياتين	Nano antic	هدية 25	المقنية العنقية
هدياتين	مصطفى التتريك	هدية 20	الصالى
هدية	Nour sport	هدية 15	Tapaz
هدية	روما لطفة	هدايا 10	القران الاسراء
هدية	League	هدايا 10	Chocolate cake
هدية	Fantasy	هدايا 10	Alida cosmetics
هدية	لعدي الالعب	هدايا 10	M&Z
هدية	سالكون على	هدايا 8	القران زيب
هدية	Tucka	هدايا 6	Soleil
هدية	Issa Parfum	هدايا 5	مركز التعاون الاسلامى
هدية	ازهار كالا	هدايا 5	سوبر ماركت رمال الاعلى
هدية	ايب اوبك 2	هدايا 5	مؤسسة بهارات العليانوي
هدية	سيفاد نويل	هدايا 5	Baby new
هدية	Class foular	هدايا 5	Paggio
هدية	Dagger	هدايا 5	لاجري نصرالله
هدية	Fildor	هدايا 4	Mirvay
هدية	Chaperon Range	هدايا 4	باتسرى حلواني
هدية	Beyond	هدايا 3	Cadence
هدية	Verona	هدايا 3	Bougatchi
هدية	Rital wahid	هدايا 3	Dress me
هدية	شخصيا	هدايا 3	Peanut
هدية	Garag	هدياتين	crustier
هدية	Kaata	هدياتين	Evita

خاص موقع المنار  
www.almanar.com.lb

Participating shops and the number of gifts each presented.

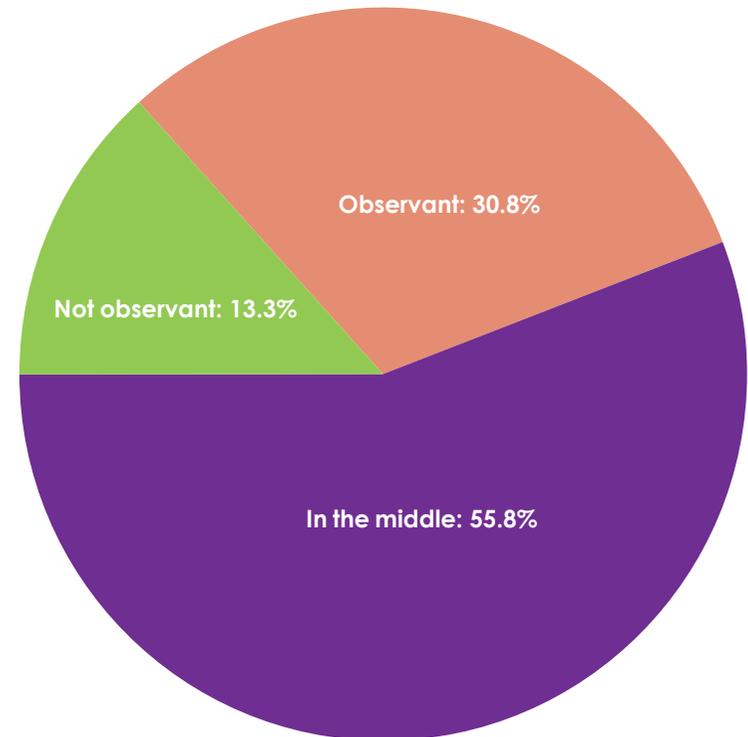
## 2.1 Do you consider yourself religiously observant?

### A community in mourning shifts toward religiosity

Compared with last year's results where 33.5% of the respondents declared that they were religiously "observant," 39.9% were somewhere "in the middle" and 27.2% were "not observant," this year's shift to the vague "middle" (at 52.7%) is interesting. It is equally thought provoking that the proportion of those who declare themselves "observant" remains almost constant.

Based on the notion that being religiously "in the middle" or being "half-religious" means little more than respecting certain social conventions, these results can be interpreted to reflect the growing sense of Shia identity and cohesion at the communal level, a trend visible throughout the poll results.

Moreover, 75.3% of the respondents declared that they know someone from their family or area who was killed in Syria (Q 7.5). Thus, it is understandable that today the Shia are in a state of mourning, and that solidarity is occurring via religious occasions and sectarian symbols.

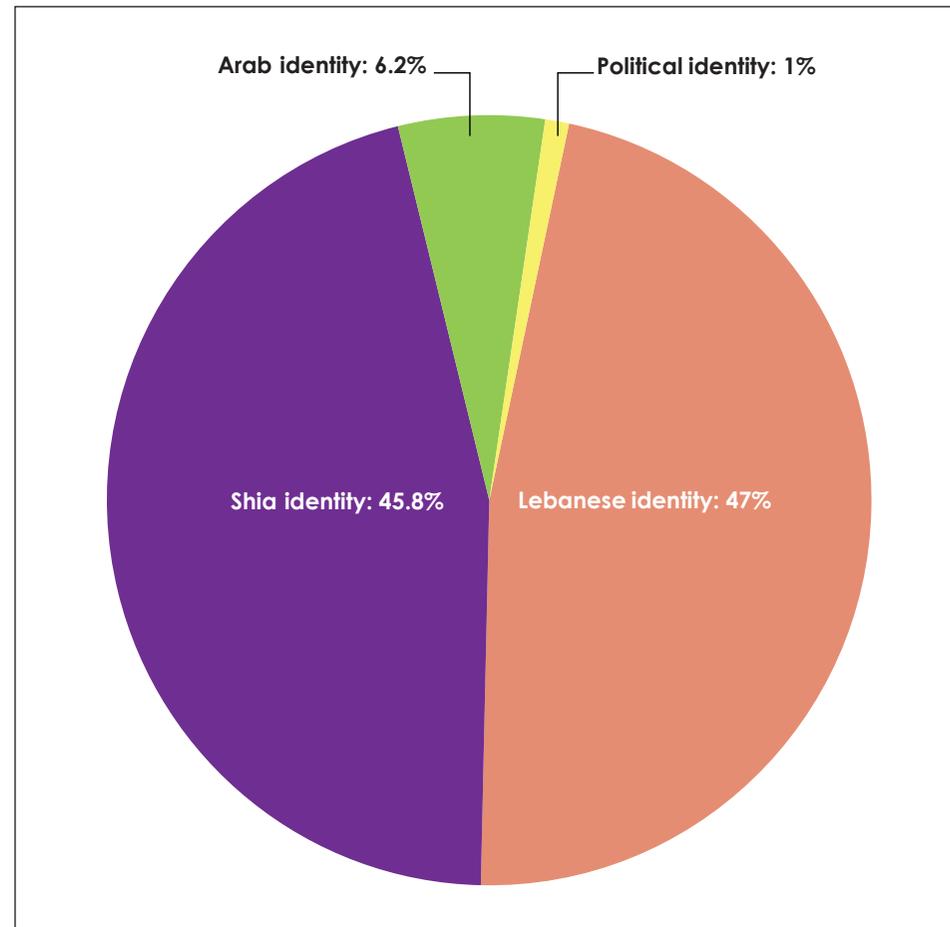


## 2.2 Which gives you a greater sense of personal pride?

### Sectarian identity gaining ground

Compared with last year, respondents indicated that they have a greater sense of pride regarding their “Shia identity” (an increase from 36% to 45.8%), with a corresponding decline (54% to 47%) in those choosing “Lebanese Identity.” These results mirror the trend observed in the question regarding religious observance.

“Shia Identity” was the least prevalent in the poorest quarters of Dahiyeh, Hay al-Selloum, (where 65.3% selected “Lebanese Identity”), while it was the most prevalent (63.3%) in the ideological nucleus of Dahiyeh, Haret Hreik, which bore the brunt of the suicide attacks and expressed the greatest negativity regarding their relationship with the Sunni community. A connection can thus be drawn between sectarian identity and sectarian tension.



# POLLING DAHIYEH

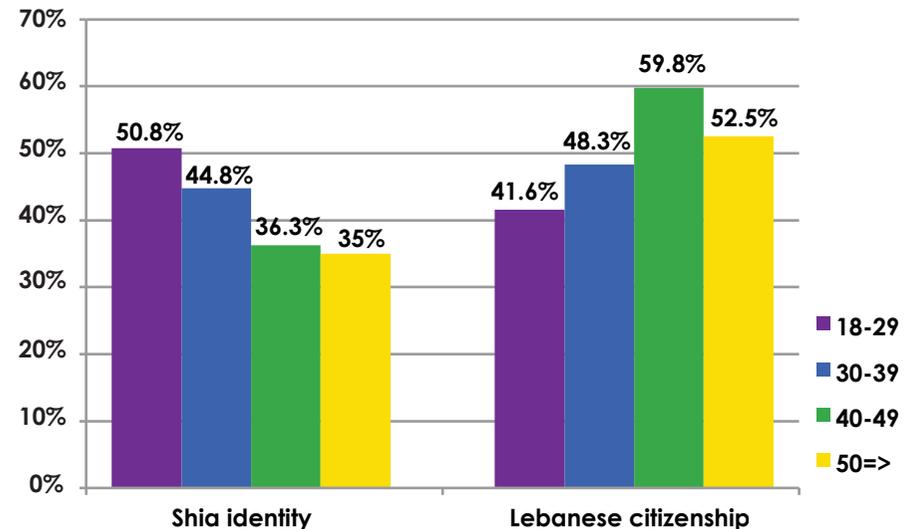
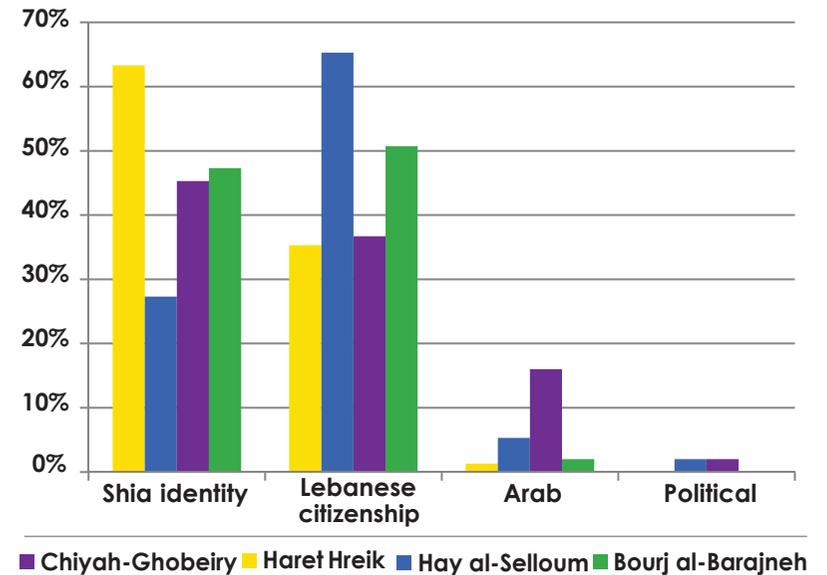
## 2.2 Which gives you a greater sense of personal pride? Breakdown by area and age

### ■ Breakdown by area

When categorized by area, 63.3% of Haret Hreik respondents acknowledged Shia as their primary identity. In Hay al-Selloum, the most economically deprived area polled, 65.3% of the respondents chose "Lebanese citizenship." This indicates that we cannot associate the higher Shia identity with a specific level of income or socioeconomic background.

### ■ Breakdown by age

"Shia identity" appears to be slightly more important to younger generations, with 50.8% of the 18-29 group choosing this as their top choice as compared with a 40.5% average of the other age groups. Although the difference is not dramatic, increased feelings of frustration and sectarian tension were a salient trend throughout the youth results.

