

# **POLLING DAHIYEH**

## **A Hayya Bina Project**

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**May 2013**

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

## Methodology

As part of its ongoing research activities, Hayya Bina contracted with a regionally based research firm to conduct a groundbreaking public opinion poll of Dahiyeh residents. Once Hayya Bina and its partner finalized the questionnaire, a pilot poll was taken to assess the effectiveness of the questions. Based on the results of that test, some revisions were made to improve the respondents' ability to understand the questions being asked. Finally, under the supervision of a single field manager, the poll was administered by 25 field surveyors in Dahiyeh, specifically the areas of Chiyyah, Haret Hreik, Ghobeiry, Bourj al-Barajneh, Bir Hassan, Ouzaii and Laylake-Solloum. The Haret Hreik area known as "security square," which is home to most of Hezbollah's offices and boasts the highest degree of local security, was not included in the survey.

The sample group consisted of 600 people (300 males and 300 females) who represented a variety of social classes, ages and educational backgrounds. The survey was administered via a "door-to-door" technique between February 4 and February 25, and all respondents were Shia Muslims.

The selection process was based on an estimate of 698 "clusters" of Shia Muslims living in the southern suburbs of Beirut (known collectively as "Dahiyeh") of the 10,560 clusters situated throughout Lebanon. Population sampling was accomplished in three stages. First, the probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling technique was used to determine that 60 (of  $n = 600$ ) clusters should be considered the primary sampling unit for this activity.

Each cluster included 100 – 150 households of which 10 households were polled per cluster. All adults over the age of 18 years who were available at the time of the interview were listed in a Kish matrix.

Finally, adults were selected randomly via the Kish matrix. The PPS method ensures the ability to obtain unbiased estimators for the parameters of interest.<sup>1</sup> This sample selection process, substantiated by statistical theory, ensured our ability to identify unbiased estimators for the parameters of interest in this survey. In this sample, the calculated margin of error (Type I sampling) was  $E = +/-4.9\%$ . Since no theoretical models can be used to assess Type II measurement error, our contractor minimized such inaccuracies by conducting rigorous training

of its field researchers and resolving the anomalies associated with the creation and administration of the questionnaire. Following the collection phase, the firm conducted a statistical analysis of the data, which included data cleaning, coding and cross tabulation. A synopsis of the results was prepared in house by Hayya Bina.

<sup>1</sup> Our contractor listed all population locations across Lebanon as well as the estimated population size at each location. The data used were collected originally by the firm in 1999 and have been updated annually, the most recent revision of which was conducted in October 2011. Of note, the company numbered every building in Lebanon, listed the residents in each building and divided each group into a cluster.






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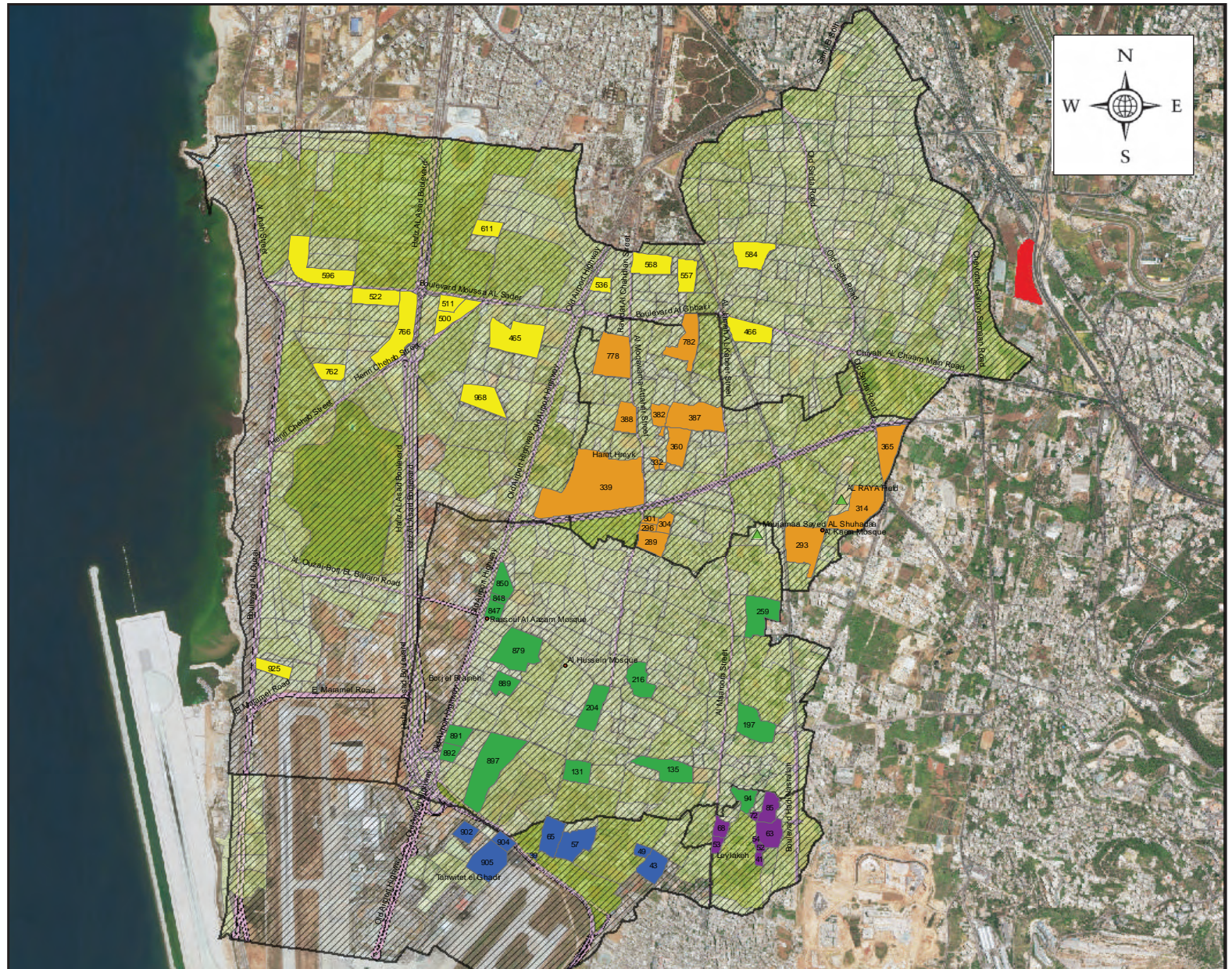
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## Why Dahiyeh?

While the word *Dahiyeh* simply means “suburb”, and Beirut (like any other major city), is surrounded by suburbs, the Lebanese lexicon ultimately defined the term as “the southern suburb of Beirut.” That meaning can trace its roots to the sociodemographic change that began to affect this part of Beirut in the early 1960s.

-  Chiyah clusters
-  Haret Hreik clusters
-  Tahwitet al-Ghadeer clusters
-  Laylake-Solloum clusters
-  Burj al-Barajneh clusters



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The changes consisted primarily of a significant population shift within Dahiyeh due to the rural exodus of residents from the South and the Bekaa. In addition, the successive bouts of internal and external violence that commenced in Lebanon during the early 1970s also caused population shifts. Historically a religiously mixed area, these changes transformed Dahiyeh into a neighborhood comprised almost exclusively of Lebanese Shia. Thus, the decision to conduct a poll in Dahiyeh stems from the fact that the area represents something akin to a melting pot for broad

based Lebanese Shia sensitivities. Specifically, this southern suburb is home to Shia from the South, the Bekaa and of course from Dahiyeh itself. Notably, in contrast to its stereotypical representation by the media, Dahiyeh is by no means a “slum.” On the contrary, it boasts a degree of socioeconomic diversity similar to any other Lebanese community.

In fact, because of its central location and diverse population, with residents hailing from all areas of the country, Dahiyeh can be considered the “Shia capital” of Lebanon.

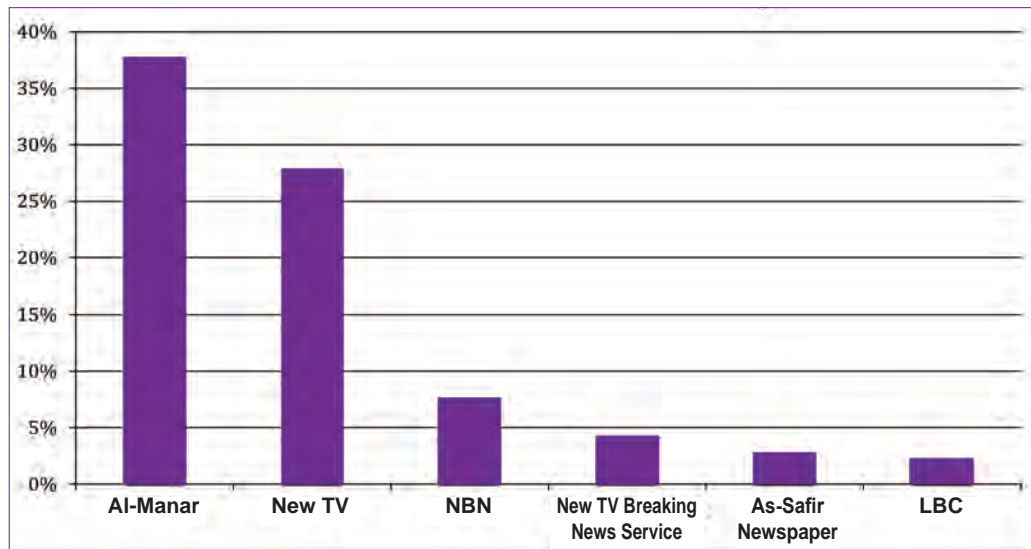
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## Which primary news source do you rely on for information?

78.2% of residents get their news from local TV channels.



**Al-Manar**—Hezbollah television station



**NewTV**—Though frequently iconoclastic, NewTV (also known as “al-Jadeed”) is generally a pro-Resistance/ March 8 Coalition television station.



**NBN** (National Broadcasting Network)—Official Amal Movement television station



**LBC** (Lebanese Broadcasting Company)—LBC started service in 1986 as the mouthpiece of the Lebanese

Forces militia but quickly became Lebanon's leading private television station. Despite the official dissolution of the Lebanese Forces after the arrest of its leader Samir Geagea in 1994, and thanks to deft maneuvering by its managers, LBC survived and ultimately prospered as a private broadcasting company. Although it maintains a relatively “objective” position, LBC continues to reflect mainstream “Christian” public opinion.



**As-Safir** newspaper—When it debuted in 1974 on the eve of the Lebanese civil war, as-Safir called itself “the voice of the voiceless people” and the mouthpiece of pan-Arabism. The publication has since maintained that sense of belligerency, which explains its current alignment with Hezbollah/March 8.

## Where is al-Akhbar in all this?

Surprisingly, al-Akhbar newspaper did not prove to be especially popular among respondents, having received just nine votes for primary news source. The newspaper began publication on August 14, 2006, the day the cease-fire between Hezbollah and Israel took effect, thus making it a relative newcomer on the Lebanese media scene and one that flaunts its clear partisan political identity. Although the publication appears to have very few readers, it gains influence by feeding information to Hezbollah's other propaganda outlets. Notably, all Lebanese media sources adopt (and adapt) stories and information printed in the country's daily newspapers.



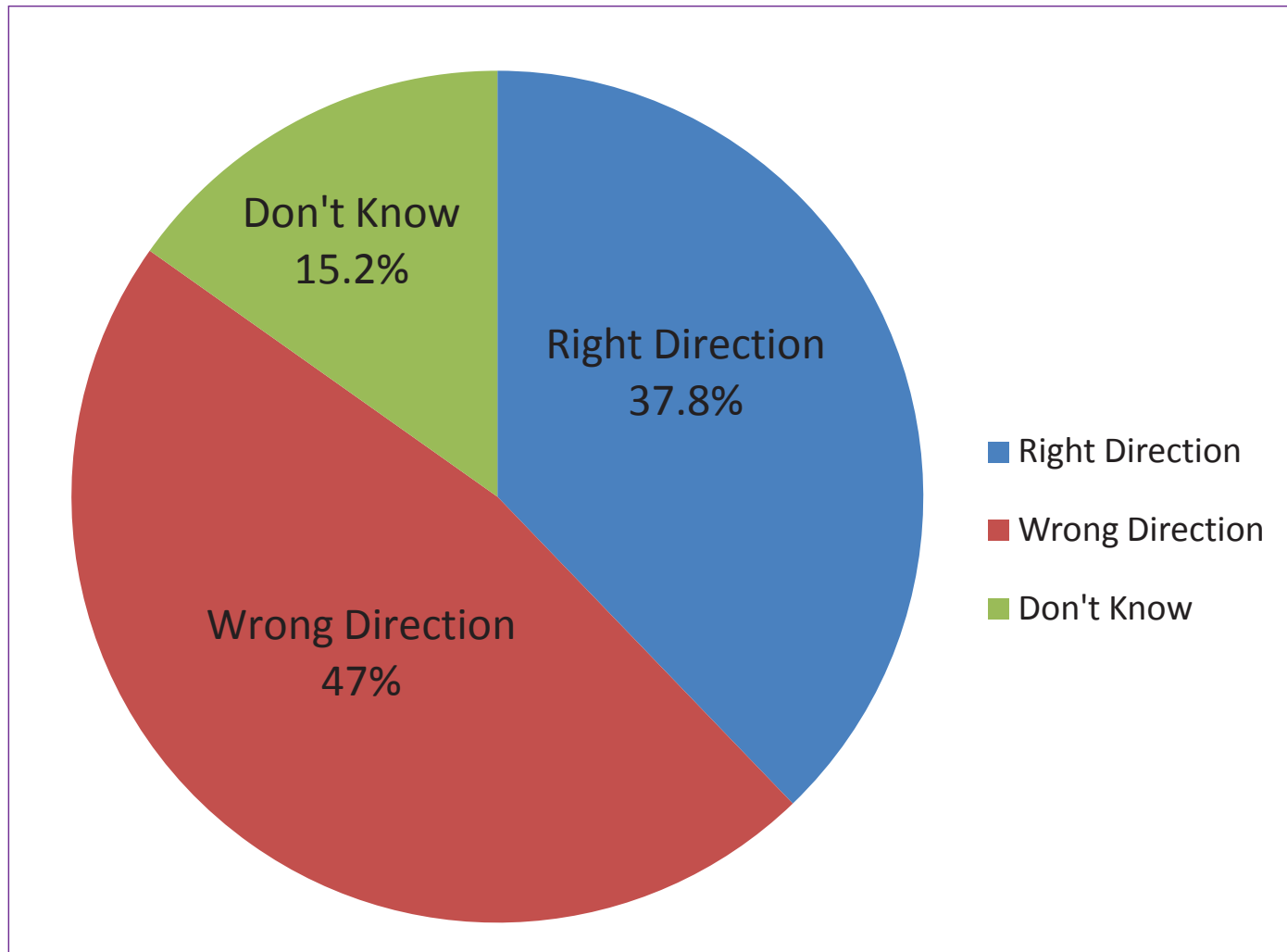
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## Do you believe things are moving in the right direction in your neighborhood?

