Women in Parliament and Politics in the UAE

A Study of the First Federal National Council Elections

Dubai School of Government
Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs

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Foreword

The elections that took place across the UAE in December 2006 were a historic milestone in the political development process of this country. Beginning with the three-stage political program outlined by the President of the UAE, HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in his December 2005 speech on National Day, the elections represented a new step at a time of impressive growth and progress in the UAE's socioeconomic development.

Analysts should view the December 2006 elections and subsequent stages of the President's political modernization program within the context of a nation building process over the past 37 years. By enabling the FNC and widening the avenues of political participation for its citizens, the UAE leadership is modernizing the workings of government in line with the strategy of the UAE Cabinet under HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to ensure that the country continues on its course as a tolerant, progressive and successful Arab state while maintaining its stability and prosperity.

Many interesting developments came out of the FNC elections, which were a learning process for all the parties involved, and for none more than UAE women, who for the first time were able to run for election to the FNC. Women played an enormously impressive role, and this was an important litmus test of how far the UAE has progressed. UAE women demonstrated their ability to successfully move into the national political arena, a fact that has been reaffirmed by their active and diligent contribution to FNC sessions and legislative debates over the past year since the elections.

This study was co-produced by the research department at the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs (MFNCA) and the Dubai School of Government (DSG); it aims to examine and analyze the experiences undergone by women in the UAE's first election process. Based on almost a year of research and primary interviews, the report highlights key themes in the nature and scope of women's participatory experience in the UAE, as well as some of the common challenges and obstacles faced by women across the Arab world.

Although, as this study has shown, government support for women's participation in the political process has driven women to the forefront in these spaces, government still has a role to play in encouraging a wider and more comprehensive societal shift to promote women's participation through an understanding of the obstacles and challenges that they face.

The study does not represent the views of the UAE government or of the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs (MFNCA), but offers an independent, academically-researched assessment that outlines how women themselves perceive their access to political participation within the context of gender policy debate in the region. The study further aims to outline some recommendations on the types of policies that could facilitate their full participation in political life. The aim of the

UAE government to encourage women to achieve their full potential is part of our core national strategy. However, no country is perfect and we have facilitated the research for this study in order to further improve and constantly strive towards informed policy making decisions and better governance for our citizens.

Dr. Anwar Mohammed Gargash

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai School of Government

Preface

Recent debates in the region have gradually given way to a near consensus on the necessity of fundamental changes in public policy. Numerous areas of reform have been identified as priorities for achieving sustainable growth and development in the future, of which gender equality forms a key part.

At the core of these proposals for reform is the challenge of institutional change or better governance. In this regard, it has become clear that enhancing governance extends beyond improvements in bureaucratic performance. It includes greater transparency, the rule of law, and the accountability of policymaking. And as public opinion in the Arab world has consistently reaffirmed, it includes the expansion of civil liberties and freedom of the press, as well as new opportunities for increased participation in political life.

In view of DSG's mandate, the Gender and Public Policy Research Initiative at the Dubai School of Government partnered with the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs to conduct a study about the UAE's elections of 2006 which marked a historic juncture in terms of women's political participation. The study aims to provide policy recommendations on how to improve women's political participation in the UAE and the GCC more generally. Based on in-depth interviews with FNC members, surveys of election candidates, and archival material the results of this study outlines a very positive story while simultaneously demonstrating where policy changes can further improve gender equality in future elections.

We at the Dubai School of Government are committed to promoting good governance by enhancing the Arab world's capacity for effective public policy. Through the Gender and Public Policy program, we aim to contribute to the academic scholarship on gender and public policy in the Arab world while simultaneously incorporating gender perspectives in the education of leaders taught at the Dubai School of Government.

Gender inequality — the differential access to resources and opportunities for women — is an important and critical policy issue in the Arab world today. We hope through the collaborative effort of this paper to have offered a small contribution towards a better understanding of the gender gap in political participation.

Dr. Tarik Yousef
Dean, Dubai School of Government

Abstract

The growth of women's participation in parliaments worldwide is still notably low and, in response, the majority of governments have introduced policy measures to redress the gender imbalance. In the United Arab Emirates, a country that recently initiated an electoral parliamentary process, elections were held in 2006 and included women as both voters and candidates for the first time. This historical juncture provides a timely opportunity for analyzing the entry of women into parliamentary life in the UAE, and to contribute to the global debate on closing the political gender gap. Based on interviews with members of the Federal National Council, surveys of the opinions of male and female candidates who participated in the UAE elections, and archival material from the election campaigns, this study investigates key themes in the nature of women's roles in the political process. The findings of this study demonstrate commonalities between the experiences of both male and female politicians, as well as critical gender-specific challenges. Key recommendations based on the findings include continued support of government for a more inclusive political process, quality training for candidates and parliamentarians, closing the gender gap in citizenship status, and strengthening the role of the Federal National Council.

Executive Summary

The recent reconfiguration of the Federal National Council (FNC), following the first-ever held elections in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), enabled Emirati women to move from having no representation in the FNC to a gain of nearly one quarter of all FNC seats. This new configuration enabled the UAE to significantly decrease its gender gap in political participation and heralded the beginning of a more gender-balanced parliamentary life. While the elections were applauded by many writers and analysts as a successful first step towards widening political participation, others were more critical of the scope of the process. Therefore, an evaluation of the first UAE elections from a gender perspective is not only opportune, but crucial for a better understanding of the ways in which women's political participation can be improved upon in future elections. The goal of this report is to investigate the entry of women into the political arena in the UAE during the first Federal National Council elections, held in December 2006. Through interviewing members of the FNC, surveying the opinions of male and female candidates who participated in the UAE elections of 2006, and using archival media material covering the duration of the election period, the study aims to provide policy recommendations on how to improve women's political participation in future elections.

Results of the survey and interview data on **prevalent attitudes toward political participation in the UAE** indicated that, in general, most men and women held positive attitudes about women's participation, especially in relation to government support, but they were more critical of the role that voters and society at large play in facilitating such participation. Gender differences in attitudes toward women's political participation only appeared when respondents were asked more detailed questions about women's contribution to the political process.

Female respondents in this study saw a more qualitatively meaningful role for women's participation that results in a healthy work environment and more effective policy making. While women generally endorsed the use of quotas more than men, there were no differences among the two groups in terms of the effectiveness of quotas if introduced by government. Both groups showed little ability to substantiate their subjective views of quotas with knowledge about successful or failed experiences of quotas used in other countries.

Study findings on **how men and women experience the political process in the UAE** showed that, in general, they share very similar perspectives. Overall, male and female candidates received family support to run in the elections, were motivated to run in order to better serve society, expressed their need to receive better training on various aspects of the election process, and had some difficulties with campaigning and reaching out to voters. Additionally, both groups expressed faith in the transparency of the elections but wanted it to be more inclusive and to result in a parliament with stronger legislative powers. However, some gender-specific trends were also identified. More men than women mentioned spouses assisting them in running their campaigns and playing a key role in reaching out to voters; men also set higher budgets for their campaigns, and had campaign advertisements that differed from female candidates in terms of their size, content, and available contact information.

Study findings on the **status of women in the FNC** indicate that, in general, most representatives were positive about the distribution of women in FNC committees, although the low number of women representatives was described as a limitation on their participation in all committees. More detailed questions about the function of

gender diversity in parliamentary committees and among decision-making posts revealed some gender-specific trends. In particular, more women than men thought that diversity is a matter of principle and that it improves both the quality of parliamentary work and the work environment. Members were split on whether there is a need for a committee dedicated to women's affairs. However, most thought that, if implemented, a women's affairs committee would improve legislation on women's issues, but only if it did not marginalize them. Accordingly, most FNC members endorsed including both male and female representatives in a women's affairs committee, keeping issues focused on the family rather on "women" per se. In terms of female representatives' effect on decision making in the FNC, most examples were focused on legislation and issues of importance to health and legal rights. While most FNC members did not think that women's participation in the FNC changed the culture of the FNC, there were many counterexamples. Finally, regarding the equality of FNC services for male and female members, results revealed that more male representatives than female representatives received such services. With regards to the relationship between women representatives and the media, women representatives felt that the media was positive in covering women's participation in politics in the UAE in general, but was deficient in communicating the role and function of the FNC and the contribution of women FNC members in it. They also reported that the General Women's Union (GWU) played a positive role overall, but that they would like to see the scope of that role increased. In general, women representatives wanted to develop more substantive relationships with organizations interested in supporting women's political participation through assistance during the elections, communication with members of the public, and data gathering.

Both the survey and interview results form the basis of a number of specific **recommendations** concerning the election process and the FNC, in addition to broader suggestions about the context for political participation in the UAE. These recommendations focus on a two-fold goal: expanding women's presence in the FNC and creating the means for enhancing their legislative performance and function. A summary of these recommendations is provided below in three sections:

- **The electoral process:** Introduce gender neutral quotas, provide quality training for candidates, involve a higher number of women in the electoral process, close the gender gap in citizenship rights, and lengthen the campaign period.

- **The Federal National Council:** Establish a family affairs committee, improve FNC services for female representatives, support research-driven policy making, and benchmark the performance of women FNC members.

- **General:** Broaden the range of women's experiences in politics, raise general awareness about the role of women in the FNC, widen avenues for engagement with civil society, create meaningful partnerships with media, and empower the FNC.

To conclude, the initiation of women's entry into the political process as voters, candidates, and FNC members marked a historic starting point for a more inclusive participatory political culture in the UAE. The continued support of decision makers, combined with the careful design and implementation of substantive policy interventions from both governmental and non-governmental bodies, is required if this process is to continue successfully beyond the first generation of female politicians.

Introduction

"Today, we stand at a threshold of a new era, whose ultimate objective is to entrench the rule of law and due process, accountability, transparency and equal opportunity."

Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan,
December 2, 2005

"A place without women is a place without soul."

Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum,
December 18, 2006

"On the day of the elections, front row seats were reserved for the three candidates…. but one of the male candidates objected to this matter and ordered us to sit at the back. Therefore, you can see that we had not yet entered the Council (FNC) and he was refusing the very idea of us being there."

Election candidate interviewee,
December 26, 2007

The recent reconfiguration of the Federal National Council (FNC), following the first elections ever held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), enabled Emirati women to move from having no representation in the FNC to a gain of nearly one quarter of all FNC seats. The historic inclusion of women in the formal political process resulted in 65 women running as candidates in the elections, with one being successfully elected to a seat at the FNC followed by the appointment of eight women from various emirates. This new configuration enabled the UAE to significantly decrease its gender gap in political participation, and heralded the beginning of a more gender balanced parliamentary life. The partial elections of 2006 were introduced by the government as the first step in a multi-staged process to introduce a participatory political culture in the UAE. Official statements regarding planned reforms indicate that future steps will include an increase in the legislative powers of the FNC, larger membership, and universal suffrage for all UAE citizens. While the elections were applauded by many writers and analysts as a successful first step towards widening political participation, others were more critical of the scope of the process. Additionally, only one female candidate managed to win a parliamentary seat, despite the participation of numerous qualified female candidates, which raised some questions concerning the efficacy of women's campaigns, voter perceptions of the suitability of women candidates, and gender-specific considerations in the election process. Although women have been participating in political life in the UAE at every level, including appointed posts as ministers in the federal cabinet, the diplomatic service and other government bodies, this was the first election process to a political body. Therefore, an evaluation of the first UAE elections from a gender perspective is not only opportune, but crucial for a better understanding of the ways in which women's political participation can be improved upon in future elections.

The goal of this report is to investigate the entry of women into the political arena in the UAE during the first Federal National Council elections held in December 2006. Research questions concerning Emirati women's participation in the elections include the following:

1) **What are the prevalent attitudes toward women's political participation in the UAE?** How do Emirati men and women conceptualize the role of women in the political process? How do Emirati men and women conceptualize the contribution of female politicians? What do men and women think about gender quotas?

2) **What were the similarities and differences in the way that male**

and female candidates experienced the political process? What was their motivation to enter politics? What were the main difficulties faced during the election period? Did candidates receive any training, and, if so, in what areas? Did they manage their budgets effectively? Were candidates able to access voters? What were the main issues candidates chose for their campaigns?

3) **What is the current status of women representatives in the FNC?** How do male and female representatives feel about the need for gender diversity in FNC committees? How do FNC members feel about the need for diversity in decision making positions in the FNC? Are members in favor of a committee for women's affairs? Are FNC services made available to male and female members equally? How do female representatives conceptualize their relationship with the media and with the national machinery for women in the UAE?

Through interviewing members of the FNC, surveying the opinions of male and female candidates who participated in the UAE elections of 2006, and using archival media material covering the duration of the election period, the study aims to provide policy recommendations on how to improve women's

political participation in future elections. The study can also be a useful resource for researchers, journalists, members of civil society, and other stakeholders working to advance women's role in politics in the UAE and the Arab world more generally.

The present paper will begin with a literature review on women's political participation in the Arab world. This section presents an overview of recent research on the status of Arab women's political participation, and identifies a framework for understanding the main challenges to enhancing women's political participation. A brief thematic analysis of women's political participation in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries is presented to provide a comparative framework for understanding women's experiences in the UAE. The second section focuses specifically on the context for women's political participation in the UAE, and describes the electoral system and process of the 2006 elections. The third section describes the design of the semi-structured interview and survey, the study sample, and research method. The fourth section describes the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data. Finally, the fifth section presents policy recommendations to improve women's political participation in future elections.

Arab Women and Politics: Regional Trends

Many countries in the Arab world have begun widening avenues for the participation of women in the political process. Some countries granted the franchise for women in their constitutions following independence, while others extended the franchise through constitutional amendments. The proclamation of rights in a country's legal codes is not, however, sufficient guarantee of de facto implementation on the ground. Though the number of women members in Arab parliaments increased from 3.5% in 2000 to 9.6% in 2008, women are still underrepresented in the political processes and in governments. The regional average of women's political participation in Arab state legislatures is currently below 10%, significantly below the world average (17.8%) and, in fact, the lowest regional figure in the world (IPU 2008).

Women's empowerment, or lack thereof, was one of the three major deficits in the Arab region identified by leading Arab thinkers and policy makers in the *2002 Arab Human Development Report* (UNDP 2002). Gender inequality is generally recognized as one of the main obstacles to development in the Arab region, and it has also been categorized as an indicator of a "human freedom deficit." (UNDP 2002). Women's empowerment has been consistently described by subsequent Arab Human Development Reports as a precondition for meaningful long-term development and change in the region.