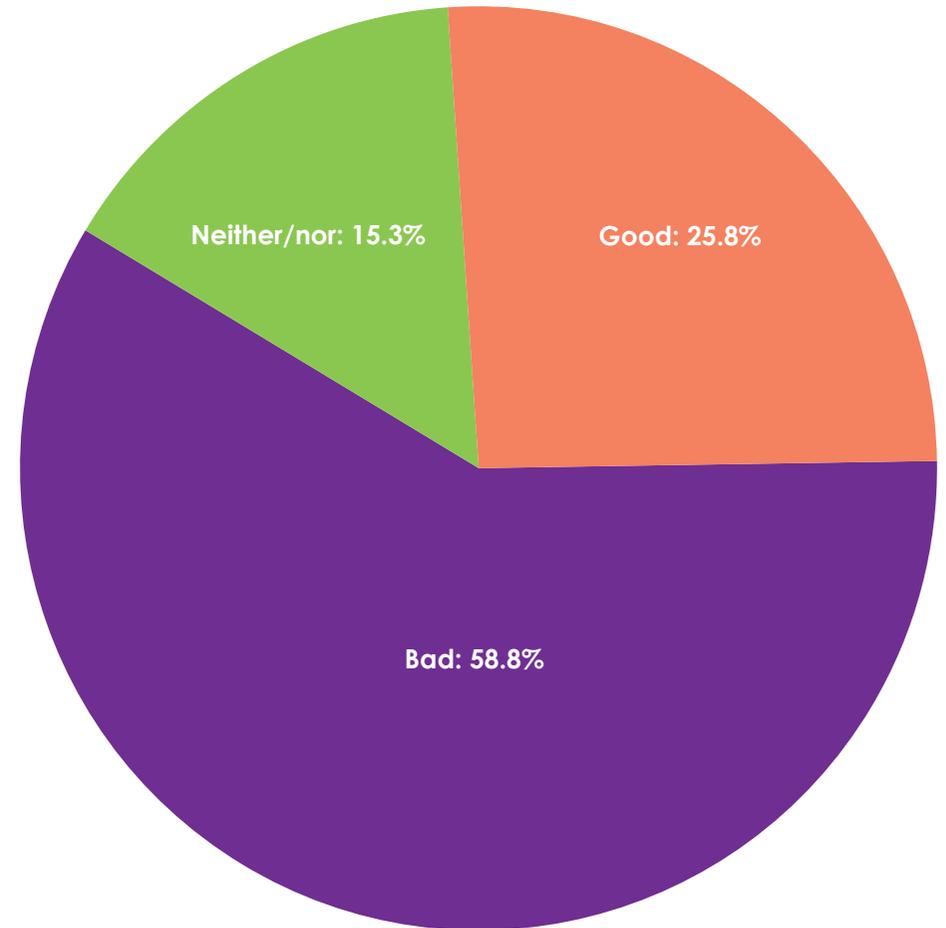


## 2.3 How do you view the relationship between your community and the Sunni community

### A dim outlook...

Most respondents characterized their relationship with the Sunni sect as bad. When categorized by area, Bourj al-Barajneh and Haret Hreik appear to hold the most negative view of their communities' relationships with the Sunnis (both have an overall negative opinion ("very bad" + "bad") of 77.3%.

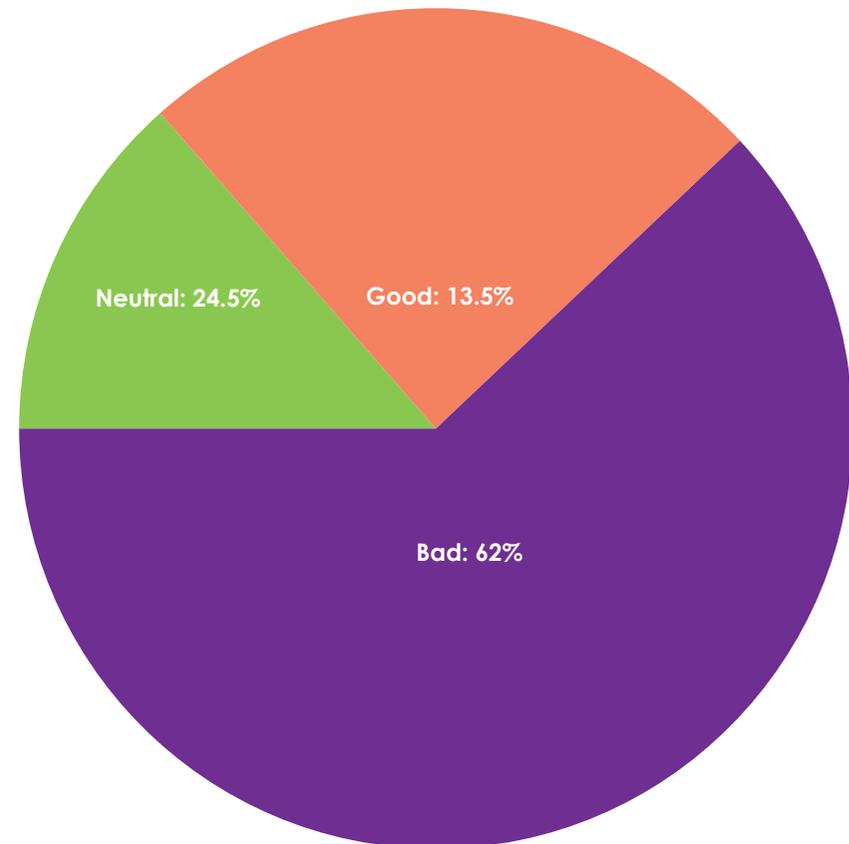
Chiyah-Ghobeiry is the only area that reported a favorable view of their relationship with the Sunnis (a positive cumulative response of 61.3%). This difference may be attributed to geographic integration with Sunni areas of Beirut and perhaps higher economic status. Of those who qualified their household financial situation as "very good," 72% came from Chiyah.



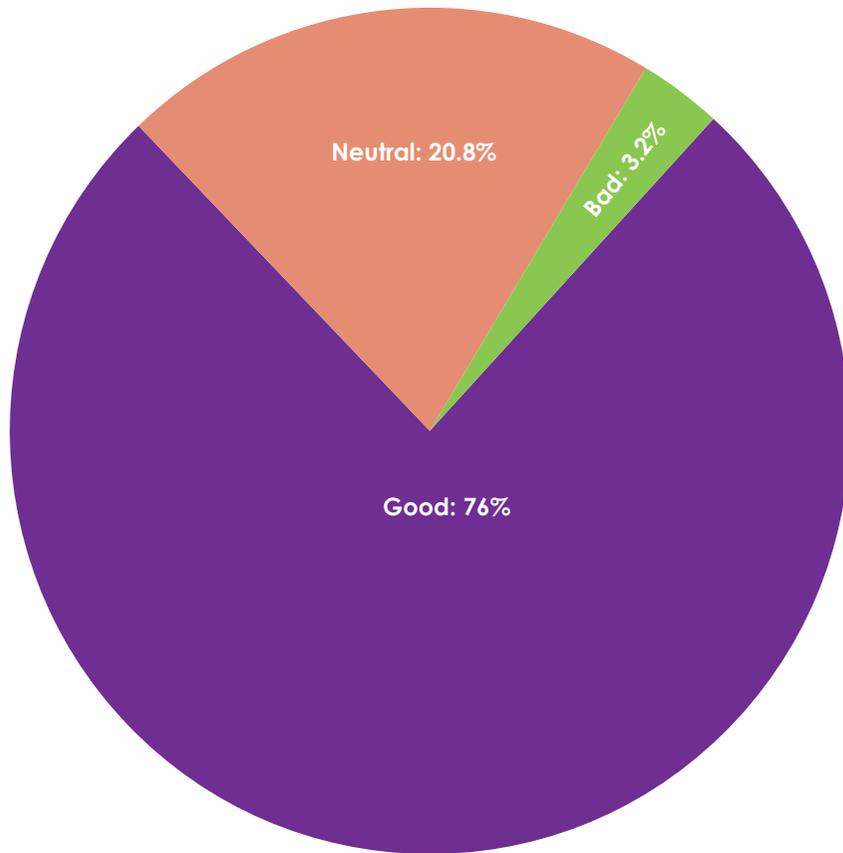
## 2.4 How do you view the relationship between your community and Palestinians?

Overall, the opinion is negative, which mirrors the responses related to the Sunni sect in general. The negative Shia attitude towards the Palestinians (62%) is fed by both historical and recent factors. The enmity being shown to the Sunni community applies to the Palestinians as well, as they are predominantly Sunni and have been accused of contributing to the recent bombings.

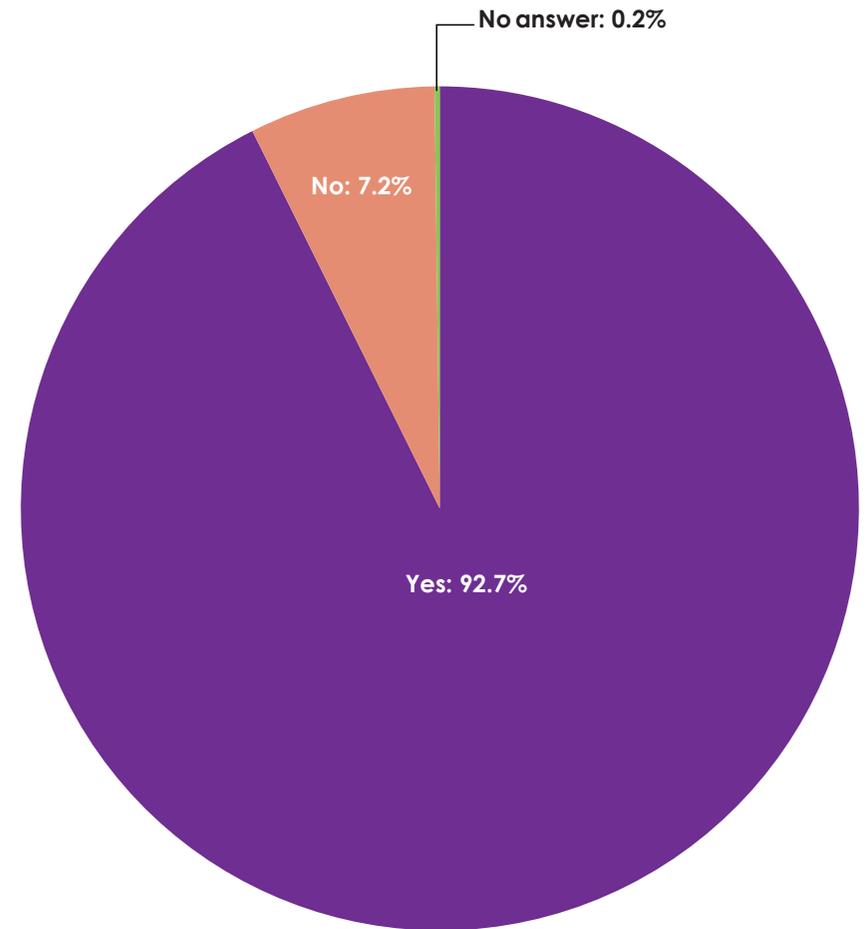
For instance, Bourj al-Barajneh and Haret Hreik are immediate neighbors of the Bourj al-Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp, against which they fought during the “The War of the Camps” (1985-1989) and retain memories of those years. Haret Hreik also experienced “war trauma” when unconfirmed information indicated that at least one of the car bombs detonated several months before polling began was prepared in the Bourj al-Barajneh camp. Reportedly, the vehicle departed the camp and headed directly to its neighbor, Haret Hreik.



## 2.5 How do you view the relationship between your community and Christians?



## 2.6 Do you think the MoU between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement is important?

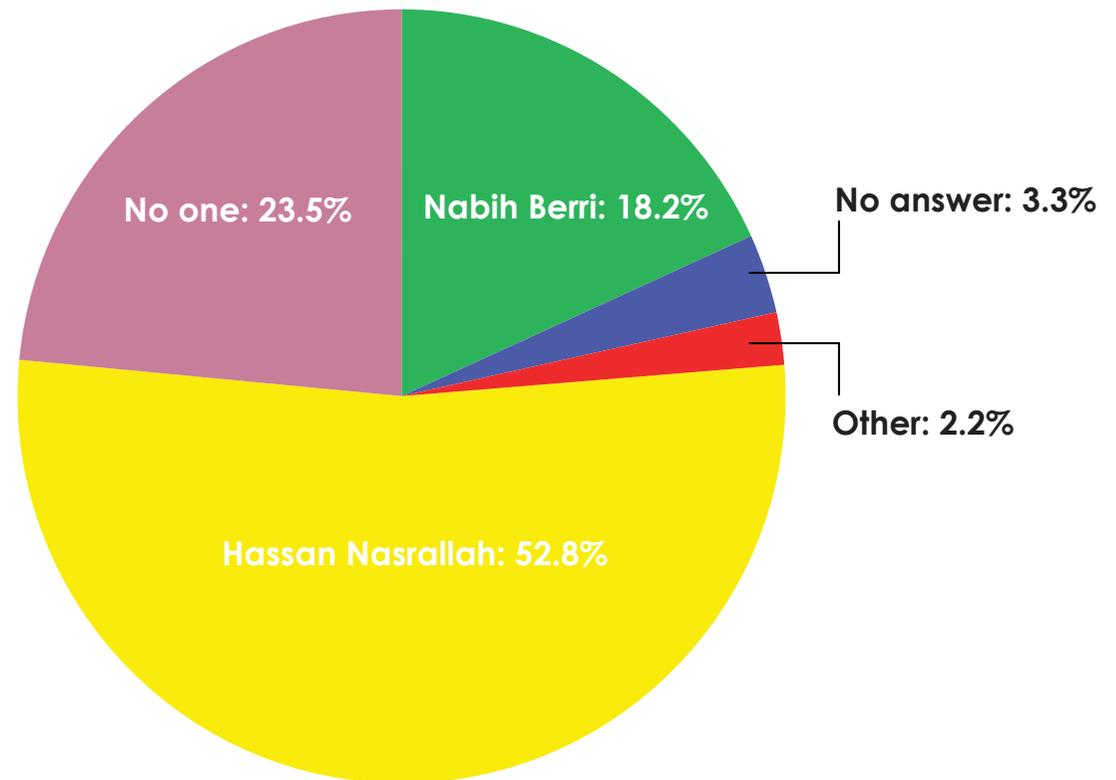


## 3.1 Is there a specific leader you trust to provide a better future for your family?

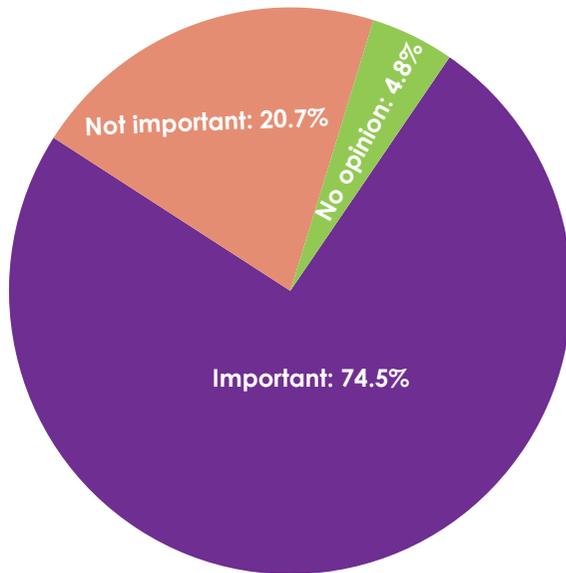
### A boost for “The Sayyed” and “The Ustaz”

Just over half (52.8%) of all respondents chose Hassan Nasrallah as the leader they trust the most to provide a better future for their families. This is a significant increase from last year's results when only 36.8% chose Nasrallah. Similarly, Nabih Berri was chosen by 18.2% of the respondents, up from 11.6% last year. In the previous poll, most (50.5%) respondents chose “No one.”