The largest number of respondents, 47%, felt that things were moving in a negative direction.



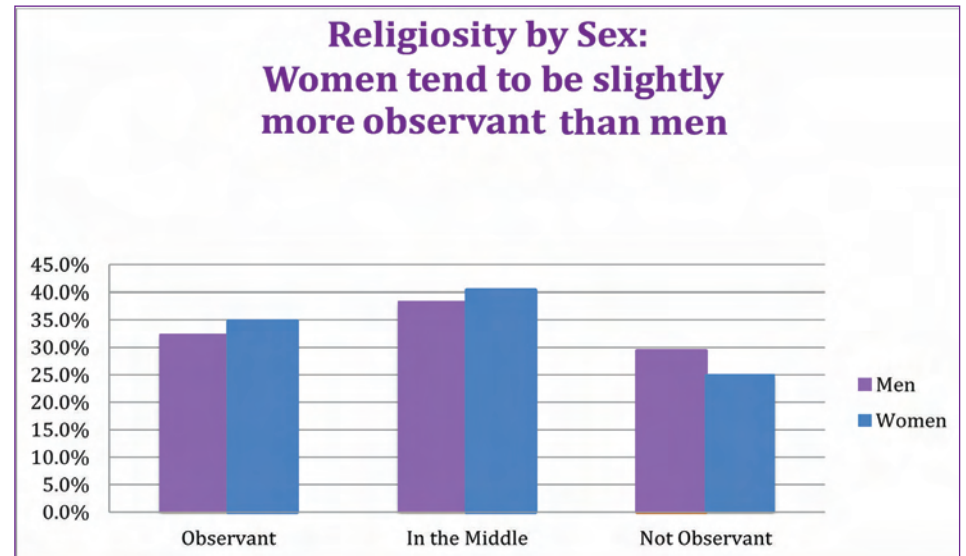
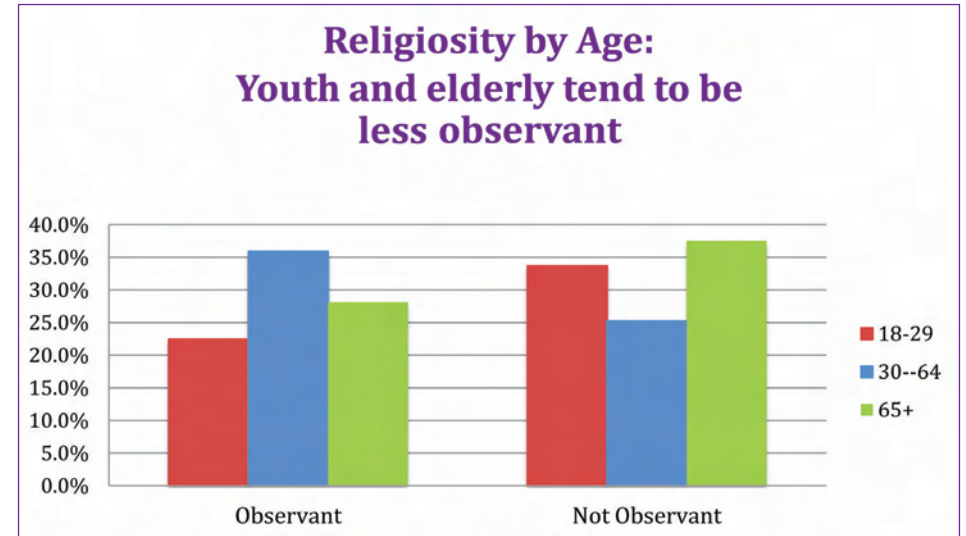
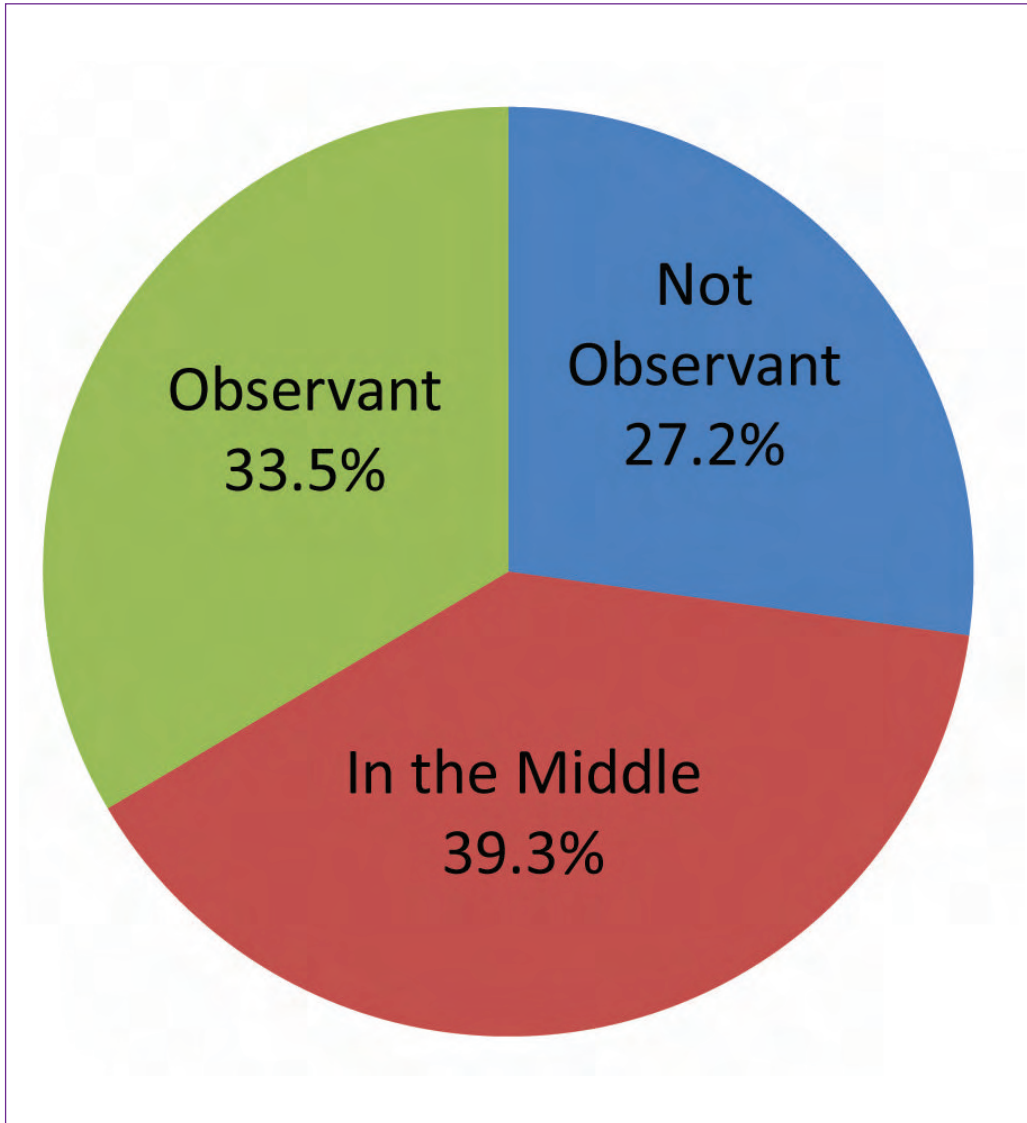
Other than in Haret Hreik, a relatively prosperous commercial area (considered Dahiyeh's "downtown") where 57.3% of the residents responded that things were headed in the "Right Direction," most respondents felt that in their neighborhood, things were headed in the "Wrong Direction."

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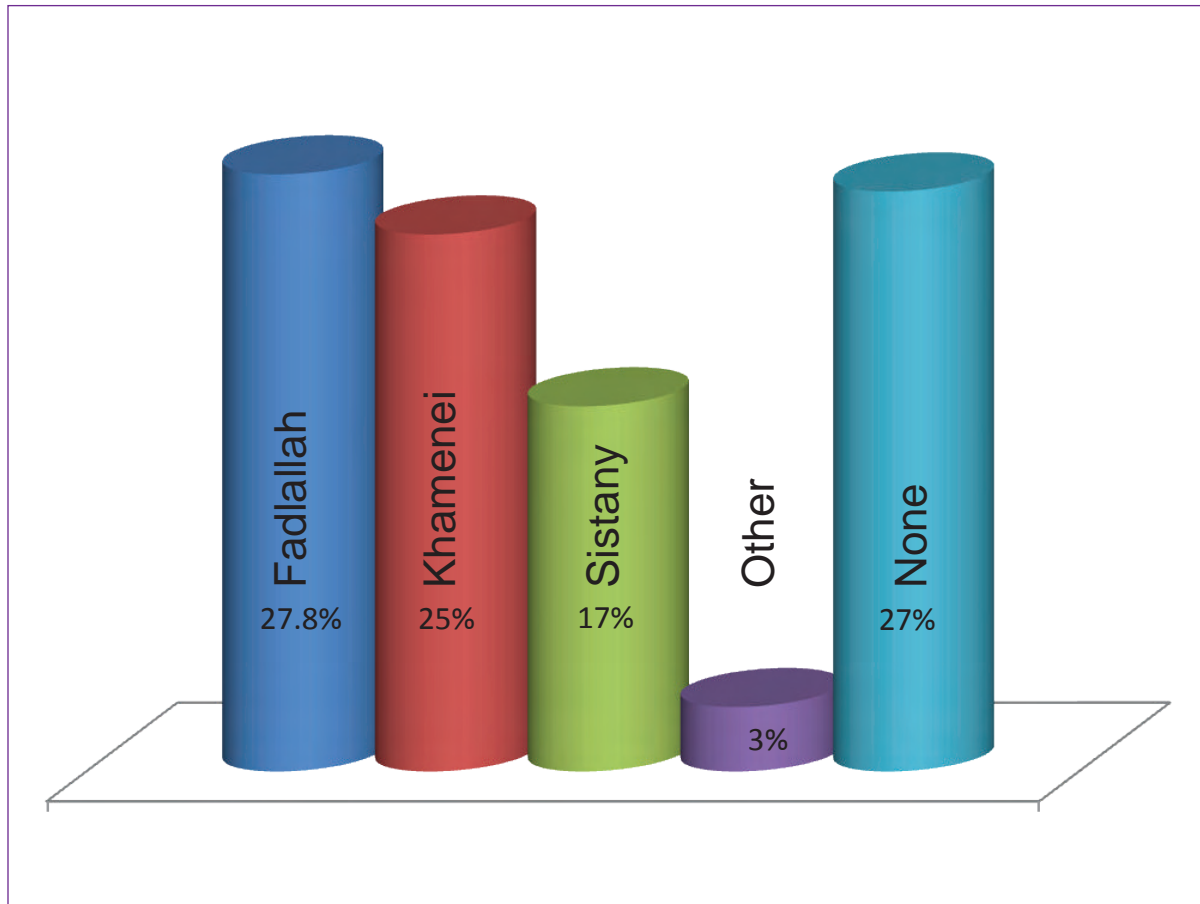
## Do you consider yourself religiously observant?





## Whom do you imitate religiously?

Top three responses: Fadlallah, Khamenei and Sistani



### The Marjaa': an Ideological and Financial Partner...

In principle, every Shia must follow (literally, "imitate") a *Marjaa Taqlid* (source or reference of imitation). The institution of *Taqlid* (Imitation) is deeply rooted in Shia history based on the "myth" of the disappearance of the 12th Imam. Thus, imitation is not an Islamic practice but is instead exclusively Shia in nature.

The *Marjaaiya* (the generic term for the relationship between a Shia and his *Marjaa*) has become a regulatory institution for the international Shia community, much like the relationship between the Vatican and the Catholic Church. Yet a *Marjaa* is not comparable to the Pope. Multiple *Marjaa* have been present from time immemorial, and each attempt to concentrate the *Marjaa* under a single heading has ended in failure.

By extension, the position is not exactly that of a "Director of Conscience." Rather, he is referred to either directly or from his collection of fatwas or *Resala 'amaliyya*. He provides guidance relative to life's practical issues and is the recipient of "religious taxes." As a result, the *Marjaa* has his hands not only on an individual's ideological existence, but on people's financial lives as well.

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Fadlallah

VS.



Khamenei

► Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah passed away in July 2010, but his "legacy" was subsequently assigned to his sons (among whom Ali serves as his "successor" despite the fact that a strictly religious interpretation of the conditions indicates that for a *Marjaa*, the notion of "automatic succession" does not exist). Still, most of the respondents who identified themselves as "Observant" or "Somewhat Observant" continue to follow Sayyed Fadlallah as the Lebanese Shia *Marjaa*. The notion that this proportion of those surveyed would rather follow a deceased *Marjaa* than an existing one is interesting.

