

من خلال تجربتك هل المجالس المحلية مجدية لليمن

Survey On:

Local Councils Members Experience In Yemen





Yemen Polling Center (YPC) was established in September 2004 as a non-governmental and non-profit organization by a registry certificate from the Ministry of Social Affairs & Labor No. 147, issued on December 2005. It was founded by a group of researchers, journalists, academics and experts in public opinion issues and communication researches. YPC is the first Yemeni organization specialized in public opinion polls.

YPC was established to meet Yemen's urgent need for such an organization and provide scientific information and data to the concerned parties, decision makers and researchers interested in Yemeni public opinion attitudes toward different local, regional and international issues. Also, the center conduct studies, researches and activities in line with its sought goals.

Our Mission: Discussing Life Issues and Diagnosing Public Opinion Attitudes

Objectives:

- Improving the capacity of decision making through the scientific research that concentrates on the community needs.
- Increasing Yemeni public awareness about different local and international issues and the developments experienced by communities
- Conducting researches and generalizing their results and benefits to all the governmental institutions and NGOs interested in public opinion.
- Spreading the culture of dialogue and welcoming the other opinion in several issues and subjects, and observing the Yemeni public opinion.
- Embodying the culture of community partnership in shaping Yemen's sought future.
- Recording the important phenomena and changes that take place in Yemen in a way serving the public opinion and reflecting its attitudes.
- Enhancing the principle of broader community partnership in general matters at the national level and providing Yemen's decision makers with the community attitudes.
- Spreading the culture of self-expression among communities and voicing public issues.
- Contributing to improving the performance of media to adopt public opinion issues and interact with them.
- Providing database and essential information, particularly in the areas concerned with requirements of Yemen's development.
- Listing the community problems and issues, mainly those related with human rights, analyzing their reality and dimensions and offering the relevant data to interested people, observers, officials and national decision makers.

Activities:

YPC undertakes various activities in line with the objective of its establishment. These activities include public opinion polls, field surveys, scientific researches, and analyzing and diagnosing social and political phenomena and economic issues.

The center organizes conferences, symposiums, sessions, workshops and training courses with the aim of increasing awareness of communities and those concerned about the different daily changes and making them more interactive with these changes. Nevertheless, YPC publishes and distributes studies, researches, reports and information to the concerned organizations and decision makers. It carries out communication researches that reflect influence of media means on public opinion and adopts activities to improve the performance of media.

Local Councils Members Experience in Yemen

Introduction:

The local council was initiated in Yemen as a form of public participation in decision making, and drawing and implementing economic, social, educational, scientific, cultural and monitoring policies. Since the very beginning, the local council experience has become a broader scope for Yemeni citizens to express their wills, elect their representatives, and specify necessities and needs for development and service projects. Also, such an experience helps citizens tackle their issues and problems, particularly as the people of North Yemen had enjoyed the experience in the 1970s, but in a slightly different form from the current experience. The experience has become a vital model attracting attention of Yemen's civil community, as well as the research institutions and centers.

The local councils have many objectives, the most prominent of which are adhered to by Associated Press Democratic School, which is concerned with training voters and developing their capacity to select their representatives at the levels of districts and governorates throughout the country. These elections are one of the factors of building self-confidence on the part of voters and making them aware of their roles and votes. One of the prominent examples is the sympathy of senior government officials and party leaders with the simple voters to win their support and votes in the most recent presidential and local council elections.

The local councils constitute one of the points of link between local communities and central authorities. They are concerned with gathering the local communities and directing their human and materialistic capability toward developing their areas at the district level and then at the governorate level and the nation in general. These councils are concerned with diagnosing needs of the areas and resolving their issues, as well as diversifying the means of performance according to the local community's needs. Consequently, the local community gradually gets rid of the bureaucratic style exercised by Yemen's central authorities while the local councils help in accelerating the citizens' procedures in the government offices and alleviate their sufferings as they are, sometimes, required to go to the capital to pursue their procedures.

The experts associated the local councils with an economic principle concerned with the general costs. "No tax without representation" is the content of this principle. As it is the duty of authorities to levy taxes on citizens, citizens have the suffrage (right) to participate in the local authority by electing the local council members, and then take part in drawing public policies of the state and monitor the activities and performance of government offices at the district and governorate levels.

Yemen has known the local councils since the 60s of the last century when the constitutions of both parts of Yemen stipulated dividing their territories into administrative units. The laws and legislations specified the number of these administrative units, their divisions, borders and specializations of those in pursuit of

projects. Under these laws, the administrative units had local councils to discuss issues of citizens and their areas.

The first package of legislations, concerned with these issues, was issued in North Yemen in 1965. Under these legislations, the local councils were established through appointment while the Presidential Council, chaired by Marshal Abdullah Al-Sallal, was granted financial resources and broader executive administrative authorities at the district and province levels.

According to studies conducted in this regard, the local councils were formed under the chairmanship of the administrative units while their members include heads of government offices, in addition to many citizens, who are selected in light of the number of inhabitants in each unit. The Law No. 64 was issued in 1967 to cancel some levels of administrative division and divide the country into provinces and districts. The law cancelled the Ministry of Local Administration and established an office for province and district affairs. This office was directly run by the prime minister.

In 1985, the government cancelled the law of municipality councils and cooperative authorities and merged both parties into one under the name of "Local Councils for Cooperative Development". In the same year, the North Part of Yemen formed the councils of local administration on the basis of combining appointment and direct election.

But in the South Part of Yemen (in the past) the local council experience was established through the direct elections for the first time in the 1970s of the last century in Hadramout governorate. According to the law of local governance of 1975, these councils were generalized to all the governorates of South Yemen until the National Reunification was established in May 1990.

The Constitution of the Republic of Yemen stated that people are the source of power, and that they have to directly exercise it by referendum and general elections. Also, under the Constitution, people may exercise power in an indirect way through the legislative, executive and judicial authorities, which are formed by the elected local councils.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen, the administrative units and local councils are part of the state's authority while governors are responsible for the Council of Ministers and must work in conformity with its decisions. Governors should implement the Council of Minister's decisions in all the areas. In addition, the constitution stipulated that the administrative units should have elected local councils while the law specifies their tasks, authorities, rights and duties. The law specifies the manner of electing these councils, their work system, local resources and their role in preparing and implementing the development plans.

For each administrative unit at the governorate and district levels, the Yemeni lawmaker assigned a local council, the members of which are directly elected for a four-year term. The number of the governorate council members must not be less than 15 and this includes the council chairman while the district council must be made up of 18 members in addition to the council chairman. For this number of representatives to be approved, the law conditioned that the population of the administrative district must be 35 thousand or less. Regarding the district of which the population ranges between 35 and 75 thousand, its local council must be made up of 20 members. According to the lawmaker, the local council members may number up to 26 in the district the population of which ranges between 75 and 105 thousand.

The Yemeni lawmaker assigned tasks and duties for local councils, the most important of which were studying and approving projects of economic and social development plans and annual budgets, as well as approving the final accounts at the governorate level only. According to the Yemeni lawmaker, the local councils are mandated to direct, supervise and monitor progress of executive bodies in the governorates and districts and evaluate the implementation of plans and programs, as well as question their chairmen and withdrawing the confidence from them if they don't perform their duties well. The lawmakers specify the wages of utilizing the services of facilities run by the executive bodies.

The local councils are responsible for studying and discussing the financial status, the collection of local revenues and approving the rules that organize citizens' contributions to funding, establishing and maintaining the projects of basic services. They also approve the rules of facilitating and improving the way the executive organizations deal with citizens.

The law stated that the local councils shall be responsible for discussing the security status in the governorate and giving the suitable directives that help enhance security and stability of citizens, defend rights and public freedoms and protect public and private money and property.

The Yemeni lawmaker gave other tasks to local councils such as monitoring and supervising underground water and protecting it from exhaustion and pollution. They are also mandated to supervise the cooperative activities and social associations, in addition to maintaining the service projects, boosting tourism and tourist investment and monitoring the implementation of job and workforce policies.

The local council experience featured numerous problems and limitations over the past few years. The fact forced decision makers to adopt basic amendments to the Local Council Law such as directly electing governors and district directors by voters like the local council members. From this perspective, the poll which the YPC conducted evaluates the local council experience in Yemen through the viewpoints of 307 members who were elected in the first local council elections, which took place in 2001. They were randomly selected from six governorates: Sana'a (the capital), Aden, Taiz, Hadramout, Dhamar and Amran.

Such a field poll represents the second part of Yemeni local council experience evaluation project, the implementation of which was funded by Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The results of the previous poll, concerned with opinions and attitudes of the Yemeni voters, were announced on Sept. 13, 2006.