When categorized by area, Haret Hreik showed the strongest support for Hassan Nasrallah (67.3%) while other areas ranged between 43% and 53%. Support for Berri was highest in Bourj al-Barajneh (24%) and Hay al-Selloum (28.7%). The increase in Berri's popularity is interesting since as Nasrallah's attractiveness seems to have been unaffected by that preference, it likely reflects the growing sense of “sectarian solidarity.”



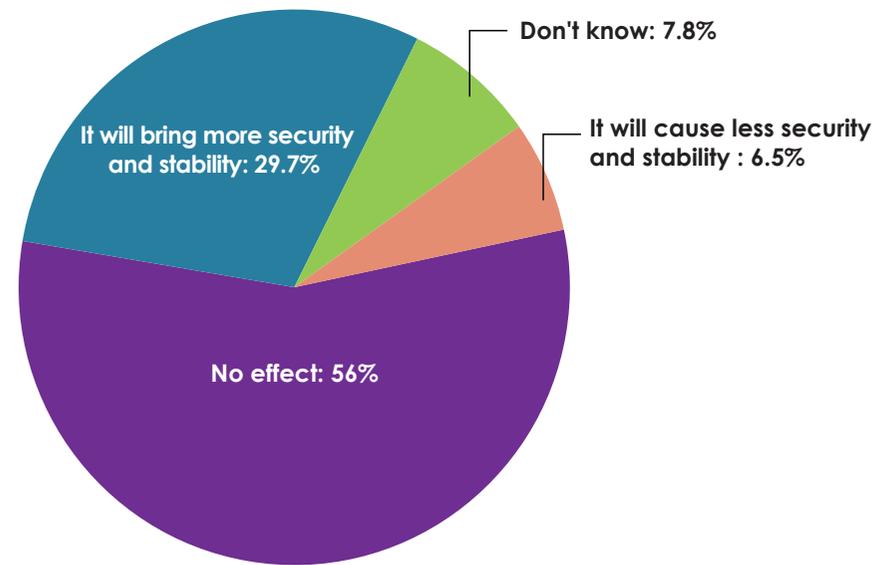
### 3.2 In your opinion, how important do you think it is to hold parliamentary elections this year?



Among the 74.5% who answered "Important," 45.2% of Shia respondents also categorized this as "very important."

These results reiterate the growing Shia feeling of empowerment and confidence, as they have the sense that they have something to gain by holding elections.

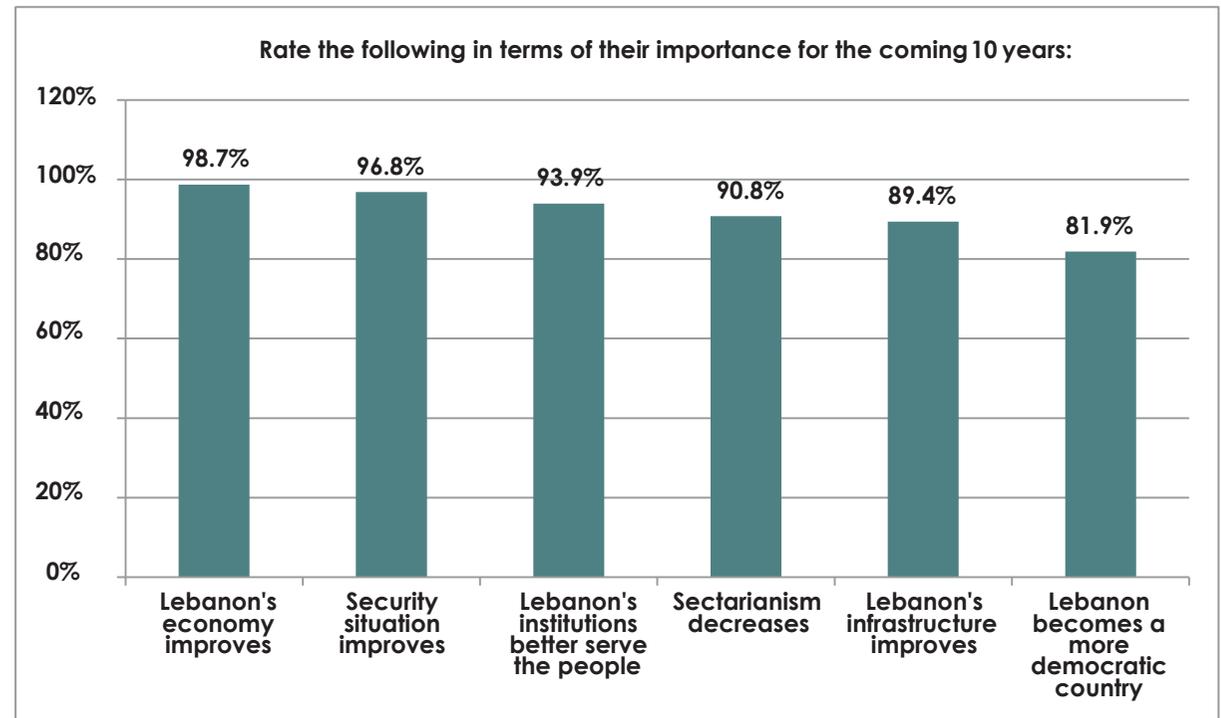
### 3.3 What effect do you think the new government will have on the country?



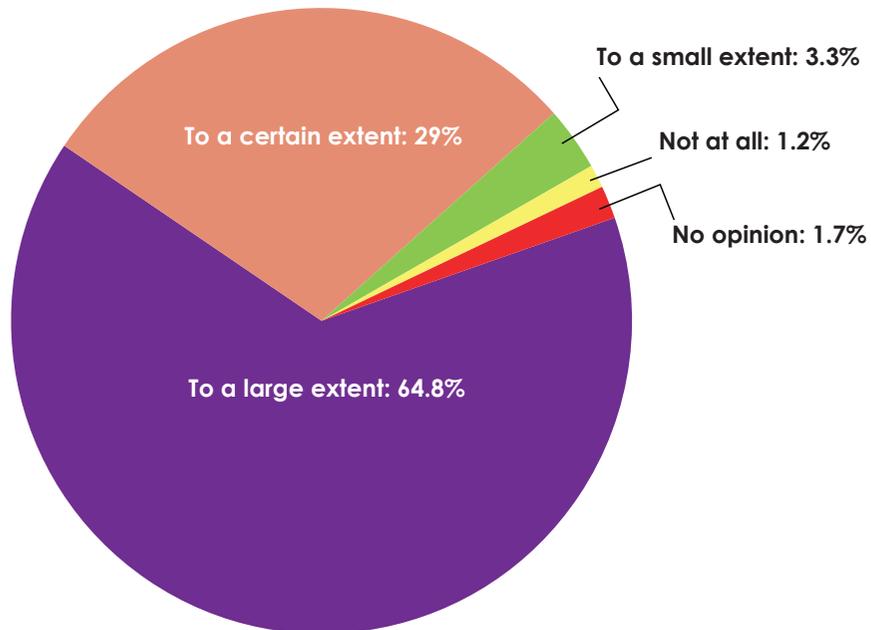
# POLLING DAHIYEH

**3.4 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is “very important” and 1 is “not important at all,” rate the following in terms of importance for the coming 10 years:**

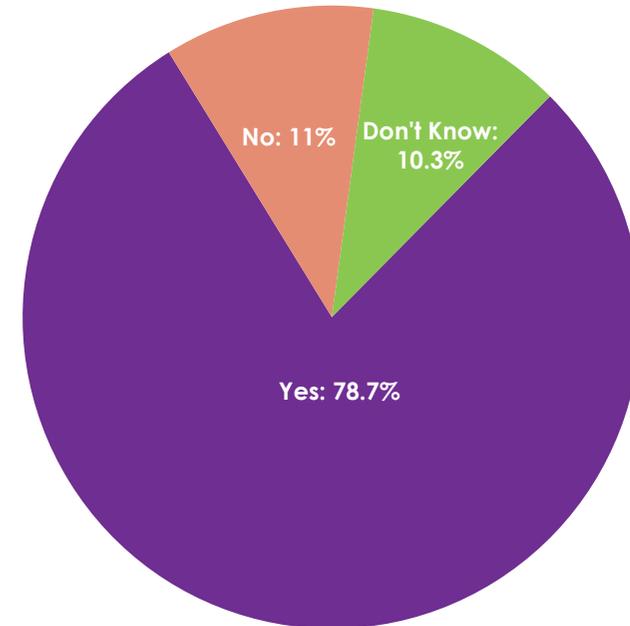
This graph portrays the combined responses for “important” and “very important.” Although the results do not vary greatly, it is interesting that respondents opted to place sectarianism ahead of infrastructure, which represents a greater focus than in previous years. This outcome likely results from the current increase in sectarian conflict and a sense that the problems in Lebanon’s infrastructure are heavily linked to sectarianism.



## 4.1 To what extent do you think that foreign interests impact Lebanon's affairs?

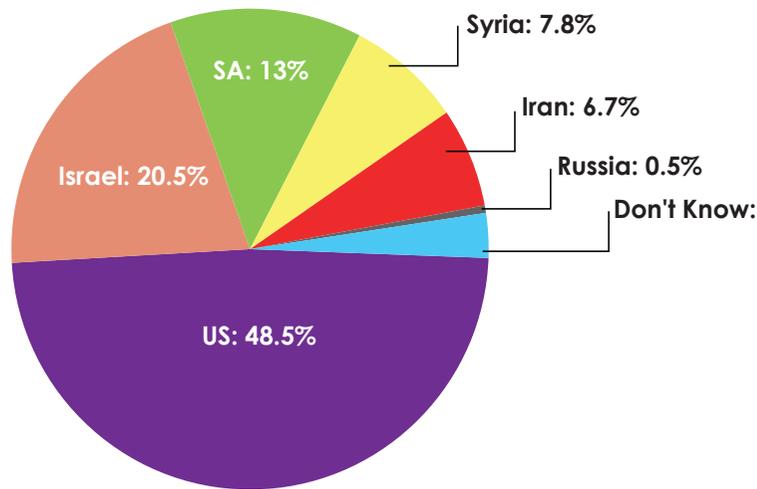


## 4.2 Do you think that Lebanese leaders should do more to counter foreign interests in Lebanese affairs?



The cumulative result of "to a large extent" + "to a certain extent" (93.8%) confirms what Lebanese historian and economist G. Corm has identified as the "chancellors' culture" of the Lebanese people. Historically, the Lebanese have believed that foreign factors prevail over their decisions.

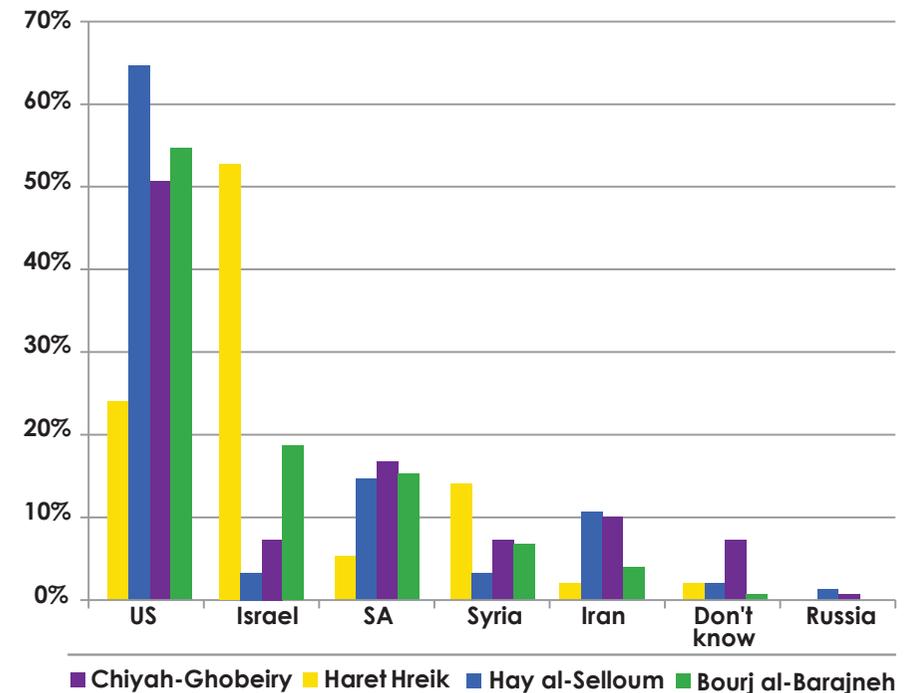
## 4.3 Which of the following countries exerts the greatest influence on Lebanese affairs?