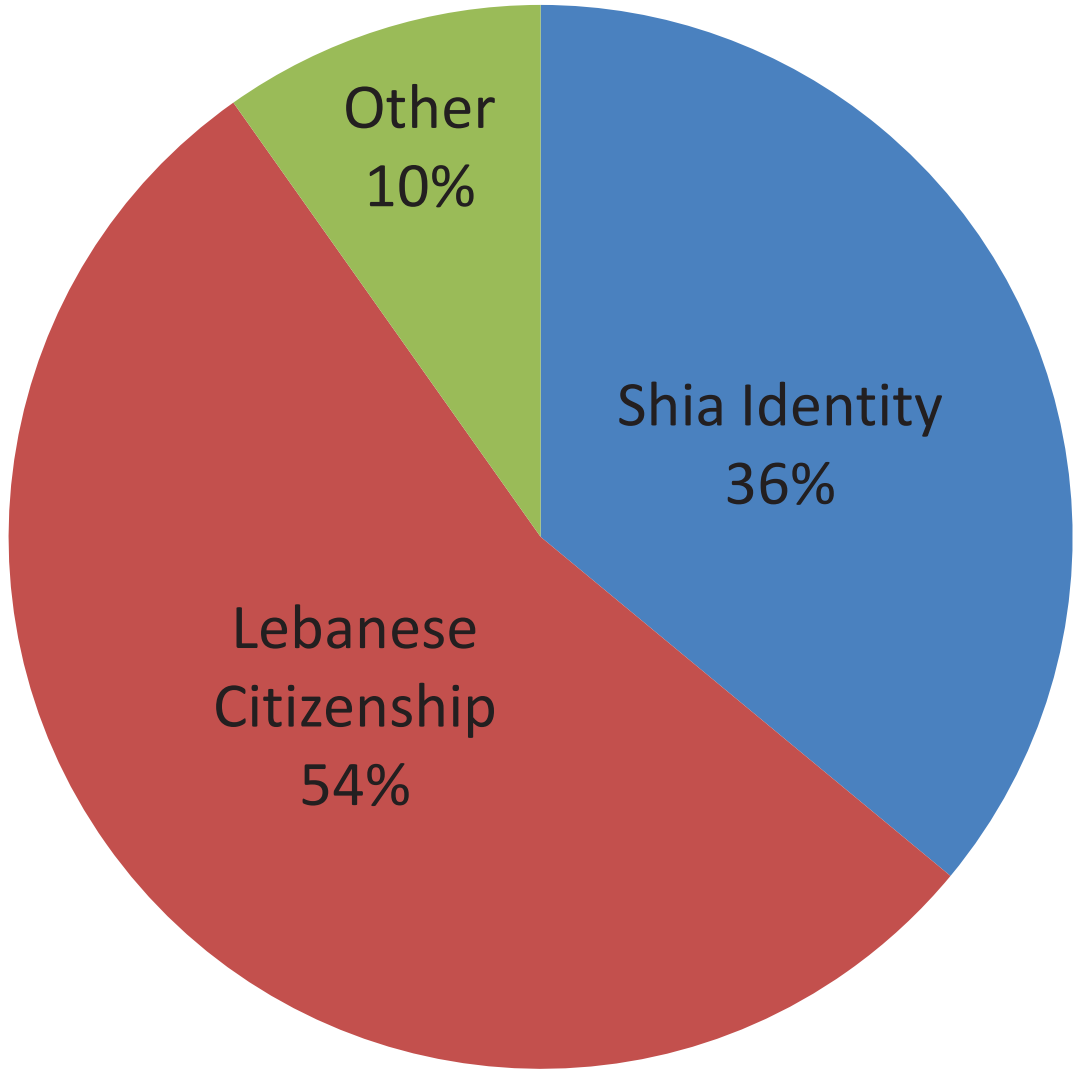
► Within the Shia community, the Najjaf-educated Fadlallah—

despite his early links to Hezbollah—is considered the most "progressive" and "moderate" of the primary Shia religious leaders. The late Fadlallah's image continues to inspire an important constituency. Of note, the late Sayyed Fadlallah opposed the concept of *Wilayat al-Faqih*, the main ideological pillar that supports the Islamic State (Iran) and Hezbollah.

► Sayyed Ali al-Sistani represents an equivalent to Najjaf, a perspective that typically represents a "politically correct" version of Arab Shiism.

► Ayatollah Ali Khamenei represents the extreme Iranian strain of Shia Islam based on the notion of *Wilayat al-Faqih*.

## What gives you the greatest sense of personal pride?



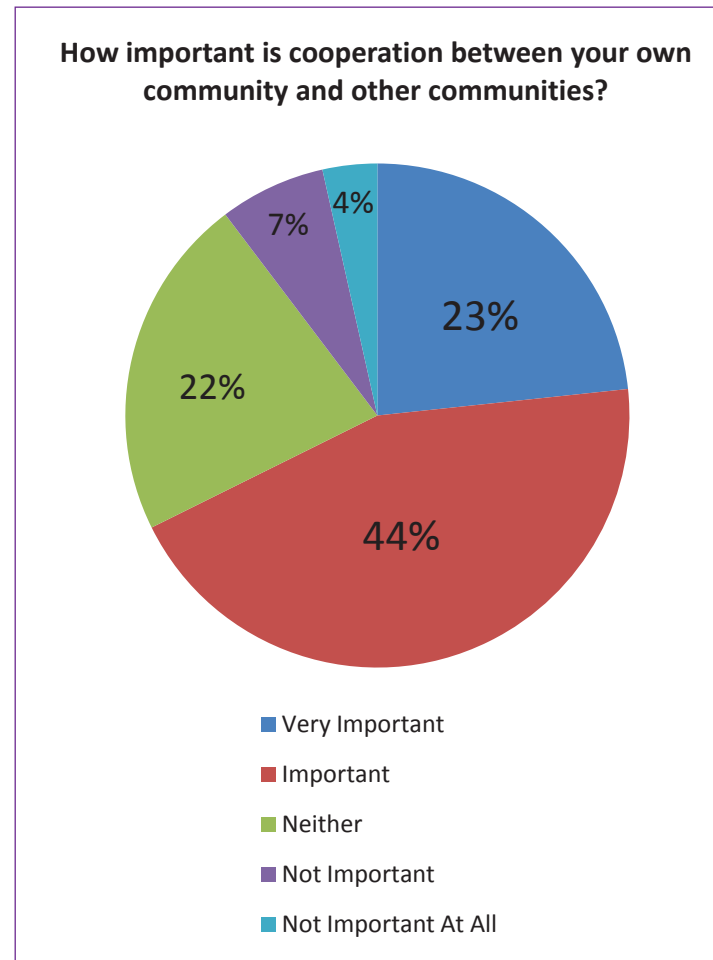
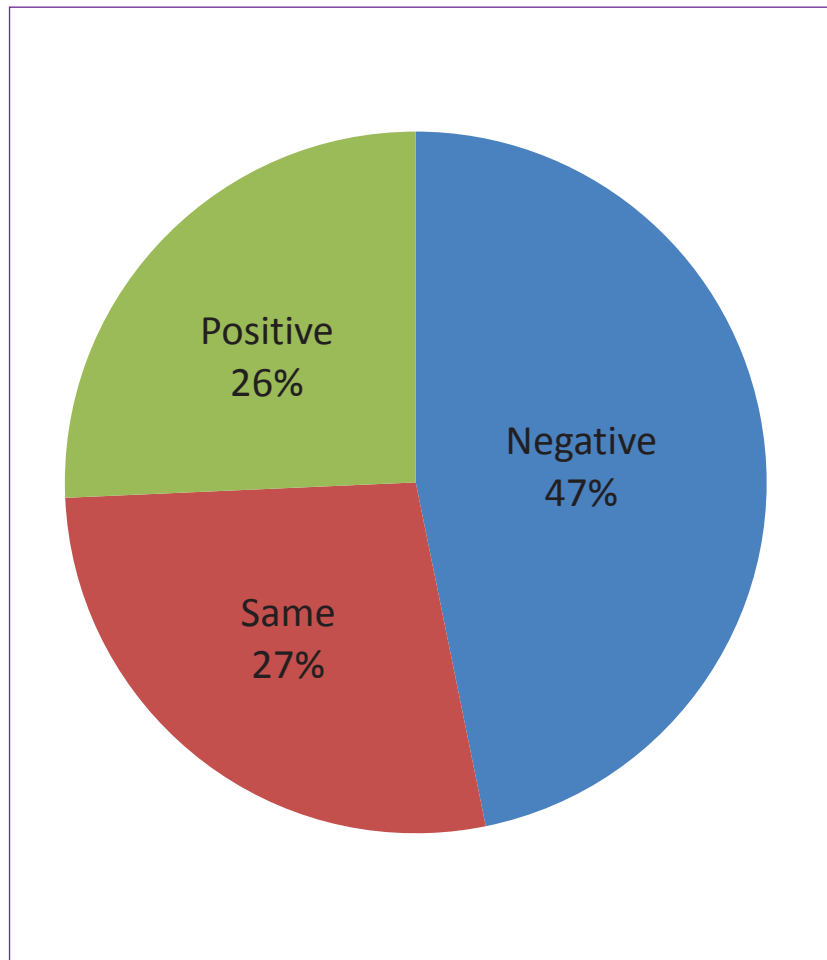
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**Do you think the relationship between your community and other Lebanese communities is moving in a positive or negative direction?**

**Most respondents believe that intercommunity relationships are headed in the wrong direction.**



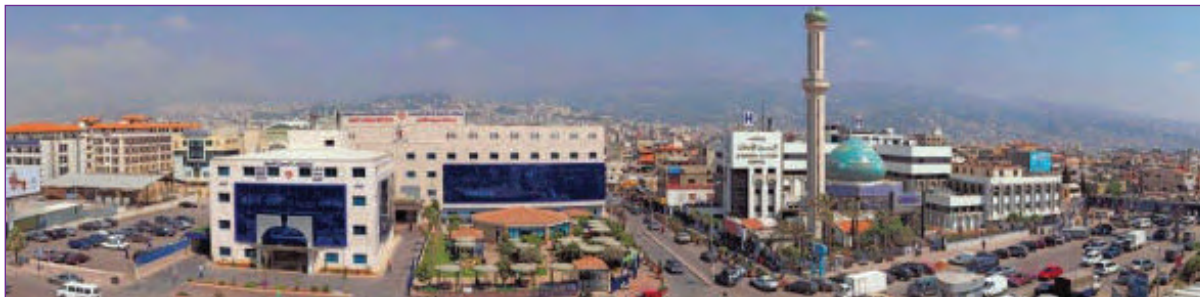
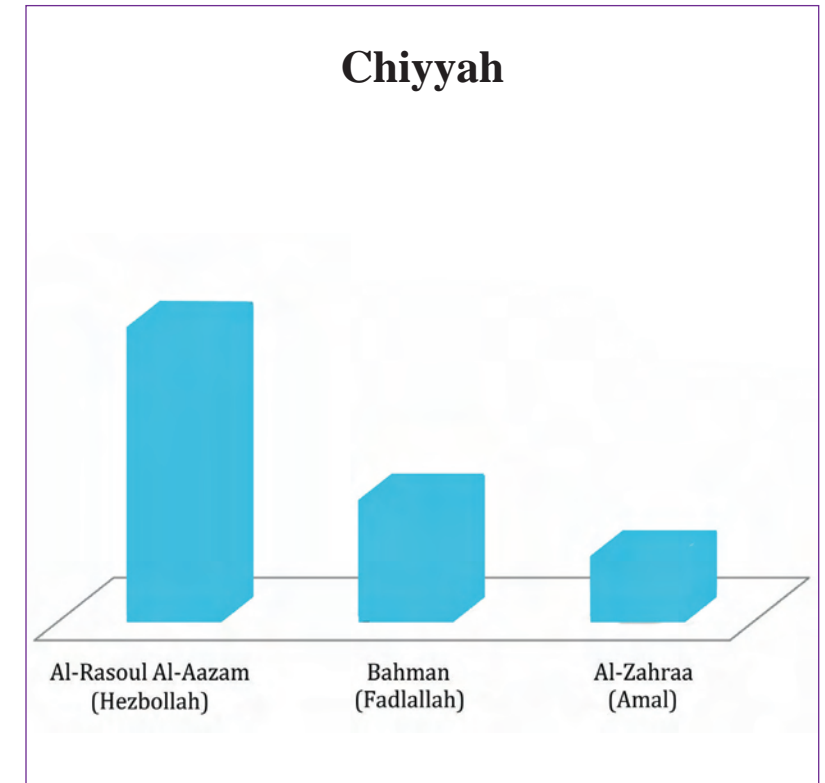
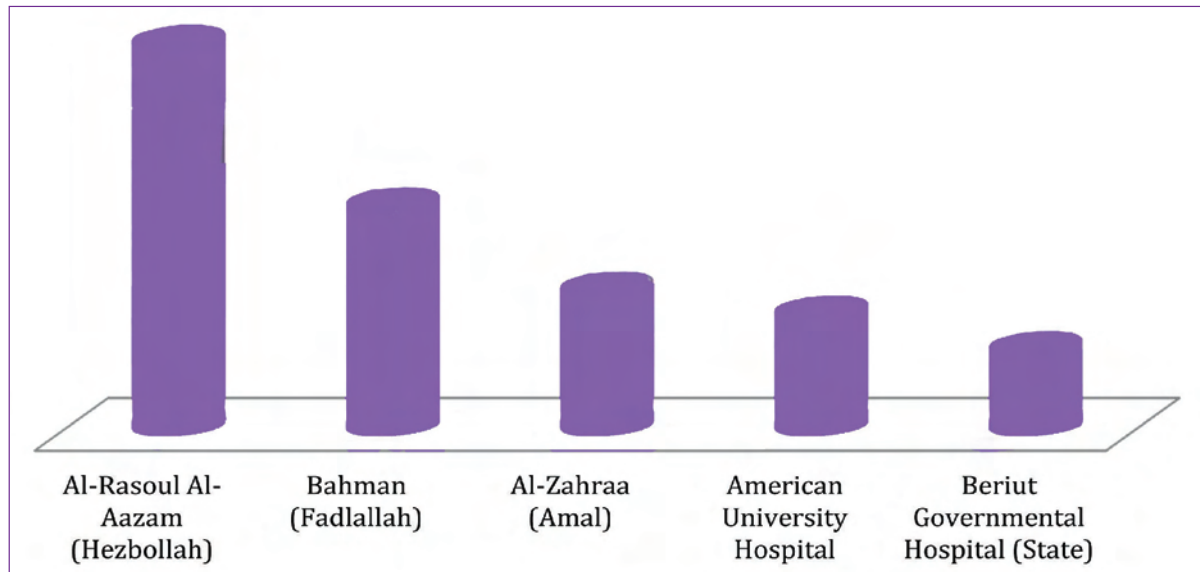
The intra-Lebanese argument over demography is nothing if not persistent. A tremendous discrepancy exists regarding the quantification of Muslims and Christians, especially since the last official figure was produced during the country's only census—a process conducted in 1932 prior to Lebanon's independence!

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**In the event you experience a health problem and must be admitted to a hospital, which of the following hospitals would you choose?**



A large mosque appears at the right of this photograph (taken from the Rasoul al-Aazam Hospital's website), which bears the same name. After becoming affiliated with the Lebanese University, the hospital now includes a center that specializes in cardiovascular medicine.