As the main objective of the project is to evaluate the local council experience and elections in Yemen, taking into account circumstances of the experience, the citizens' opinions (viewpoints) were significant but not sufficient.

The ordinary citizen views the experience in the way he/she benefits from it in his/her life. Some citizens view the local council experience has only been witnessed through the extra fees added to the electricity and water bills. To diagnose the problem well along with its two parts, the researcher examined the viewpoints of local council representatives themselves in order to shed light on the experience's circumstances and identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Valuing importance of the viewpoints of the study community (local council members), the YPC chose a sample of 450 local council members but the number was cut

down to 307 informants due to two reasons. The first reason is that some of the selected informants were preparing for the second local elections. The second reason is that some of the selected informants moved to live in the cities or were living in the cities where they work. The sample covered 5% of the study community which is composed of 6,000 people.

Fifty-five percent of the interviews were conducted with members living in large cities. 12.7% of the interviews were conducted in small cities and 32.8% in rural areas. The interviews were conducted between Sept. 1 and 9, 2006, the period ahead of the second local council elections in Yemen.

Collecting the data, the study depended on a questionnaire from composed of 27 questions, which were judged and evaluated by Dr. Nader Sa'eed, a Research Methodology Expert and Director of Development Research Program in Birzeit University in Palestine.

Choosing the sample

The YPC depended on the electoral division applied by the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) in Yemen to specify sections of the sample (Cities and Rural Areas). It also depended on the distribution of local council members over governorates. All the data were processed and entered by a specialized statistical program specifying the centers (starting points) where the interviews are conducted.

In detail, the sample was used throughout three stages as follows:

- The Geographic division of governorates:

The overall governorates were divided into four clusters while the data of each cluster (population and their distribution over governorates) were entered into a specialized computer program to select one governorate. The YPC cared for dividing the governorates into these clusters in order to make available an equal opportunity to each governorate and avoid the population density of large governorates at the expense of smaller ones such as Aden and the remote governorates.

- The electoral division at the level of constituencies:

The data of the selected constituencies were put in electronic tables in order to randomly select 50 constituencies from the six governorates.

- The electoral division at the level of voting centers

In the same manner, the data of the centers included in the 50 constituencies were entered into tables in order to randomly select 100 voting centers based on the number of voters each center.

Based on that, the study selects three interviewees from each voting center, according to the sample. Because the researchers couldn't obtain the required number of informants in the voting centers located in the remote and scarcely populated areas, due to the different reasons including the unavailability of local council members, field researchers selected other interviewees from the nearby voting centers located within the same constituency.

The **Tables (1) and (2)** show the number of interviews conducted in every governorate and the distribution of the sample over rural areas and cities.

Table (1)
Distribution of the sample over the governorates

Governorate	No. of forms	%
Sana'a (Capital)	111	36.2
Aden	28	9.1
Taiz	69	22.5
Hadramout	39	12.7
Dhamar	24	7.8
Amran	36	11.7
Total	307	100.0

Table (2)

Distribution of the sample over cities and rural areas

Interview venue	Frequency	%
Big city	169	55.0
Small city	39	12.7
Village	99	32.2
Total	307	100.0

Characteristics of the sample

The male interviewees constitute 97.4% of the study sample while the female interviewees don't exceed 2%. Representativeness of the sample is somewhat good because women representatives in the local council don't exceed 1%.

Aden topped the list of governorates in terms of the number of female informants, followed by Taiz while the capital Sana'a ranked third. The following **Diagram (1)** shows the percentage of women representativeness in the governorates.

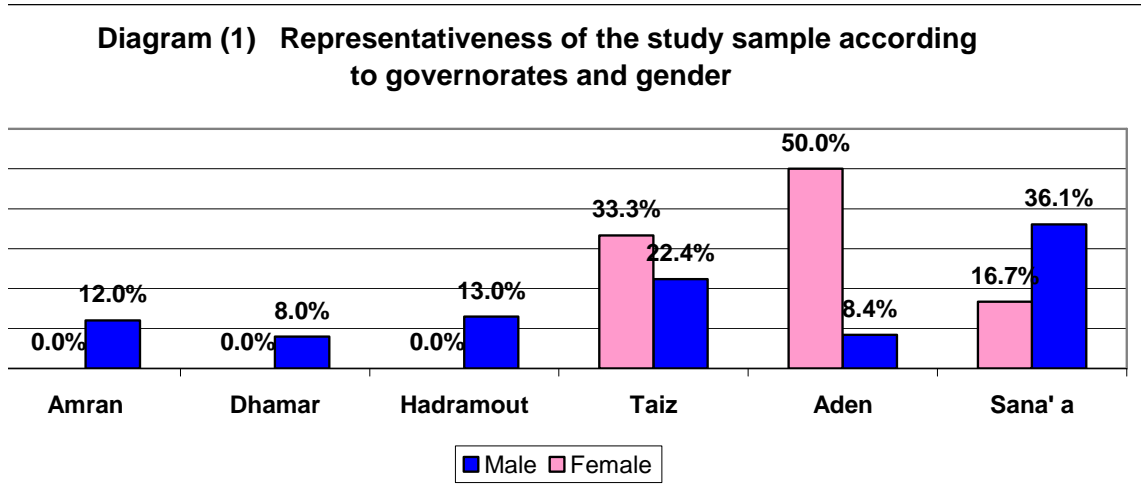


Table (3)

The age groups of the study sample

Age Group	Frequency	%
18 – 28 years	3	1.0
29 – 38 years	117	38.1
39 – 48 years	123	40.1
49 years and over	61	19.9
Missing	3	1.0
Total	307	100.0

The **Table (3)** indicates the age groups of participants. Having a cursory glance at the table, it has been made clear that the majority of respondents (local council members) are aged between 29 and 38 years, and 39 and 48 years, followed by those at age 49 years and over.

Table (4)
Education level of interviewees

Education Level	%	Percentage (%)
Read and write	10.7	10.9
Primary school (completed or uncompleted)	4.2	4.3
Secondary schools (completed or uncompleted)	19.5	19.9
Post secondary school diploma	18.2	18.5
Bachelor's degree	39.4	40.1
M.A. Ph.D.	6.2	6.3
Missing s	1.6	
Total	100.0	

According to the study findings, 40.1% of the local council members, who were surveyed, hold Bachelor's degrees, 6.3% hold M.A. and Ph. 18.5% of those surveyed have post secondary school diploma, 19.5% completed/haven't completed the secondary school while 10.7% can read and write.

The findings revealed that 90.4% of those surveyed don't have enough time to work in the local councils and that the local council work is voluntary according to them. This is clarified in the **Table (5)**. Most of the surveyed local council members (more than 78%) said they have government jobs, according to the **Table (6)**. 11.7% of the total informants noted they have private businesses while 8.8% of them said they work for the private sector.

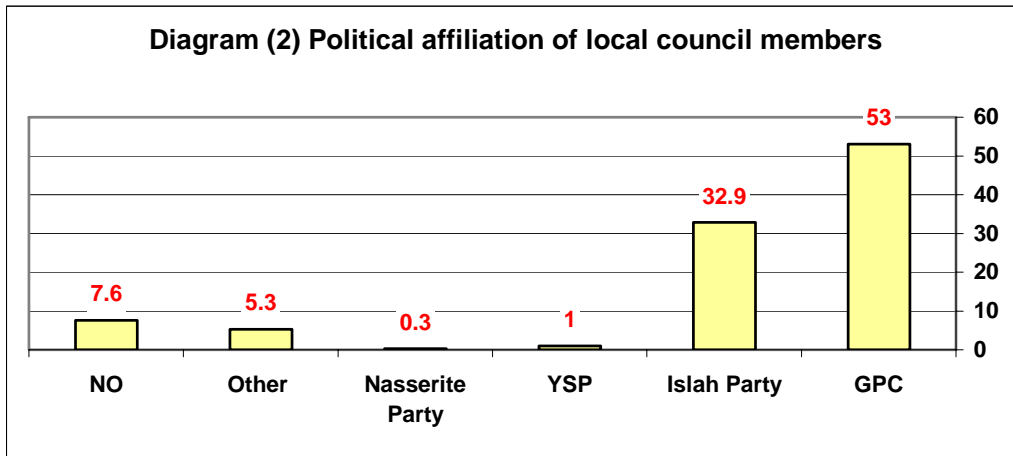
Table (5)
Work status of informants

Answer	Frequency	%	Percentage (%)
Having work	272	88.6	90.4
Having no work	29	9.4	9.6
Missing	6	2.0	
Total	307	100.0	

Table (6)
Jobs of local council members who were surveyed

Job	Frequency	%	Percentage (%)
Government job	214	69.7	78.1
Private sector job	24	7.8	8.8
Free business	32	10.4	11.7
Others	4	1.3	1.5
Missing s	33	10.7	
Total	307	100.0	

According to the **Diagram (2)**, 53% of the local council members who were interviewed (informants) belong to the General People Congress (GPC) (the ruling party), 32.9% are affiliated with the Islah Party, 1% of them belong to the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) and 5.3% have other political party affiliations. The independent local council members who were interviewed constitute 7.6% of the sample.