The empowerment of women and the establishment of gender equality are also described as crucial components of the much discussed "democratization" or, rather, liberalization process underway in many of the region's political systems. Although a discussion of "democracy" in its western or most liberal sense is a misnomer in the case of the Gulf Cooperation Council States (GCC), and beyond the scope of this study's

mandate, the literature relating gender empowerment to a democratic process offers a useful perspective on different contextual frameworks. The democracy framework can, in fact, be applicable when the key components of democratization are understood as political participation, accountability, and pluralism (Nonneman 2007). This notion of democracy is as much about citizenship rights, participation and inclusion as it is about political parties, elections, and checks and balances. The nature and quality of democracy is determined not only by the form of institutions, but also by the extent to which different social groups participate in these institutions. The absence of women from political life results in a "male democracy" — or, rather, an incomplete form of political development. Democratization and women's rights are therefore interconnected and mutually dependent. To prevent "democracy without democrats," policies to protect women's rights and to increase women's participation in governance — in the legislature, judiciary, and civil society — are essential (Karam 1999). Women may need democracy in order to flourish, but the converse is also true: democracy needs women if it is to be an inclusive, representative, and enduring system of government (Moghadam 2003).

Although the Arab world ranks as the second-lowest region in the world on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), this regional ranking obscures the heterogeneity of country-specific historical social, political, and economic conditions, and the diversity of women's experiences of political participation (Farah 2006). For example, although women's representation in the region is seen as negative relative to the rest of the world, some Arab countries have, in fact, surpassed the 30% target of the "Beijing Platform for Action." Iraq has a 31% rate of women's

representation, compared to 0% in many other countries (Sabbagh 2005). Moreover, the gap between high ranking countries such as Tunisia and the UAE and the rest of the Arab countries is substantial (see Table 1).

A major critique of the use of indices to measure and compare women's political participation is that they presume that politics only occurs within the domain of a "public" sphere which men both occupy and dominate. Recent research, however, challenges this notion and demonstrates that women's roles in decision making are also part of the polity, whether directly in the realm of public institutions, or within the private realm (Karam 1999). Accordingly, the boundaries between public and private are fluid, and the exclusive use of the idea of a "public" political sphere as separate from a "private" one is both dichotomous and misleading. In such a conceptualization, every interaction and space is ultimately political, involving the use of power, authority and influence. Several academics have attempted

to reject the mainstream view of politics as an activity limited to the institutional or formal domain, replacing it with broader definitions of the "political sphere." These definitions encompass a wider range of activities as inherently political, and support the idea that women in the Arab world have, in fact, been involved in decision making for centuries within various social and historical contexts.

Defining women's political participation in terms of their role in formal political institutions is too narrow a framework, but it can indicate the degree to which women are directly engaged in the policy making process. As such, it is important to understand the obstacles that can impede Arab women's representation in formal political institutions. Although wide variations exist in the economic, political, historical and social realities affecting each of the Arab countries, there are some commonalities among them as well. A brief overview of the common obstacles to women's political participation in the Arab world is a useful exercise to

Table 1
Women in national parliaments (International Parliamentary Union 2008)

Arab countries	Ranking	Percentage of women in lower house	Percentage of women in upper house
Iraq	32	25.5	–
Tunisia	41	22.8	15
United Arab Emirates	43	22.5	–
Syrian Arab Republic	89	12.4	–
Morocco	100	10.5	1.1
Algeria	113	7.7	2.9
Jordan	120	6.4	12.7
Lebanon	123	4.7	–
Bahrain	129	2.5	25
Egypt	130	1.8	6.8
Kuwait	131	1.5	–
Yemen	133	0.3	1.8
Oman	134	0	20
Qatar	130	0	–
Saudi Arabia	130	0	–

contextualize the experiences of women in the UAE within a regional setting.

Culture and Traditional Practices

Religion, and specifically Islamic culture, has been cited by some scholars as one of the main reasons behind women's low participation in public life. However, this essentialist perspective overlooks the fact that many predominantly Muslim countries have produced elected female leadership at the highest levels of office, such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan (Sabbagh 2005). Opponents of the cultural argument contend that culture alone is not a satisfactory explanation for limitations on women's participation in a public life, but that a variety of other factors, including state ideology and economic development, are implicated as well (Moghadam 2003). Other researchers have argued that broader aspects of neopatriarchy, also found in non-Muslim societies, form the basis of cultural constraints on women's participation in public life (Karam 1999). "Neopatriarchy" refers to the interaction of internal power dynamics with external pressures of modernization and globalization (Sharabi 1992). This interaction is characterized by the recreation and reinstatement of "authentic" values as a reaction to the perceived political and cultural loss brought about by modernity. In effect, the localized backlash against globalization, manifested in the strengthening of patriarchal norms and values, can have a negative impact on the advancement of women in political life.

Legal and Constitutional Rights

Despite positive revisions to legislation in some Arab countries, legal discrimination remains a major impediment to women's political participation. Although constitutional equality of status exists in a number of Arab countries, in general, women are not treated equally before the legal system in matters such as social security, inheritance, legal status and the criminal courts, as well as in terms of benefits from the state. This inequality undoubtedly affects any attempts by women to achieve

equality in the political system. Although the majority of Arab countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and have met a number of their obligations under the convention, there still remains considerable scope for improvement.

Economic Challenges

Across the globe, and in many Arab countries, women's political participation is undoubtedly influenced by factors such as poverty and illiteracy. Nonetheless, in some countries where both the illiteracy and poverty rate is favorable compared to global averages, there still remains a notable disparity between the finances available for men, as compared to women, during elections. In many cases, women who do not have access to credit or the financial backing of their families are unable to run as candidates and finance an election campaign.

Role of the State

The role of the state in the Arab world has been viewed as both problematic and simultaneously fundamental to the advancement of women's political participation. The high level of political will to encourage women's participation in many Arab states through ministerial appointments and quotas for parliaments has clearly created a better opportunity for women's presence politically. However, this form of "state feminism" can also be viewed as a top-down approach that does not allow for societal change at the grassroots level. The role of the state is undoubtedly at the center of contemporary debate in the Arab world in terms of women's rights and their participation in politics. In other areas, state limitations on NGOs and civil society organizations have also curtailed a potentially useful platform for putting women's participation on the policy agenda in the Arab world. Similarly, the absence of political parties in some Arab countries also limits the mechanisms for women to influence the policy debate within a defined collective agenda

that includes men. Conversely, in countries where political parties do exist, female party members refrain from becoming advocates of women's issues to avoid being marginalized within party politics or stereotyped into "women only" policy issues.

Electoral Processes and Quota Systems

A common viewpoint as to how women can impact political processes anywhere in the world is the idea that women need to first achieve a "critical mass" in decision-making bodies. Plurality majority electoral systems, where the candidate with the most votes fills the position regardless of the actual percentage of these votes, generally do not result in a high number of women in national legislatures (Reynolds and Reilly 1997). The majority of Arab countries practice variants of this system. The proportional representation system, which is only used by three Arab countries, tends to favor women's legislative representation. In this context, the question of quotas is a crucial one in discussing mechanisms for enhancing the number of women in the legislature. Although the term carries much associated baggage and resistance from those that argue that quotas discriminate against qualified men and lead to "token" representation, many argue that quotas are a critical tool for overcoming male/female disparities in societies with institutionalized mechanisms against women (Dahlerup 2007). In fact, the issue of "tokenism" is multi-layered, as quota appointments can also lead to negative accusations of "window-dressing" appointees who are not appointed on merit, but rather based on their societal status (Norris 2007). Other issues in electoral processes could also be addressed by governments to ensure women's political participation in Arab countries, including the need to create an environment in which women feel secure enough to participate without fear of threat or coercion (UNIFEM 2004).

Women and Politics: Focus on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries

It is important to examine the common obstacles to women's political participation in the Arab region in order to contextualize the political experience of Emirati women. In particular, focusing on the six GCC countries, rather than the wider Arab world, offers a useful and sharper comparison. The shared and interrelated histories and political trends of the GCC states, as well as their similar sociopolitical and economic structures, form a unique and distinctive focus point within a wider regional context. Although all six countries are at different stages of a political modernization process, with variations from country to country, there are some clear commonalities among them (Norton et al. 1997; Herb 2002).

While the GCC states have relatively better records in providing education and healthcare for women compared to many other Arab countries, reports such as those produced by Freedom House argue that the Gulf countries receive low scores on women's civic, legal, and political rights (Nazir 2005). Nonetheless, over the past two decades almost all of the GCC countries have granted women the right to vote and hold public office. Five of the six GCC countries have appointed women as cabinet ministers, and all have selected women as members of various representative bodies. However, the inclusion of women in the political process has not matched their economic power: some estimates put the collective wealth held by high net worth women in the Gulf at $350 billion (Robson 2008).

Several factors influence this lack of parity, not all of which can be addressed in this study. An examination of women's political developments in the GCC demonstrates that the state plays a key role in the formation of social policies and legislation creating opportunities for women's engagement with public life. In fact, the state has been described as a "gatekeeper" for the inclusion of women in politics (Moghadam 2003). Conversely, it has also been argued that while the governments of the region generally support women's political rights, strong social sentiment against women's participation in politics persists, as do economic and social discrimination (Kitbi 2006). Indeed, the relationship between the state and women's movements in the GCC is not a simple one, and needs to be understood in light of local, regional and international factors and the interaction between them (Al-Dabbagh 2008).

For the purposes of understanding the UAE context, four key thematic trends are highlighted here as driving factors impacting women's political participation across the GCC countries. The first trend includes legislative and constitutional reforms geared towards widening the avenues of participation and institutionalizing the decision-making process. The second interrelated trend evident in some of the GCC states has been the adoption of an appointment mechanism that allows for the state-led inclusion of women in parliaments. The third trend is the adoption of a public face for the state-led gender reform process in the form of female members of the royal families, especially ruler's wives, who promote societal and attitudinal change. The fourth trend relates to the sectarian and/or tribal influences which have an impact on the political culture, election process and outcomes in a given country. Although these dynamics do not comprehensively cover the wide range of factors influencing women's political life in the GCC, they can inform our understanding of why women play a vibrant role in politics in some GCC countries whereas their public presence is virtually absent in others.

In the case of Bahrain, all four themes are evident in the political landscape. The change

in Bahrain's political climate began in the early 1990s, with the introduction of an appointed Consultative Council (Majlis Al-Shura) holding advisory authority and the power to review legislation. This reform trend was accelerated by the introduction of a framework for a constitutional monarchy and a two-chamber Parliament of equal legislative powers. Nevertheless, Bahraini women did not hold national office until the year 2000, when King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa appointed four women to the 40-member Consultative Council. Although the promulgation of a new constitution in 2002 granted women the right to vote and contest for elections to the non-appointed chamber of Parliament, none were elected in the 2002 elections. Six women were appointed to the Consultative Council at a later stage. In the 2006 elections, one woman won a seat after she was declared victorious unopposed, but without an appointment system, women would not have been able to achieve representation in either body. The official support from King Hamad's wife, Sabeeka bint Ibrahim al Khalifah, has reportedly played a role in challenging cultural and societal objections to women's participation in politics. Additionally, the success of women candidates is affected by religious and sectarian issues that characterize Bahraini politics.

Legislative reform in Kuwait was an equally important and complex process that bore ramifications for women's participation there. Although Kuwait has a far stronger historical parliamentary experience compared to its GCC counterparts, a 1999 attempt by Emir Jaber Al Sabah to amend the election law by decree was struck down by the all-male Parliament, as was a subsequent draft law (Al-Mughni and Tetreault 2003). It was not until the passage of an October 2003 bill that women had the right to vote and stand for municipal elections, while a 2005 bill gave them equal rights for parliamentary elections. No woman was elected in the 2006 or 2008 elections, which were characterized by tribal voting patterns and strong religious

opposition to women's participation. Indeed, soon after women were granted the right to vote and contest in elections, Islamist members of Parliament added a clause stating that women must abide by shari'a when campaigning and voting (Jones 2006). Kuwait, therefore, has been cited as an example of the double-edged sword that can typify the paradoxical outcomes of a democratization process or, as Herb argues, the fact that "modestly democratic parliaments in the Gulf generate a good deal of illiberal policy" (Herb 2002). The fact that there is no mechanism for appointment in the Kuwaiti political system may impede women's inclusion in this body for some time to come.

Despite Qatar facing similar issues of conservatism in its society and social objection to women's political participation, Qatar's permanent Constitution, approved in an April 2003 referendum, gave women the right to vote and stand for parliamentary elections (Kapiszweski 2003). In May 2008, Qatar's appointed Consultative Council adopted a new electoral law paving the way for two thirds of its 45 members to be directly elected. The Council will have the power to approve the budget, to question ministers and to vote them out of office through a no confidence vote according to the new constitution (Herb 2002). Although Qatar has not yet held its first parliamentary elections, one woman did win a seat in the April 2003 municipal council elections, marking the first time a woman was elected by universal suffrage in a GCC country. Should women not be successful in the Qatari parliamentary process, the creation of a partially-appointed parliamentary body can, nonetheless, guarantee their representation. Women will most likely be appointed, given recent official statements advocating the need for women to participate in public life. The development policies championed by Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al Missnid, Consort of the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, further adds impetus to this liberalization trend and readdresses societal norms regarding women's status.

By way of contrast to other GCC countries, Saudi Arabia relies on *shari'a* law as a basis for its constitution, and has not consented to universal suffrage for women in any election process, excluding the 2004 Chamber of Commerce elections. Nonetheless, there have been some legislative reform trends in the Kingdom. The promulgation of the 1992 Basic Law and the creation of the appointed *Majlis Al-Shura* in 1993 marked the first signs towards a more institutionalized participatory process in the Kingdom. The Consultative Council was established as a debating assembly of 60 appointed members, and this figure was increased several times over subsequent years, essentially widening the participatory process. However, unlike other GCC countries, Saudi Arabia has not used any kind of appointment system to include women in the political process, except in purely advisory capacities. Institutionalized segregation and the exclusion of women continue to be a key feature of public life in Saudi Arabia. Women were not allowed to participate in the 2005 municipal elections, the first democratic exercise in the kingdom since the 1960s, although promises were made for their inclusion in future elections. Nonetheless, the prominent role played by key women in the ruling family continues to impact societal and attitudinal changes. Although a less well known figure than the first ladies in neighboring GCC states, Princess Adila bint Abdulla Al-Saud, King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud's daughter, plays an important role in the political landscape by championing women's rights and lending support to women's groups and organizations.