The residents of Chiyah (a neighborhood traditionally associated with Amal) overwhelmingly chose a Hezbollah-operated hospital. It is evident that even the imposing persona of the late Sayyed Fadlallah could not trump quality considerations related to services provided at its hospital. Stated otherwise, the Fadlallah facility does not garner the same degree of respect as its late benefactor.

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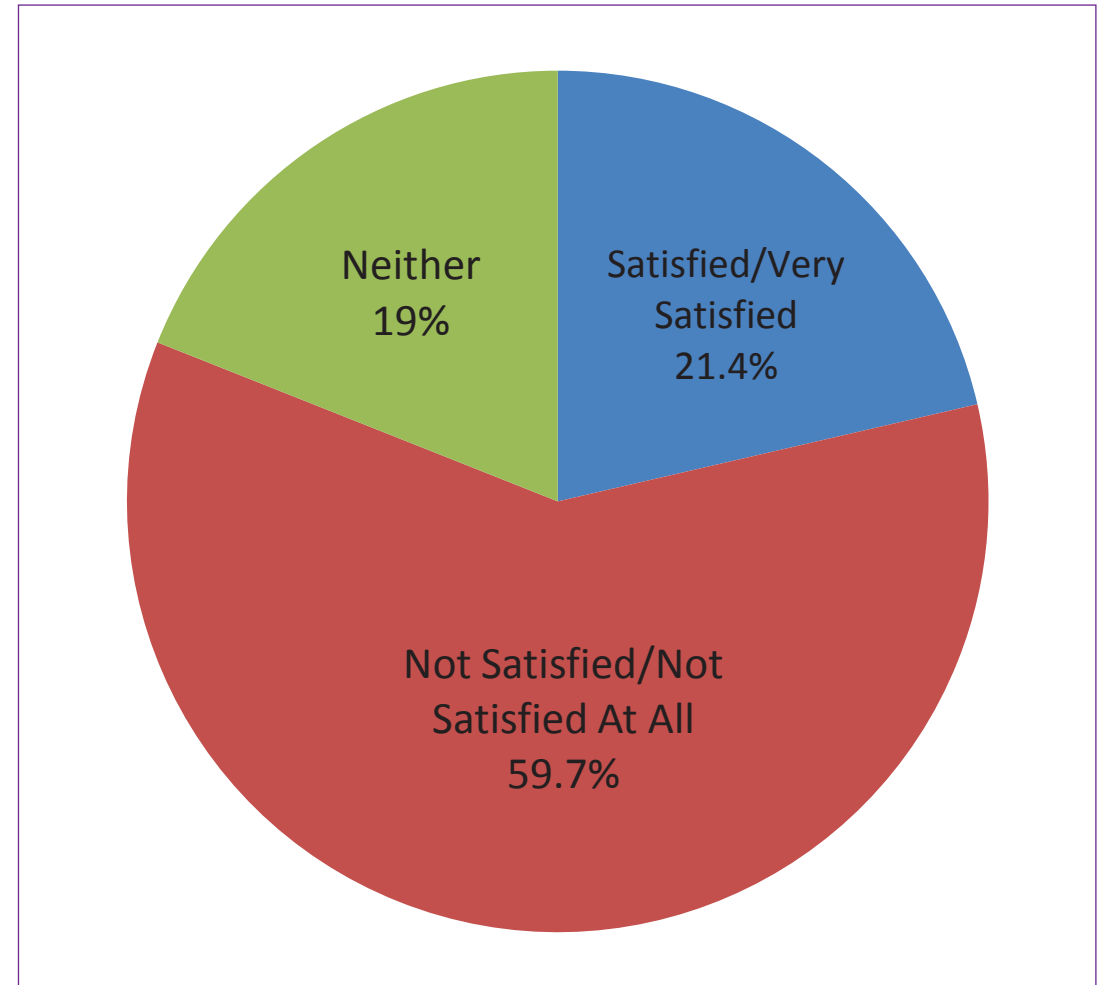
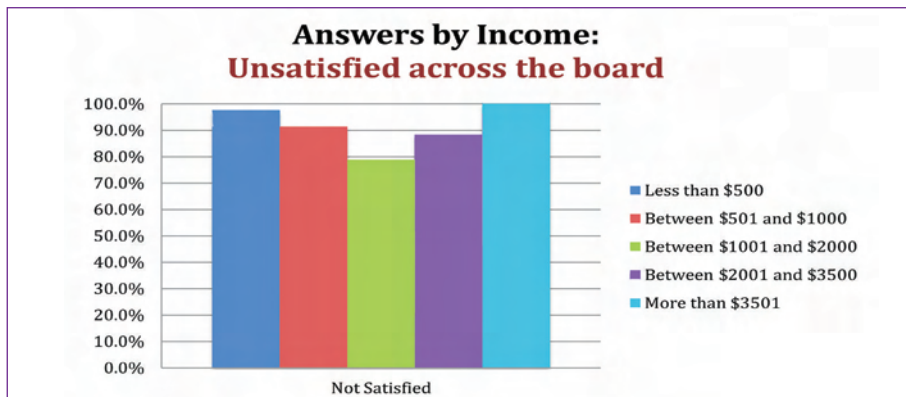
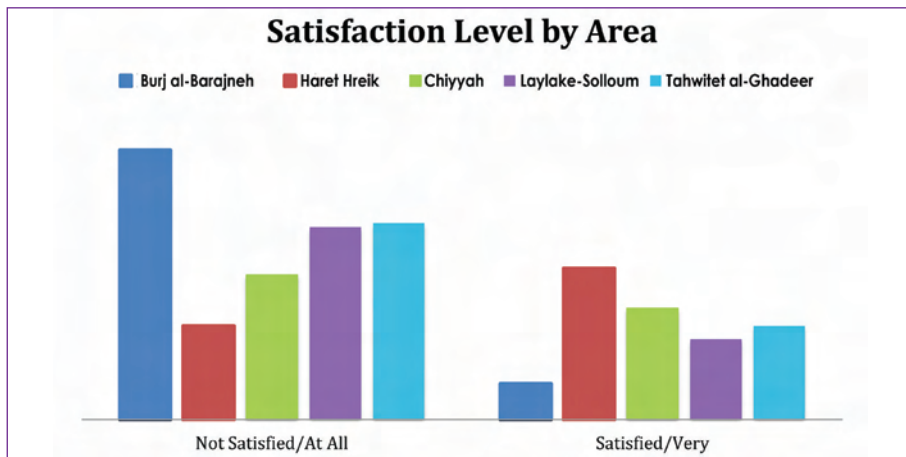
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## Rate your satisfaction with the quality of public services provided in your neighborhood

**Only 21% satisfied overall**

**Only 1.2% satisfied with Water & Electricity**



Despite the fact that its constituents rely on Hezbollah to provide critical assistance such as healthcare, overall satisfaction with such daily services appears to be remarkably low. This data conflicts with reports which indicate that Hezbollah's "high caliber" provision of services is holding the Shia community captive.

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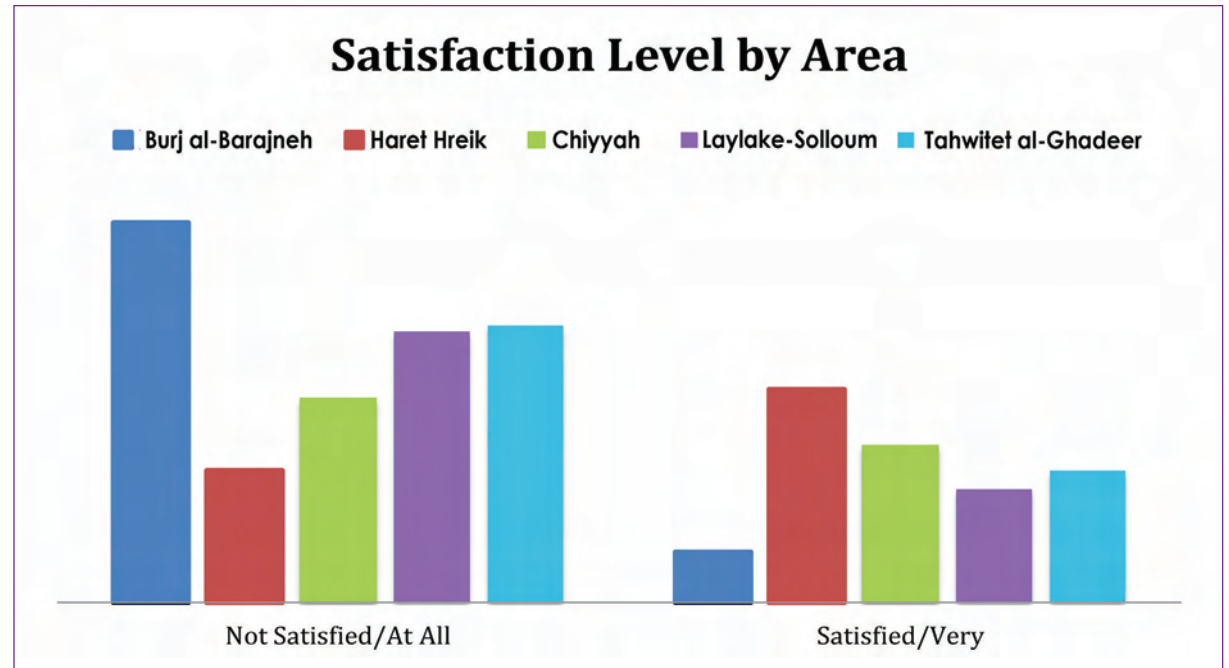
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## On a scale from 1 to 5, rate your satisfaction with the crime and safety in your area?

**29% of those polled reported being satisfied.**

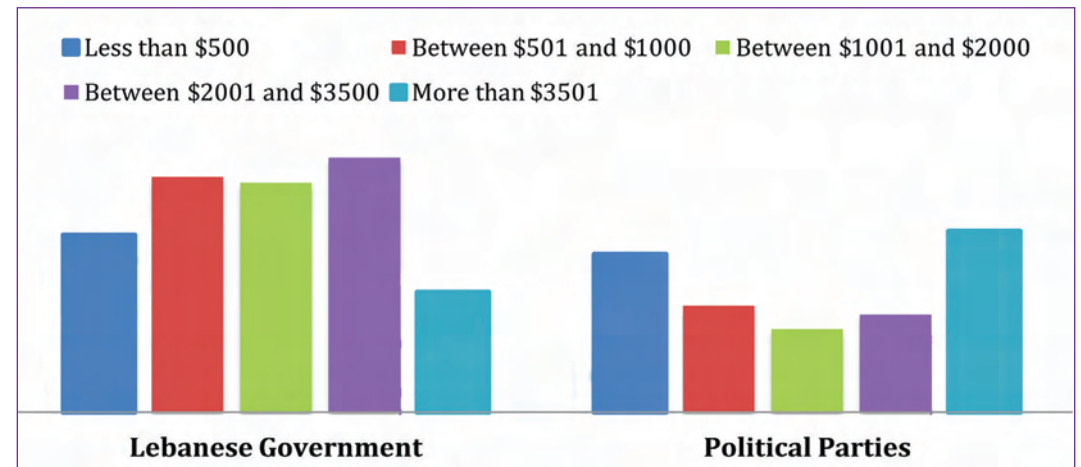
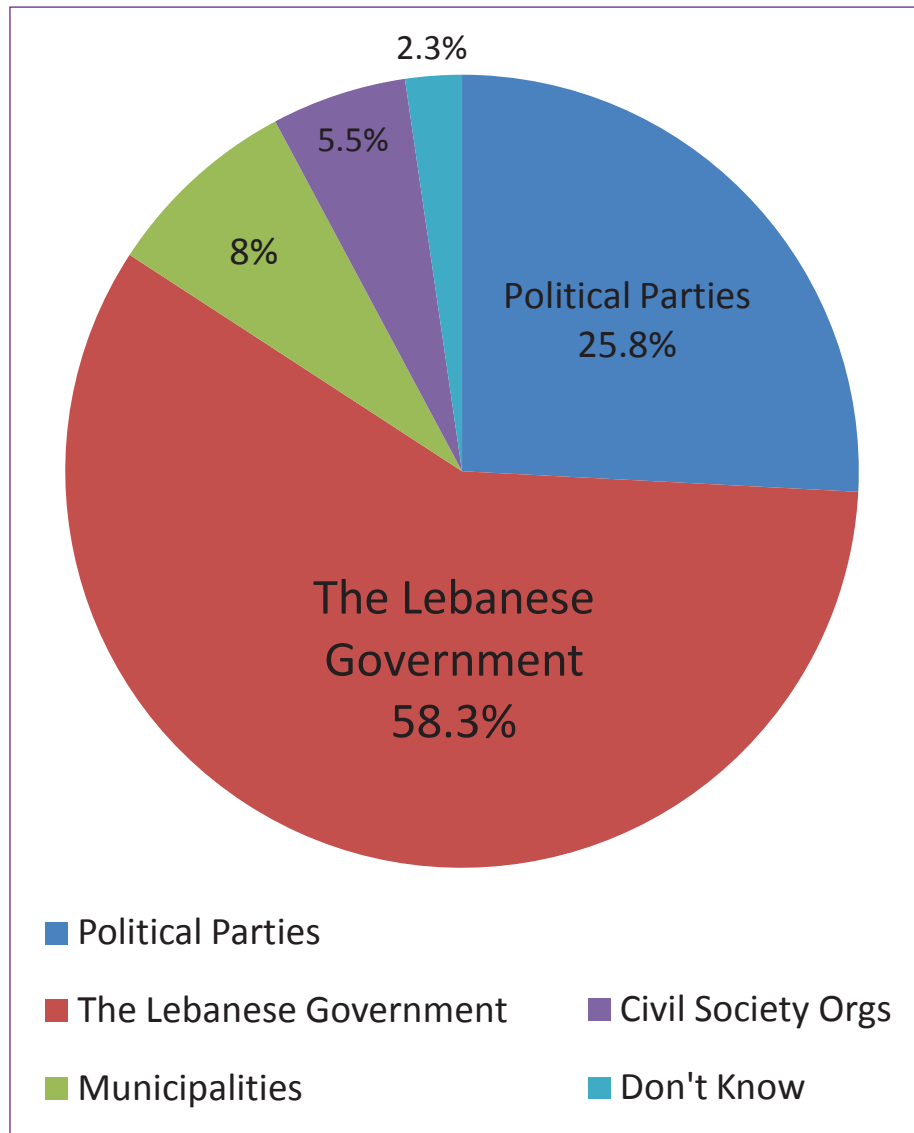
Since 2006, crime and violent incidents have risen dramatically in Dahiyeh. That trend seemed to reach an apex in spring 2012, as evidenced by scandals such as the highly public kidnappings orchestrated by the Moqdad family and the murder of senior Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) officers who were attempting to arrest wanted individuals. To address the abysmal security conditions in its stronghold, Hezbollah employed two strategies: (1) it led its own raids (i.e., to break up racketeering networks) and (2) it relinquished to the Lebanese State's security institutions some of the groups and wanted individuals it once protected. The neighborhood of Bourj al-Barajneh is home to a Palestinian camp of the same name, a fact that may influence perceptions of safety.