Findings of the Study

The Local Council Experience: Concept and Reality

1 – Usefulness of Local Councils

According to 65.5% of the sample, the local councils are useful in their current situation and they are somewhat backed by 27% of the informants (**Diagram 3**). The study findings reveal that more than 90% of those surveyed believe that Yemen benefit from the local councils. This was their response to a question raised by the end of the interview.

The high percentage of those who view the local councils as useful, even in their current situation, is linked to the hope that the problems faced by the local councils may be tackled. Having a quick look at the following **Three Tables**, one realizes that the main aim of nomination or re-nomination is linked to an attempt to serve the community. The inability to serve the community bottomed the list of reasons for quitting re-nomination.

Table (7)

Did you run for a local council seat once again?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	168	54.9
No	138	45.1
Missing s	1	
Total	307	

Fifty-five percent of those surveyed said they nominated themselves for local council posts once again and the main reason behind their desire to make bids for local council seats once again, is to serve locals of their areas according to **Table (8)**.

Table (8)

Why did you run for a local council post once again?

Why did you run for a local council post once again? Response	Frequency	%
To exercise my democratic right	15	8.9
To improve my social status	3	1.8
To serve locals of my area	110	65.5
My party nominated me	30	17.9
It is the only work I have	2	1.2
Others	7	4.2
Refuse to answer	1	0.6
Total	168	100

17.9% of the total informants noted that they nominated themselves for local council posts once again upon the request of their political parties.

Other informants attributed their re-nomination for local council posts either to exercising their democratic rights, obtaining a better social status or to the fact that they have not other works to do.

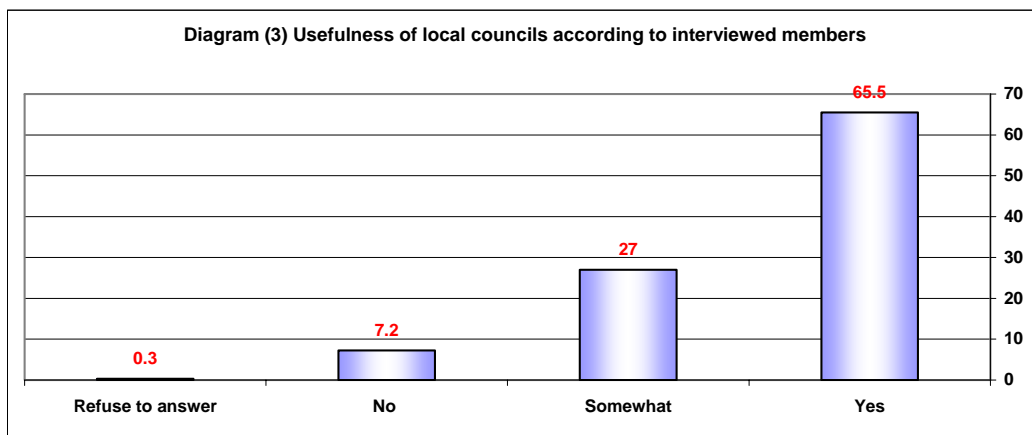
Informants, who had no desire to run for local council posts once again due to a list of reasons, mainly giving the chance other candidates, account for 47.1% of the sample. 14.5% of the informants said they did not want to apply for local council posts once again because they were unable to do anything during the previous term and 9.4% mentioned they didn't run for local council posts once again as their parties didn't nominate them while 11.6% mentioned they couldn't stand for the posts once against as they are engaged in other businesses, which are more important than nomination for local councils.

Table (9)

Why didn't you applied for a local council post once again?

Response	Frequency	%
My party didn't nominate me	13	9.4
To give the change to other candidate	65	47.1
Haven't benefited from the local council experience	5	3.6
Haven't achieved anything for locals of my area	20	14.5
Engaged in other businesses	16	11.6
Others	8	5.8
Don't know	5	3.6
Refuse to answer	6	4.3
Total	138	100.0

According to 7.2% of the local council members, who were surveyed, the local councils are not useful in their current situation, compared to 65.5% of them who view the local councils as a useful experience and they are somewhat backed by 27% of the sample.



2 – Local Council Member's Duties and Awareness about These Duties

A number of duties were listed in conformity with the Local Authority Law with the aim of identifying the local council members' awareness about their constitutional and legal duties. The informants were asked to identify whether the listed duties should be performed by the local council members or not. The law stipulates that these duties are part of the local council member's work but the numbers of informants agreeing with the duties varied and were sometimes very low.

Only 36.5 % of the informants agreed that the local council members are tasked to pursue implementation of court verdicts. Excluding this duty, the other duties were agreed by a large number of informants ranging between 85 and 99%. This is explained in the following **Tables**. The duties are concerned with monitoring, follow-up and supervision.

The surveyed local council members have the desire to obtain real authorities in order to enable them question those in charge of executive offices in case of violations. This is one of the local council member's tasks under the law, however there are many obstacles posed to the duties of the local council member, as explained in the following chapter.

Table (10)

Are the local council members tasked to pursue the implementation of court verdicts?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	110	36.5
No	176	58.5
Don't know	12	4.0
Refuse to answer	3	1.0
Missing s	6	
Total	307	

Table (11)

Are the local council members tasked to question those in charge of executive offices?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	289	94.1
No	13	4.2
Don't know	3	1.0
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

According to Table (11), 94.1% of the total informants agree that questioning those in charge of executive offices and holding them accountable for any violations should be one of the local council representatives' duties while 4.2% of them said no. 97.7% of those surveyed agreed that directing, supervising and monitoring works of executive offices should be one of the local council member's tasks. 88.9% of the informants stated that monitoring and reinforcing laws and orders in different areas are some of the local council member's duties, compared to only 9.5% who didn't agree.

Table (12)

Are the local council members tasked to supervise and monitor works of executive offices in their areas?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	300	97.7
No	5	1.6
Don't know	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

Table (13)

Are the local council members tasked to monitor and reinforce laws and orders?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	272	88.9
No	29	9.5
Don't know	3	1.0
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Missing	1	
Total	307	

The duty of following up citizens' affairs and basic needs was backed by 99% of the informants, who consider this one of the main duties of a local council member. 98.4% agreed that the local councils should hold periodic meetings with citizens to learn about their needs and issues.

Table (14)

Are the local council members tasked to monitor citizens' affairs and basic needs?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	304	99.0
No	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

Based on the responses of 88.2% of the informants, the local council members are tasked to protect rights and public freedoms. Other informants argued that local council members are responsible for delivering aids and assistances to the poor and the needy of their communities. Only 36.5% of the sample disagree that following up the implementation of court verdicts is one of the local council member's duties.

Table (15)

Are the local council members tasked to protect rights and public freedoms?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	268	88.2
No	22	7.2
Don't know	12	3.9
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Missing	3	
Total	307	

According to 88.5% of the sample, protecting the underground water from exhaustion and pollution should be one of the main tasks of a local council member, compared to only 8.9% who disagree with the notion. 2% of the study sample said they don't know whether they are tasked to protect underground water from exhaustion and pollution or not.

Table (16)

Are the local council members tasked to protect underground water from exhaustion and pollution?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	269	88.5
No	27	8.9
Don't know	6	2.0
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Missing	3	
Total	307	

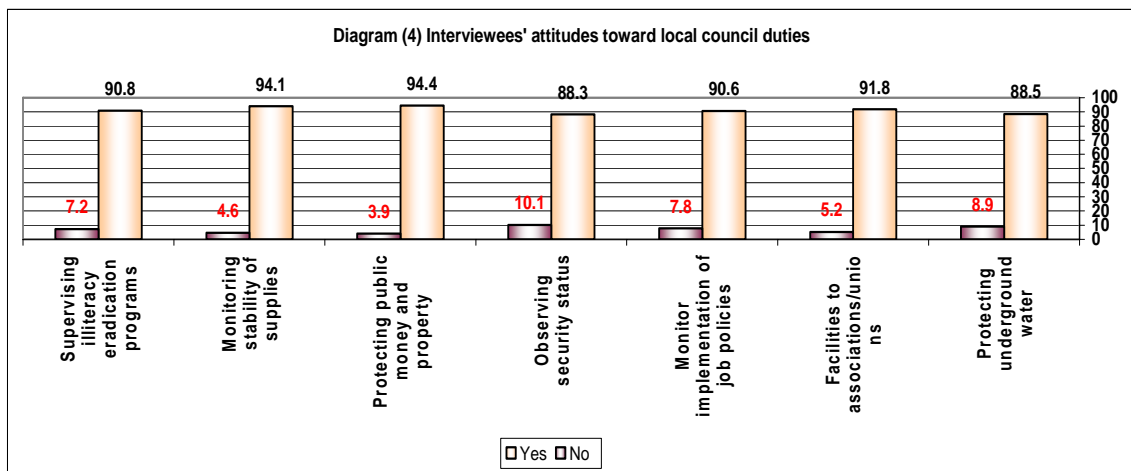
Ninety-two percent of the informants claim that providing facilities to social and associations and trade unions is one of the local council member's duties. This is explained in the following table.