Like some of the other GCC states, the process of political modernization was launched in Oman on the initiative of the ruler, with little demand or opposition from the public (Kapiszewski 2003). Oman's electoral process was introduced by a degree of Sultan Qaboos. The decree stipulated that each of Oman's 59 provinces could choose two candidates for consideration to the new council. The candidates would be chosen by the respected seniors of the communities in each province, and the Sultan would then appoint one of the two selected to represent that province on the council. Two women members of the council were appointed, the first time in the GCC that women participated in the political process (Al-Haj 1996), demonstrating once again the importance of an "appointment" mechanism for women's inclusion in the political sphere. Oman also became the first GCC country to grant women voting rights, through the introduction of the Basic Law in 1996. Women first ran for the Consultative Council in 2000, and managed to win two seats. In 2003, Oman established universal suffrage for all citizens over the age of 21, and in the subsequent elections the two women from the 2000 council were reelected, having been able to prove their capabilities in public life (Kitbi, 2004). Recently however, women were not able to maintain their share of elected seats when Omanis went to polls in October 2007; in fact, none of the 20 women contesting in the 2007 election were elected to the Parliament. In 1997 however, upon the establishment of the State Council (*Majlis Al-Dawla*), five women were selected to the then 41-seat appointed body, and currently women occupy 14 of the 70 seats of this Council.

This brief thematic overview of five GCC state examples demonstrates that women have a much greater chance of entering parliamentary or public life in cases where constitutional and legal reforms have been made to widen participation and institutionalize decision making, where an appointment mechanism exists for parliamentary inclusion, and where strong official support for women's participation in politics exists.

These trends are similarly applicable to the UAE, where the main avenue for participatory politics is through the Federal National Council (FNC). Established in 1972 as an advisory body following the creation

of the UAE federation, the FNC effectively exercises consultative rather than legislative powers. The 2006 elections opened half the number of seats in the FNC to an election process through the introduction of an electoral college system. In the case of the UAE, women's participation was an integral part of the political modernization process and indeed its constitution, in contrast to some GCC countries where the very issue of women's eligibility remains part of the public debate. In the UAE's 2006 elections, Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, wife of the late UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, was widely regarded in the media as an instrumental figure in championing the cause of women's political participation. Although only one woman won a seat through election, in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, a further eight women were appointed. Government appointments were the key mechanism for ensuring a higher percentage of female representation on the Federal National Council. The UAE's FNC contains the highest proportion of women representatives across the GCC.

UAE Women and the FNC Elections of 2006

The elections that took place across the UAE in December 2006 were seen by some as a historic milestone in the history of the country, and by critics as too limited a process. The president's three-step political modernization program was launched in December 2006 with the election of half the number of FNC members through an appointed Electoral College. The second phase is expected to include an expansion of the powers of the FNC and an increase in its members. The final phase will conclude with open and direct elections for all UAE nationals for half the FNC representative body (see Appendix 1 for FNC Constitution and committees). Up until the 2006 elections, women had never held a seat on the FNC.

The UAE National Election Committee (NEC) was established in August 2006 to manage the first FNC election process, and was chaired by the Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs. The Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs (MFNCA) was mandated to act as General Secretariat to the NEC. The first step for the NEC was to manage the Electoral College lists that had been submitted by the *diwan*, or ruler's court, of each of the seven emirates. The electoral college system raised a number of controversial criticisms from international observers, although the UAE argued that it was a necessary first step to create a new system for the country's first elections. In the absence of an election law, the government issued the Executive Election Instructions as the legal framework for conducting the elections. The Electoral College members were appointed by the *diwans* of the seven emirates in multiples of hundreds relative to the number of seats apportioned to that emirate by the Constitution.

Each committee was comprised of five members: a president of the committee, a representative of the *diwan*, a representative of the police, and any two representatives of the "domestic" sector. All of the subcommittees were responsible for coordinating with the National Elections Committee (NEC) to regulate and oversee the logistics for elections in each emirate.

Women played a fairly prominent role in the management of the UAE's elections. Two out of the seven election centers where polling took place had female supervisors of the election centers (Abu Dhabi, Fujairah) and two deputy supervisors (Sharjah, Ajman). The heads of election centers across the UAE had highly visible roles within the election

Table 2
National Elections Committee report for the 2006 FNC elections, UAE

Emirate	Total Electoral College	Female registered candidates	Male registered candidates	Total registered candidates	Seats by election	Total seats
Abu Dhabi	1741	14	86	100	4	8
Dubai	1520	15	67	82	4	8
Sharjah	1017	29	72	101	3	6
Ajman	436	2	22	24	2	4
Umm Al Quwain	403	1	28	29	2	4
Ras Al Khaimah	1061	3	80	83	3	6
Fujairah	417	1	36	37	2	4
Total	6595	65	391	456	20	40

process, and were responsible for supervising the election management team and the polling system in each center and ensuring that the process was transparent. There were no female members of the National Election Committee. It was, in fact, an unwritten objective of the National Election Committee to aim for 50% female representation of election center supervisors.[1] The purpose of this objective was to ensure that election poll centers were "women-friendly," and that all possible logistical requirements to ensure women's ease of participation were considered. Furthermore, the visual image of female supervisors of centers was intended as an indirect boost to promote women in positions of political responsibility within this first-ever electoral process. The general election participation rate across the UAE of 74.4% was reasonably high for both men and women (see Appendix 2 for participation rates by emirate and gender).

Although overall participation of women in this political process was high, it could no doubt be improved upon, particularly if the government focuses on results-oriented targets. The purpose of this study on women in the first UAE elections is to examine both the successes they achieved and the challenges they faced, and to offer researched policy advice as to how gender equality in the UAE's governance system could be improved. The importance of female participation in the development of the UAE goes well beyond cosmetic issues of international reputation and appearance to a genuine need to utilize the female portion of the population in the rapid development process occurring in the UAE.

[1] Personal communication with Dr. Anwar Gargash (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs), 2008.

Study Method

Sample

Participants in this study consisted of members of the United Arab Emirates Federal National Council (FNC) and members of the UAE electoral pool who had nominated themselves as candidates and ran in the FNC elections of 2006. Official authorization was received by the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs to conduct interviews with members of the FNC, and postal addresses were obtained for the 2006 election candidates for questionnaire distribution. Interviews were conducted by two bilingual female Emirati researchers from the Dubai School of Government and the Ministry of Federal National Council Affairs. All data was collected between November 2007 and February 2008.

All members of the Federal National Council agreed to participate in the study (100% response rate for male and female FNC members).[2] Most interviews with representatives were conducted at the Federal National Council premises in Abu Dhabi, the FNC offices in Dubai, and at the Ministry of Federal National Council Affairs in Dubai. The majority of representatives agreed to have the interviews recorded. All 346 male and 48 female candidates who ran for the

2006 elections received a letter from the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Federal National Council Affairs inviting them to participate in the study.[3] The response rate to the questionnaires was low, and 50 complete surveys were received (see Table 3).[4] In total, the study included 95 valid responses, of which 45 were conducted as interviews.[5]

The limited response rate of the election candidates can be attributed to a number of possible reasons. First, some of the candidates' contact information on record at the MFNCA had changed. Second, some respondents may have had concerns over their anonymity, despite assurances of the confidentiality of the responses.[6] There was some variation in response rates between emirates, which might indicate that respondents in different emirates placed different value on the relevance or necessity/utility of the study (see Table 4). Finally, a number of candidates expressed their disinterest in participating in the study, either because they did not believe that their feedback would influence policy or because they did not think that women's political participation deserved particular attention. As such, responses in this study are likely to have favored individuals who believed in the fairness of the political process, the utility of

Table 3
Response rates for representatives in the FNC and 2006 Election Candidates

	FNC	Election Candidates
Female	9 (100%)	13 (27%)
Male	31 (100%)	42 (12%)

[2] Of the total 40 representatives, this included 37 interviews and three self-completed questionnaires.

[3] In addition to the surveys, eight women were approached for interviews to collect more qualitative reports on women's experiences of the political process in the UAE.

[4] The questionnaires were returned to us by either mail, fax or e-mail. We also received four questionnaires, of which two were incomplete and two were accidentally lost.

[5] Thirty-three interviews were recorded and have complete interview transcripts, while the remaining 15 interviews are based on interviewer notes of the responses, because participants preferred not to be recorded.

[6] Based on follow-up phone calls with non- FNC members who did not complete the questionnaire

Table 4
Participants' response rates by emirate

	Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	Ajman	Ras Al Khaimah	Umm Al Quwain	Fujairah
Response rate per emirate	22%	25%	19%	32%	17%	30%	14%

policy-oriented research, and importance of women's political participation in the UAE.

Measures

A comprehensive 11-page questionnaire was developed to address numerous aspects of women's involvement in the political process, such as

- attitudes towards women's political participation;
- subjective evaluations of the political process;
- experiences as an FNC member; and,
- women FNC members and their interaction with the media and national machinery for women.

See Box 1 for detailed subtopics.

In order to emphasize the comparability of the results, questions from the survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for their *Politics: Women's Insight* report (2000) were included. This report was based on a series of questionnaires analyzing the experiences of almost 200 women in politics from 65 countries worldwide.[7] This allowed the research team to compare the responses of UAE female parliamentarians with those of other female parliamentarians globally. Twenty-one items were open-ended questions,

and the remaining majority of questions required either a "yes" or "no" response.[8] Interviews were semi-structured and covered all items included in the questionnaire. The final draft of the questionnaire was translated into Arabic (the language in which the majority of the interviews were conducted)[9] and re-checked by several Arabic language specialists to ensure consistency between the English and Arabic versions. The initial Arabic draft was pre-tested on Arabic-speaking members of staff at the Dubai School of Government. After remarks and suggestions were considered and adjustments were made, the final version of the interview/questionnaire was re-drafted by the researchers and sent to the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs for approval.

Data Analysis

All valid responses were entered into a statistical analysis software, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), for data analysis. Analyses included summarizing demographic variables, tabulating responses, and conducting significance tests to assess whether male and female responses differed at a statistically significant level. In particular the Pearson chi-square test (X^2) was carried out to compare differences between male and female responses[10] (see Appendix 3 for the complete list of test results). In addition,

[7] http://www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#INSIGHT

[8] A copy of the questionnaire/interview used for our study is available upon request.

[9] Two FNC and two non-FNC interviews were conducted in English based on the preferences of the interviewees.

[10] Despite the relatively small size of the sample and the difficulty of establishing whether the sample was randomly selected, significance tests were conducted to boost the methodological rigor of the analysis. Pearson's chi-square is a statistic used to test the hypothesis of no association of columns and rows in tabular data. Significance level was set at .05. Any differences that are not statistically significant were not considered valid and reported accordingly.

responses from female parliamentarians in the *IPU Women's Insight* report were compiled to provide a comparative framework for the responses of Emirati female parliamentarians on a subset of questions.

The qualitative data was analyzed by three researchers who independently examined interview transcripts. Recurring themes were recognized, and a consensus was reached on the most salient ones. Many qualitative findings substantiated findings from the quantitative analysis. In some cases, the qualitative findings provided a more nuanced and complex view of respondents' answers.

Box 1
Questionnaire topics and subtopics

1. Demographics: Sex, age, civil/marital status, dependents, field and level of education/ professional training, profession, and Emirate.

2. Attitudes toward women's political participation in the UAE
    a. general attitudes toward women's political participation
    b. attitudes towards the role of women in politics
    c. attitudes towards quotas

3. Subjective evaluations of the elections
    a. previous experience
    b. motivation to enter politics
    c. work-life balance issues and family support during elections
    d. difficulties during the elections
    e. personal preparation and mentorship
    f. official training
    g. budgets
    h. accessing voters
    i. campaigns

4. Experiences as a member of the FNC
    a. distribution of female representatives in parliamentary committees
    b. distribution of female representatives in decision-making posts in the FNC
    c. fields of action in which women make their presence felt
    d. women's affairs committees
    e. equality of services at the FNC

5. Women representatives and their interaction with the media and national machinery for women
    a. how the media views female politicians
    b. female representatives' experiences of relations with women's organizations / national machinery for women

Note: All participants answered topics 1 and 2; candidates who ran in the 2006 elections answered questions about the elections in topic 3; current FNC members answered questions about their experience in the FNC in topic 4; and, FNC women representatives answered questions in topic 5.

Study Results

Demographics

Participants' ages ranged between 26 and 59 years, with an average of 44 years (Mean = 43.9, SD = 8). About three quarters of the sample was male, reflecting their over-representation in the FNC and the electoral pool. The sample was highly educated, as three quarters of the sample held a minimum of a bachelor's degree. Most participants were married (85%) and had children (85%). The average number of children in the sample was 4.7 (SD = 3.8). A small percentage of the sample had a dependent with special needs (2%) or an elder family member dependent (17%). The largest number of participants was from Abu Dhabi (23%), while the smallest number was from Fujairah (5%). When the data was split by gender of

Table 5
Demographic profile of sample

(Total sample = 95)

Variable	Percent
Age	
26-30	4
31-40	32
41-50	43
51-59	21
Sex	
Male	77
Female	23
Emirate	
Abu Dhabi	23
Dubai	21
Sharjah	19
Ajman	8
RAK	15
Fujairah	5
UAQ	9
Marital Status	
Single	12
Married	85
Divorced	2
Widowed	1
Education	
High School	6
Univ. Diploma	20
Bachelor's	41
Master's	18
Ph.D.	15
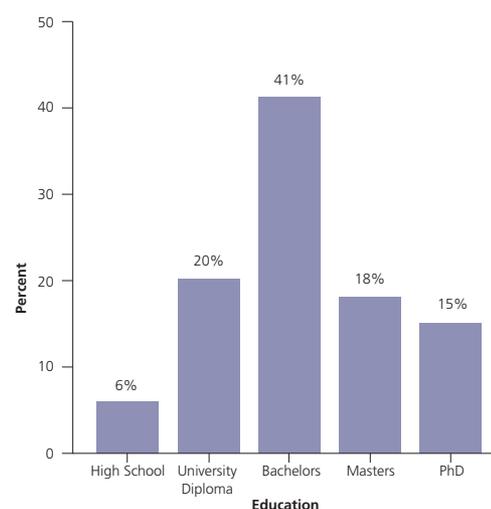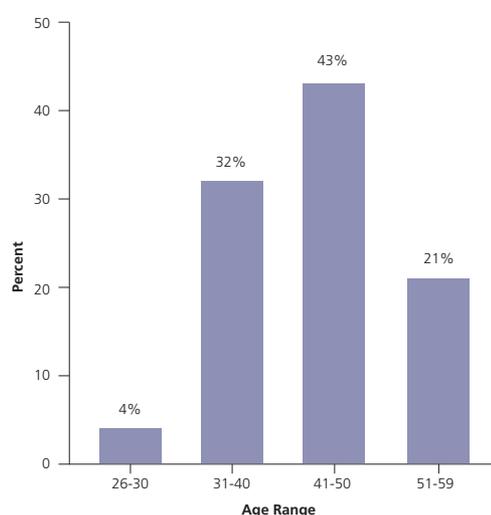
the respondent, the demographic profile for women was identical to that of men, excluding two variables: marital status and number of children. Our sample consisted of more single women (36%) than single men (4%), and more married men (95%) than married women (55%). In addition, the average number of children for women was 1.7 (SD = 2.4), while the average number of children for men in our sample was 5.6 (SD = 3.6). Thus, in our sample male and female respondents were similar in terms of their age and educational qualifications, but male respondents were more likely to be married and have a higher number of children than female respondents.