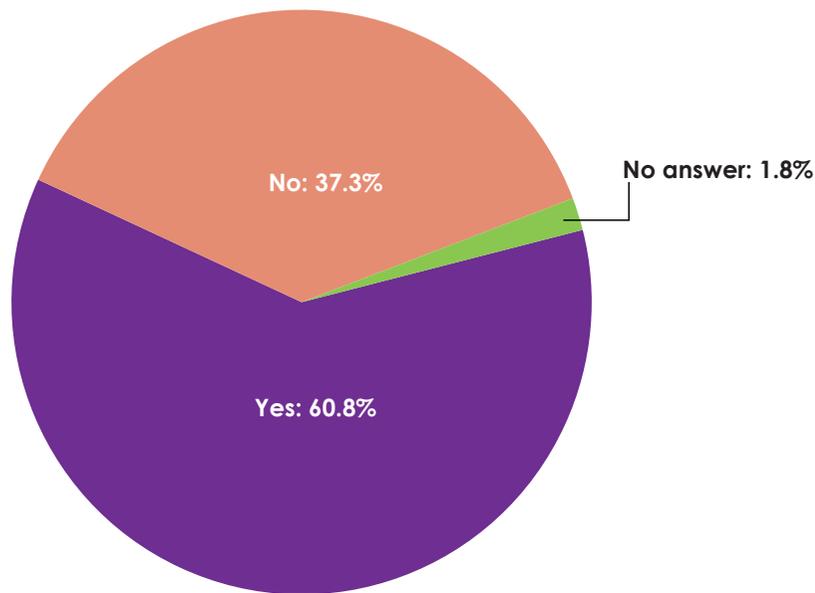
48.5% of respondents believe that the US exerts the greatest influence on Lebanese affairs, followed by Israel and Saudi Arabia. Here, “influence” is clearly understood in a negative light. According to the previous year’s results, 7.8% of respondents viewed better relations with the US as favorable. In contrast, 78.8% of respondents viewed better relations with Iran as beneficial.

### Breakdown by area

The US was the most popular choice for all areas (ranging from 50.7% to 64.7%) apart from Haret Hreik, which selected Israel at 52.7% and positioned the US in second place at 24%. The Haret Hreik results show the extent to which the memory of the 2006 war has been kept alive in the area that suffered the most due to its role as Hezbollah’s nerve center. By contrast, 4.1% of Hay al-Selloum’s respondents selected Israel.



## 4.4 Do you think the Shia community will benefit from Iranian-US dialogue?



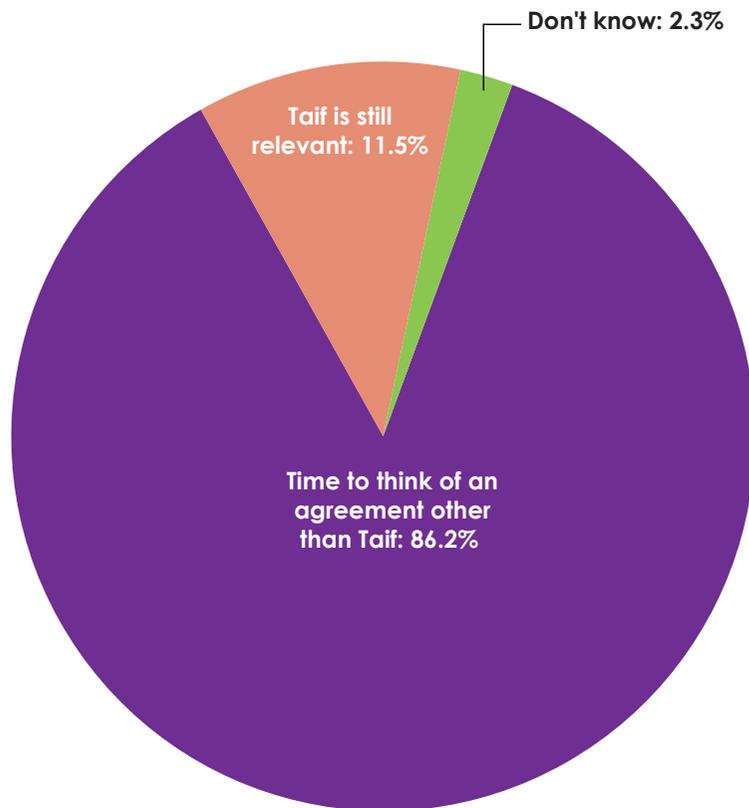
A majority (60.8%) of respondents believe that the Shia community will benefit from a dialogue between Iran and the US, although a sizeable (37.3%) minority answered in the negative. Regardless of perspective, however, this indicates that most people see their future connected to that of Iran - and that such an association is beneficial, exerts a positive influence and importantly, represents a joint venture.

The intimacy that exists between Iran and Lebanon's Shia community influences every facet of life. It ranges from the quasi-official picture of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah bending to kiss the shoulder of Iran's leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei (an example of filial respect) to the small signs scattered throughout the Shia regions that read "The Iranian people at the service of the Lebanese people" (vaguely reminiscent of the renowned USAID slogan, "From the American People"). These pictures exemplify the ways in which Iran is present in Lebanon, which sometimes verges on megalomania, as is evident in Maroun al-Ras in South Lebanon. This village, which faces the Israeli border, contains a huge park called "The Iran Park," built to commemorate the battles that occurred in the village during the 2006 war.



## 5.1 Do you believe that we must think of an agreement other than Taif, or do you believe that the Taif Agreement is still relevant?

Taif, Adieu...



In the last few years, the first official to explicitly mention Lebanon's need for a "new societal contract" (a polite way of suggesting that the Taif Agreement needed to be amended) was Maronite Patriarch Bechara al-Raii, who made the observation at a social function in November 2011: "In these difficult times when Lebanon is experiencing a political, economic and social crisis, we look for real statesmen willing to take the daring step of creating a new societal contract based on the national pact" (*Al-Mustaqbal*, November 22, 2011).

At the time, not many people reacted strongly to the patriarch's words, taking his remark as a pious wish.

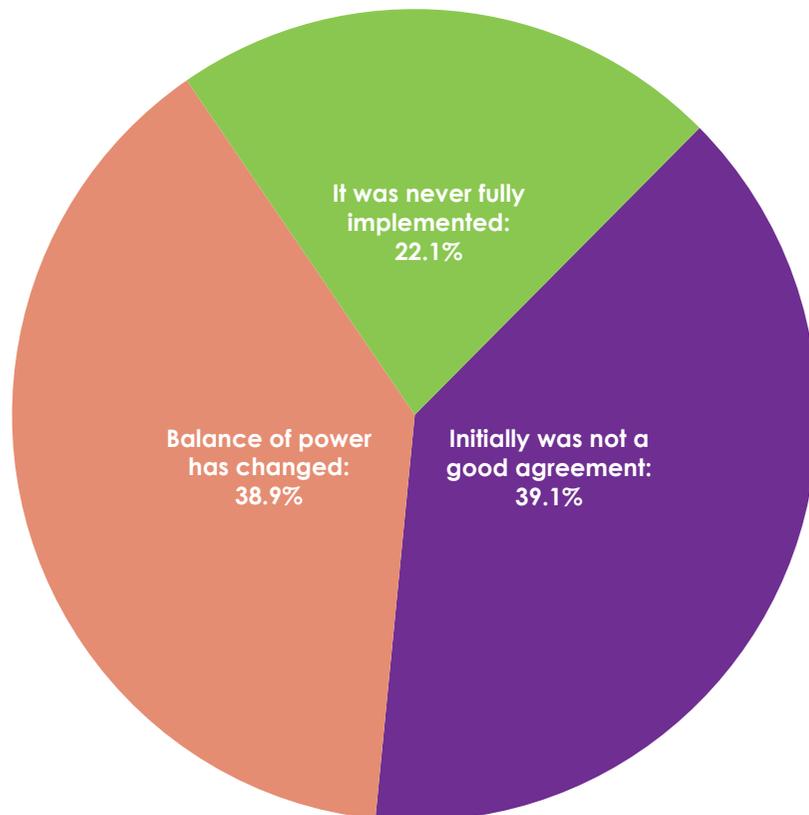
On June 1, 2012, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah stated that his organization would not oppose a "national convention" in which the Lebanese could discuss a new "societal contract." To this day, reference is made frequently to that speech as having

been the basis of subsequent discussions concerning the power-sharing formula advanced by the Taif Agreement. It should be clarified that if such an overhaul were conducted according to Nasrallah's expectations, Lebanon's power-sharing formula would not be divided equally between Christians and Muslims. Instead, the reallocation would provide a larger slice of the country's power-sharing "pie" to the Shia community at the expense of Lebanon's Sunni and Christian communities.

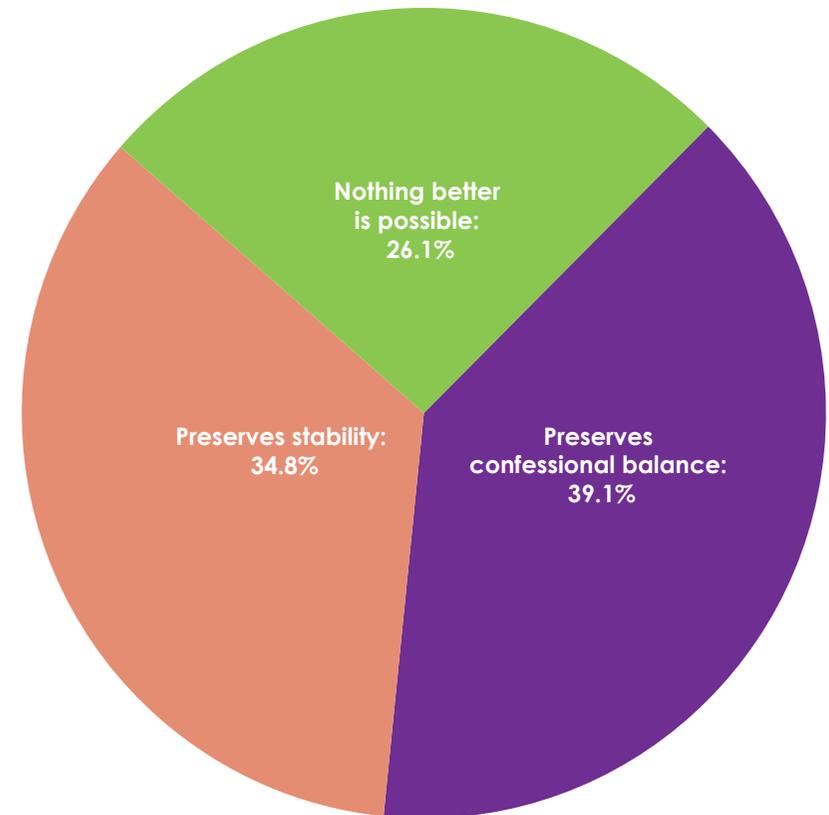
The fact that most (86.2%) respondents believe the time has come to think of an agreement other than Taif suggests that the Shia community is actually in polite agreement with Nasrallah.

Consideration must be given to the "culture of victory" with which Hezbollah has inundated Lebanon's Shia community since 2000, and reboosted following events such as the 2006 war, the 2008 military action followed by the Doha agreement, the ousting of Saad Hariri from office in 2011 and even Hezbollah's involvement in Syria, all of which strengthened the Shia self-image. This illustrates the abiding perception that Taif has become "too small" to do the job. When categorized by area, this opinion remains constant throughout the five neighborhoods polled.