Table (17)

Are the local council members tasked to facilitate work of social associations and trade unions?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	280	91.8
No	16	5.2
Don't know	7	2.3
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Missing	2	
Total	307	

The Diagram (4) shows informants' attitudes toward many local council members' duties specified by the law.



2 – Obstacles

There is an agreement between the Local Councils Law and informants with regard to the duties of local council members. At the same time, the local council members, who were interviewed, acknowledge that the matter is merely an ink on paper (such duties are no applied in real-life situation) for a variety of reasons due to be reviewed in the coming pages, after discussing the obstacles posed to duties of the local council members from their viewpoints.

The questionnaire form suggested a number of obstacles that hinder local council members from implementing projects in general. In addition, the form covered other obstacles, which were excerpted from the results of the first part of the study concerned with citizen's opinions and attitudes toward local councils.

Citizens harshly criticized the local councils for allegedly becoming tax authorities, particularly as they imposed heavy taxes on services due to the little financial allocations accrued to them. 83.7% of the interviewees confirmed that financial allocations accrued to local councils are very low. Similarly, 87.3% said that rewards accrued to local council members are low. The local council members aren't regularly salaried, but the heads of main committees receive monthly rewards that don't exceed YR 19,000 (less than \$100). Other local council representatives get YR 5,000 (\$25) per three months as 'meeting allowances'.

Table (18)

Are the allocations accrued to local councils low?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	268	87.3
Somewhat low	25	8.1
No	12	3.9
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

Table (19)

Are the rewards accrued to local council members low?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	256	83.7
Somewhat low	30	9.8
No	18	5.9
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Missing	1	
Total	307	

The other problem is associated with powers of the executive authorities. Nearly 77% of the respondents believe that the executive authorities dominate all the tasks and main decisions, considering this one of the obstacles posed to duties of local council members. 92% of them somewhat agree that powers of the executive authorities dominate all the duties and main tasks. In addition, the executive authorities ignore the local council decisions according to 73% of the sample. Adding the number of those who somewhat agree that the executive authorities ignore the local council decisions, the percentage amounts up to 93.8% of the study sample. This viewpoint appears in line with the

interviewees who back electing governors instead of appointment (explained in the following pages). The first part of the study, concerned with citizens' attitudes toward local councils, which was announced in September 2006, reveals that nearly 62.5% of the sample wants governors to be elected in lieu of appointment.

Table (20)

Do the executive authorities dominate all the main duties and decisions?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	236	76.9
Somewhat agree	46	15.0
No	22	7.2
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

Table (21)

Do the executive authorities ignore the local council decisions?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	224	73.0
Somewhat agree	64	20.8
No	18	5.9
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

According to 67.8% of those interviewed, the central investment projects are not fairly distributed to governorates and districts, and this is one of the obstacles posed to the duties of local council members. 71.6% of the interviewees said the local council members' inability to withdraw confidence of the governor, the deputy governor or the district director hinders their performance while 13.4% somewhat agree with this.

Table (22)

The central investment projects are not fairly distributed over governorates and districts.

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	208	67.8
Somewhat agree	61	19.9
No	33	10.7
Don't know	3	1.0
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

Table (23)

The local council members have no power to withdraw confidence of governors, deputy governors or district directors.

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	219	71.6
Somewhat agree	41	13.4
No	40	13.1
Don't know	2	0.7
Refuse to answer	4	1.3
Missing	1	
Total	307	

Nearly 91% of the interviews (including those who agree or somewhat agree) stated that the lack of accountability and questioning those in charge of executive offices in case they commit violations is one of the obstacles posed to the local council's performance. 85% of the sample (agree or somewhat agree) claimed that the absence of a mechanism to monitor performance of the executive offices hinders the relation between the local councils and executive authorities.

Table (24)

Those in charge of executive offices are neither questioned nor held accountable for violations?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	202	65.8
Somewhat agree	76	24.8
No	24	7.8
Don't know	3	1.0
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

Table (25)

There is no mechanism to monitor performance of executive offices.

Response	Frequency	%
Agree	195	63.5
Somewhat agree	66	21.5
Disagree	40	13.0
Don't know	4	1.3
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

The local council role is unclear on the part of the members themselves and employees of executive offices, according to nearly 50% of the interviewees who added this to the list of obstacles hindering the performance of local councils. Those who acknowledge that the low awareness about the role of local councils is one of the obstacles posed to the local councils' performance account for 84.3% of the sample. This is followed by admitting the weak relation between citizens and local councils.

Table (26)

The local council's role is unclear on the part of local council members themselves and employees of executive offices.

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	153	49.8
Somewhat agree	106	34.5
No	44	14.3
Don't know	2	0.7
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

Table (27)

Citizens have poor relations with local councils.

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	136	44.3
Somewhat agree	98	31.9
No	71	23.1
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

Nearly sixty-five percent of the interviews agree or somewhat agree that the local councils don't hold their meetings regularly, adding this to the list of obstacles hampering performance of local councils, compared to 34% of them who disagree.

Table (28)

Irregularity of the local councils' meetings is one of the obstacles hindering their performance.

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	120	39.1
Somewhat agree	80	26.1
No	104	33.9
Don't know	2	0.7
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

Local Council Experience: An Overview from Within

The local council experience in Yemen can not be assessed by only discussing the local council duties as specified by the law or identifying the obstacles posed to the local council performance in light of the viewpoints of local council members themselves. These points can only function as main headlines to register strengths and weaknesses.

It has been made apparent that the local councils have no powers equal to those of the executive authorities. This is coupled with the lack of awareness about the role of local councils. We need more details about these comments.

For instance, while 92% of the local council members, who were interviewed, believe that the executive authorities dominate all the main duties and hinder their performance, and at the same time one of the Tables indicate that 50% of the interviewees realize similarities between tasks and duties of local councils and executive authorities, many questions are being raised.

In this part of the study, the interviewed local council members responded to a number of questions, which were framed with the aim of getting closer toward the problem and having a glance at this experience from within.

The questions fall into two groups, the first of which aims to identify the respondents' viewpoints about the local council through their experience during the time period when they represented citizens of their areas. The second group suggests some ideas to develop the experience through the discussion of problems and obstacles.

First: Through Practice

1 – Social service

According to 76.2% of the interviewees, they perceive (are aware of) problems of their areas, compared to only 2% who said they don't perceive the problems of their areas while 21.5% somewhat agree. 22.8% of the interviewees argued that they can not get the services needed by their areas while 34.5 of them confirmed that through their experience they managed to get projects needed by their areas. 42.3% somewhat agree with regard to getting projects needed by their areas.

Table (29)

Are local council members aware of the problems of their areas?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	234	76.2
Somewhat agree	66	21.5
No	6	2.0
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

Table (30)

Do the local council members provide the projects needed by their areas?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	106	34.5
Somewhat agree	130	42.3
No	70	22.8
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

Based on the responses of 15.7% of the interviewees, the local councils do not provide the basic needs for citizens while 31.4% of them said that the local councils helped people have an access to the basic needs. 52.6% of those interviewed somewhat agreed with this point. Responses to the question about whether the local council members facilitate citizens' procedures in the government offices appeared relatively similar to responses of the same question in the first part of the study, concerned with citizens' attitudes toward local councils, as 45% of the sample strongly agreed that local councils add extra burden on citizens in pursuit of procedures at government offices.

On the other hand, 39.4% of the interviewees strongly agreed that the local councils facilitated progress of citizens' procedures at government offices, 43% somewhat agree and 16.9% disagree.

Table (31)

The local councils provided citizens with the basic needs.