Attitudes Toward Women's Political Participation in the UAE

The first section of the study is concerned with attitudes toward women's political participation in the UAE. Topics covered include general questions about the acceptability and prevalence of women's political participation, and specific questions about the unique contribution of female politicians and the usefulness of quotas. All 95 respondents (FNC and election candidates) provided responses to these questions. In general, most men and women reported having positive attitudes about women's participation in politics in the UAE, especially through government support, but they were more critical of the role that voters and society at large play in facilitating such participation. Gender differences in attitudes toward women's political participation only appeared when respondents were asked more detailed questions about women's contribution to the political process. Female respondents in this study see a more qualitatively meaningful role for women's participation that results in tangible change and positive contribution. While women generally endorsed the use of quotas more than men, there were no differences among the two groups in terms of the effectiveness of quotas if introduced by government. Both groups showed little ability to substantiate their subjective views of quotas

with knowledge about successful or failed experiences with quotas in other countries.

General attitudes toward women's political participation

In general, participants endorsed general statements about the importance and availability of opportunities for women's political participation. For example, survey results revealed that three quarters of respondents think that that women in the UAE play an active part in political life (W = 77%, M = 71%), that women have legal opportunities in participating in the FNC equal to men (W = 68%, M = 88%), and that politics is shaped and led as much by women as by men (W = 75%, M = 62%). Interestingly, the participants' positive view of women's role in politics was based less on women's participation as voters (W = 50%, M = 57%), and more on the percentage of women in the FNC (W = 89%, M = 67%) and in government (W = 90%, M = 75%). This may indicate that the participants' views concerning women's political participation in the UAE are more positive in situations where the government plays an active role in facilitating women's participation, compared to others. This finding was substantiated by respondents' more critical views of voter attitudes. Most respondents did not think that voters in the UAE have as much confidence in women compared to men (W = 87%, M = 72%), and did not strongly endorse the view that voters were willing to elect a woman to the FNC (W = 38%, M = 61%). This is in contrast to results from the IPU study that reported more positive views of voter perceptions of women candidates: 75% of female representatives worldwide believed that voters in their country were generally willing to elect women to the national parliament (IPU 2000, 92).

Qualitative data generally supported the results of the quantitative analysis. The role of government as champion of women's rights permeated most of the responses from both men and women alike. In the words of a male candidate from Dubai, "I think [women]

had a role previously, but it further changed when HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum was appointed Ruler of Dubai and Prime Minister. I think many matters and perceptions have changed, and some marginal cases have now become priorities in our society."

In fact, women's participation in politics is seen as an obligation towards the government and the UAE more generally: "I don't mind if women members of my family occupied a position in any post of the government; instead I see this as part of a woman's duty towards her country for the benefit of society."

In some cases, women's right to participate was construed as a divine right, supported, rightfully, by the government despite regressive societal forces:

> God gave women the right to participate in social, economic and political life, and history proves this matter. Even if some people that don't play a role in society object to the role of women in the entire development process in all fields, they cannot hinder the process of women's participation in parliamentary life, especially at this time when women now can fully participate and are supported by God and the decision makers of the country.

When asked about the role of the existing value system in the UAE in acting as an impediment to women's political participation, male and female respondents were equally split (W = 50%, M = 48%). For example, in an interview with a male FNC member, there was a clear dichotomy between the past (as equated with tradition) and the present (as equated with modernity): "If we talk about traditions and customs, we can now see that women occupy posts in all the sectors. Therefore, this matter no longer exists…. In the near past, educated women faced difficulties even if it concerned participating in the educational sector. But now men are

totally convinced that women must eventually participate in all activities including the elections."

However, for other respondents, like a female election candidate from a northern emirate, the boundaries between tradition and modernity are more blurred, and they still experience "literal" societal constraints on their participation:

> In Ras Al Khaimah, we faced many obstacles since the nature of our society there is a tribal one, which prevents women from playing a leadership role…. I would like to refer to a story here: On the day of the elections, front row seats were reserved for the three candidates from Ras Al Khaimah, but one of the male candidates objected to this matter and ordered us to sit at the back. Therefore, you can see that we had not yet entered the Council (FNC) and he was refusing the very idea of us being there.

In sum, most men and women held similar attitudes toward general notions of women's political participation. Participants from the FNC and candidates from the 2006 electoral pool generally held positive views of government-supported efforts for women's political participation, but they were more critical of the role that voters and society at large play in facilitating such participation.

Attitudes toward the role of women in politics
Gender differences in attitudes toward women's political participation only appeared when respondents were asked more detailed questions about women's contributions to the political process. In particular, results show that more women than men think that women have special talents in politics (W = 84%, M = 38%), that women can change politics (W = 90%, M = 54%), that female politicians restore the public's trust in politics (W = 71%, M = 45%), and that women's increased participation in political

life changes the outputs of politics (W = 78%, M = 47%).[11] This indicates that while respondents generally endorse the notion of women's participation in the political process, they differ in their understanding of the role that women can (and do) play in that process. Female respondents in this study see a more qualitatively meaningful role for women's participation that results in tangible change and positive contribution. Their responses were similar to female representatives worldwide, who consider that women's participation in the political process significantly changed political outcomes (87.4%) (IPU 2000, 30).

Similarly, qualitative data showed clear differences between men's and women's conceptualizations of the role of women in politics. Many of the men's responses to questions about the contribution that women politicians make in the political arena were structured around the notion of a "test" that women need to pass to prove deserving of the privilege of participation. For example, multiple references were made to the premature nature of women's political participation experience and the need for women to prove their ability before an assessment of their contribution can be made: "There is no previous experience, but based on what took place in Kuwait and Bahrain and Qatar, I feel that women are still taking their first steps and we have no feedback on this matter yet." Or, "In general, I feel that women are not yet qualified to become active bodies in the political field."

Moreover, when asked about the special responsibilities and contributions that women bring to politics, men's responses often included women's special responsibilities towards her family. For example, "A women employee in the ministry already has commitments, and participating in political life will add to these commitments and might require her

to attend meetings, conferences or even travel abroad to meet people; all of this affects her life." Or, "Women have special responsibilities, and if they happen to be housewives, then their responsibilities will be twice as much."

Therefore, the "difference" that women's participation makes is either not tangible, or is intricately tied to her role in the family, even when the questions do not directly probe women's non-work roles. In contrast, the responses of female interviewees showed that the effect of women's participation in politics was positive and clearly felt. Women's participation resulted in a healthy working environment and better outcomes: "If men and women play a positive role in society and work together side by side for the benefit of this society, then I personally feel that it is a great investment for the entire country and will have excellent outcomes."

For women, participation in politics also meant partnership for a common goal. In the words of one of the female interviewees,

> The social, economic and political security of the country is the priority of both men and women, and both of them hold responsibilities in the development process of the nation, its progress and maintaining this matter. We look forward to further progress in the future to achieve international standards as per our noble religion, traditions, customs, and special identity being UAE citizens.

In sum, results indicate that general attitudes about women's political participation were similarly positive among men and women, but more nuanced questions about the effect and function of women's political participation elicited differing responses between the two groups of respondents.

[11] More women than men also endorsed the view that women have a special responsibility to represent the needs and interest of other women (W = 90%, M = 69%) but this difference only approached statistical significance. This result replicates findings from the IPU survey, which found that female representatives report that women politicians do represent the needs of female constituents (89%) (IPU 2000, 43).

Attitudes toward quotas

Questions about quotas were a particularly interesting lens through which to examine men's and women's conceptualizations of participation in the political process. Results show that women hold more favorable views of quotas than men, and see them as conceptually distinct from seats reserved for emirates. However, if implemented by the government, both men and women would endorse them as a useful mechanism to boost women's political participation.

Quantitative results showed that more women than men endorsed quotas (W = 81%, M = 57%), and that quotas were favored most by women candidates in the 2006 elections (85%), followed by female FNC members (75%), then male FNC members (60%), and lastly by male election candidates (54%).[12] Interestingly, almost all women thought that reserved seats based on gender are different than reserved seats based on emirate, while only half of the male respondents agreed (W = 94%, M = 47%). More detailed questions about quotas revealed surprising results. Most respondents thought that if implemented, quotas would be useful in boosting the number of women in politics and would not hinder the natural progress of women in the FNC (W = 86%, M = 63%). When asked if they knew of quotas and/or reserved seats for women that are used in other countries, more women than men responded in the affirmative (W = 72%, M = 32%). However, only a small percentage of respondents, irrespective of gender, could name a specific country at all – only one third of our sample of women, and only a handful of men, could name a country that had quotas and/or reserved seats for women (W = 36%, M = 15%). Thus, while men and women presented their (positive or negative) views on the quota issue, few could demonstrate knowledge of successful or problematic experiences with quotas.

Qualitative data showed that the main reasons behind respondents' views of accepting (or rejecting) quotas were based on their views of discrimination. Those who rejected quotas generally endorsed the view that women and men are treated equally and, therefore, that quotas are not needed. Examples of views endorsing the existence of an egalitarian political climate for women and men include the following:

> We do not require quotas for women at present, because people now understand the political role of women in society and know that women have proved themselves and are able to give.

> In the coming elections the nominees that deserve to be elected will win automatically, because everyone will get a chance to hear what they have to say…. Therefore, no matter whether there is a quota or not, these elected bodies will impose themselves and their participation will be a positive one.

> I believe that women are able to create a balance and create changes in the process itself. I don't believe in having the government deciding the number of seats specified for women. When it comes to me during the elections, I will always elect the best no matter if it's a man or a woman.

In contrast to the excerpts above, those supporting quotas tended to see discrimination as part and parcel of the experience of participating politically and a necessary step to be overcome for a truly inclusive process across all emirates:

> If no seats were specified, the number [of women in the FNC] will not increase. But in the future, once political life changes and women take their rights via the quota system, then the quota should not be adopted.

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[12] Fifty percent of men surveyed chose not to answer this question. While significance tests were conducted for comparisons between men and women, the sample sizes were too small to conduct these tests for the male FNC, female FNC, male candidate, and female candidate groups. Therefore, the differences between these groups should be interpreted loosely and not as statistically significant differences.

I can understand that women are not able to participate by themselves, and therefore depend only on the government to appoint them, this is for the first stages, but will eventually end, and a new phase will begin.

Even if the trend is generally positive in the UAE, based on what I witnessed in Umm Al Quwain, there was no female participation. Had there been at least one permanent seat specified for each emirate, or seats specified based on the percentage of population, then we definitely would have seen more women (in the Council).

I still stress the importance of education. Why? Because if the experience we have results in the depression and fear of women, then we need to spread political awareness among the society and educate men about the important role of women in society, making them understand that they are there to support them and are not their enemies, or to be looked down upon.

Thus, most proponents of quotas saw them as a temporary, yet necessary, measure, while opponents saw them as a misleading indication of the lack of opportunities for women. Taken together, the results of the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that if quotas were to be implemented under clear guidelines outlining their short-term duration and their role in facilitating the representation of qualified women in all emirates, support for such quotas is likely. More importantly, more information about quotas in other countries and how they have worked to mainstream women's political participation is needed to dissociate the use of quotas from the presumption that quotas are only used in contexts where the government has failed to support its female citizenry.

Subjective Evaluations of the Elections
This section of the study is concerned with candidates' experiences of the 2006 elections;

the results are based on responses from those who ran in the elections, including current FNC members who had nominated themselves as candidates. In general, results indicate that men and women shared very similar perspectives. Overall, male and female candidates received family support to run in the elections, were motivated to run in order to better serve society, expressed their need to receive better training on various aspects of the election process, and had some difficulties with campaigning and reaching out to voters. Additionally, both groups expressed faith in the transparency of the elections, but wanted the process to be more inclusive and to result in an assembly with stronger legislative powers. However, some gender-specific trends were also identified. More men than women mentioned spouses assisting them in running their campaigns and playing a key role in reaching out to voters. Men also set higher budgets for their campaigns, and had campaign advertisements that differed from female candidates in terms of their size, content, and available contact information.

Previous experience
When asked about previous experiences that played a role in encouraging candidates to run in the elections, results revealed that men and women shared many of the same experiences. In particular, both groups reported having a family member in politics (W = 67%, M = 27%), and having appropriate job experience that gave them an edge over other candidates (W = 73%, M = 83%), while only half had some experience in politics at the local level (W = 57%, M = 62%). In general, women's work experiences in teaching, health, government, and NGOs were identified as particularly important for helping them develop skills needed for the political arena. Most women held multiple positions in voluntary and paid organizations. Men and women reported that their work in government and consultative councils was an important part of their political training,

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[13] FNC members who were not candidates in the 2006 elections were not eligible to report on their experiences of the elections as candidates.

but gender-specific trends were also evident, as many men reported having worked in the private sector and the military, while women did not. Moreover, a number of male candidates also emphasized having formative experiences in student unions in school and university, while female candidates did not.