The caption reads, "Dozens of armed, masked men associated with the so-called "military wing" of the Moqdad family gather at the Moqdad association." This picture gives a sense of conditions in Dahiyeh in spring and summer 2012 amidst a series of notorious kidnappings and familial violence.

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## Whose responsibility do you think it should be to handle management of services?

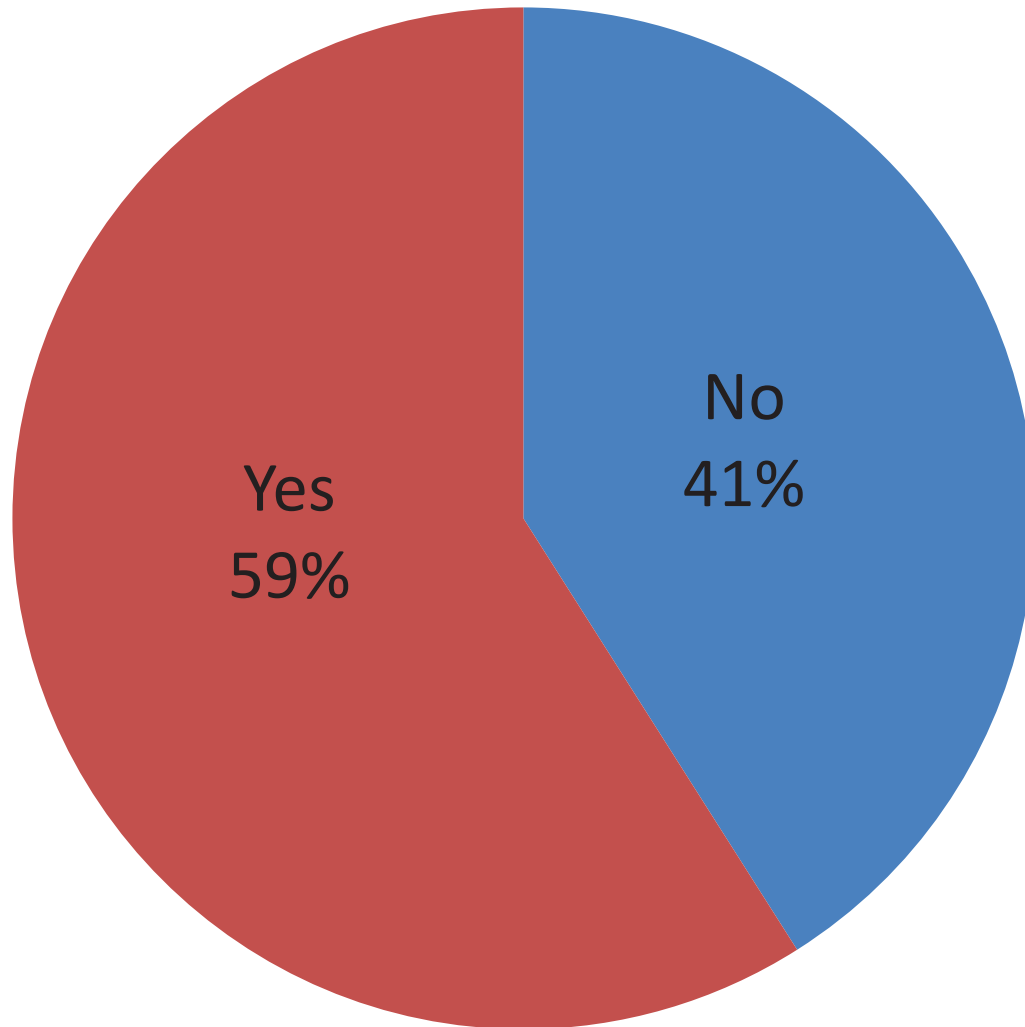


### Breakdown by income

Dahiye residents clearly consider the State to be Lebanon's primary provider of utility services. As such, it is assumed that the State bears the greatest responsibility for managing the country's numerous infrastructural issues.



## Would you like to have greater say in the way things are being run in your area?



It is interesting to note that while most respondents want greater say in the way things are being run 40% of those polled responded negatively despite only 20% of them having expressed satisfaction with the provision of such services.

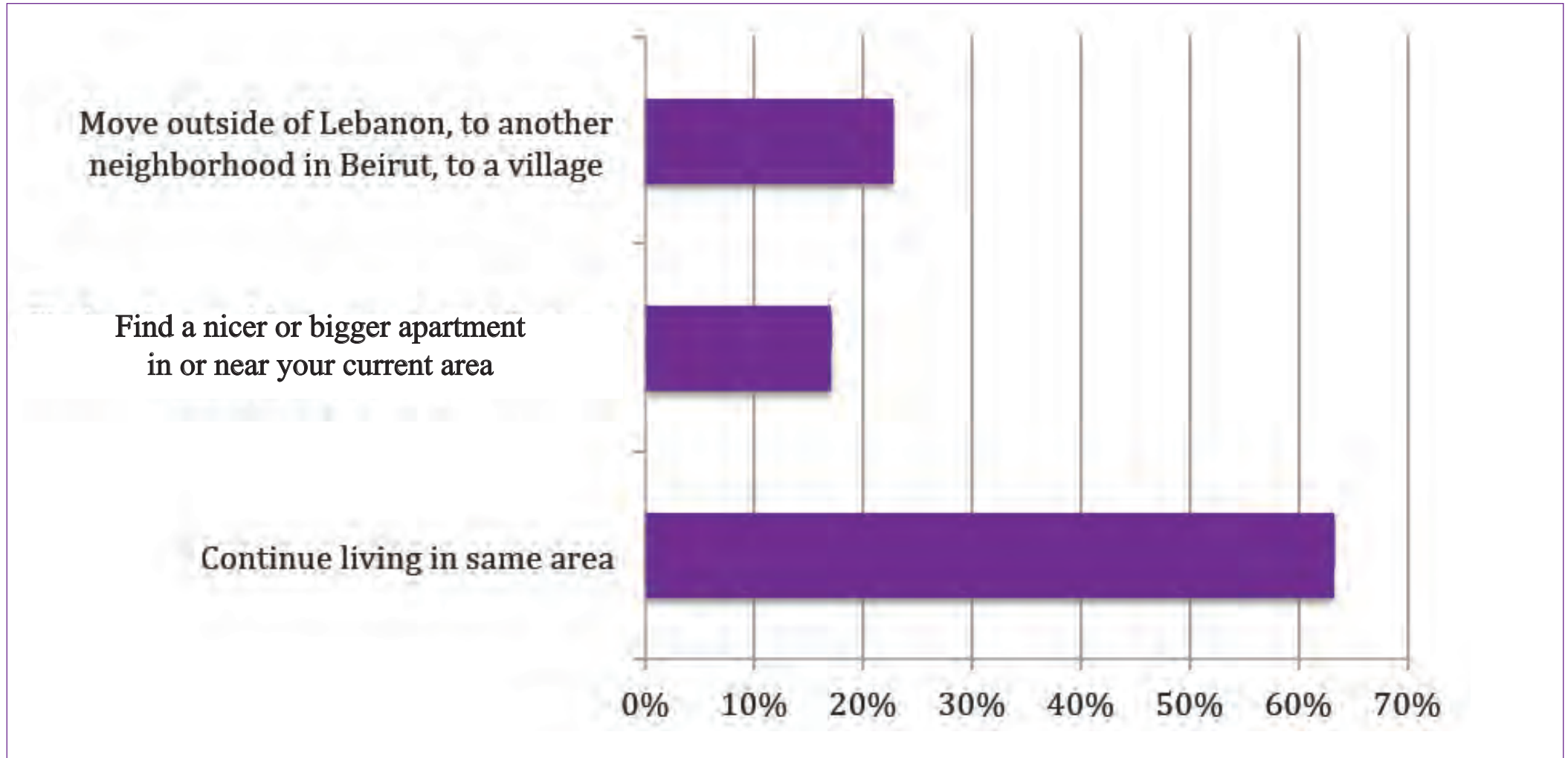
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## What are your plans for the next five years?

One-fifth of Dahiye's residents would prefer to relocate away from the area.



## Do you have a positive or negative view of the following government institutions?



### Lebanese Armed Forces:

Of those polled, 82% responded that they were positive/very positive.

Dahiyeh is comprised of many people who hail from Lebanon's Deep South, where they enjoyed the border security provided by both the LAF and the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL). The country's military is also one of the largest job providers, and many Lebanese consider that holding a post in the army is a sound career choice. The LAF is also viewed as an independent body that has distanced itself from politics. Of note, Hezbollah has repeatedly announced support for the LAF: "Let us defend the military institution," Nasrallah stated in a May 25, 2012 speech given in the aftermath of sectarian tensions. He warned that "no side would be victorious should civil war and sectarian divisions return."



### Internal Security Forces (ISF):

Of those who responded, 52% indicated that they were positive/very positive while 29% were neither.

Despite the numerous political attacks Hezbollah focused on the ISF and its leaders, and regardless of the ISF having been labeled the "Sunni community's private security force," it clearly commands substantial

respect. Although the cross-confessional ISF has faced significant obstacles to conducting security operations in Dahiyeh, it does not appear that the general population has developed a negative view of that organization due to these so-called incursions.

### Local Municipality:

14% responded positively.

The Federation of Municipalities of Dahiyeh (an organizational body that provides spokespersonship for the area's Hezbollah oriented municipalities) receives substantial Iranian funding. Moreover, these municipalities are used by Hezbollah to conduct necessary work and provide services.

### Ministry of Education:

47.8% responded neither.

### Ministry of Health:

41.7% responded neither.

Here, it is important to note that to enjoy the services provided by these institutions, citizens must petition either Hezbollah or Amal.

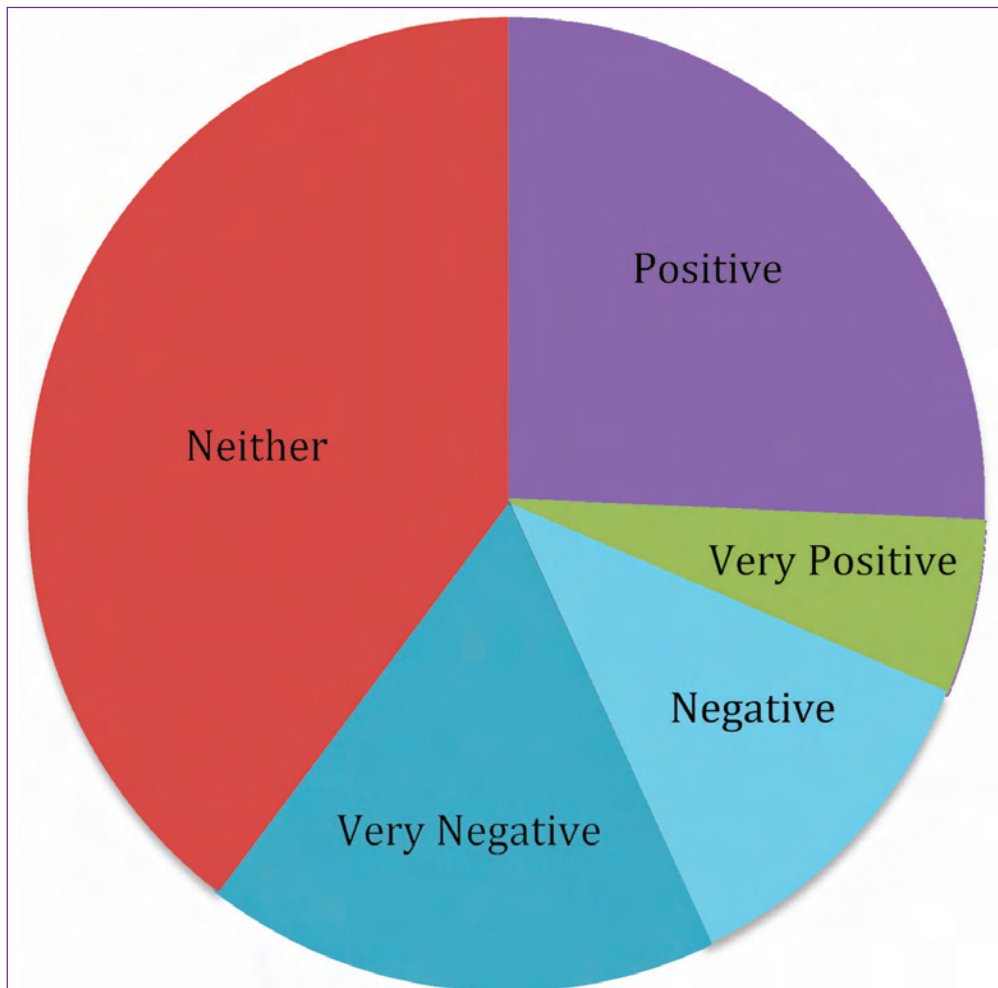
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## The Cabinet:

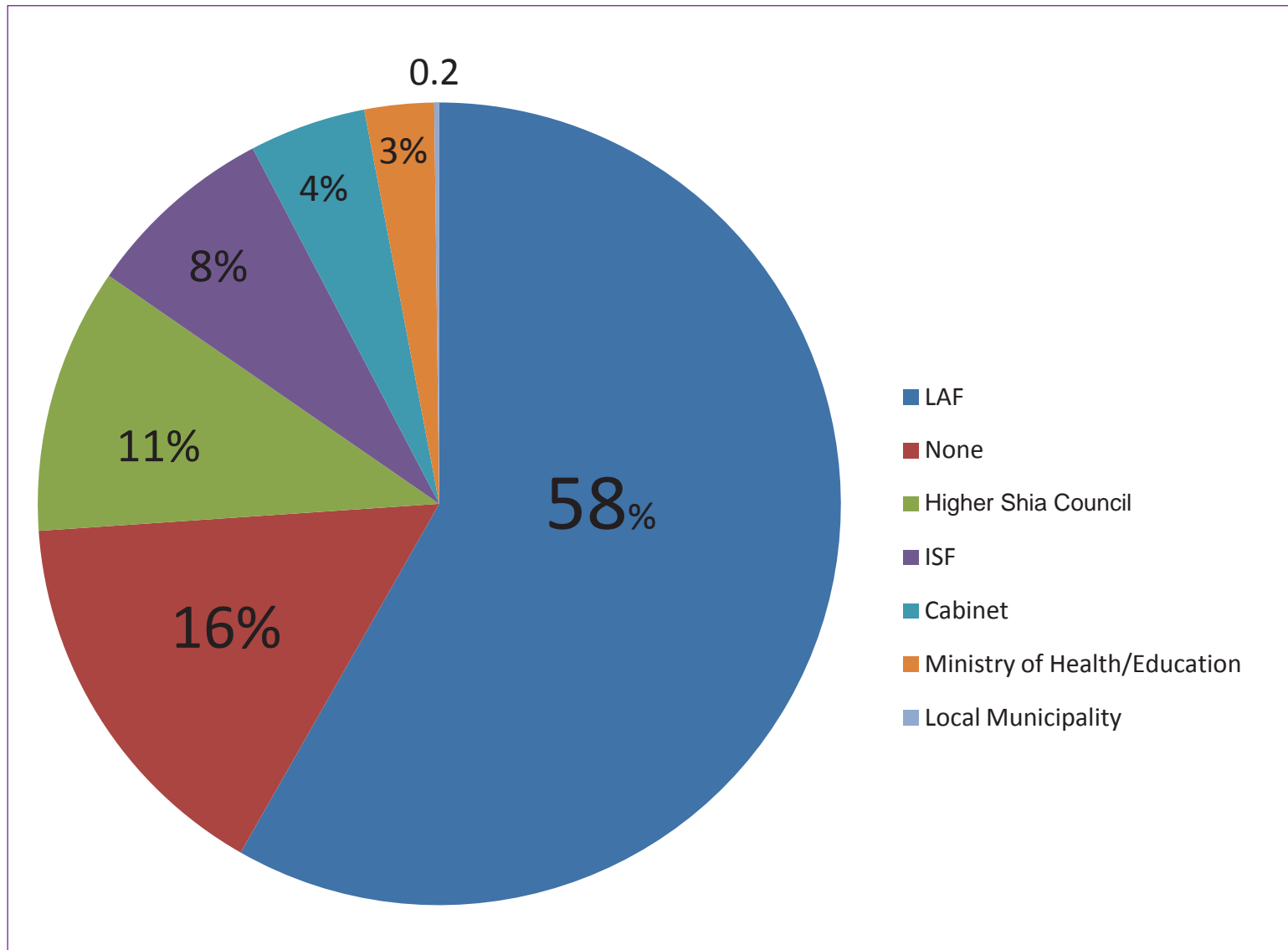
Only 25.7% of respondents indicated that they held a positive opinion of the Cabinet.



Five full months passed between the collapse of the Saad al-Hariri government on January 12, 2011 and the formation of the Mikati government (the government in question) on June 13, 2011. In terms of ministers, Hezbollah was underrepresented in the Mikati administration, with only 12 members in Parliament and two in the Cabinet. During its tenure, however, it remained clear that Hezbollah was largely responsible for controlling the government's actions.

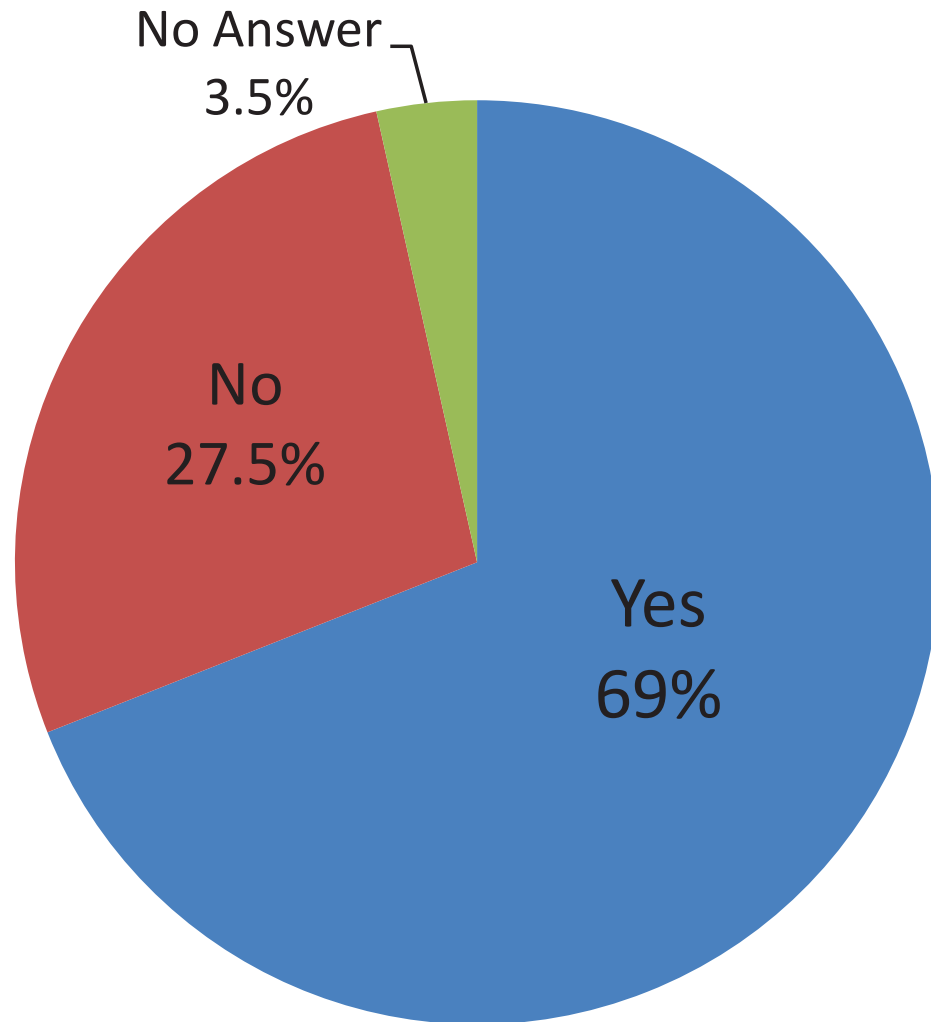
Despite Hezbollah having controlled the government for more than two years, the opinions expressed by Dahiyeh residents regarding the now defunct Cabinet were low—only 25.7% of those who responded held a positive view.

## In which institution do you have the greatest confidence?



Dahiye's Shia exhibit greatest confidence in the LAF of all state institutions at 58%, clearly demonstrated by the fact that the second highest response of 15.7% was "None."

## Do you feel secure in your area?



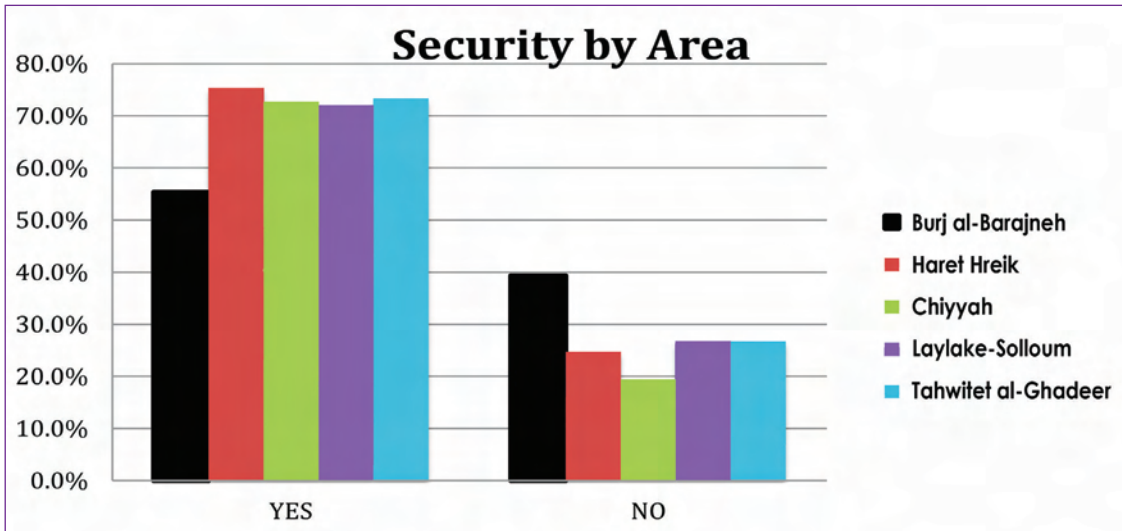
In comparing these responses to the previous questions concerning Crime and Safety, it becomes clear that two distinct senses of security exist: (1) personal, day-to-day safety (issues related to crime) and (2) existential community security (security from outside threats such as car bombings).

Among the respondents, 30% answered negatively. Of note, the region of Bourj al-Barajneh houses one of the largest Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

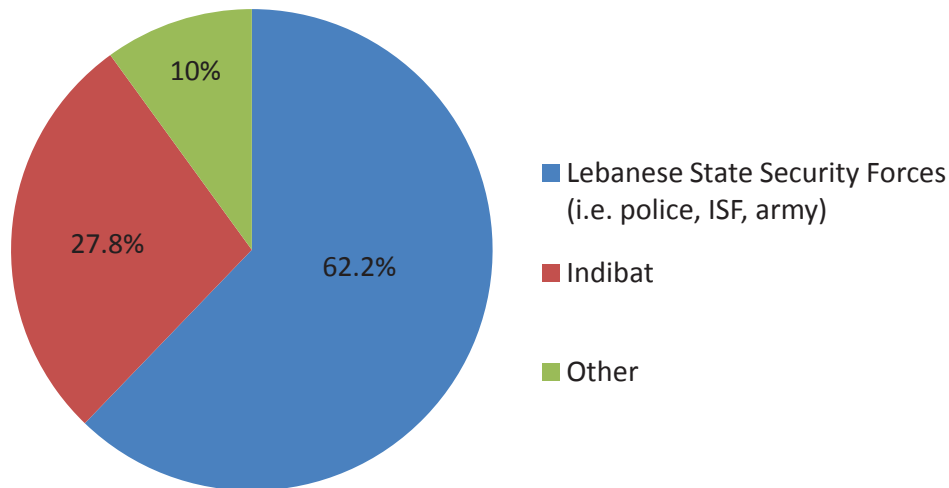
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### To whom do you look to provide security? 28% rely on the *Indibat*



### Indibat

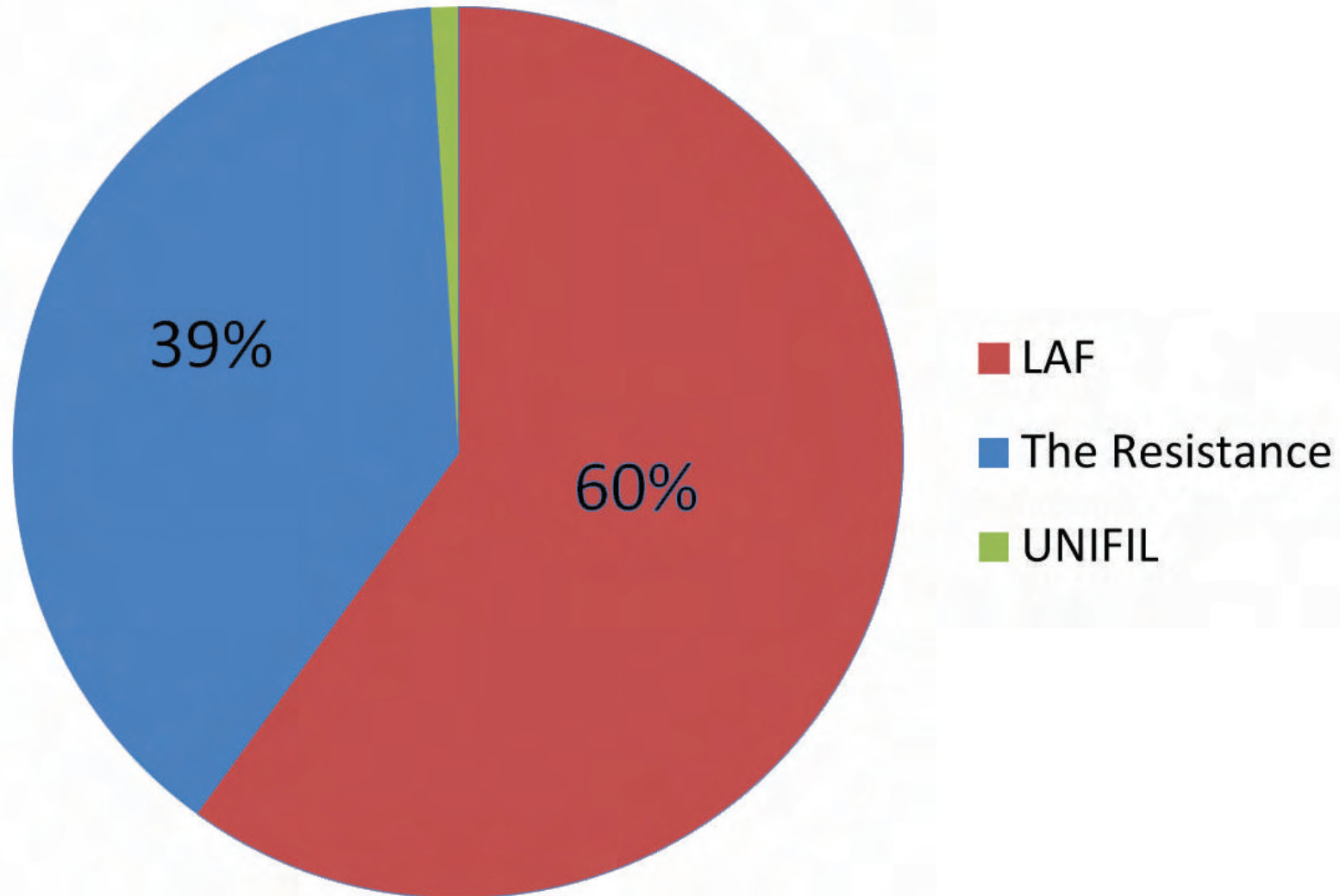
The *Indibat* ("Discipline") emerged in the aftermath of the 2006 war and the subsequent cease-fire. At the time, Hezbollah had to deploy some of its elements to regulate the return of civilians to Dahiyeh and protect the various areas that had suffered from any type of "misdeed." Over time, and concurrent with the commencement of the reconstruction process in Dahiyeh via the *Waad* ("Pledge") project, the *Indibat* began to play a more significant role. Essentially, it replaced the municipal police and began to address all issues related to the reconstruction effort. The organization has evolved into a kind of "urban" police whose presence in the streets of Dahiyeh no longer raises eyebrows. Today, the organization is an enduring part of Dahiyeh's landscape.