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	96	31.4
Somewhat agree	161	52.6
Disagree	48	15.7
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Missing	1	
Total	307	

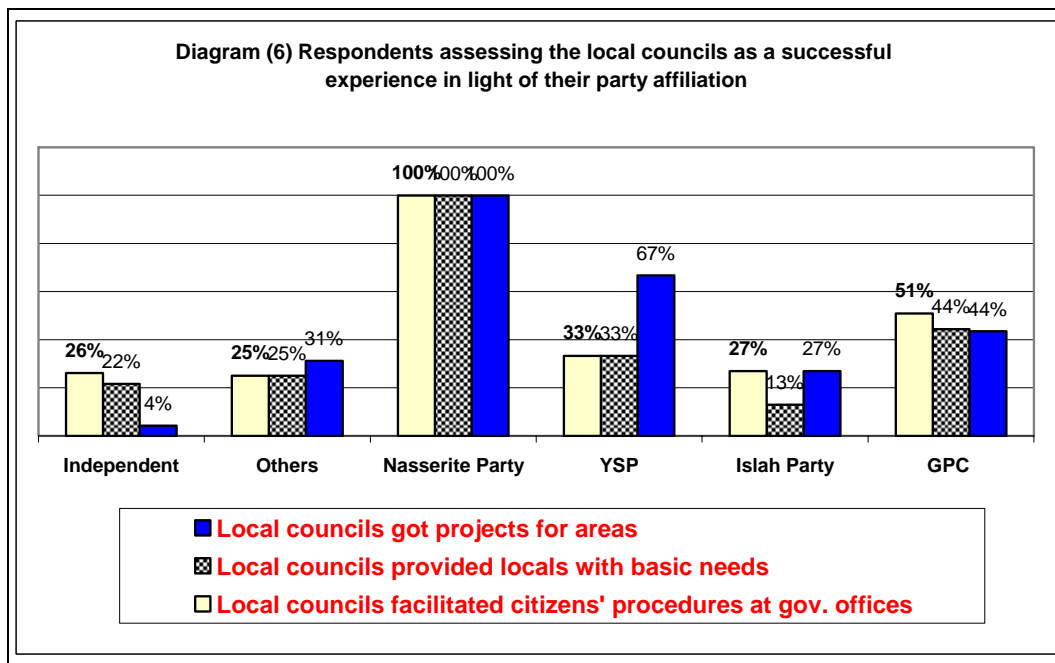
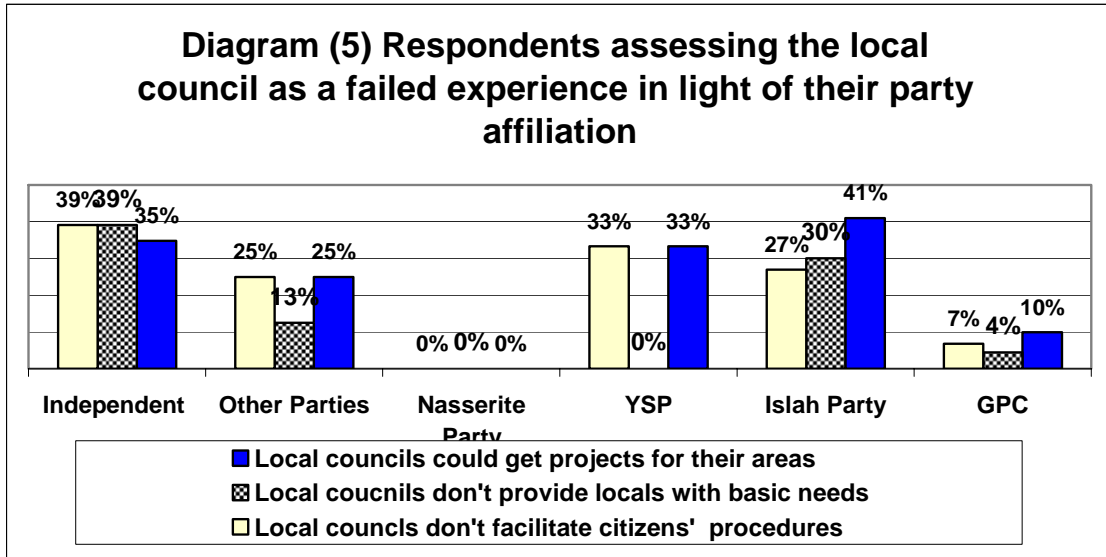
Table (32)

Local councils facilitated the progress of citizens' procedures at government offices

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	121	39.4
Somewhat agree	132	43.0
Disagree	52	16.9
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Missing	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

The following two diagrams indicate that party affiliation influenced interviewees' assessment of the local council experience. Most of those who responded that the local councils failed to achieve many things either belong to opposition parties or are independent without any party affiliation.

The Diagram (6) reveals that the ruling GPC members, who disagree that the local councils failed to achieve many things, don't constitute the majority of those who assess the local council experience as successful.



2 – Relation between local councils and the community

The following Table provides us with some details for interpreting the local council experience in Yemen. It indicates the poor relation between the community of voters and their local council representatives. The matter is symptomatic of the failure of local council members to do their duties. In addition, the results are related with a main problem, which is the low awareness about the duties and tasks of local councils, as referred to by the interviewees. If the local councils have no executive powers (authorities), how it is impossible for citizens to resort to these councils to resolve their conflicts. According to the Table, 28.2% of those surveyed expressed that citizens resort to the local council members to resolve their conflicts, 16.7% of them said they don't resolve the conflicts between locals while 54.4% somewhat agree that local councils resolve citizens' conflicts.

Table (33)

Do citizens enjoy good relations with local councils?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	86	28.2
Somewhat agree	166	54.4
No	51	16.7
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Missing	2	
Total	307	

In other words, if the relation between citizens and local councils is manifested by low awareness or the weak powers of local councils, how the majority of the local council members, who were interviewed, believe that they are aware of the problems in their areas.

To know about issues and affairs of their areas, do local council representatives depend on their personal knowledge? Or do they have sources other than voters? Answers to these questions make awareness of the local council experience; the democratic concept and partnership top the list of obstacles. Also, such answers cancel the idea that local councils are schools for learning the concepts of democracy and partnership.

Having a glance at the following Table, it has been made apparent that 24.4% of the interviewees believe that the citizen doesn't know about the role of local councils. 14.7% of the respondents strongly agree that citizens know about the role of local councils while 60.6% of them somewhat agree.

Table (34)

Citizens are aware of the local council's role.

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	45	14.7
Somewhat agree	186	60.6
Disagree	75	24.4
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

The interviewees gave different viewpoints in their assessment of the citizens' level of awareness that enables them to select the most eligible local council candidates to represent them. 15% of those interviewed disagree that citizens are aware enough to select the most eligible local council candidates, compared to 23.5% of them who strongly agree that citizens are aware enough to select the most eligible candidates and 61.2% who somewhat agree.

Table (35)

Citizens are aware enough to select the most eligible local council candidates.

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	72	23.5
Somewhat agree	188	61.2
Disagree	46	15.0
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

3 – Qualification of Local Council Members

According to 36.2% of the respondents, the local council members are qualified enough to do their duties. As only one of the respondents refused to answer, 6.2% of them noted that the local council members are not qualified to do the duties required from them while 57.3% somewhat agree that the local councils are qualified to do so. Consequently, the local council members, who were interviewed, believe that their low qualification is one of the reasons behind failure of the local councils, particularly as they have another important list of obstacles during the current stage.

Table (36)

Local council members are qualified enough to do their duties.

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	111	36.2
Somewhat agree	176	57.3
No	19	6.2
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

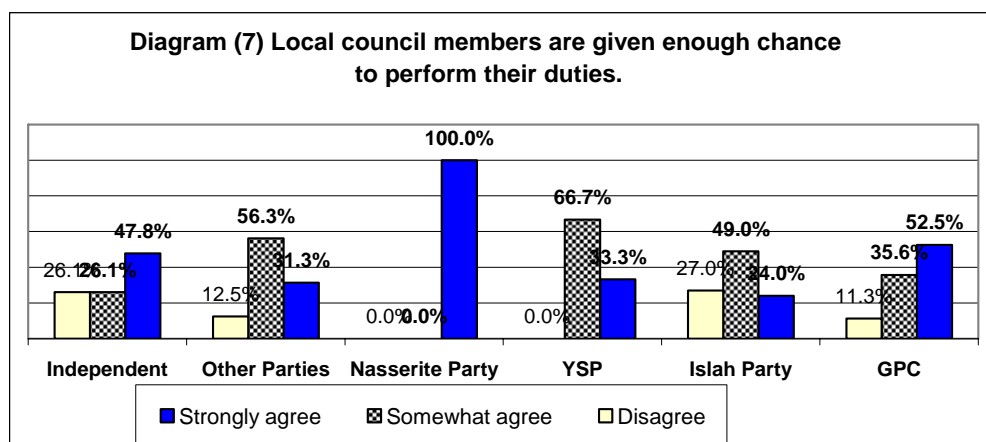
Table (37)

Yemen benefits from local council elections

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	277	90.2
Somewhat agree	26	8.5
Disagree	3	1.0
Refuse to answer	1	.3
Total	307	100.0

4 – Performance of Local Councils

Yemen benefits from the local council elections according to the viewpoints of the majority of those surveyed; however, these elections still face numerous problems. Less than 50% of the interviewees stated that local council representatives are allowed to exercise their duties while 17.3% disagree. This is explained in the following diagram.