Motivation to enter politics
All of the men and women reported that their interest in entering politics was driven by the desire to do something for the community (W = 100 %, M = 100%). Most men and women also endorsed the challenge and taste for risk as a motivation for their decision to run (W = 77%, M = 71%). However, more women than men reported that they entered politics to pursue a particular political project (W = 86%, M = 47%).[14] Examples of such projects include better service provision to women in certain communities, and improvement of the educational sector. While almost all candidates expressed their excitement at having been included in the political process and their motivation to make a difference, some were critical of the limited nature of the process, which had privileged a small fraction of the national population based on unclear criteria. Additionally, many expressed concerns about favoritism in the election process. The following three quotes from participants are examples of concerns about the election process:

> The selection of candidates was not successful…. Some people were chosen not because they deserved to be, but because they functioned under the basis of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." In some areas, unqualified people were eligible for voting.

> It seems that what is described as "democracy" and "voting process" was actually just a tribal process that has nothing to do with democracy. It increased tribalism and every tribe supported its

candidates and teamed up with other tribes to the detriment of some qualified candidates who should have received more votes.

> Only a few candidates managed to get numbers for members of the Electoral College. This was not fair. It was very difficult to keep in touch with most of the election body, particularly for women, because our customs and traditions prevented us from calling them. In addition, some people just refused to talk on the phone. Therefore, there was no way for me to convey my message in person, and I had to depend on the newspapers instead.

Other research on the 2006 FNC elections replicates our findings that serious critiques are likely to reflect the experience of a minority of candidates, since overall the satisfaction rate with the elections was high, and the government and National Electoral Committee were perceived as "trustworthy" by the majority of the participants (Salem 2007). Nevertheless, it is important to document and understand these concerns because their prevalence is likely to be higher among people not included in the present paper. More importantly, if future election experiences are to be successful, careful consideration must be given to ensure that the perception of future elections is both positive and fair.

Work-life balance issues and family support during elections
A very high percentage of male and female candidates reported receiving family support (W = 93%, M = 76%) and, more specifically, most candidates had received encouragement from family to run in the elections (W = 92%, M = 79%). Excerpts from female candidates' descriptions of family support include the following:

> My husband and brother were the first to support me. And the first to encourage me

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[14] The response rate for male candidates was low on this question.

was my father…. As I mentioned earlier, a woman will be held responsible for every act she carries out, where she comes and where she goes. And her deeds will be remembered by others. I am very happy and proud to receive the support I received, and consider it as a great advantage.

Yes, everyone supported me. Even my father went to my eldest uncle to ask for his permission, because they were afraid he would object to my participation, but instead my uncle supported me and encouraged my participation. All my family encouraged me.

The high percentage of candidates reporting family support may indicate that the group of candidates is a self-selected group, and that family support was an important predictor of the decision to run for elections in the UAE. More importantly, family support is technically a prerequisite for women's participation as candidates, since individuals are legally required to submit a copy of their family book (*khalasat al-qaid*) in order to identify themselves for registration purposes at election centers. Women are registered on their male guardian's family book (e.g., father, husband, or brother) rather than having an independent citizenship document. While this may not pose a problem for women whose families are supportive of their decision to participate, such as in the case of female candidates in our study sample, it will certainly exclude those who do not receive such support. The recent introduction of individual national identity cards presents a useful mechanism for overcoming this particular challenge.

When asked about work-life balance issues, both groups report having domestic help and finding it necessary (W = 100%, M = 83%) which replicates IPU findings that most female representatives worldwide (77.5%) report that domestic services were essential (IPU 2000, 154). Interestingly, however, most women did not have a problem with work-

life balance issues. In fact, more men than women reported having these difficulties (W = 20%, M = 41%). This is in contrast to IPU findings, which found that 67% of women representatives experienced difficulties in balancing amounts of time to be devoted to private life and political activities (IPU 2000, 87). Follow-up analyses were done to compare the responses of married and single women to see whether we could attribute the lack of difficulties with non-work responsibilities to their marital status. No significant differences were found between the two groups, as both married and single women reported low levels of difficulty in balancing home and work. Qualitative data show that women respondents were conscious of the time consuming element of political work, but that they seek creative solutions and get support from family members to overcome this. For example:

Thank God, my family and I consider ourselves as friends before being a family. The friendship we have has helped us adapt, and of course I have a housemaid that cooks for us.

At the time being, all my children are grownups; only the youngest is a college student in his third year, while the rest all work. I also have people at home who help out.

It is normal for a woman to schedule her time even if she doesn't work. At morning the kids are at school, and I am at work, but when they return it's study time. When they finish their homework I take them out too. But I must admit, a working woman's schedule might be more organized than that of a housewife.

In comparison to women, many of the men's interviews reveal that the support that they get involves not only home responsibilities, but help with the campaign itself:

To be honest, my wife was the manager of my campaign; therefore, she carried a

heavy part of the burden, and was capable of doing so because she holds a degree in politics…. I think that she was behind my success, and she knows this. My sister was also present when they were counting votes, as my wife could not be there at that time.

It's extremely important for me to have a healthy relationship with my family, and I play an active role in raising my children and attending to their every need. I take them out and play with them without the assistance of my housemaids. My kids are my life; I don't even travel without them.

This is nothing compared to when I was in the armed forces, when my children were very young. At that time my mother (peace be upon her soul) covered all their needs and kept them happy. My wives — I am married to three women — also take care of my kids and all know their duties well, and everything runs smoothly, even if I am very busy. The main thing is to organize matters, and thank God all is well.

Yes, my wife [supported me], and my eldest daughter was my secretary.

Thus, it appears that for women, the reported lack of difficulties in work-life balance were attributed to their ability to manage those difficulties effectively, whereas for men spouses played a key role in both helping with the campaign and supporting candidates with home responsibilities. In contrast to work-life balance, a salient issue reported by both groups related to conflicts in balancing their professional commitments and the election process (W = 54%, M = 51%). Legally, candidates were required to take time from their work to run as candidates, and about half of the respondents indicated that this was difficult to do due to their work obligations (see Appendix 4 for election regulations). In fact, many candidates reported that they found the election period a time for transition to a different job, take their yearly vacation, or

resign in order to fully dedicate themselves to the election process.

Difficulties during the elections

In general, only a small percentage of men and women reported problems concerning becoming a public figure (W = 13%, M = 18%), public speaking (W = 0%, M = 8%) or any insecurities during the election process (W = 7%, M = 9%). In terms of logistical problems, few candidates reported trouble with transport (W = 27%, M = 5%), but about half the male and female candidates reported difficulties with finances (W = 54%, M = 39%). Women in the UAE reported fewer difficulties in general than women representatives elsewhere (IPU difficulties: public figure 19%, public speaking 16%, insecurities 20%), but had similar difficulties in transport and finances (IPU transport 21%, finances 36%). Also, a smaller percentage of the sample of UAE candidates reported experiencing conflicts between their role as a politician and their identity as a woman (W = 7%) compared to women representatives worldwide (31%) (IPU 2000, 87). Based on interviews, the most important difficulties noted were the short campaign time during the election period, lack of training, difficulty in accessing voters, and campaigning. Notable from these responses is the lack of complaints about safety or long and complicated election procedures, all issues that characterize elections in many other Arab countries (UNIFEM 2004). Thus, a noteworthy achievement is the ability of the National Election Council to create "safe spaces" for women to vote. This may have been the result of involving women at every step of the election process as members of NEC subcommittees and in technical and administrative positions in the election centers. While a little over half of the female candidates reported experiencing cultural values and attitudes opposed to their participation (57%), none indicated experiencing hostile intimidation, physical threats, or slanderous insults.

Personal preparation and mentorship

Most men and women reported that they would have liked more preparation to run in the elections (W = 90%, M = 68%). When asked if they received any advice, about half reported receiving advice on conducing the election campaign (W = 64%, M = 48%) or their future role as an FNC member (W = 50%, M = 48%), and about a third reported receiving help regarding legislative work proper (W = 29%, M = 48%) and advice on the analysis of the national budget (W = 25%, M = 33%). When asked specifically about mentors, all male FNC members reported having male mentors (100%), followed by women (43% from female mentors, 63% from male mentors), and the lowest responses were from male election candidates (6% from female mentors, 35% from male mentors). While only half the women had mentors, all thought that incoming women politicians could benefit from the direct support and advice of seasoned women politicians (W = 100%). This was similar to responses from the IPU survey, which reports that 91% of female representatives would find it beneficial to receive advice from more seasoned politicians (IPU 2000, 112).

Official training

Training is a key component for the success of any new process, particularly an election where a population is participating in a new type of process for the first time without precedent. Results of this study indicate that less than half of the respondents report receiving training in general. About half of the male and female respondents reported having training on voting (W = 53%, M = 34%) and the election process (W = 60%, M = 38%). Less than a quarter of respondents reported receiving training on conducting campaigns (W = 21%, M = 22%) and less than 10% (W = 7%, M = 10%) reported receiving training on fundraising. Interviews indicated that candidates wanted more quality training in more convenient locations.

Interviews with members of the National Election Committee (NEC) revealed that, in response to candidates' requests for training, the NEC partnered with Watani, an organization based in Dubai and mandated to reinforce national identity and social cohesion in the UAE. A series of workshops were designed to define the key components of campaigning for candidates and encourage candidates to develop real campaign issues and discourage them from campaigning on socially divisive issues such as sectarian/religious issues or reliance on name recognition rather than actual campaign issues.[15] Watani also had a mandate to develop awareness in the country that these elections were an important part of the political development process in the UAE, and to inculcate a sense of obligation among UAE citizens to participate in and support this process. Throughout the month of November 2006, one workshop was held in each of the seven emirates for the candidates of that emirate (see Appendix 5 for workshop timetable).

Other organizations were particularly keen to promote the participation and success of women in these elections. The UNDP partnered with the UAE General Women's Union (GWU) as part of their Gender Mainstreaming project to provide training to female candidates. The General Women's Union and the National Election Committee (NEC) also held two sessions entitled "Building the Capacity of Women Candidates" for female candidates. The first took place on Monday, December 4, 2006 at the General Women's Union in Abu Dhabi. The speakers included two female parliamentarians from Oman, and members of the FNC, who offered an insight into how women can succeed in elections. Turnout was high in this session. However, even though there were attempts by the NEC to encourage further sessions across the UAE, these did not materialize due to a lack of logistical backup and time. Both

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[15] Personal Communication with Muhammed Buharoon (Deputy-General Coordinator of Watani, UAE National Social Development Programme, May 2008.

types of training also allowed for candidates to network with each other, although evaluations of the training were not available for review.

At the NEC level, a series of road shows were conducted nationwide during the last two weeks of November 2006 by the Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs and other senior NEC officials. The training was for all election candidates; it aimed to clarify the regulations for the upcoming elections, as well as create a public avenue for questions and concerns to be voiced to the NEC about the process. A specific training session for any military or police officers who were election candidates was conducted at the Armed Forces Officers' Club by the Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs.

Budgets
About half the candidates submitted their budgets, and the range was between 4,200 dirhams and two million dirhams.[16] On average, women candidates set lower budgets than male candidates (see Table 6).

Less than a quarter of women and men spent over their budgets (W = 23%, M = 12%), while more men than women spent under the budget (W = 23%, M = 63%). Almost all respondents were self-funded (W = 93%, M = 97%). About one quarter of candidates received financial support from family (W = 36%, M = 15%). Very few candidates took bank loans (W = 0%, M = 7%) or engaged in fundraising activities (W = 7%, M = 2%). Interviews indicated that candidates would have liked to receive training on how to raise money for their campaigns and how to manage their budgets. For example, a male candidate described the main problem he faced with his budget: "We did not have a certain budget, because we had no idea what we should do with it. For example, we prepared

brochures, but we were not told what to do with the rest of it." Other interviews also indicated that the difficulties reported with budgets reflected a lack of knowledge with the election process in general.

Table 6
Campaign budget average and range for male and female candidates (in AED)

	Male	
Average	241,000	90,000
Range	4,200-2,000,000	30,000-200,000

Accessing Voters
In general, half of the men and women candidates had difficulty accessing voters (W = 54%, M = 49%) and in particular in accessing voters of the opposite sex (W = 47%, M = 52%). Interviews indicated that the biggest obstacles in accessing voters were that voters' contact information was not made available and that speaking to unknown members of the opposite sex without an introduction was culturally problematic in most cases. While this was a problem for both men and women, it was especially problematic for women, who made up a fraction of the electoral pool to begin with and would have had to get a substantial number of male votes to win. Examples of such obstacles include accounts from both male and female candidates:

All the information was treated as "top secret" by the organizing committee of the elections, and this was an obstacle in our path because we were unable to follow up with the other candidates, especially the men. And our culture and traditions prevent us from calling men, which made it difficult to convince them of the election program.

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[16] Missing data includes 39 men and 7 women.

Of course I faced difficulties, because it's a bit embarrassing for me to keep in touch with a woman. I remember trying to follow up with a woman candidate and she slammed the phone in my face, despite the fact that I had informed her that so-and-so person gave me her number and it was for the election purpose. Therefore, it's very embarrassing to contact someone you don't know, although the ladies in my family did help me a lot with this matter.

I faced difficulties, but fortunately I found a solution to them through my sisters and aunts, who helped me communicate with other women candidates, or we contacted the husbands or brothers of female voters.

Candidates who did not report having problems accessing voters tended to use traditional forms of campaigning (*majlis*) or were from the northern emirates, where personal relationships are more effective in reaching voters due to the smaller size of the electoral pool.

It was very easy because I have strong relations with people. I am keen on attending every wedding and making social calls, or visiting my friends when they are sick or in mourning, and this is my nature — not because I want to enter the Council (FNC). I am proud of these strong relations with others.

Both of these forms of accessing voters put women at a disadvantage, since they would not be able to hold a mixed *majlis* or mingle with men in segregated settings. Thus, the result was that women often limited their campaign venues to expensive female-only events held at hotels, or sought the media as an alternative to meeting candidates. A number of female candidates attributed the low percentage of elected females to

such limitations. In the words of a female candidate, "Yes, I would like to point out that on the day of elections, the women were inside while the men were outside promoting themselves." Until the percentage of women in the electoral pool is large enough to make a substantial difference, segregation will continue to disadvantage women candidates.