## 5.2 If you believe the time has come “to think of an agreement other than Taif,” then why?

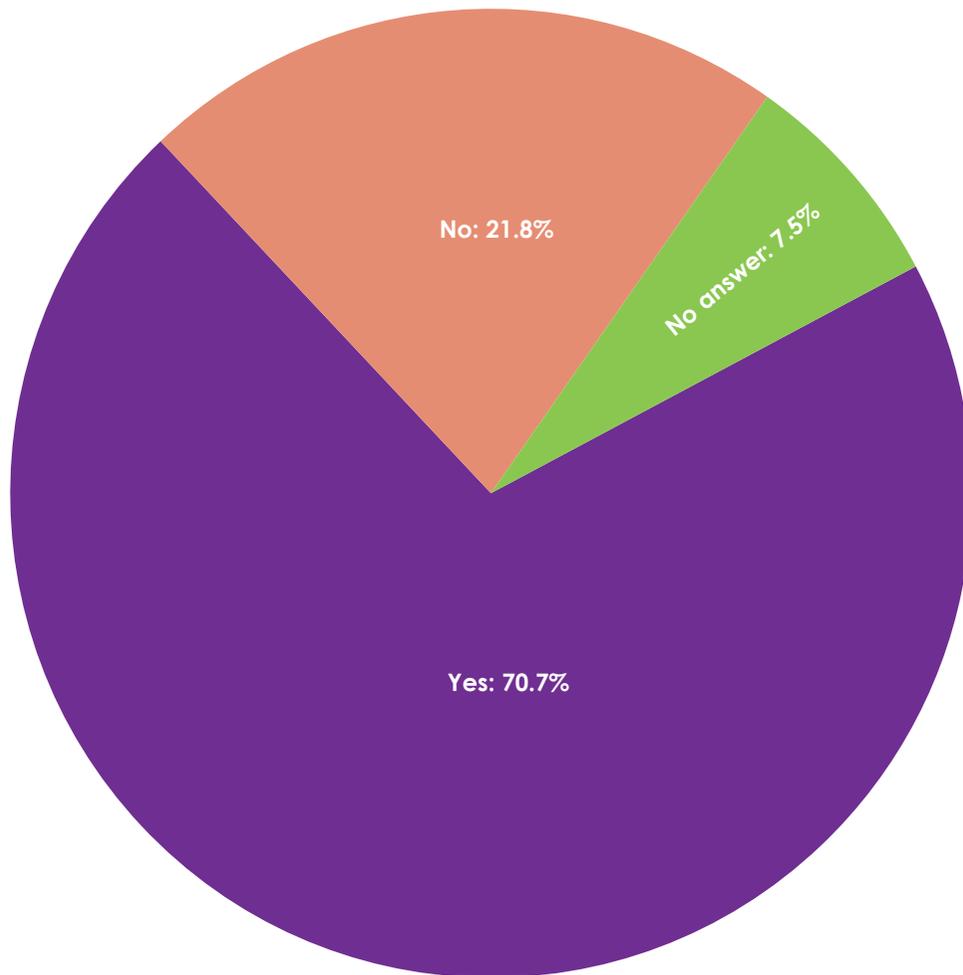


## 5.3 If you answered that the “Taif Agreement is still relevant,” then why?



## 6.1 Do you feel secure in your area?

More secure until proved otherwise...



Compared with last year (69% yes, 27.5% no), the results were similar. These findings are perhaps surprising considering the dramatic decline in the security situation in Dahiyeh since the preceding year. While perhaps Dahiyeh residents were feeling more secure compared to previous months (due to factors such as the absence of Dahiyeh bombings in the New Year, as well as the mid-May fall of Yabroud to Hezbollah and Syrian regime forces which was touted as a military victory that would halt the spate of car bombings in Lebanon), the findings remain puzzling, especially as they are not consistent with other results indicating a desire to move outside the area, and the need for improved security as a national priority.

An explanation may lie in Hezbollah's intense propaganda campaign justifying its involvement in Syria. For example, the Yabroud face-off was advertised as a "defensive" operation aimed at protecting Shia regions - and Lebanon in general - from *takfiris*. At home, extremely visible security measures were implemented jointly by Hezbollah and Lebanese state institutions,

# POLLING DAHIYEH

A Hayya Bina Project

August 2014



Revision: Above: A newly married couple visits the site of a car bomb explosion. Below: Parking obstacles in Dahiyeh being painted pink. The campaign is intended to mitigate the frustration caused by the need to emplace those barricades, which dramatically reduced the number of available parking spaces. *La vie en rose!*

which caused a great deal of annoyance, but may have given the illusion that Dahiyeh had become a “secured” area. However, the cumulative impact of a year’s worth of bombings and violence is evident when categorized by area: only 48.7% of the respondents in Haret Hreik (the main bombing target) feel secure while a sizable number (40.7%) feel insecure.

In parallel, Hezbollah’s policy has been to spur a return to normalcy as soon as possible. In most cases, work was carried out to remove nearly all traces of the attacks—including removing wreckage and rubble, repainting affected buildings and replacing broken windows—within 24 – 48 hours of those events. These actions were intended to give the impression that nothing significant had occurred. Hezbollah even copied the “I love life” advertising slogan promoted at the time by adversaries of March 14 by organizing “joyful” social functions (e.g., weddings or cross-sectarian gatherings) at the site of each explosion to highlight the Lebanese nature of the danger to Shia areas. In addition, Hezbollah instituted far-reaching security measures individually, then jointly (with the Lebanese Armed Forces and other Lebanese security institutions) and in the most conspicuous manner possible.

## 6.2 Who is providing security in your area?

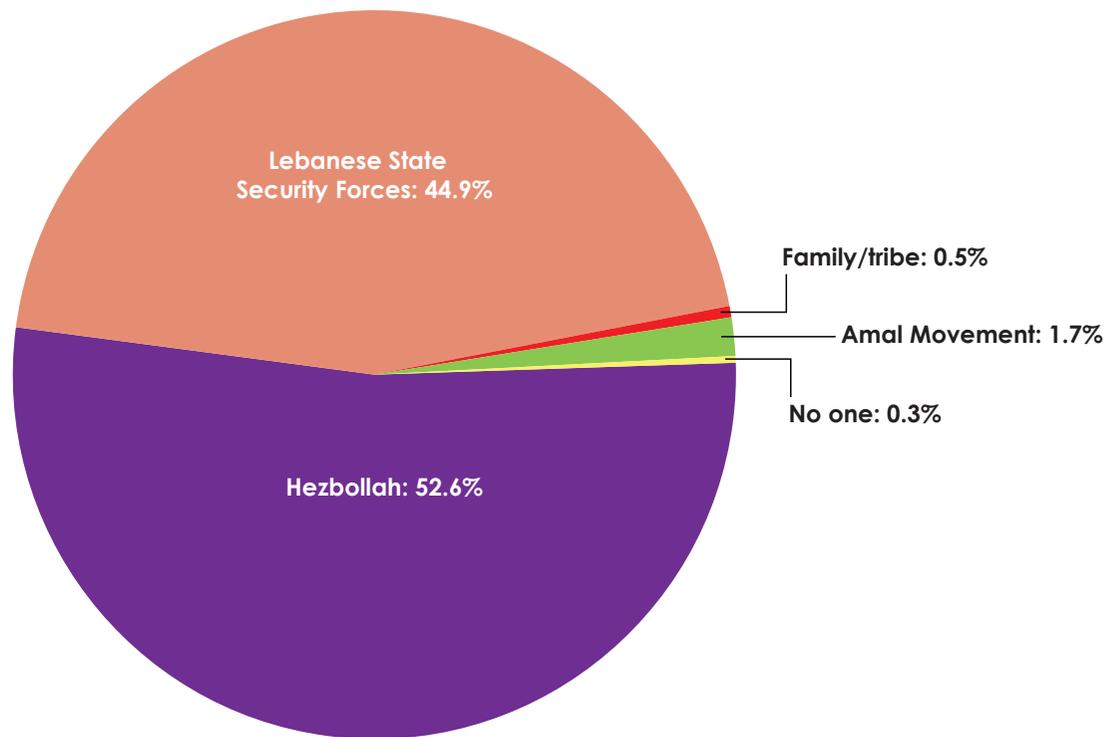
### A “team effort...”

The responses to this question are especially interesting. While Amal’s visibility was negligible, Dahiyeh residents recognize Hezbollah and state security forces as their protectors.

The question permitted more than one answer, and 881 responses were recorded from 600 respondents. Of the 463 (52.6%) who chose Hezbollah and 396 (44.9%) who chose Lebanese state security, a significant proportion (276 or 31.3%) chose both.

This illustrates that the relationship between them is more of a “partnership” than a “division of labor.”

Of note, since Hezbollah “invited” the LAF and other state security institutions to help secure Dahiyeh—a decision intended to reduce the frequency of arguments between residents and Hezbollah affiliates and to boost local economic prosperity—a third, ambiguous participant has appeared in the form of a police force representing the Federation of Dahiyeh’s Municipalities. That organization, related

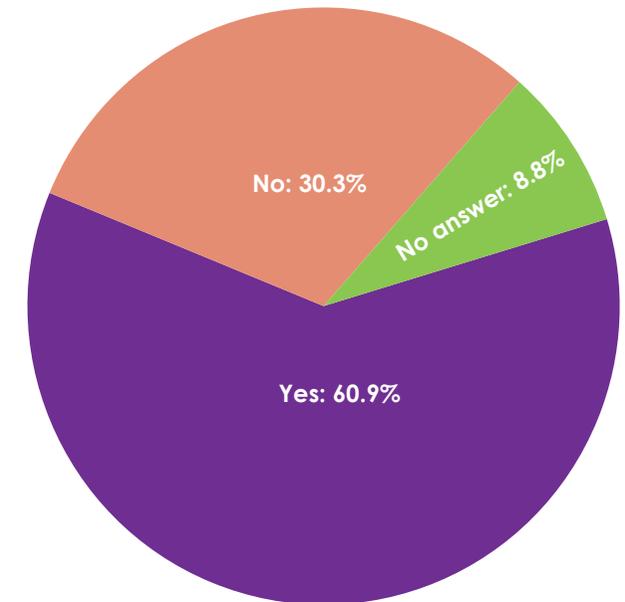
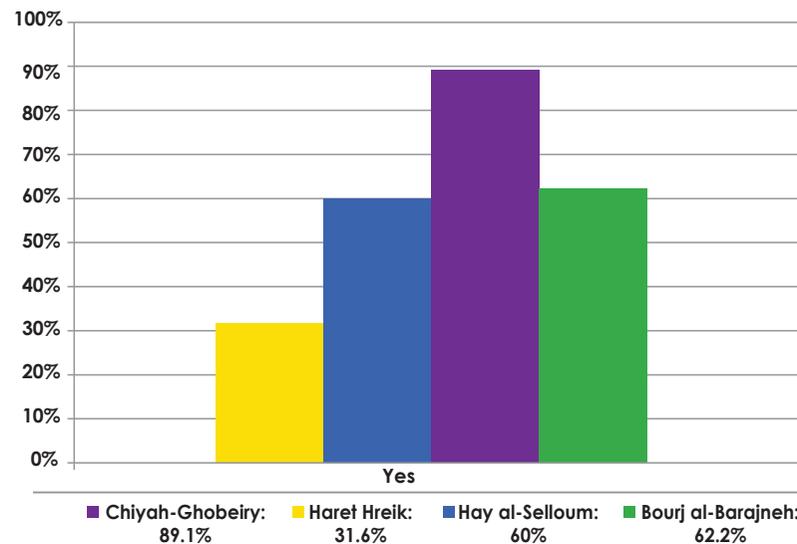
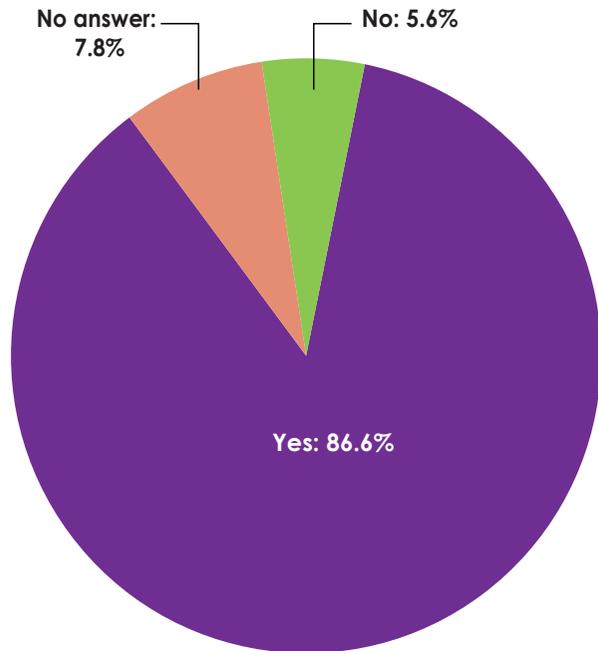


officially to a state institution (the Hezbollah-controlled federation of Beirut’s southern suburbs), is comprised of Hezbollah militiamen dressed in official attire and given a certified capacity.