The real problems facing the local council experience in Yemen in its infancy stage, from the representatives' viewpoint, are mainly related with the powers and facilities

given by the executive offices to these councils. These matters have no relation with the citizen, his/her role or awareness about the experience.

For instance, those who don't believe that the local council resources are allocated for social and economic development in the governorates and districts account for 22.2% of the total sample while 43.5% strongly agreed that these resources are allocated for development and 33.3% somewhat agree. This is explained in the Table (38). Such scores have nothing to do with citizens' relations with local councils or their lack of awareness about the role of local councils. Similarly, the citizens' law awareness about the role of local councils is not one of the reasons behind wasting the resources.

Table (38)

Are the local council resources used for development?

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	133	43.5
Somewhat agree	102	33.3
No	68	22.2
Don't know	2	0.7
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Missing	1	
Total	307	

Although the local council resources are used for development, these resources are not fairly distributed over governorates and districts, according to 45.1% of the sample as clarified by the Table (39). Only 19.9 of those interviewed agree that the financial resources are fairly distributed over governorates and districts and 29.1% of them somewhat agree. 45.1% of the respondents disagree that financial resources are fairly distributed over governorates and districts while 5.6% said they know nothing about how these resources are distributed.

Table (39)

Resources are fairly distributed over governorates and districts.

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	61	19.9
Somewhat agree	89	29.1
No	138	45.1
Don't know	17	5.6
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Subtotal	306	100.0
Missing	1	
Total	307	

Based on the responses of nearly 50% of the interviewees, there are remarkable similarities between tasks and responsibilities of the local councils and the government executive authorities. 30% of the sample somewhat agree, 16.9% say there is no any similarity and 2.6% answered that they don't know.

Table (40)

Are there any similarities between the tasks and responsibilities of local councils and executive authorities?

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	153	49.8
Somewhat agree	93	30.3
No	52	16.9
Don't know	8	2.6
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

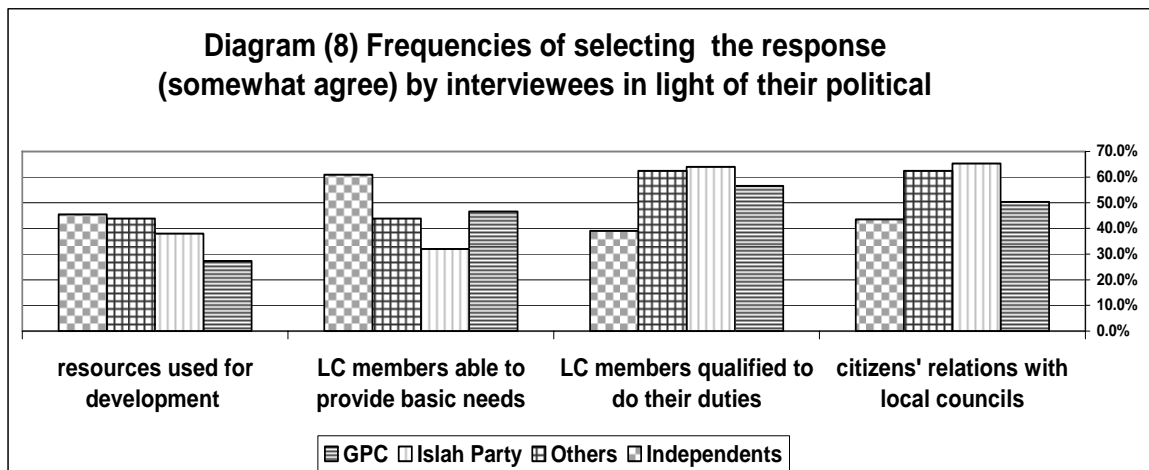
Although there are similarities between the tasks and responsibilities of both sides, the matter isn't associating with awareness of people in charge of executive offices about the local councils' powers and tasks. Having a cursory glance at Table (41), it has been made clear that 33.6% of the interviewees disagree that executive officials are aware of local council's tasks and powers, compared to 25.7% who strongly agree and 40.1% who somewhat agree.

Table (41)

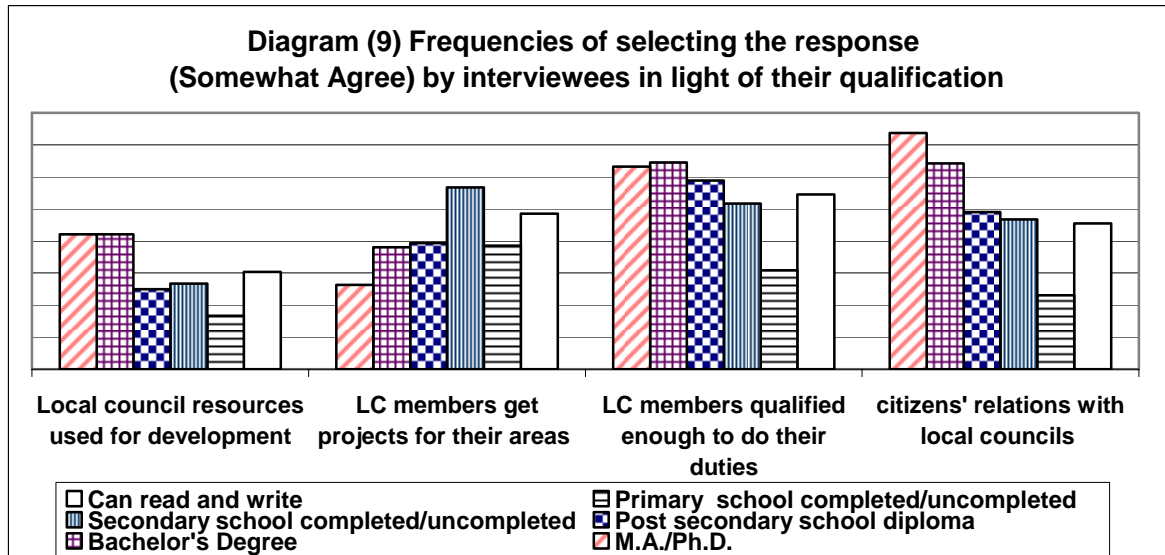
The executive officials are aware of the local councils' powers and tasks.

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	79	25.7
Somewhat agree	123	40.1
Disagree	103	33.6
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

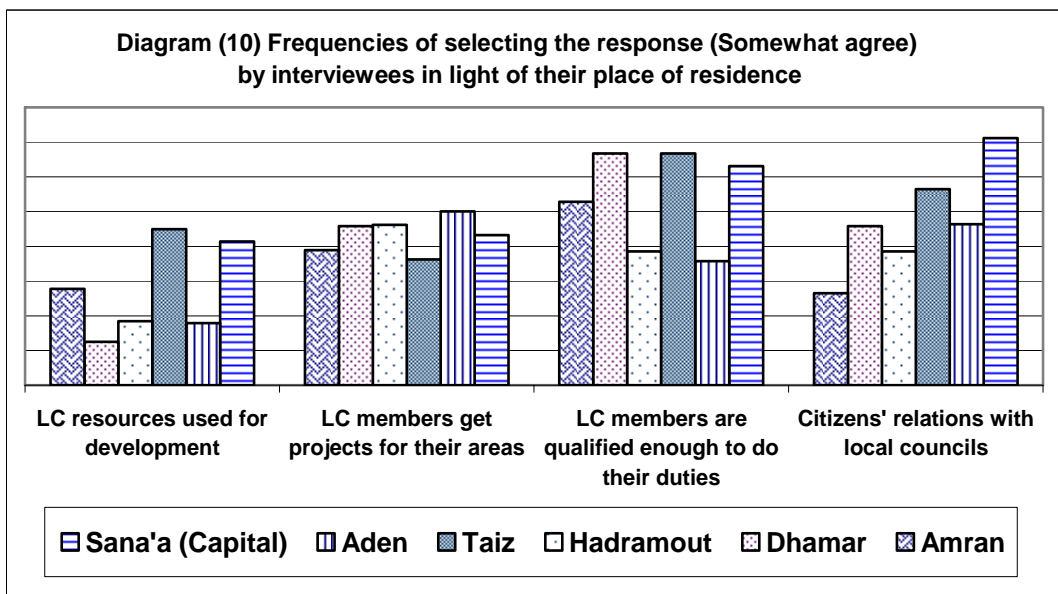
The Diagram (8) discloses that there is no relation between party affiliation and interviewee's frequent selection of the response (somewhat agree). Moreover, it appears that interviewees belonging to opposition parties haven't shown decisive responses.