Campaigns

When interviewed about their experiences running their campaign, almost all interviewees reported that the period of time allocated for campaigning was too short. Candidates were given two weeks to run their campaigns, and this was repeatedly cited as a major obstacle to running an effective campaign (see Appendix 6 for schedule of elections). The NEC's position was that two weeks was the appropriate duration of time for a pilot project of this size and nature, and as a first time experience in the UAE. An exploratory analysis of the campaigns based on archival material at the MFNCA compared the brochures and newspaper advertisements of campaigns for male and female candidates in the different emirates, and a number of general trends were detected.[17] First, a substantially lower percentage of candidates from the northern emirates had campaign advertisements, compared to those from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. This may be due to variation in budgets allocated for media outreach or differences in preferences in campaigning.

Second, contrary to assumptions that women generally campaign on "soft" issues compared to men, the analysis revealed that men's and women's campaign issues were very similar in the UAE. Nine main themes marked the most prevalent campaign issues (in order of prevalence): education, health, demographics, social services, women's issues, unemployment, youth and children's issues, housing, and

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[17] The majority of campaign advertisements found in the MFNCA archives were from Al- Khaleej newspaper. The archive does not contain information on the campaign Web sites or advertisements in other media outlets such as television. While the archive contains only a sample of campaign materials, it is one of the most comprehensive archives to date of the FNC election campaigns.

migration. Thus, most campaigns focused on domestic policy and were not differentiated on ideological grounds. There were some themes which were less prevalent among the women's campaigns, including security, energy issues and the environment, accountability, and national budget and *zakat* (almsgiving). Interviews with female candidates indicated that while many thought that women's issues were a priority to them personally, many did not want to announce this as their only or overarching interest.

Third, campaign advertisements for both men and women listed Web sites and e-mails, although women's campaigns rarely had pictures of the candidates or telephone numbers. Fourth, men's campaigns were characterized by positive self appraisals and adjectives describing the ability and worth of the candidate, while women's campaigns tended to show more limited self promotion phrases and the inclusion of a copy of their biography or curriculum vitae. Fifth, men tended to have larger advertisements in the newspapers than women, possibly reflecting higher budgets for male candidates. To summarize, while campaigns for men and women were similar in terms of the issues, the main differences were in the size of advertisements, the availability of contact information and candidate photos, and the prevalence of positive self appraisals describing the candidate.

Experiences as a Member of the FNC

This section of the study is concerned with the experiences of members of the FNC and their attitudes toward women's role in the FNC. In general, most FNC members were positive about the distribution of women in FNC committees, although the lower number of women representatives was described as a key factor in the limitation on women's participation on all committees. More detailed questions about the function of gender diversity in parliamentary committees and among decision making posts revealed some gender-specific trends. In particular, more

women than men thought that diversity is a matter of principle and that it improves both the quality of the parliamentary work and the work environment. FNC members were split on whether there is a need for a committee dedicated to women's affairs. However, most thought that if implemented, a women's affairs committee would improve legislation on women's issues, but only if it did not marginalize them. Accordingly, most representatives endorsed including both male and female FNC members in a women's affairs committee, keeping issues focused on the family rather on "women" per se. In terms of female representatives' effect on decision making in the FNC, most examples were focused on legislation on issues of importance to health and legal rights. While most members did not think that women's participation in the FNC changed the culture of the FNC, there were many counterexamples. Finally, regarding the equality of FNC services for male and female members, results revealed that more male representatives than female representatives received such services.

Distribution of female representatives in parliamentary committees

Generally, respondents had a positive attitude towards the distribution of female representatives in FNC committees. Most male and female representatives think that the current distribution of men and women in the FNC is satisfactory (W = 87%, M = 92%), that their presence on all committees would be positive (W = 100%, M = 86%), and that their absence from FNC committees would have a noticeable effect on legislation (W = 86%, M = 85%). Thus, similar to participants' general attitudes about women's political participation, there was a generally positive attitude about women's participation in FNC committees, and this participation was viewed as a national responsibility supported by the government.

Distribution of female representatives in decision-making posts in the FNC

While both men and women were split about

whether the gender distribution of decision making posts are balanced in the FNC (W = 44%, M = 64%), their responses differed significantly regarding the importance of that balance. Almost all women thought that a gender balance in decision making posts is a matter of principle, compared to half the men (W = 89%, M = 48%). All of the women thought that a balance in the distribution of decision making posts enhances the quality of the work done (W = 100%, M = 54%) and enhances the working climate (W = 100%, M = 62%), compared to only about half of male FNC members who endorsed these statements. This echoes earlier findings that men and women differ in how they conceptualize the value of women's participation in the decision making process. Almost all women viewed diversity as inherently positive and effective, whereas half the men tended to view the effect of women's participation as too premature and in need of evaluation. For example, women in the FNC described gender-balanced decision making in the following terms:

We are only nine women amongst men. Therefore, of course there is no equality no matter how hard we try…. But the existence of men and women in the same place creates a healthy environment.

Equality between men and women in the national assembly creates a strong environment for creativity and decision making.

We have participated actively in making changes to the legislation that were previously discussed inside the National Assembly: health and social affairs legislation and the Medical Liabilities Law, which is still under study. I must admit here that discussing such law and making suitable changes have a large impact on the safety of the citizens.

Compared with the quotes from the female FNC members, interviews with male representatives

revealed a more ambivalent stance which equated success in decision making with being accepted by societal standards:

Women should spend more effort in order to convince society that they are worthy of becoming members in the Federal National Council.

A woman needs to ask herself: "Are your theories, personality, and you as a person accepted? Are you trustworthy and honest? Does the society accept you?" These are the most important measures.

However, some male FNC members considered that societal approval, although necessary, is not a prerequisite for women's leadership. Rather, it is a consequence of it:

The women that are currently present are the first generation of women who will break through the wall of customs and traditions, and will pave the way for others who follow in their path. They will draw an honorable picture for women and their positive role in society and what they can achieve for the benefit of the society and public life. They will leave their impact so that they change the ways in which society currently thinks.

In terms of the reasons behind women's underrepresentation in decision-making posts in the FNC committees, many female respondents attributed it to the lower proportion of women representatives and the regulation of a maximum two-committee membership for each representative. Similarly, the IPU report documents that respondents to their study were aware that the proportions of men and women in their respective parliaments determined the possibilities of women being represented on all or just some committees (IPU 2000, 106). In addition to the proportion of women representatives, responses indicated that personal preferences and areas of expertise were a deciding factor in which

committees women select to join. However, almost all thought that joining committees provides the experience that women need in order to broaden the fields of activity in the FNC. For example, when asked about the reasons for women's participation in some committees rather than others, one female FNC member replied with the following statement: "Women do have a role, especially in legislation, to read the laws and discuss them…. The real value is in the cumulative expertise that is gained overtime in any committee. That is more important." Thus, the definition of participation in this instance goes beyond current realities to include learning and expanded involvement in different subjects.

Fields of action in which women make their presence felt
When asked about the fields of action in which women make their presence felt, most respondents identified the committees which were either headed by women or in which many women were active. In particular, the Education, Youth, Information, and Culture Committee, and the Islamic Affairs, Awqaf, and Public Utilities Committee were mentioned as examples of committees in which women's voices have had an impact. In both cases, these committees are headed by women and have numerous female members (four each). The Health, Labor and Social Affairs Committee, which is also comprised of four female members, was also highlighted as a case in which women have contributed to the debate on important legislative issues pertaining to public health such as the fertility law. Overall, results indicate that for women representatives to have an effect which is recognized by others, they need a critical mass in committees and numerous official leadership positions.[18]

Women's affairs committee
Currently there is no committee specifically concerned with women's affairs in the FNC. In

that sense, the UAE is similar to about half of parliaments worldwide that do not have such a committee (57%). However, parliaments that do not have a women's affairs committee often report having women's branches of political parties that focus on women's status (IPU 2000, 117). When asked if a women's committee should be introduced to the FNC, representatives were split on the subject, although a larger proportion of women supported the idea than men (W = 50%, M = 27%). The concern expressed by many women representatives was that the introduction of a women's committee would marginalize women's issues. Therefore, most supported the idea of a committee for family affairs that included women but was not limited to "women's issues." In contrast, male FNC members' opposition to the idea was driven by the belief that women already have their rights and that formation of such a committee would indicate that the government is not giving women its full rights. Thus, in both cases, a women's affairs committee was perceived as oppositional to "partnership" between men and women. For example, excerpts from male representatives on the idea of a women's affairs committee included the following:

> I think that women have received their rights, and still ask for more rights. There is no need for that [committee] really.

> I feel there is no need for having specific committees that deal with women's affairs. Today women have more rights than men.

> If the country and government has defined the priorities of the Emirati women from day one… then it should be assumed that the Parliament will take care of women.

When representatives were asked if, hypothetically, a committee addressing the status of women should exist, almost all agreed that the committee should be

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18 Other specific contributions include lobbying for equal private passport rights for women representatives and making adjustments to legislation on salaries. However, these changes were not recognized by many male representatives as frequently as the others mentioned previously.

composed of men and women (W = 100%, M = 90%) and that would be effective in ensuring that legislation takes account of women's interests as much as men's (W = 86%, M = 73%).

Equality of services at the FNC
A number of services provided at the FNC were reported as available to men, but not to women. In particular, convenient WCs, prayer and relaxation rooms near the assembly halls were available to all male FNC members, whereas insufficient or ad hoc facilities were made available for women members. Based on the interviews, most men assumed that services were provided equally to men and women (W = 56%, M = 100%). For example, one of the male representatives responded to this question with the following statement: "Thank God, women enjoy excellent rights nationwide and here and there is no discrimination; their situation is fine, and each woman has taken her full rights." In contrast, almost all female representatives expressed the need for an appropriate space where they could take breaks after praying. The IPU report notes that inequality in access to facilities symbolizes how parliaments are predominantly male spaces in which women are marginal add-ons, and in which women's spaces are either located outside the building or far from the main hall where voting takes place (IPU 2000, 108). Having been built for men, old parliaments did not originally have members' toilets that women could use; however, women's inclusion in the process should now require their access to equal facilities and the provision of services that meet their needs. In the case of the FNC, no crèches are available, although both male and female representatives mentioned that making hotel accommodations available for FNC members' young children would be a good solution. More generally, both men and women expressed the need for FNC facilities to be updated to accommodate newer technologies.

Almost none of the FNC members thought that women's presence affected established rules and practices (W = 0%, M = 3%), including the observance of announced timetables (W = 22%, M = 3%) and fewer night sittings (W = 11%, M = 3%). However, a number of women mentioned one legal practice which was changed due to women's membership in the FNC. Representatives in the UAE are given special passports, which are then automatically granted to their spouse(s) and children. However, this does not apply in the case of UAE women FNC members, because legally they are dependents registered on their male guardian's identification. After requesting the same privilege as their male counterparts, women representatives were granted the same benefits.

Interaction with the Media and National Machinery for Women
This final section is concerned with the way that female FNC members view their relationship with the media, NGOs, and the national machinery for women[19] in the UAE. Women representatives felt that the media was positive in covering women's participation in politics in the UAE in general, but was deficient in communicating the role and function of the FNC and the contribution of women members in it. They also reported a generally positive role played by the General Women's Union and NGOs, but were critical of the limited scope of that role, which centered mainly on highly publicized events. In general, women representatives wanted to develop more substantive relationships with organizations interested in supporting women's political participation through assistance during the elections, communicating with members of the public, and data gathering.

How the media views female politicians
A little over half of all female FNC members

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[19] The national machinery for women in any country is the official body responsible for monitoring and improving the status of women. Areas of responsibility often include the coordination of activities among governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with women's issues, the integration of women's programs into national development plans, conducting specialized research, and supporting women's economic and political participation.

thought that the media treated female politicians differently than men (W = 62%). However, when female representatives were asked if they consider that the media view men and women politicians differently, most believed that this works out more to a woman's advantage (W = 71%). In fact, the media was viewed as hostile to the FNC more generally and not towards women in the FNC specifically. The IPU report notes that 68% of female representative respondents agree that the media privileges female politicians, but many expressed the view that it does so in particular ways. For example, the media consistently interviews women about women's issues (IPU 2000, 169-170). Similarly, female FNC members in the UAE felt that while the coverage of female candidates in the elections was generally positive, especially in women's magazines, there was little interest in covering the actual changes that women were making in the FNC. For example, when asked about how the media interacts with female politicians, one member of the FNC responded with the following statement:

> It is not right for us to sit and talk about the political role of women during the time of elections and then be quiet about it. For example, from the month of October until now [December]… no one has said anything about the political role of women, nor has the media done anything to confirm it or even mention the achievements of women. This is very important, but sadly the role of women only comes up in certain occasions, and this is a negative matter.

When female representatives were asked whether they were willing to work with a professional association of female journalists, most insisted on a partnership with journalists of both sexes and did not want to differentiate between male and female journalists. Once again, female FNC members expressed a deep commitment to the concept of partnership between men and women, and a strong rejection of anything identified as "women only." In the words of one representative,

I know the press society for women and men journalists…. There is no separate society for each. I don't like this idea of distinguishing between men and women. They must work together, because women and men have different views and joint interests; therefore, if they are together it gives a more complete picture and better opinion.

Relations with women's organizations and national machinery for women
The national machinery for women in the UAE is the General Women's Union in Abu Dhabi. When asked about the role of the GWU in supporting women's parliamentary activities, only about half of the women representatives felt that the GWU is sufficiently in contact with them (56%), supports their parliamentary activities (63%), or offers necessary information (56%). Only two of the representatives mentioned working with NGOs, and highlighted the difficulties involved in contacting them and getting the required information and feedback from them. In contrast, all representatives expressed a desire to work on a more substantive relationship with the GWU and NGOs. First, they would like to see more support related to the logistical aspects of running an election campaign such as financial assistance, or hosting events in their premises for female candidates to meet voters. Second, they would like a more effective means of communication with NGOs to gather accurate data about public policy issues and to communicate the role that female FNC members can play to members of the public. Finally, representatives would like the role of women's organizations to go beyond official publicized events to allow for more informal networking and training workshops that can help women become better politicians and enable them to mentor future generations of aspiring Emirati women.