In the meantime, Hezbollah (as the organization that controls many of Dahiyeh's Shia municipalities) is embedding an increasing number of *Indibat*



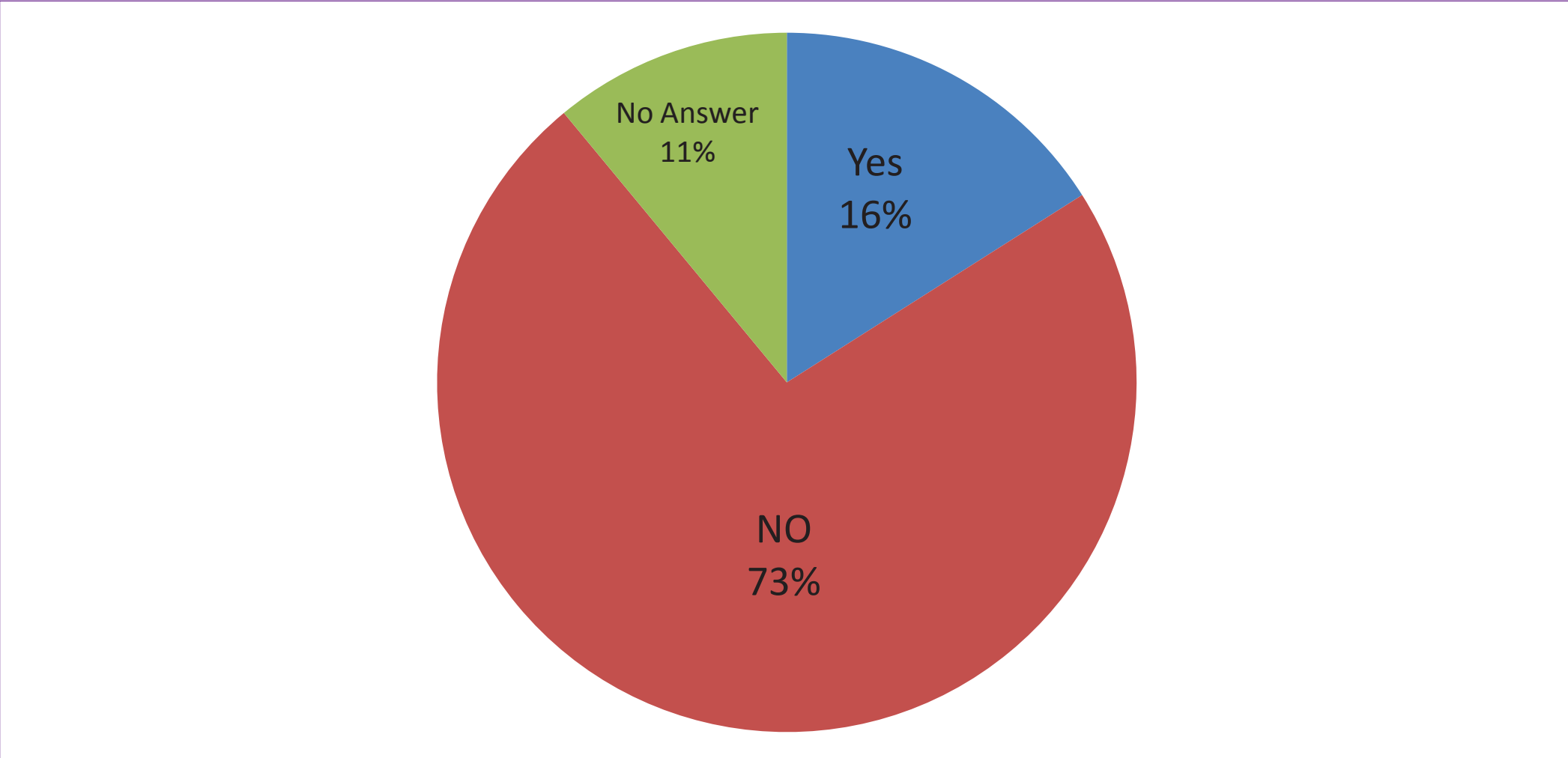
members within the municipal police. This not only relieves some of Hezbollah's financial responsibilities, but it also gives its own police force official recognition.

## Who should be responsible for securing Lebanon's borders?



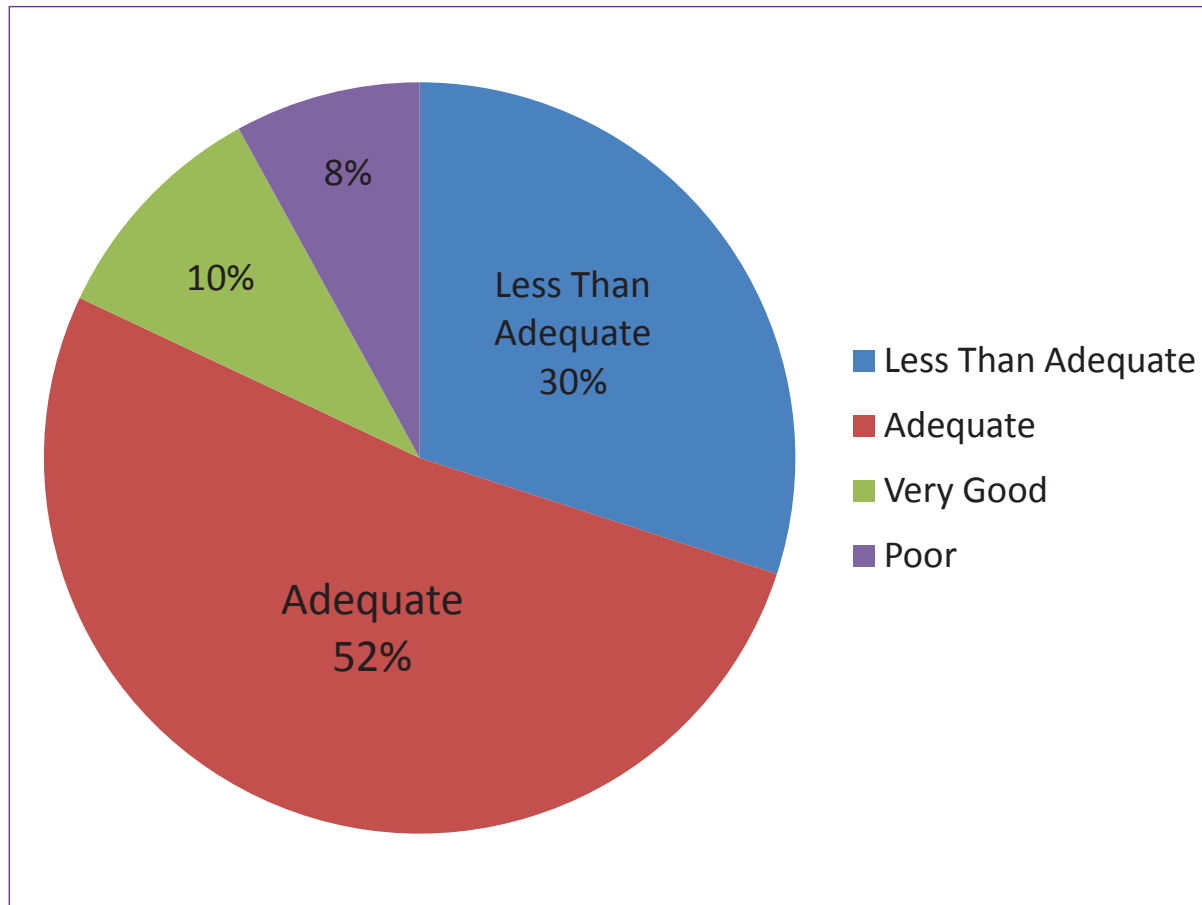


**Should it be permissible for Lebanese groups, such as sects, communities, parties and families to be armed?**

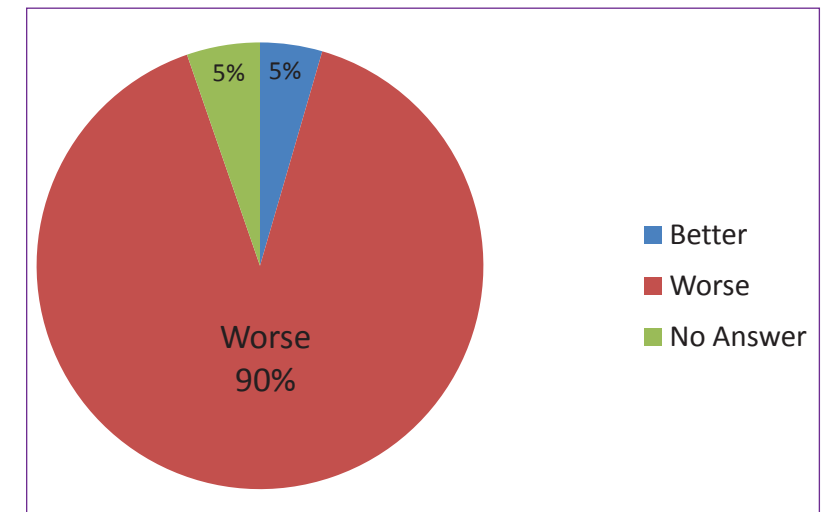


## How would you describe your personal/ household financial situation?

Far from being the impoverished ghetto portrayed so frequently by foreign media, Dahiyeh residents are generally comfortable with their financial conditions.



## Is the country's economic situation better or worse than it was in early 2006?

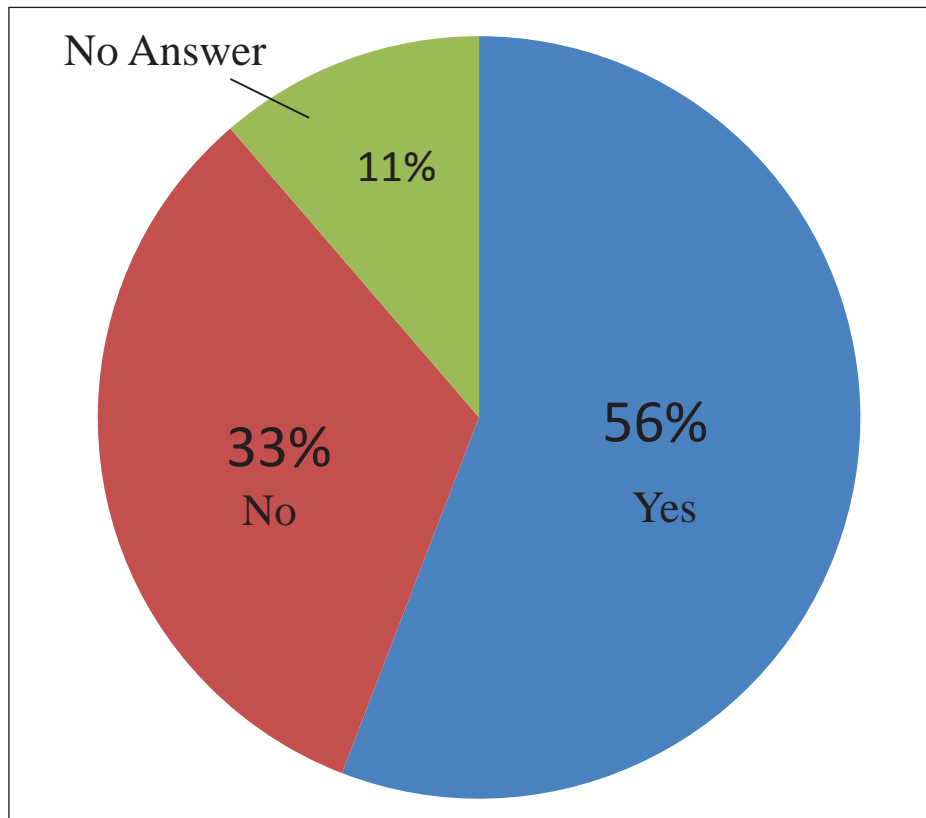


## Do you believe voters are given a sufficient number of choices of qualified and trustworthy candidates?

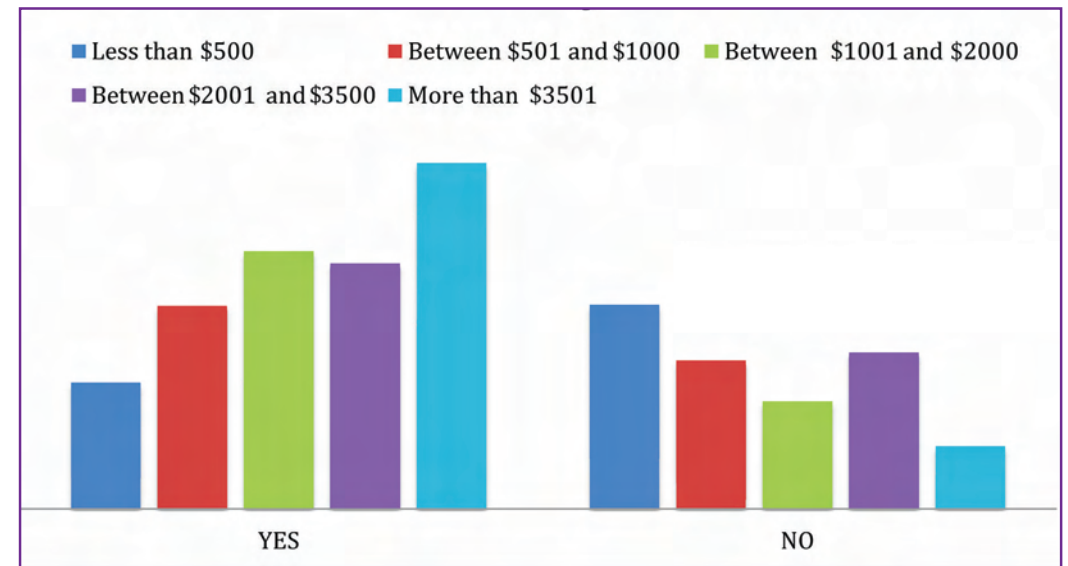
### Breakdown by income

The income breakdown demonstrates that as income rises, respondents are more satisfied with the range of candidates. The low-income bracket is the least satisfied with its options.