In Diagram (9), the matter is evaluated in light of the qualification of respondents. The more the interviewees are qualified, the less decisive answers they give. According to the following diagram, it is the M.A and Ph.D. holders who mostly selected the response (somewhat agree).



The frequency of selecting this response by interviewees in light of their residence (governorates) is not that different. As indicated in the Diagram (10), the response (somewhat agree) was selected most frequently by interviewees living in the main cities.



Secondly: Local Councils' need for development

According to the Table (42), 83.7% of the interviewees back the idea of electing governors instead of appointing them while 16% disagree with the idea. The local council members, who were interviewed, outnumber the surveyed citizens (in the first part of the study) in terms of backing the idea of electing governors instead of appointing them. This implies that local council members have the desire to get rid of the dominance of powers and tasks by the executive authorities, which, according to them, constitute one of the primary obstacles posed to their performance. They hold the view that electing governors instead of appointing them is due help eliminate this obstacle.

Table (42)

Do you want governors to be elected instead of being appointed?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	257	83.7
No	49	16.0
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0

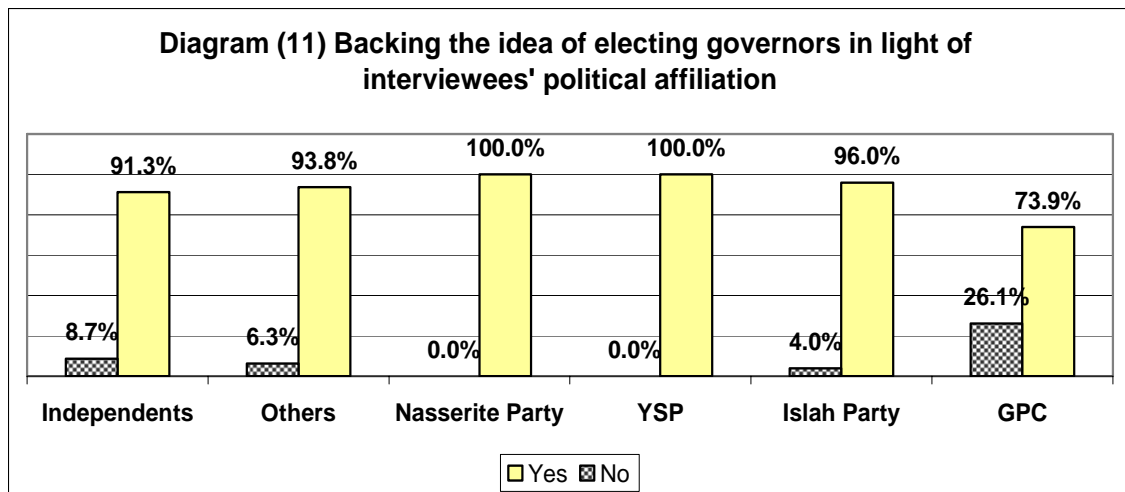
Asked about whether they back the idea of electing deputy governors instead of appointing them, 31% of the respondents disagreed while 66.7% said they back such an idea. Compared to the responses to the item contained in the in the Table 43, the number of interviewees backing this idea declines because they consider governors (not deputy governors) to have more dominance of the executive offices than any other officials.

Table (43)

Do you want deputy governors to be elected instead of being appointed?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	204	66.7
No	95	31.0
Don't know	6	2.0
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Missing	1	
Total	307	

Having a glance at the following two diagrams, it appears that 73.9% of the respondents, belonging to the ruling General People Congress, back the idea of electing governors while 26.1% disagree (Diagram 11)



Based on the responses of those interviewed, 70% of them back affiliating branches of the Central Organization for Control and Audit (COCA) with the local councils while 27.5% disagree. 2.3% of the interviewees said they don't know whether this is feasible or not.

49.8% of the interviewees are of the opinion that the three specialist committees of the local councils are enough for planning and implementing the local council duties and tasks. 15.6% of the sample somewhat agreed that these committees are enough for planning and carrying out local council duties while 31.6% answered no and 2.3% said they don't know whether these committees are enough or not.

Table (44)

Are the local council specialist committees enough for planning and carrying out activities?

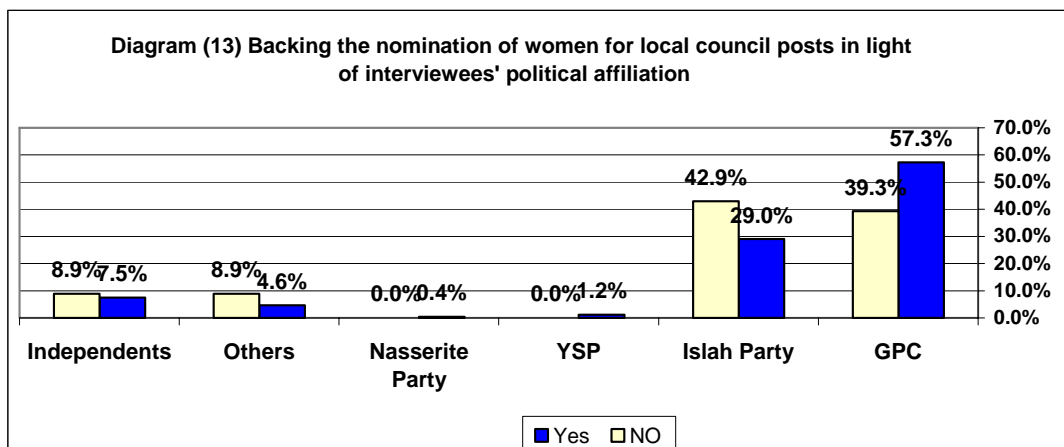
Response	Frequency	%
Yes	153	49.8
Somewhat agree	48	15.6
No	97	31.6
Don't know	7	2.3
Refuse to answer	2	0.7
Total	307	100.0

The Table (45) shows that 51.5% of those interviewed back extending the local council term to six years while nearly 48% of them disagree. 79.2% of the sample confirmed that they back the nomination of qualified women to run for local council posts, compared to 18.2% who stated that they don't back the nomination of women and 1.3% said they don't know. Interviewees belonging to the Islah Party outnumber those with other party affiliations in terms of opposing the nomination of qualified women for local council seats. This is made clear in the Diagram (13).

Table (45)

Do you back extending the local council term to six years?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	158	51.5
No	147	47.9
Don't know	1	0.3
Refuse to answer	1	0.3
Total	307	100.0



Local council experience from citizens' viewpoints (Summary)

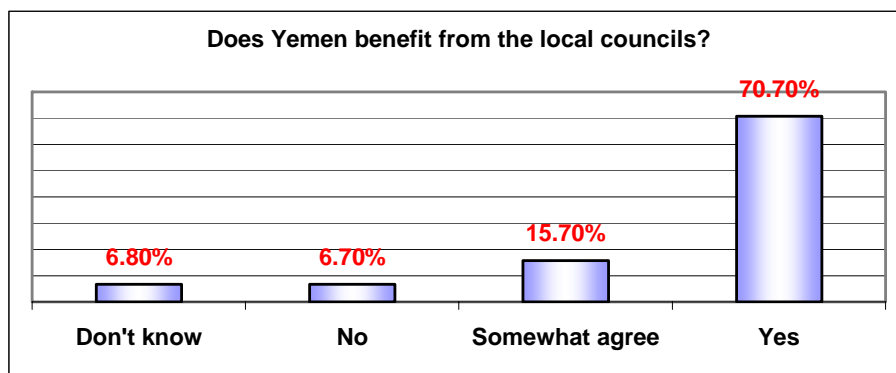
If the citizen's viewpoint about the local council experience lacks the specific details, the viewpoints of the local council members, who were interviewed, will lack neutrality, as indicated by some of the interviewees. Therefore, obtaining the maximum possible vision about the local council experience, which the poll attempted to reach, requires combining the two extremes of the equation. In the following pages, the researchers review the most important findings reached by the first part of the study, concerned with citizens' opinions and attitudes toward local councils, which was announced on September 13, 2006.