# POLLING DAHIYEH

6.3 Are you satisfied with the performance of the institution you identified above (Hezbollah)?

6.4 Are you satisfied with the performance of the institution you selected above (i.e., Lebanese State Security Forces)?

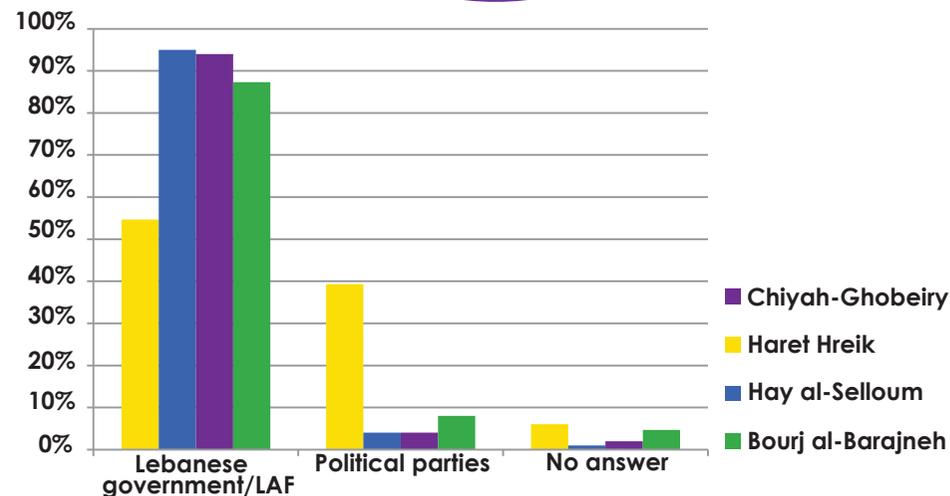
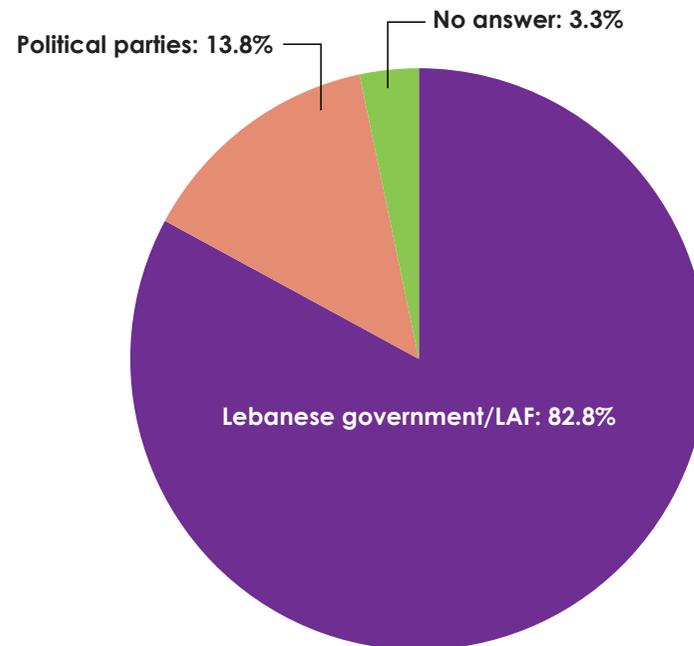


Significant variation is apparent when viewed by area, with Haret Hreik (31.6%) indicating the least support for the state security services and Chiyah-Ghobeiry the most (89.1%).

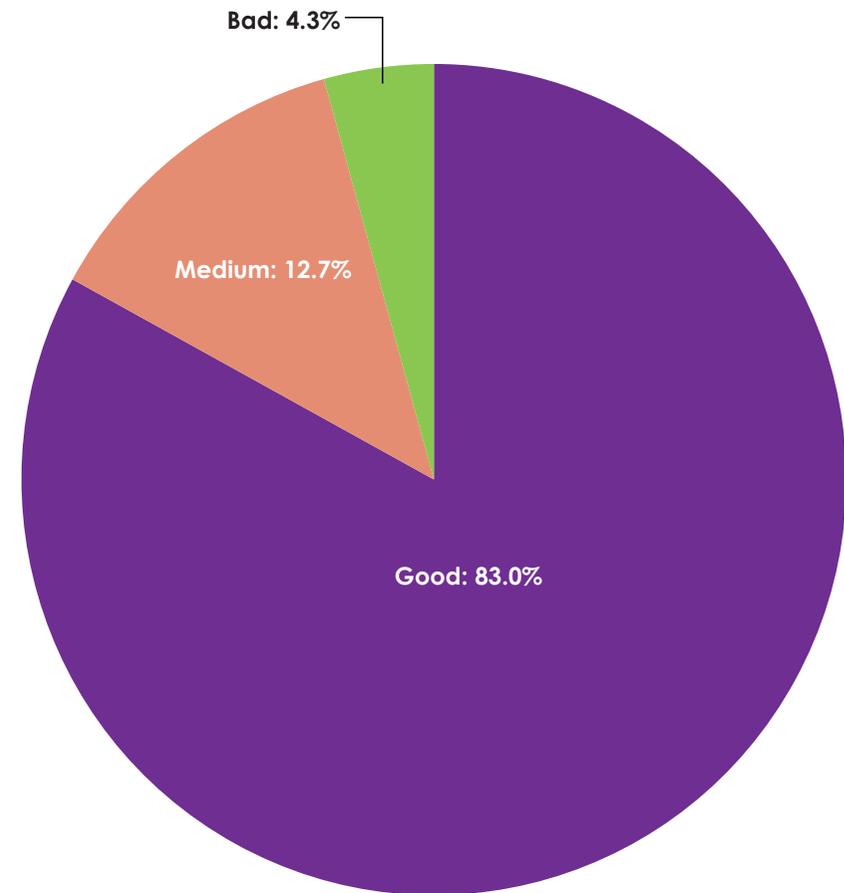
## 6.5 Whose responsibility do you think it should be to provide security?

Most (82.8%) respondents believe that the LAF/Lebanese State is responsible for providing security. The responses indicate clearly that widespread support exists for Lebanese state institutions; however, such support is concurrent with the belief that Hezbollah should be given leeway to address security and retain its status as an alternative armed force. Since fall 2013, security conditions in Dahiyeh (as in other Shia regions of Lebanon) typically reflect visible coordination between state security institutions and their non-state counterparts (represented by Hezbollah). This successful coordination largely obscures the inherent contradiction between the two types of organizations. The prevailing perception is that Hezbollah is not acting on behalf of the Shia community but in the best interests of Lebanon and the Lebanese people, with 41.2%, (Q 6.8), of respondents identifying “defending Lebanon” as the main purpose of Hezbollah’s arms. By reinforcing the operational value of this state/non-state venture, Hezbollah is advancing that impression.

When categorized by area, respondents from Haret Hreik overwhelmingly indicated the greatest support for political parties that provide security.



## 6.6 Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is “excellent” and 1 is “very bad,” how would you characterize the performance of the LAF?



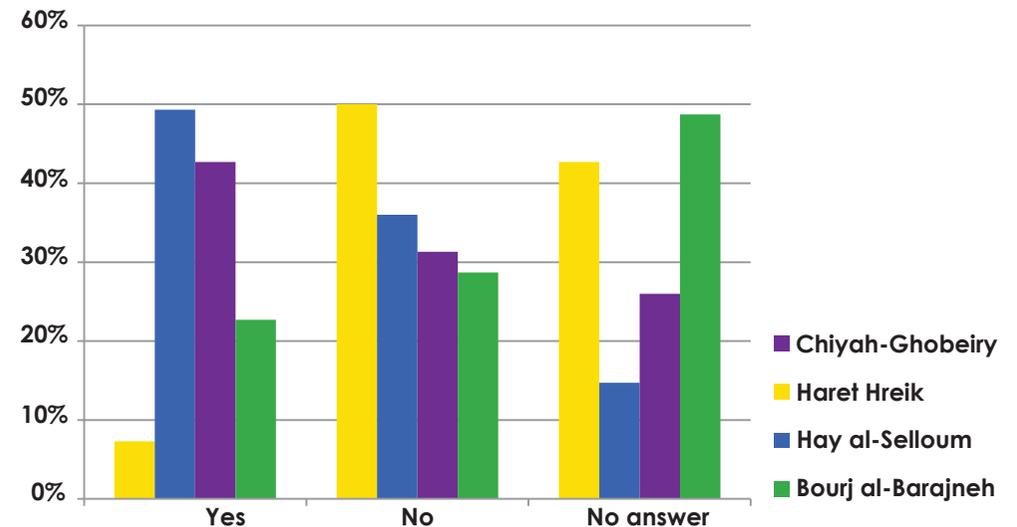
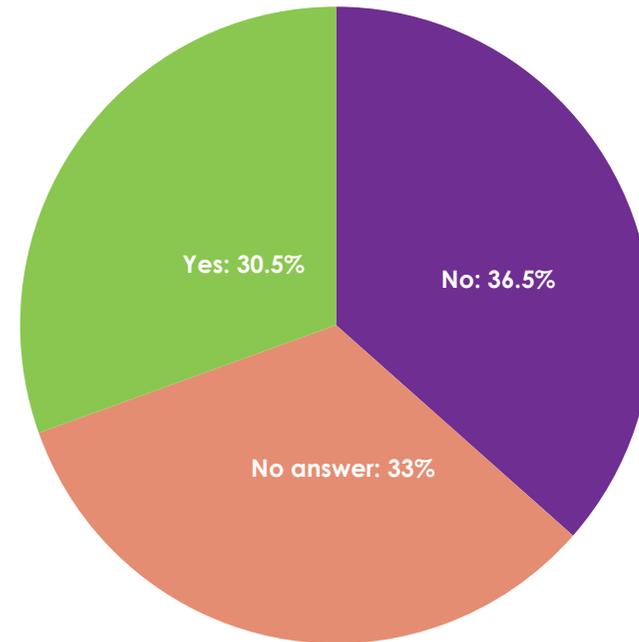
### ■ Breakdown by area

When categorized by area, Haret Hreik again becomes an anomaly. Although positive opinions regarding the LAF remain high (a cumulative figure of 56% answered positively), they are not as high as in the other three areas. In this instance, Haret Hreik posted the greatest cumulative proportion (10.7%) of negative answers with one-third (33.3%) of the respondents having rated LAF performance “medium,” far higher than any other neighborhood.

## 6.7 Do you think it is permissible for any groups or parties to maintain arms outside the government?

### An alarming shift from the previous year

Compared with 2013, significant variations are apparent in the responses to this question. The number of respondents who consider it permissible for groups to maintain arms has went up from 16% to 30.5%, while the number who responded that maintaining such arms should not be permissible dropped from 73% to 36.5%. A sharp rise (from 11% to 30.5%) was also noted in the number of respondents who gave no answer. This should not be viewed as an indication of greater support for Hezbollah as most Shia do not perceive Hezbollah's weapons as non-state arms (an understanding made clear in last year's results). Additionally, Haret Hreik, which voiced the most support for Hezbollah's security role in other sections, exhibited negligible support for non-state arms. Thus, the shift can most likely, and most alarmingly, be attributed to a generalized state of fear and insecurity where private arms are becoming more appealing.

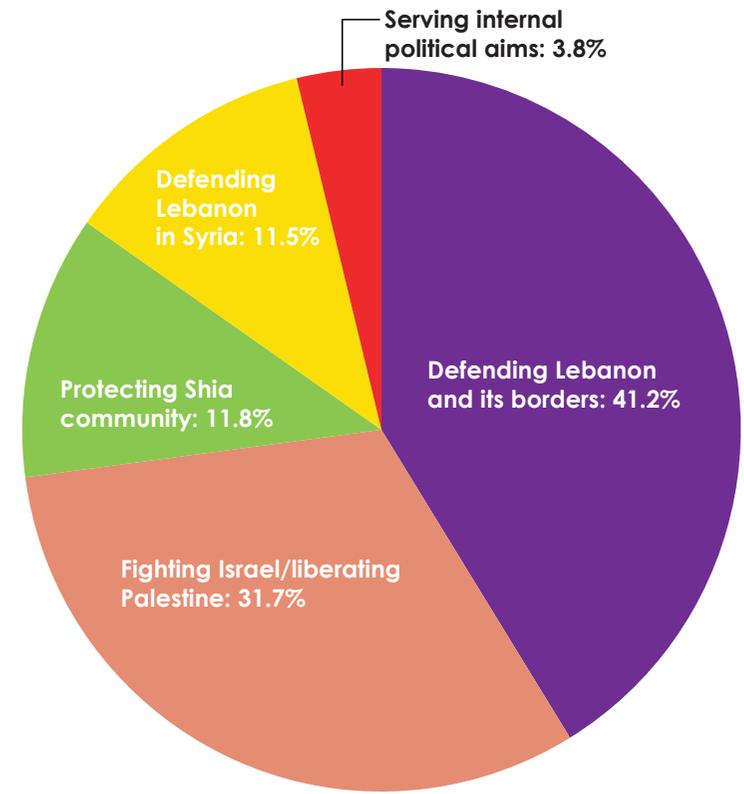
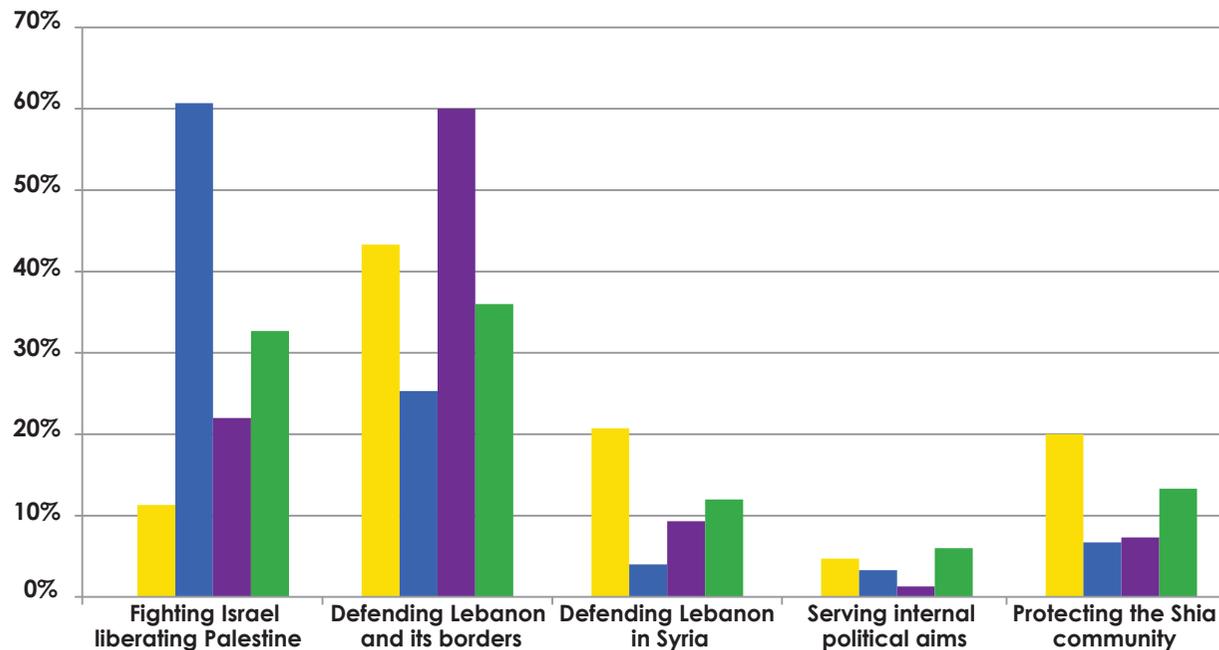