Recommendations

In order to encourage and facilitate women's participation in the political arena in the UAE, government policies could address some of the obstacles highlighted by the experiences of participants in this study. Both the survey and interview results form the basis of a number of specific recommendations concerning the election process and the FNC, in addition to broader suggestions about the context for political participation in the UAE. They focus on a two-fold goal: expanding women's presence in the FNC, and creating the means for enhancing their legislative performance and function. The recommendations are divided into three sections: recommendations about the electoral process, recommendations about the FNC, and recommendations concerning the political process in the UAE more generally.

Recommendations Concerning the Electoral Process

Introduce gender-neutral quotas

Quotas, or reserved seats, are a broad measure for ensuring a proportionately balanced number of men and women in a decision-making body. The introduction of quotas for women and men from every emirate is the most high-impact way to ensure proportionately adequate female representation in the Federal National Council. There are a number of international benchmarks that support this position (Dahlerup 2005). Quotas are a short-term measure geared towards creating a "critical mass" in various political institutions until such time that women are able to impact policy from within those bodies. In particular, gender-neutral quotas are designed such that neither gender should occupy more than a certain percentage (e.g., 60%) or less than a certain percentage (e.g., 40%) of the positions in a decision-making body. In the case of the UAE, a gender-neutral quota system could be introduced through an electoral law

guaranteeing a minimum percentage of men and women from each emirate.

Provide quality training for candidates

Training should be a key component of government policy. The NEC, a future election management body, or a non-governmental service provider should be used to provide all candidates with specific tailor-made training at the outset. Training could incorporate budget preparation, election campaigns, identification of core issues, public speaking, media training, as well as an overview of the role of the FNC, the importance of legislation and the responsibilities of public individuals. Rather than large lecture-style public relations events, there is a need for quality training workshops for candidates that can help them with putting together meaningful campaigns. This approach would provide more benefit to both the candidates and the electorate, in addition to creating greater public buy-in for the electoral process. In order to equip women parliamentarians with the tools needed to enter the FNC and make an impact from the start, training should also focus on ensuring that candidates understand the institutional and procedural rules of their parliamentary body and are able to use them effectively. Training programs for potential FNC members should also encourage networking opportunities between male and female politicians, and between candidates and female representatives from the UAE and other Arab countries to create potential network and mentor systems.

Involve a higher number of women in the electoral process

If the electoral college methodology is repeated in the next elections, the number of women in the Electoral College should be increased. It is also important to increase the percentage of women involved in managing and staffing electoral centers in all emirates, if necessary, through a short-term quota system in the Candidates' Election Manual. Respondents

in our study were all "insiders" who were included in the political process; it is important not only to widen this pool of insiders, but also to make the process truly inclusive. To bridge this gap, interim measures can be taken to ensure that previously excluded groups have a better understanding of women's political roles. For example, it would be useful to have female representatives visit remote areas of the UAE to investigate schools, local power stations or bus depots, where families not involved previously in the political process can meet female politicians "on the information trail." This process can lead to a better appreciation of the role of women in national politics, and sends a signal that qualified women can run as politicians.

Close the gender gap in citizenship rights
Women should be able to run freely as election candidates unhindered by the need for approval from family members. In order for the electoral process to be fair and inclusive, women should be allowed to register as individual citizens rather than as dependents on their male guardian's family book. The newly-introduced individual identity cards should be used in the next round of elections.

Lengthen the campaign period
A longer campaign period would enable women to host voters of both sexes and meet face-to-face in an appropriate space. More time for campaign planning can also allow for better fundraising and more strategic campaign platforms.

Recommendations for the Federal National Council

Establish a family affairs committee
A committee that addresses women's issues under a broader umbrella of "Family Affairs" would create a culturally sensitive forum for discussing policies regarding women, without the associated stigma of a committee solely dedicated to this purpose. Such an umbrella would also facilitate membership of male and female

representatives, and could focus on outreach efforts with other women's affairs committees in other parliaments to activate the role of the committee.

Improve FNC services for female members
Provide better services for female representatives at the FNC, including more conveniently located facilities and, in absence of a crèche, hotel accommodation for young children.

Support research-driven policy making
Create a research staff at the FNC with strong institutional links to governmental and non-governmental organizations that can help in the preparation of motions and in the formulation of policy. Arrange informal meetings for female representatives to meet with present and former ministers, visits to other parliaments, and informal meetings with women's NGOs and other organizations.

Benchmark the performance of women FNC members
Monitor the progress of women FNC members and document their involvement in parliamentary committees, inclusion/ exclusion from decision-making bodies, and participation in public debates. This would expand the body of research on women's political participation from merely identifying obstacles to women's participation to actually empowering female legislators once they are actually in the FNC.

General Recommendations

Broaden the range of women's experiences in politics
Nurture women's political expertise by involving more women in politics at the local level and in consultative councils for each emirate, as well as in national committees and other decision-making bodies.

Raise general awareness about the role of women in the FNC
Public awareness activities should address two key issues: the role of the FNC and the role of

female representatives within it. It is important to increase public awareness about the role of the FNC, and to introduce the study of elections, political participation and civic duty at schools and universities in order to inculcate ideas of public policy making at the schools level. Second, and equally important, promoting women's political participation should move towards emphasizing their qualitatively meaningful contributions and alternative perspectives in policy making.

Widen avenues for engagement with civil society
Allow NGOs and civil society groups more freedom in creating an alternative space from government for the creation of policy ideas and recommendations; cooperate with NGOs on data collection and communication of relevant policy making at the FNC, and work with NGOs to collect better data on various public policy issues of joint interest.

Create meaningful partnerships with media
Extend the role of the media beyond covering big events or official celebrations into a more dynamic partnership, and provide the media with better access to situations in which women are changing legislation and shaping political culture. The creation of a more meaningful understanding of the ways

in which women contribute to the political process enhances the government's support of such attitudinal change.

Empower the FNC
Widen the channels of political participation by empowering bodies into more effective legislative entities, expanding membership numbers to allow more opportunity for female candidates, and creating checks for accountability and transparency of process. The creation of an effective participatory political culture cannot happen if the process does not include the majority of the population, or limited to a consultative role.

The inclusion of women as voters and candidates in the elections of 2006, and as members of the FNC, marked a historic starting point for a more inclusive participatory political culture in the UAE. Decision makers have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to encouraging women's participation; their continued support is needed to successfully maintain this process successfully beyond the first generation of female politicians through more focused and substantive interventions provided by both governmental and non-governmental bodies.

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Appendix 1
The Federal National Council:
Constitution and Committees

The main avenue for participatory politics in the UAE is through the Federal National Council (FNC), which was established in 1972 as an advisory council following the creation of the UAE federation. Constitutionally, it is a federal authority and comes fourth in terms of order in the hierarchy of the five federal authorities outlined in Article 45 of the Constitution.[20] The five federal authorities are as follows: the Supreme Council of the Federation, Federation President and Vice-President, Federation Cabinet, the Federal National Council, and the Federal Judiciary. The FNC is comprised of 40 members elected from the member emirates. Each emirate has the right to select the UAE nationals representing it in the FNC, although members represent the whole of the UAE and not only their emirate (UAE Constitution, Articles 68 and 69).

The FNC's powers are effectively consultative rather than legislative. Presided over by a speaker, or either of two deputy speakers, elected from among their number, the FNC is responsible under the Constitution for examining and amending all proposed federal legislation, and is empowered to summon and to question any federal minister regarding ministry performance. The FNC is an important, though not executive, part of the lawmaking process in the UAE.

Draft laws are prepared by the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), and then sent to the FNC for review and debate. Once the FNC has added their comments and suggestions, the laws are then passed to the President, who obtains the ratification of the Supreme Council before signing and issuing those laws. The FNC also debates, reviews and approves the UAE annual budget. Specialized sub-committees and a Research and Studies Unit have been formed to assist FNC members and provide support.

The FNC has eight standing committees specialized in one or more areas, formed by the FNC during the first week of its annual meeting (FNC Bylaws, Articles 38 and 39). The FNC is run according to its bylaws, which are devised by the FNC itself and issued via Federal Decree promulgated by the Federation President with the approval of the Cabinet. The FNC also has an internal system of its own, with financial and administrative independence (UAE Constitution, Article 85). Members are not allowed to sit on more than two committees (see Table I). Currently, two of the eight committees are headed by women (the Education, Youth, Information and Culture Affairs Committee, and the Islamic Affairs, Awqaf and Public Utilities Committee), and women are members in all committees excluding two (the Internal Affairs and Defense Committee, and the Legislative and Legal Affairs committee).

The FNC has a General Secretariat presided over by a Secretary-General appointed through a resolution by the President of the UAE, following the approval of the administrative staff (Constitution, Article 85, and Bylaws, Articles 123 and 124). The FNC must hold an annual ordinary session lasting not less than six months, commencing on the third week of October each year (Constitution, Article 78, and Bylaws, Article 54).

The FNC is both summoned into session and terminated by decree as issued by the President of the UAE. Over the previous 13 legislative sessions during the period from 1972 and 2005, members of

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[20] All articles of the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates and Bylaws of the Federal National Council referred to henceforth can be found electronically on the Web site of the Federal National Council, at http://216.176.179.74/english/uploads/CNSTIT_E.pdf

Table I
Committees at the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates

Internal Affairs and Defense Committee	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general subjects referred by the FNC pertaining to security and defense issues
Financial, Economic and Industrial Affairs Committee	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general issues referred by the FNC pertaining to financial, economic and industry issues. The committee is also mandated to discuss the final accounts of the ministries and federal departments, as well as to review the UAE State Audit Institution's reports.
Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general subjects referred by the FNC pertaining to legal affairs, the judiciary, fatwa and legislation
Education, Youth, Information and Culture Affairs Committee	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general subjects referred by the FNC pertaining to education, higher education and scientific research, youth, cultural and tourist activities and all that pertains to video, audio and print media
Health, Labor and Social Affairs Committee	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general subjects referred by the FNC pertaining to health and labor affairs and facilities related to social affairs
Foreign Affairs, Planning, Petroleum and Mineral Wealth, Agriculture and Fisheries Committee	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general subjects referred by the FNC pertaining to the foreign affairs, planning, oil and derivatives, agriculture and fisheries
Islamic Affairs, Awqaf and Public Utilities	Specialized in discussing the draft laws and the general subjects referred by the FNC pertaining to Islamic affairs and subsidiary facilities as well as all the aspects pertaining to electricity, water, transportation, public works and housing
Objections and Complaints Examination Committee	Specialized in resolving objections and examining the complaints referred by the FNC Speaker through the provisions of Article No. 119 of the FNC Bylaws

the FNC were appointed by the Rulers of the UAE. The FNC seats are distributed to the member emirates in the following manner: Eight (8) seats for each of the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, six (6) seats for the Emirates of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah, and four (4) seats for the Emirates of Ajman, Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah. Their period of term in office was two years, until a constitutional amendment was passed in December 2008 to extend the term to four years.

There are five criteria for FNC membership outlined in the UAE Constitution. Members of the FNC must be nationals of one of the emirates and permanent residents of the emirate nominating them. They must be at least 25 years old, without criminal record and of good reputation, literate, and they may not be ministers or federal officials (Constitution, Articles 70 and 71, and Bylaws, Articles 3, 4 and 5).

Appendix 2
Participation Rates by Emirate and Gender

Emirate	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Abu Dhabi	64.75	43.98	60
Dubai	71.33	69.47	71.05
Sharjah	82.38	81.75	82.20
Ajman	85.22	83.33	85.09
Umm Al Quwain	88.64	100	88.83
Ras Al Khaimah	79.54	75.66	78.98
Fujairah	90.77	88.89	90.41

Source: National Elections Committee Web site, www.uaenec.ae.

Appendix 3
Complete List of Test Results

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X^2 (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
	Attitudes toward women's political participation, N= 95			
	General attitudes toward women's political participation			
1	Do you consider that, in practice, women in the UAE take as active a part as men in national (federal) political life?	77	71	X^2 (1, N = 94) = .56, p > .05
2	Do you consider that, in the UAE, women enjoy the same legal opportunities as men of participating in national (federal) political life?	68	88	X^2 (1, N = 94) = .035, p < .05
3	Do you consider that, in the UAE, politics is shaped and led as much by women as by men?	75	62	X^2 (1, N = 89) .30, p > .05
4	Referring to the question "in the UAE, women enjoy the same legal opportunities as men of participating in national (federal) political life" on what criteria to base your reply:			
a	Voter participation figures?	50	57	X^2 (1, N = 73) = .61, p > .05
b	The respective proportions of men and women in the FNC?	89	67	X^2 (1, N = 72) .068, p > .05
c	The respective proportions of men and women in government?	90	75	X^2 (1, N = 78) .14, p > .05
5	Do you believe that voters in the UAE generally have: (only applies to those who ran for the FNC)			
a	As much confidence in women as in men?	13	28	X^2 (1, N = 79) .236, p > .05
b	More confidence in women than in men?	0	3	X^2 (1, N = 75) .512, p > .05

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X² (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
6	Do you believe that voters in the UAE are generally willing to elect women to the Federal National Council? (only applies to those who ran for the FNC)	38	61	X^2 (1, N = 75) .130, p > .05
7	Do you consider that prevailing values as to the respective roles of men and women in the UAE limit the participation of women in politics?	50	48	X^2 (1, N = 86) .905, p > .05

Attitudes toward the role of women in politics

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1	Do you think that in comparison with men, women have special talents or advantages for working effectively in politics?	84	38	X^2 (1, N = 87) .00, p < .05
2	Do you think that women change politics?	90	54	X^2 (1, N = 85) .004, p < .05
3	Do you think that, generally speaking, women politicians restore the public's trust in politics?	71	45	X^2 (1, N = 92) .034, p < .05
4	Do you consider that women's increased participation in political life does anything to change the outputs of politics?	78	47	X^2 (1, N = 90) .020, p < .05

Attitudes toward quotas

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1	Do you support the idea of reserved seats for women?	81	57	X^2 (1, N = 90) .043, p < .05
2	Do you think that reserved seats based on gender are different than reserved seats based on emirate?	94	47	X^2 (1, N = 78) .000, p < .05
3	Do you think quotas/reserved seats hinder the natural progress of women into the FNC?	14	37	X^2 (1, N = 77) .050, p = .05

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X^2 (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
4a	Do you think quotas/reserved seats would assist women in entering the FNC?	95	88	X^2 (1, N = 89) .35, p > .05
4b	Do you think that more women would be encouraged to run if there were reserved seats for women?	95	80	X^2 (1, N = 90) .095, p > .05
5a	Are you aware of quotas/reserved seats for women that are used in other countries?	72	32	X^2 (1, N = 80) .002, p < .05
5b	If so, please give an example of one that is particularly useful.	36	15	X^2 (1, N = 95) .029, p < .05