Prominent and affluent families with prestigious legacies continue to be represented in larger political parties or as independent candidates.



### Breakdown by monthly income



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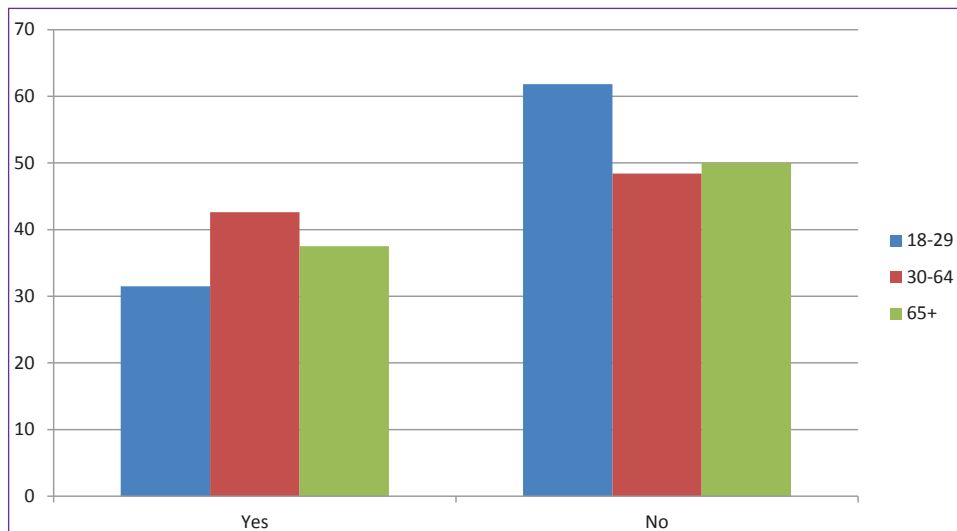
## Do you feel that your MPs are in tune with your needs?

Of those who responded, 50.5% said no.

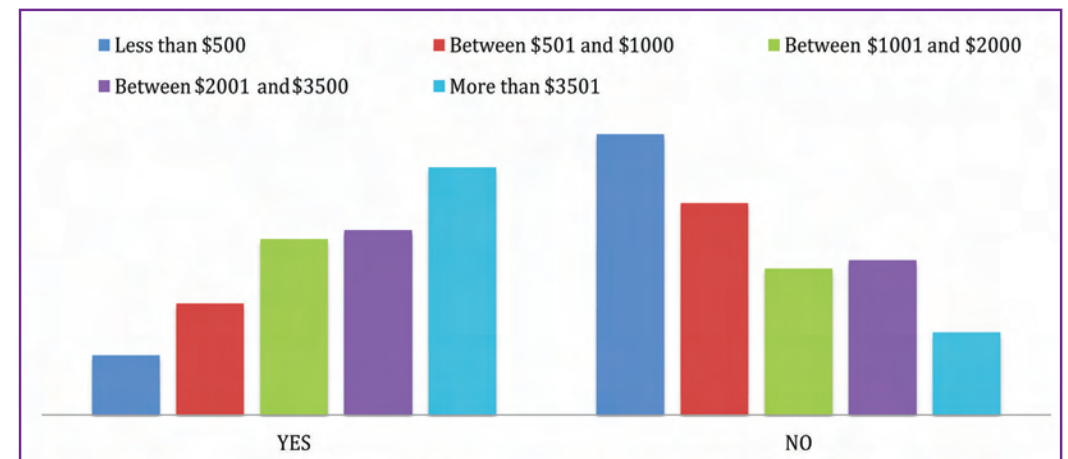
Of note, a Hezbollah sponsored MP does not necessarily mean that the individual is a member of the organization's decision making inner circle. Therefore, MPs are not pivotal representatives of the party. Further, MPs are appointed based

on the will of the party rather than the people. Lebanon operates on a party-list system wherein political parties select the candidates that will run on their respective party lists. Those lists, which are eventually submitted by voters, become official ballots during the election.

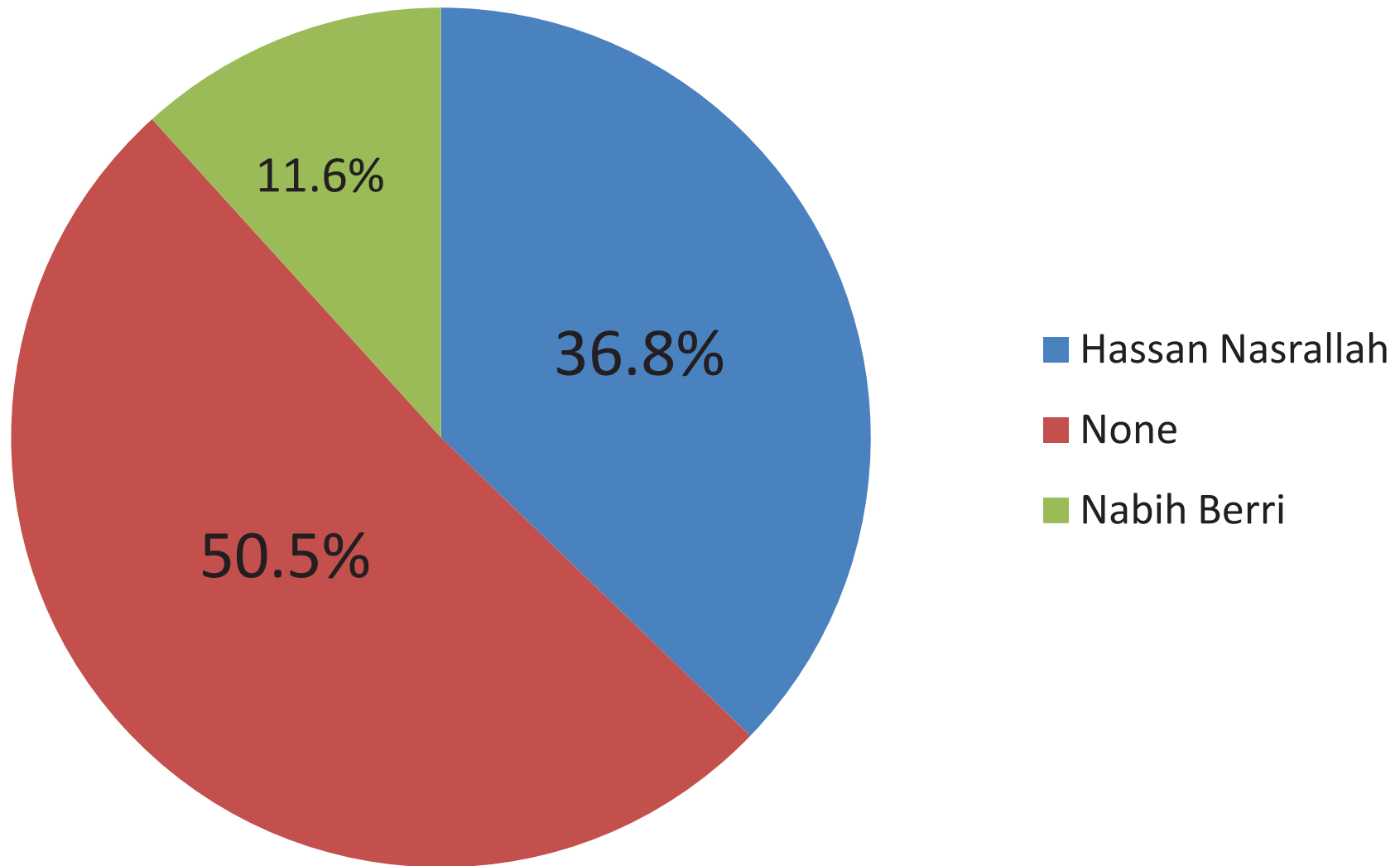
### Breakdown by age



### Breakdown by income



**Do you trust any specific leader to provide a better future for your family?**



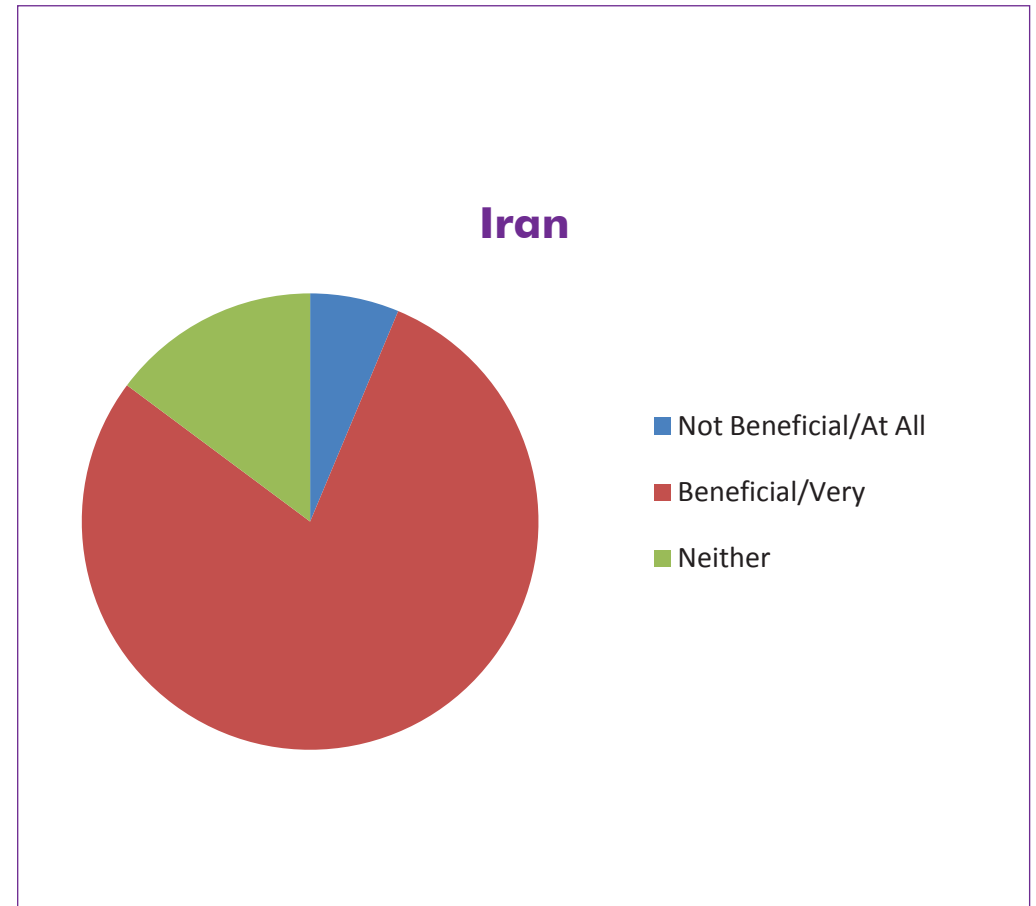
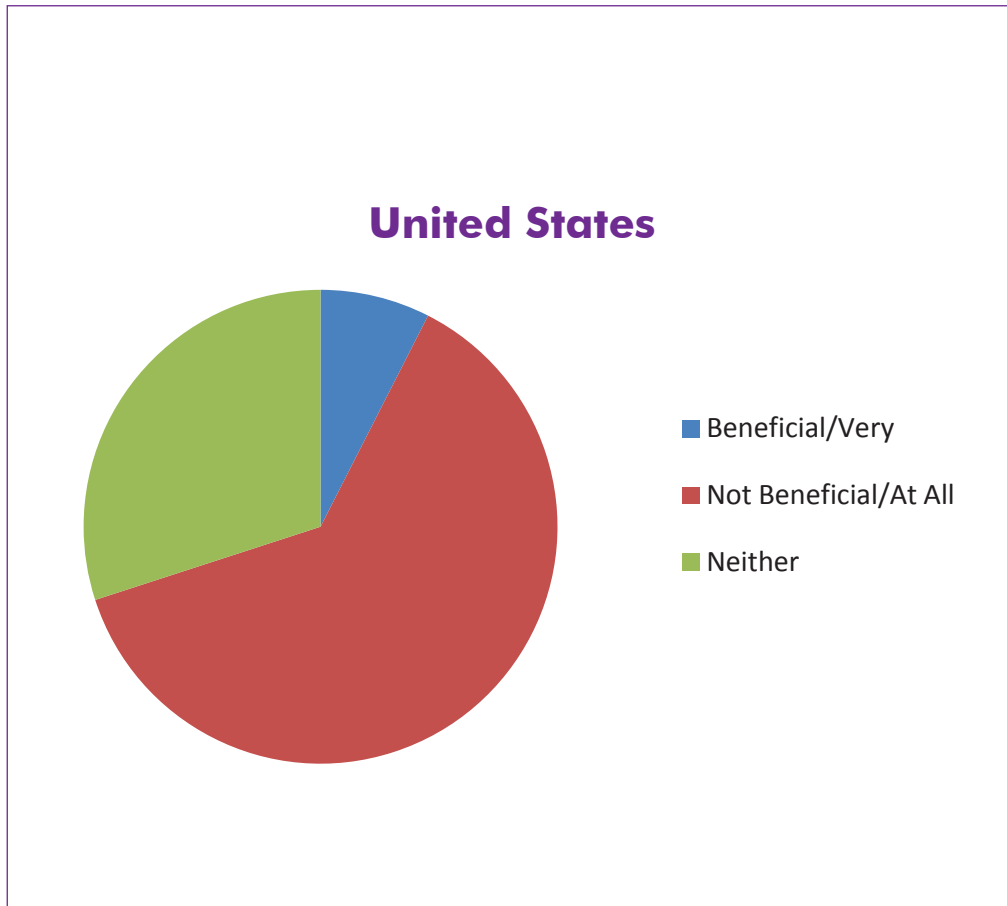
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**Rate how beneficial it might be for Lebanon to improve its relations or increase its cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and to the United States.**

## The Islamic Republic of Iran versus the United States



## What is the conflict in Syria about?