# POLLING DAHIYEH

## 6.8 In your opinion, what is the main function of Hezbollah's arms? (one answer only)

### Confused customers or satisfied customers?

The responses are at once remarkably diverse and vary greatly between the areas in Dahiye. Apparently, a number of factors contribute to respondents' perception of Hezbollah's arms. Thus, it is difficult to understand if this indicates a communications failure or success.

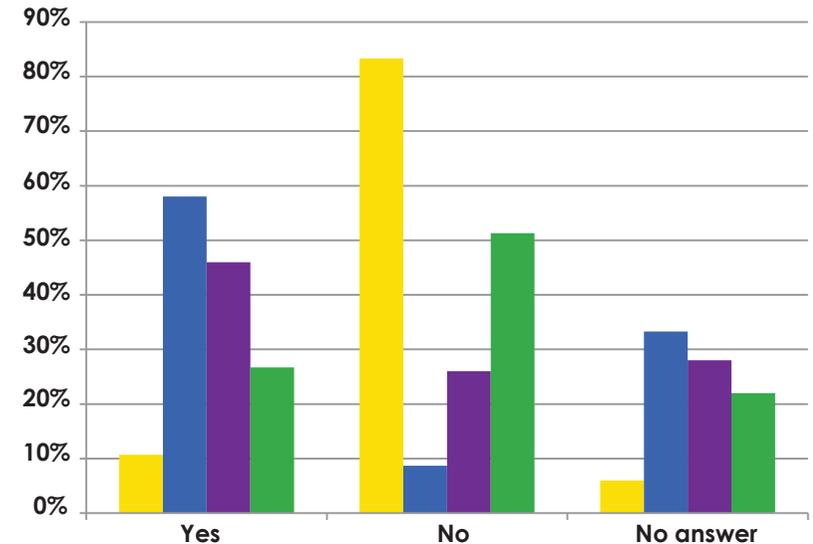
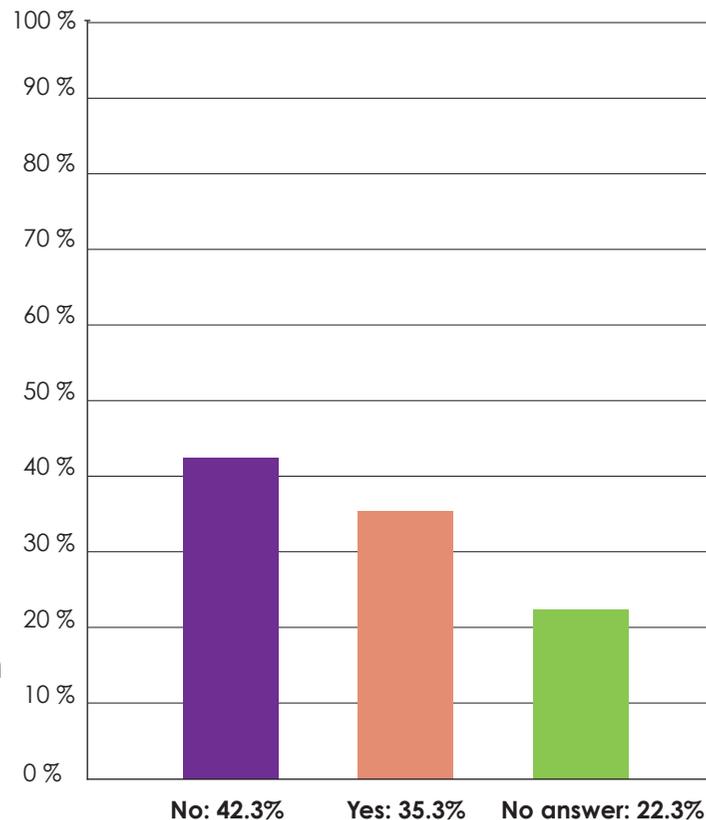


- Chiyah-Ghobeiry
- Haret Hreik
- Hay al-Selloum
- Bourj al-Barajneh

## 6.9 Do you believe that one day the “Resistance” will be integrated into the LAF?

### Shia dilemma...

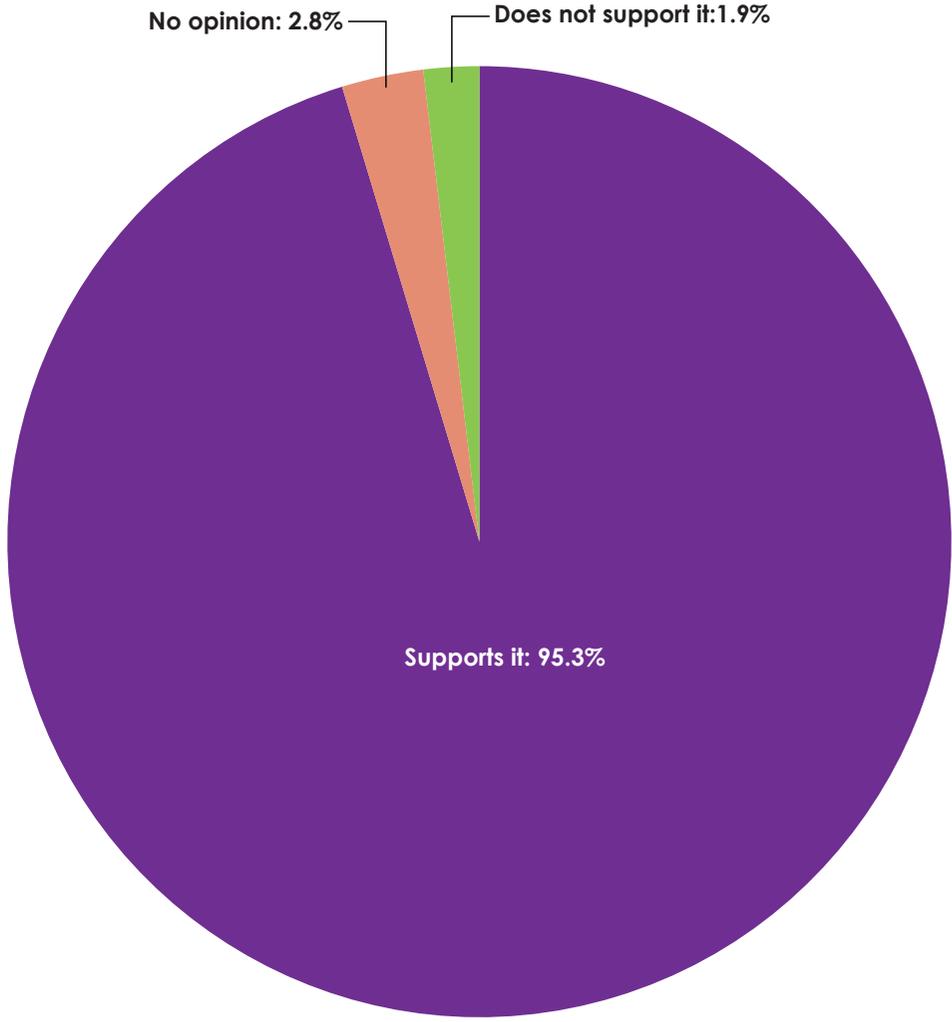
The results of this question identify two nearly equal trends within the Shia community. First, the “hardline” Hezbollah supporters (strongly visible in Haret Hreik) who view the “Resistance” as a unique and indispensable entity. Second, those who see the merging of the two “institutions” as desirable, without posing a conflict of interest. Of note, the language used in the phrasing of the Arabic question utilized the vocabulary associated with the post-civil war debate about integrating former militamen into the LAF.



Respondents from Haret Hreik gave the most decisive responses: 83.3% of those polled do not believe that Hezbollah’s military apparatus will ultimately be incorporated into the LAF.