An overview of the sample of the study concerned with citizens' opinions and attitudes toward local councils:

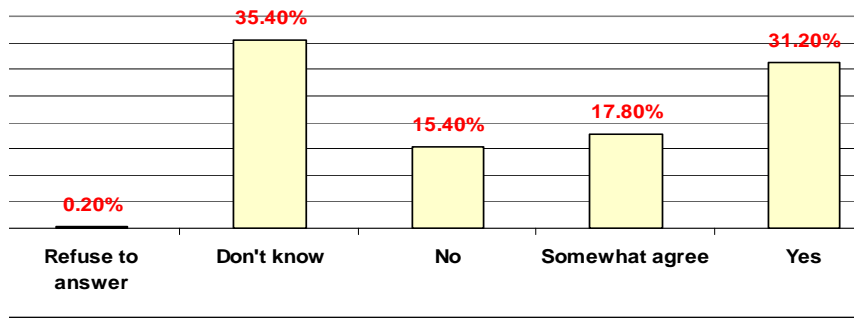
The study was conducted in six governorates with as many as 47 male and female field researchers, who attended a two-day training course at the YPC, collected the data from the field and filled out the questionnaire forms. Some 1,000 interviews were conducted with citizens, who are registered voters, during the period September 1 – 9, 2006. According to the researchers' reports, large numbers of citizens feared being interviewed while the response rate came at 66%. The field researchers visited as many as 1522 households in the six governorates. Citizens in 414 of the total households visited by researchers refused to be interviewed. The responses of 108 interviewees in 108 households were cancelled because these interviewees hadn't responded to all the questions contained in the form or refused to answer some questions.

In addition, responses to the questions answered by the study sample, composed of 1000 respondents, were subjected to a margin of error estimated at 5%. Based on the total interviews, numbering 1,000, the reliability was worked at 95%. According to the researchers' reports, many citizens feared being interviewed due to the prevailing state of worry and uneasiness, symptomatic of the candidate's sharp addresses, ahead of the presidential and local council elections.

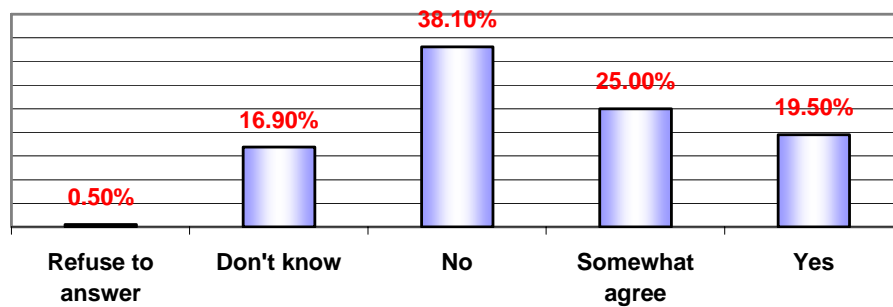
The most important findings:



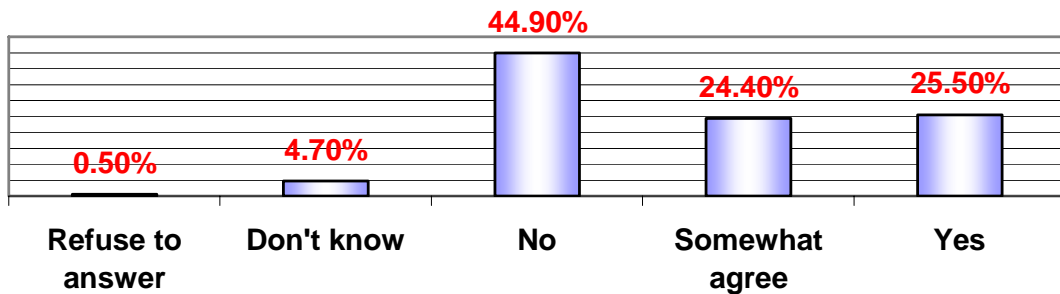
Is there any similarity between tasks and powers of local councils and executive offices?



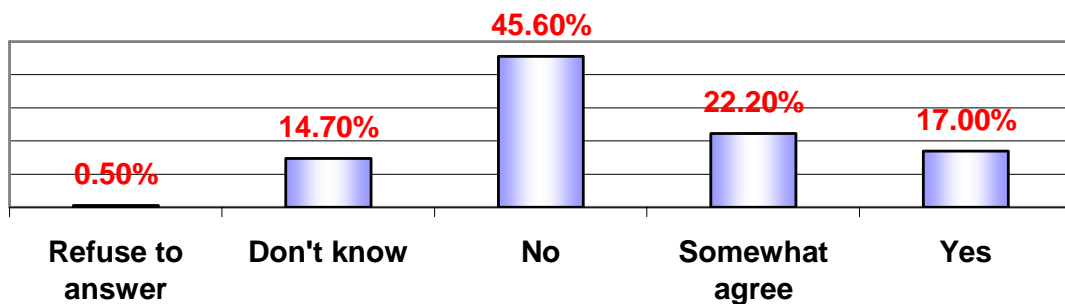
In your opinion, are the local council resources used for social and economic development?

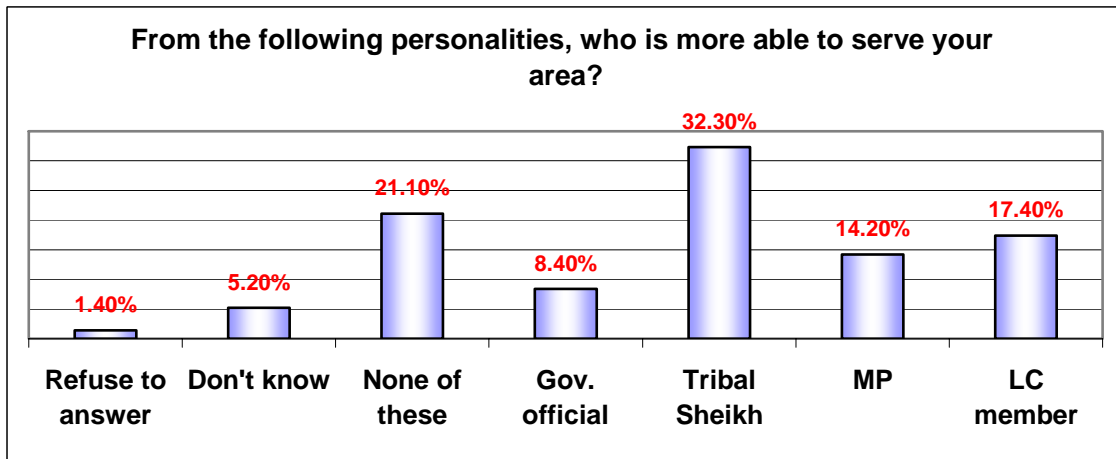
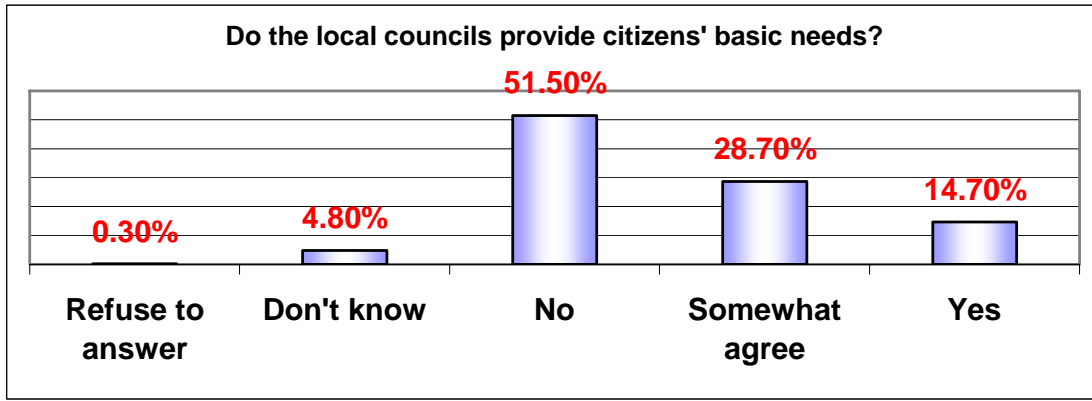


Do people resort to the local councils to resolve their disputes?



Do local councils facilitate citizens' procedures at government offices?





Do you want governors to be elected instead of being appointed?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	616	62.2
No	171	17.3
Don't know	192	19.4
Refuse to answer	11	1.1
Missing	10	
Total	1000	

Do you back affiliating branches of the Central Organization for Control and Audit with the local councils?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	418	42.2
No	281	28.4
Don't know	288	29.1
Refuse to answer	3	0.3
Missing	10	
Total	1000	

Do you back extending the local council term to six years?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	326	33.0
No	557	56.4
Don't know	95	9.6
Refuse to answer	9	0.9
Missing	13	
Total	1000	

In a case a qualified woman runs for a local council post, will you vote for her?

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	637	64.4
No	329	33.3
Don't know	19	1.9
Refuse to answer	4	.4
Missing	11	
Total	1000	