Subjective evaluations of the political process, N= 79

Previous experience

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1	Do/did you have any family members involved in politics?	67	27	X^2 (1, N = 75) .004, p < .05
2	Can you identify aspects of your current or previous job that you felt gave you an advantage/competitive edge over other candidates?	73	83	X^2 (1, N = 66) .440, p > .05
3	Have you been involved in politics at the local level?	43	38	X^2 (1, N = 75) .721, p > .05

Motivation to enter politics

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1	When becoming a candidate / being selected / what were your main motivations:			
a	An overall desire to do something for the community?	100	100	No statistics are computed because this item is a constant
b	The challenge, a taste for risk?	77	71	X^2 (1, N = 61) .664, p > .05
2	A political or other particular project?	86	47	X^2 (1, N = 59) .010, p < .05

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test $[X^2$ (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
Work-life balance issues and family support during elections				
1	Do you receive support from your closest relations for your political commitment and activities?	93	76	X^2 (1, N = 66) .149, p > .05
2	When becoming a candidate / being selected / what were your main motivations: Encouragement from your family circle?	92	79	X^2 (1, N = 55) .317, p > .05
3	To reconcile family life and political commitment: Do you find domestic help as essential?	100	83	X^2 (1, N = 66) .094, p > .05
4	When becoming a candidate / being selected / what were your main difficulties and inhibitions with: Balancing the amounts of time to be devoted to private life, to professional life and to your political activities?	20	41	X^2 (1, N = 76) .131, p > .05
5	Do you practice your profession during your parliamentary term?	54	51	X^2 (1, N =56) ., p.865 > .05
Difficulties during the elections				
1	When becoming a candidate / being selected / what were your main difficulties and inhibitions with:			
a	Becoming a public figure?	13	18	X^2 (1, N = 75) .647, p > .05
b	Inhibition about public speaking?	0	8	X^2 (1, N = 75) .247, p > .05
c	Problems of insecurity? Were there any:	7	9	X^2 (1, N = 74) .819, p > .05
2	Transport problems?	27	5	X^2 (1, N = 75) .010, p < .05
3	Financial questions?	54	39	X^2 (1, N = 75) .314, p > .05
4	When becoming a candidate / being selected / what were your main difficulties and inhibitions with:			

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X² (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
a	Assuming your politician status without betraying your woman's identity and approach?	7		
b	Cultural values and attitudes hostile to women's participation in politics?	57		

Personal preparation and mentorship

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X² (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
1	If you have received no kind of preparation, do you consider that some preparation would have been of use to you?	90	68	X² (1, N = 57) .161, p > .05
2	As a candidate, did you receive any support or advice:			
a	As to how best to conduct your election campaign?	64	48	X² (1, N = 76) .282, p > .05
b	As to your future role as an FNC member with your constituents?	50	48	X² (1, N = 72) .916, p > .05
3a	Regarding legislative work proper?	29	48	X² (1, N = 74) .180, p > .05
3b	Regarding analysis of the national budget?	25	33	X² (1, N = 73) .596, p > .05
4	In the affirmative, could you say whether this preparation was given to you:			
a	By a female mentor?	43	19	X² (1, N = 33) .195, p > .05
b	By a male mentor?	63	65	X² (1, N = 45) .899, p > .05
5a	From your experience, do you think that incoming women politicians can benefit from the direct support and advice of seasoned women politicians? (only applies to female members of the FNC)	100		

Training

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X² (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
	Did you receive any formal training for			
1a	Voting?	53	34	X² (1, N = 77) .163, p > .05
1b	The election process?	60	38	X² (1, N = 76) .117, p > .05

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X^2 (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
2a	Campaigning?	21	22	X^2 (1, N = 74) .984, p > .05
2b	Fundraising?	7	10	X^2 (1, N = 75) .691, p > .05

Budgets

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1,2	What budget did you set for spending on your campaign?	Average = 90,000 Range = 30,000- 200,000	Average = 241,000 Range = 4,200- 2,000,000	
3	Did you spend	23	12	
a	Over your budget?	23	63	X^2 (1, N = 62) .324, p > .05
b	Under your budget?	93	97	X^2 (1, N = 61) .011, p < .05
4	Were you self-funded?	36	15	X^2 (1, N = 73) .576, p > .05
5	Did you receive any financial support from your family?	0	7	X^2 (1, N = 74) .075, p > .05
6	Loans from a bank?	7	2	X^2 (1, N = 73) .316, p > .05
7	Did you engage in any fundraising activities?			X^2 (1, N = 72) .268, p > .05

Accessing voters

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1	Was it easy to access voters?	46	51	X^2 (1, N = 72) .759, p > .05
2	Were there any obstacles in accessing male/female voters?	47	52	X^2 (1, N = 75) .729, p > .05

Experience as a Member of the FNC, N= 40

Distribution of female FNC members in parliamentary committees

Practice within your Assembly

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test
1	With due regard to the respective proportions of men and women in the Federal National Council, do you consider the present distribution satisfactory?	87	92	X^2 (1, N = 33) .700, p > .05
2	Do you consider			
a	That the presence of women in all FNC committees is or would be a good thing?	100	86	X^2 (1, N = 36) .257, p > .05
b	That the fact of women not being present in all FNC committees would have an effect on legislation?	86	85	X^2 (1, N = 33) .943, p > .05

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X^2 (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
	Distribution of female representatives in decision-making posts in the FNC			
	Please state whether in your Assembly			
1	Decision-making posts are distributed in a balanced manner between men and women?	44	64	X^2 (1, N = 37) .292, p > .05
2	You consider such a balance to be important as a matter of principle?	89	48	X^2 (1, N = 36) .032, p < .05
3	You consider that it also enhances the quality of the work done?	100	54	X^2 (1, N = 36) .016, p < .05
4	You further consider that it enhances the working climate within the FNC?	100	62	X^2 (1, N = 35) .028, p < .05
	Women's affairs committee			
	On a committee at the FNC addressing the status of women, please provide the following particulars:			
1	Does there exist a committee at the FNC which addresses the status of women?	0	0	
2	Should there be such a committee in the FNC?	50	27	X^2 (1, N = 35) .282, p > .05
3	Should the committee be composed of men and women?	100	90	X^2 (1, N = 39) .323, p > .05
	Do you consider that the committee			
4	Would be doing effective work to ensure that legislation takes account of women's interests as much as men's?	86	73	X^2 (1, N = 33) .489, p > .05
	Equality of services at FNC			
	In the FNC, is there a presence of			
1	Toilets/conveniences near the assembly hall for men and women?	56	100	X^2 (1, N = 40) .000, p < .05
2	Crèche/day nursery?	0	0	

#	Variable	Female response (%)	Male response (%)	Chi Squared Significance Test [X^2 (df, N=) = value, p < .05]
3a	On the basis of your personal experience, would you say that the presence of women in the FNC has prompted any modification of the established rules and practices concerning working hours?	0	3	X^2 (1, N = 39) .579, p > .05
	For example			
3b	Observance of timetables announced	22	3	X^2 (1, N = 38) .068, p > .05
3c	Fewer night sittings	11	3	X^2 (1, N = 39) .354, p > .05

Women representatives and their interaction with the media and national machinery for women, N=9

How the media views female politicians

#	Variable	Female response (%)		
1	From your own experience, do you believe that the media view women and men politicians differently?	62		
2	If you consider that the media view men and women politicians differently, do you believe that, generally speaking, this works out more to women's advantage?	71		

Female representatives' experience of relations with women's organizations / national machinery for women

#	Variable	Female response (%)		
1	For your political and parliamentary activity, do you consider that the UAE General Women's Union			
a	Is sufficiently in contact with you?	56		
b	Supports you effectively in your parliamentary activity?	63		
c	Offers you the necessary information?	56		

Appendix 4
Election Regulations

Chapter 4: Voting Rules

Article 22:
Each member of the Electoral College has the right to nominate themselves as a candidate for election to the Federal National Council subject to fulfilling the requirements proscribed by the UAE constitution. The potential candidate will submit their nomination by completion of a form to the National Elections Committee during the stipulated nomination period, in addition to a deposit of the amount of 1000 Dirhams paid to the National Elections Treasury. The candidate may amend his/her nomination via the organizing committee of each emirate by the date determined by the National Elections Committee.

Article 23:
Each candidate may select an agent or representative on his/her behalf, from the names listed in the emirate's electoral college though application to the emirate's committee. Nomination of such a representative will be submitted via the stipulated form at least 7 days prior to the election date in that emirate. The National Elections Committee will confirm approval of the candidate's nominated representative, whose role is limited to attending the election process on behalf of the candidate and exercising the powers of the candidate in this regard.

Article 24:
All public employees within the Electoral College have the right to nominate themselves for Federal National Council membership but will have to temporarily resign from their jobs effective from the day the list of candidates is announced by the NEC. Candidates may return to their jobs if they are not successful in joining the FNC, and their absence from work will be either deducted from their holidays or counted as unpaid leave if the candidate holds sufficient balance of leave days.

If the candidate is from the military, the consent of their place of work must be obtained to grant him/her leave to run for election.

If the candidate is from the judiciary he/she must submit their resignation from their job during nomination.

Chapter 5: Election Rules

Article 26:
Elections will take place in a direct secret ballot form.

Article 27:
The Elections Management Committee will create election center committees in each emirate that will facilitate the logistics of elections operations. Each emirate committee will elect a supervisor for each election center, and the committees will be responsible for organizing and executing the election process on the specified dates of each emirate.

Article 29:
Voters have the right to cast their vote at the specified election center subsequent to proving their identity at the election center through presentation of a passport or the UAE identity card issued by the Emirates' National Identity Authority.

Article 44:

Members of the Federal National Council have the responsibility to represent all people of the UAE and not only the Emirate that the candidate is from. In particular, candidates shall commit to the following principles:

1. Seek to enhance the sense of national belonging and to promote the public good.

2. To preserve the values and principles of society, comply with the rules and regulations, and respect the public order.

3. To abstain from any ideas that could agitate sectarian or religious or tribal or ethnic intolerance towards others in candidates' electoral campaigns.

Sources: National Elections Committee Web site, www.uaenec.ae, and

قرار رئيس دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة رقم (3) لسنة 2006 بشأن خديد طريقة اختيار ممثلي الإمارات في المجلس الوطني الإخّادي
– التعليمات التنفيذية الإنتخابات الإخّادي الوطني المجلس. اللجنة الوطنية للانتخابات

Appendix 5
Workshop Timetable

Duration (Min)	Section	Responsibility
	Reception	Reception committee
15	Opening	H.E The Minister
20	Election Process and Directives	Election Committee
20	Prospects for the FNC	FNC Former Member
10	What representing constituents means	Moderator
10	Expectation of constituents from representatives	Moderator
15	Campaigning responsibly and effectively	Moderator
	Break	
20	Finding and expressing an agenda that will benefit the UAE	Moderator
30	Practice in stating issue positions	Moderator
30	Practice in presenting and critiquing positions	Moderator
10	Tips and Conclusions	Moderator

Source: Watani (2006). Proposal to the National Election Committee of workshops for FNC candidates.

Appendix 6
Election Timetable

| Date | | Period | Program |
From	To		
19.Nov.2006	22.Nov.2006	4 days	Nominees' registration
23.Nov.2006	24.Nov.2006	2 days	Preliminary list of candidates
25.Nov.2006	26.Nov.2006	2 days	Objections submittal
27.Nov.2006	28.Nov.2006	2 days	Deadline for committee's decisions on objections
30.Nov.2006		1 day	Final list of candidates
01.Dec.2006	14.Dec.2006	14 days	Election campaigns
09.Dec.2006		1 day	Deadline for submitting candidates' representatives
09.Dec.2006		1 day	Deadline for withdrawals
16.Dec.2006		1 day	First day of elections (Abu Dhabi and Fujairah)
16.Dec.2006		1 day	Preliminary vote count results
17.Dec.2006	18.Dec.2006	2 days	Deadline for vote count appeals
18.Dec.2006		1 day	Second day of elections (Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah)
18.Dec.2006		1 day	Preliminary vote count results
19.Dec.2006	20.Dec.2006	2 days	Deadline for vote count appeals
20.Dec.2006		1 day	Third day of elections (Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain and Ajman)
20.Dec.2006		1 day	Preliminary vote count results
21.Dec.2006	22.Dec.2006	2 days	Deadline for vote count appeals
23.Dec.2006		1 day	Committee's decisions on appeals
24.Dec.2006		1 day	Final announcement of results
25.Dec.2006		1 day	First supplemental elections
26.Dec.2006	27.Dec.2006	2 days	Deadline for supplemental elections vote count appeals
27.Dec.2006		1 day	Second supplemental elections
28.Dec.2006	29.Dec.2006	2 days	Deadline for supplemental elections vote count appeals
30.Dec.2006		1 day	Deadline for vote count appeals
30.Dec.2006		1 day	Final announcement of supplemental elections results

Source: www.uaeinteract.com.

Training Schedule

The NEC and the Higher Colleges of Technology collaborated on the following awareness seminars conducted prior to the elections period.

Date	Period	Program
1.Nov.2006	1 day	Abu Dhabi
2.Nov.2006	1 day	Ras Al Khaimah
5.Nov.2006	1 day	Dubai
7.Nov.2006	1 day	Fujairah
8.Nov.2006	1 day	Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain and Ajman

Source: www.uaeinteract.com.

About the Dubai School of Government

The Dubai School of Government (DSG) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, DSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Dubai School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in delivering its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world.

The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs, including

- applied research in public policy and management;
- master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.

About the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs

The Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs (MFNCA) is a federal government ministry that was established under Federal Decree No. (10) of 2006 to coordinate the affairs of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Federal National Council (FNC). The MFNCA was originally mandated as an organizing body for the UAE's first nationwide parliamentary elections in 2006 as the Secretariat to the National Elections Committee (NEC), but was then ratified to develop as a ministry to continue the goal of developing political participation in the UAE.

The MFNCA's key objectives include the following:

- Coordination between the government and FNC, in relation to the FNC exercising its functions
- Participation in drafting legislation related to the role of the FNC
- Supervision of media affairs in respect to parliamentary practice