■ Chiyah-Ghobeiry    ■ Haret Hreik  
■ Hay al-Selloum    ■ Bourj al-Barajneh

## 7.1 Do you think your community supports Hezbollah's involvement in Syria?

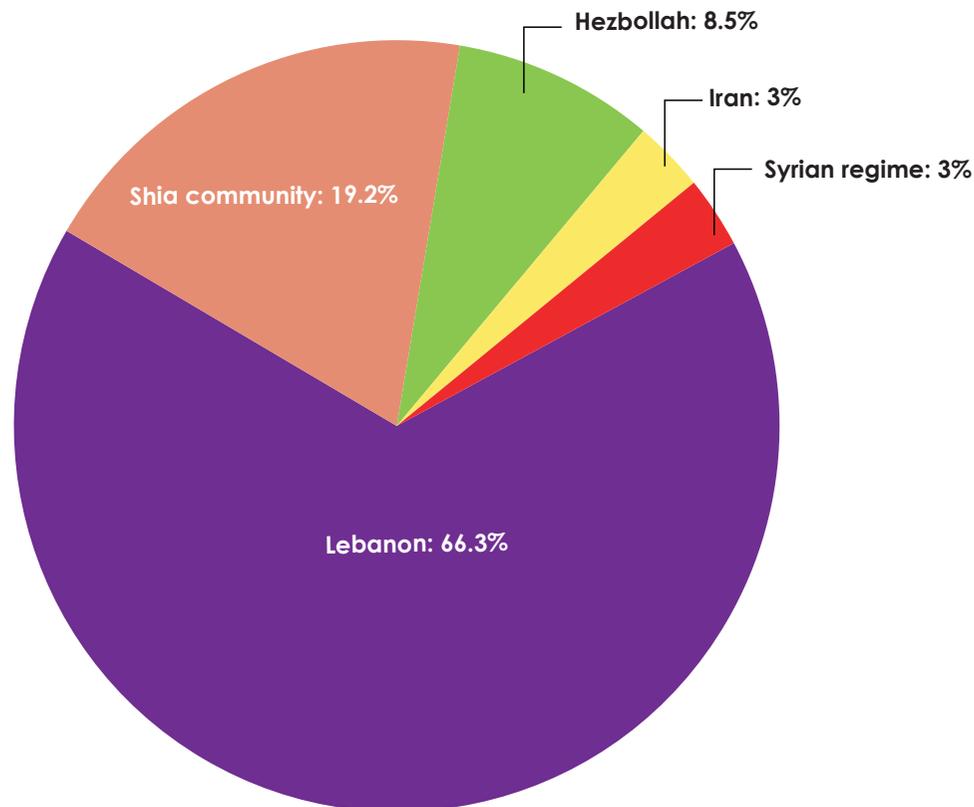


## 7.2 On whose behalf is Hezbollah fighting in Syria?

### A job well sold

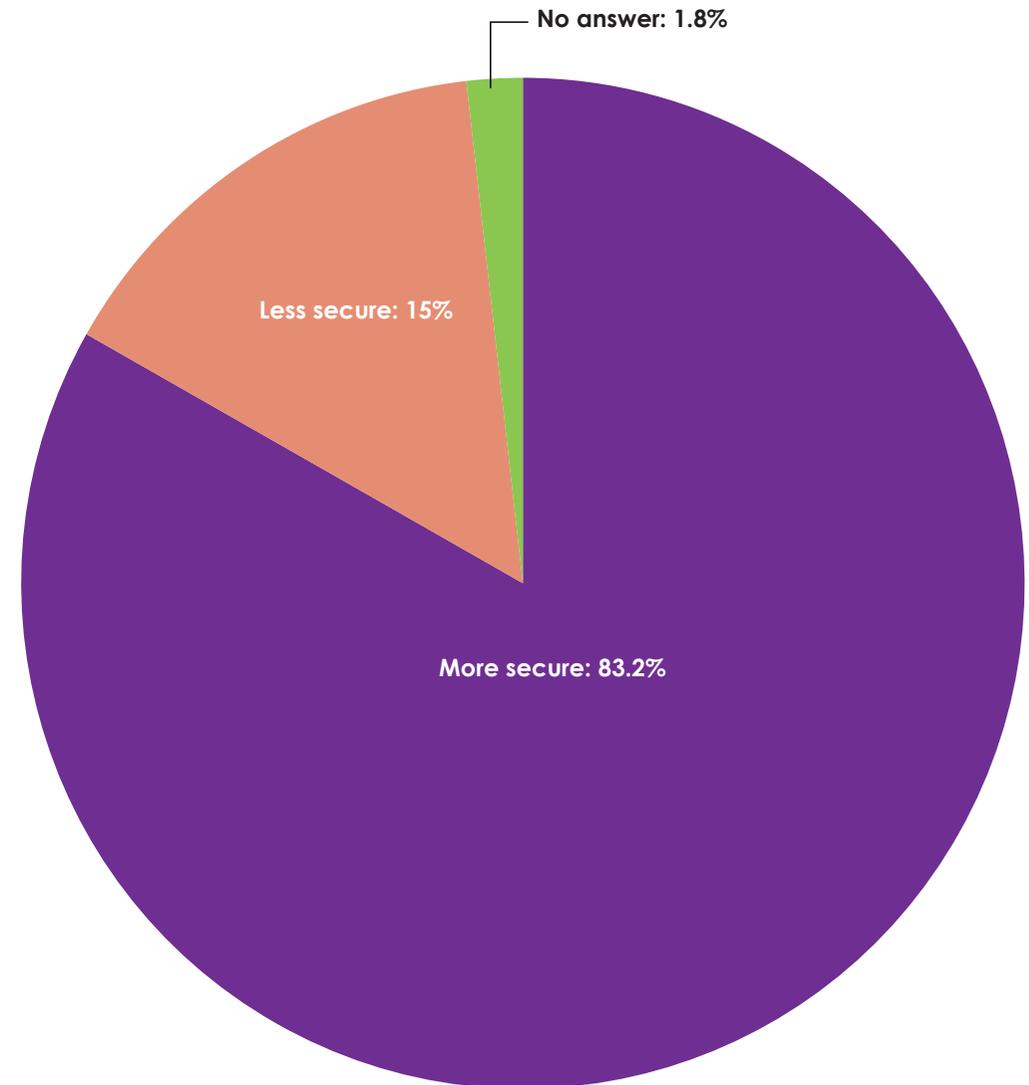
Just under two-thirds (66.3%) of those polled believe that Hezbollah is fighting on behalf of Lebanon in Syria. Slightly fewer than 1 in 5 (19.2%) respondents believe those actions benefit the Shia community.

As evident in previous questions, there exists a perception that Hezbollah is defending the state of Lebanon, especially its minorities. Since Sunni extremism in Syria is considered a direct threat to Lebanon as a whole, Hezbollah is defending the country through its engagement there.



The growing merger between Lebanon's defense and the "Resistance" began as early as 2000 but took a different form after 2005. In a speech Hassan Nasrallah gave on June 8, 2005 (the year Rafik Hariri was assassinated and the Syrians withdrew from Lebanon), he espoused the slogan "Lebanon 10,452 km<sup>2</sup>." That motto was launched during the 1980s by Christian leader and assassinated president-elect Bashir Gemayyel. Propaganda items that paralleled the beginning of the Lebanese national anthem ("Koullouna lil-Watan" or "All for the Nation") with "All Resistance" have become pivotal elements in Hezbollah's partisan propaganda, as dictated by needs. Stated otherwise, this pillar of "Shia ideology" being promoted by Hezbollah is intended to sow confusion between Lebanon and the "Resistance."

## 7.3 Has Hezbollah's involvement in Syria made you feel more or less secure?

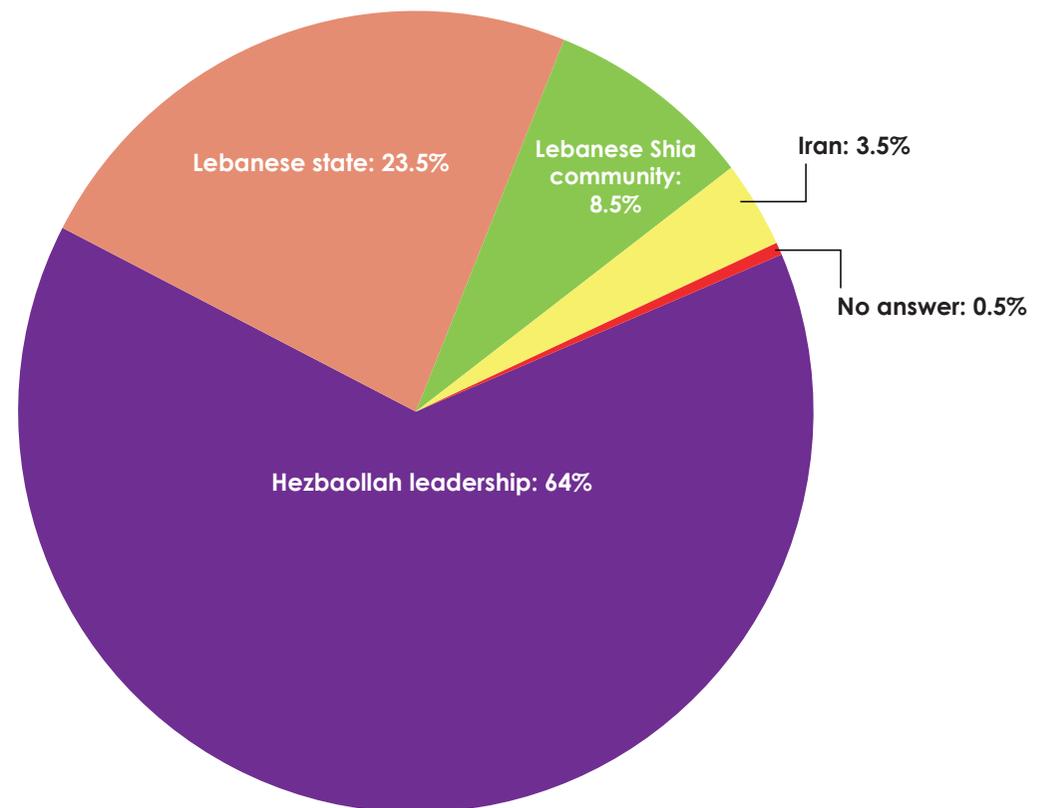


When categorized by area, 83.2% of respondents from all areas indicated that they felt “more secure” due to Hezbollah’s involvement in Syria. When broken down by area, the highest proportion of respondents who answered “less secure” were from Bourj al-Barajneh (21.3%) and Haret Hreik (17.3%). That outcome may be due to their proximity to the Bourj al-Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp, which is a potential hotbed of Sunni retaliation.

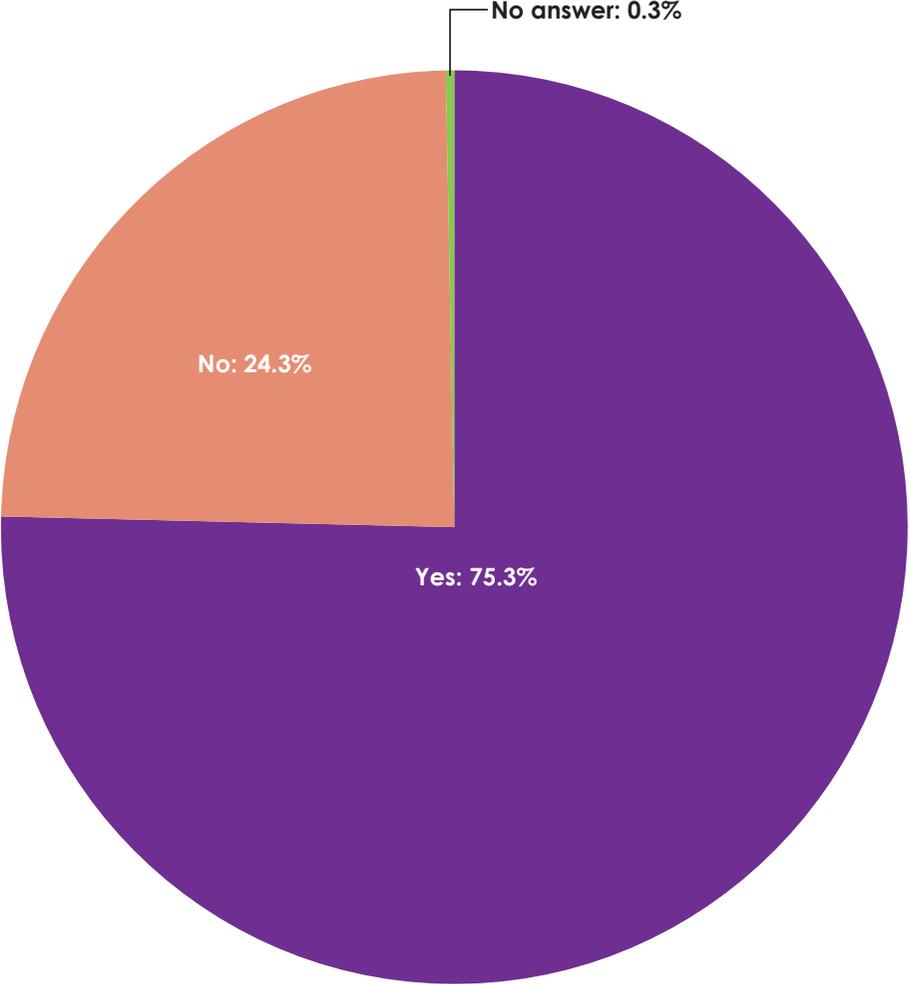
## 7.4 Who do you think should make decisions about Hezbollah's involvement in Syria?

Although 66.3% (Q 7.2) responded that they believe Hezbollah is fighting in Syria in the interest of Lebanon, 64% believe that Hezbollah should be in charge of its own involvement. Of note, this becomes yet another example of Hezbollah trying to represent itself as "Lebanon." It would seem that very few respondents believe that Iran should be the decisionmaker behind Hezbollah's involvement.

When categorized by area, it is interesting to note that 55.3% of the respondents from Haret Hreik believed the Lebanese state should retain the authority to decide Hezbollah's involvement in Syria. Still, a sizeable minority (36.7%) indicated "Hezbollah leadership" as their first choice. The results in Haret Hreik could reflect the perception that the objectives of Lebanese state institutions are aligned with those of Hezbollah.

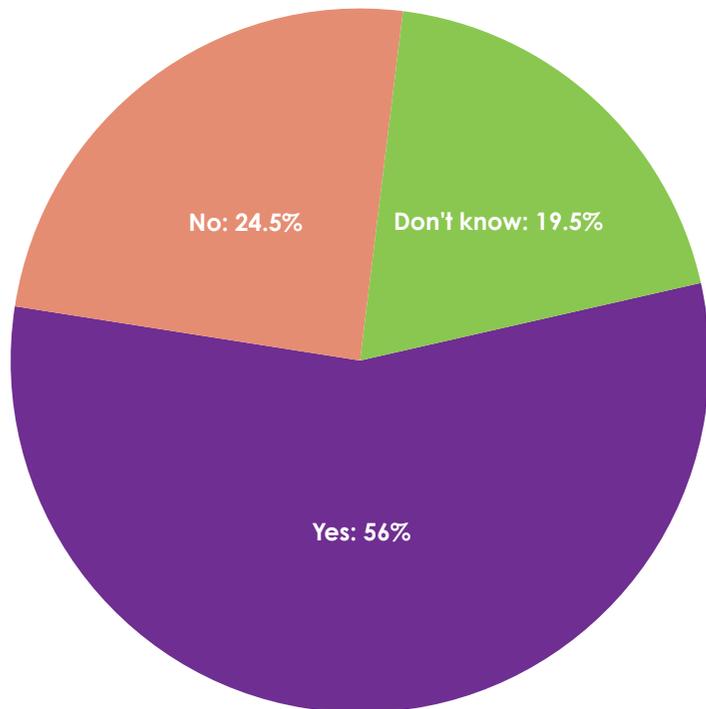


## 7.5 Do you know anyone from your neighborhood/village/family who was killed in Syria?



## 7.6 Do you think the conflict in Syria will end soon?

The results indicate that 56% of respondents have adopted Hezbollah's opinion that it is winning the conflict and that the war will soon be over.



## 7.7 What would you prefer as the outcome of the crisis in Syria?

While 58.5% support the idea of Assad remaining in power, 41.5% would still prefer other outcomes. This indicates that Hezbollah's involvement in Syria is not so much intended to defend the Syrian regime, but to curtail the threat from Sunni radicals, which now extends into Lebanon itself.

