Unpacking the Factors Influencing Political Engagement Amongst Syrian Youth

A Study on Trends, Current Engagement, and Future Aspirations

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The Day After Association (TDA) is a Syrian organization that works to support democratic transition in Syria, and its scope of work is focused on the following areas: Rule of law, transitional justice, security sector reform, electoral system design and Constituent Assembly election, constitutional design, economic reform and social policies.

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Executive Summary:

The politics of Syria under the Assad family's rule can be divided into two distinct parts. The first part is the "National Progressive Front," a group of parties that share the Ba'ath Party's political discourse and are permitted to operate within the political system. The second part comprises parties that operate outside the Ba'ath Party's authority. The Syrian regime actively targets members of these parties, regardless of their political affiliation, be it Islamic, leftist, or national, as well as anyone who has any association with these parties. This ruthless approach extends even to those with knowledge of these groups' members.

The Syrian regime has gone to great lengths to assimilate any youth, worker, student, women, or trade union initiatives within its ideological framework. This strategy aims to suppress intellectual rigor, political discourse, and dissenting viewpoints in favor of the regime and its security apparatus. The same tactic is employed towards older age groups, such as the Revolutionary Youth Union and the National Union of Syrian Students. This is applicable to trade unions and vocational federations that have aligned themselves with the Baath Party and are operating under its guidance. They seem to be revolving around the Baath Party and following its directives.

When the revolutionary movement began in Syria in 2011, local coordinators became the primary form of organization, with young people as its main driving force. Many regarded this as the foundation of political practice, given its organizational structure and the distinct roles assigned to its members. As a result, Syrian youth who took part in the movement gained a greater understanding of politics, political life, affiliation, and organization, which helped to increase their political participation.

As violence by the Syrian regime's military and affiliated militias escalated, the Syrian movement evolved into an armed conflict. This conflict gained the attention of regional and international parties, earning the name "Syrian conflict." The violence and turmoil have led to the emergence of several short-lived political blocs and the retreat of traditional opposition parties. Unfortunately, these parties continue to reproduce their discourse and have distanced themselves from the aspirations of Syrians, particularly the younger generation.

The success of the Syrian movement in achieving its demands presented an opportunity to reintroduce the "political dimension" to Syrian life. However, subsequent local and regional tensions led to a complex state of confusion and conflicting interests between the political and military currents on Syrian soil, ultimately plunging the country and its people into conflict. This study seeks to explore the Syrian youth's attitudes towards the political trends that emerged as a result of these events, whether positive or negative, and to investigate their actual support for political engagement in Syrian society, as well as their future aspirations.

The study yielded several significant results, which are summarized as follows:

- There is a clear lack of interest among Syrian youth in following political news related to Syria.

- Males tend to follow Syrian political news more than females, and the older the men and women are, the more they tend to follow Syrian political news.

- The level of education plays a significant role in following political news among young people. The higher the level of education, the more they tend to follow political news in Syria.

- Workers are the most likely category to follow the news of Syria, compared to the unemployed and students.

- Many factors contribute to young people not following political news in Syria, including a general lack of interest in politics, economic and living priorities that must be met first, and a lack of trust in political currents and bodies in Syria.

- The most prominent reasons for young people to follow political news in Syria are the impact of the political situation on their daily lives and the presence of family or relatives in different regions of Syria.

- Syrian youth, on average, have limited knowledge of Syrian political bodies and formations, as well as international laws related to the Syrian situation.

- The authorities on Syrian soil did not gain collective satisfaction from Syrian youth, albeit to varying degrees.

- The Syrian government in Damascus had the largest percentage of opposition among Syrian youth, followed by the Syrian Democratic Forces. The Salvation Government in Idlib came in third place, followed by the Syrian Interim Government.

- The study revealed a significant weakness in youth political engagement, with only 3.6% of young people highly involved in political work, compared to 64.5% who had weak participation.

- Syrian youth primarily participate in politics through discussions with friends and relatives, followed by attending demonstrations and writing political comments on social media.

- The study shows a significant weakness in affiliation rates as well as support for Syrian political parties and bodies, with parties having Syrian national orientation receiving the highest degree of support and affiliation among the young study sample.

- Syrian youth are not adequately represented in various political parties and bodies due to the dominance of traditional political bodies and blocs on the Syrian political scene, as well as the preoccupation of young people with securing daily life matters and the fear of political engagement at the security level.

- An increasing trend towards Syrian youth's preference for a "decentralized state" has been observed, with 43.7% in favor. In contrast, 38.9% of Syrian youth prefer the "central state."

- Nearly 40% of Syrian youth support the existence of a constitution based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international laws and conventions as a main source of legislation, while 36.7% support a constitution that relies on Islamic jurisprudence as one of the main sources of legislation, in addition to other sources of legislation. Meanwhile, 19% favor a constitution that relies on Islamic jurisprudence as the sole source of legislation.

- The parliamentary system is preferred primarily by 37% of Syrian youth, followed by the mixed "presidential and parliamentary" system by 32%, then the presidential rule by 30.5%.

- The support of Syrian youth in general for the rights of Syrian women to participate in political and public life has increased, with 64.2% supporting these rights to a large extent and 25.6% supporting them to a moderate degree. The percentage of opponents did not exceed 10.2%.

- Syrian youth highly support women's right to vote, with 91.2% in favor, followed by 80.7% supporting women's right to run for local administrations and parliament.

- Many of the Syrian youth in the study feel that fear of security services, lack of information on political issues, political ambiguity, and political inexperience are significant barriers to their political engagement in future Syria.

- The Syrian youth proposed several important conditions to encourage political action in future Syria, including separating security services from political institutions and currents, integrating political action into study curricula, and enacting flexible laws to support youth political action.

I. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

First: Research Problem and Solutions

In 2011, a popular movement began in Syria with protests calling for reform and later, the overthrow of the Syrian regime due to violence against demonstrators by security and military services. The movement was fueled by the desire for freedom, dignity, and social justice, and attracted many different segments of Syrian society.

The movement was not directly instigated by opposition political parties or youth political currents but was the culmination of decades of Baath and family rule, which perpetuated the absence of democracy and social justice while criminalizing political action that was not deemed acceptable by the Syrian regime.

The one-party political system in Syria tightened its grip on public life, forcing all Syrians to affiliate with the Baath Party through organizations such as the Vanguards of the Baath Party, the Youth of the Revolution, and the National Union of Syrian Students. This alienated many Syrians, especially the youth, from political issues and prevented the formation of a true political culture.

In 2011, the Syrian regime issued Legislative Decree No. 100, which prohibited young people between the ages of 18-25 from establishing parties or participating in the Constituent Assembly. This limited the organizational forms available to the revolutionary movement, which began with the establishment of local coordinators whose strength was mainly the youth.

Through the coordination committees, young people in Syria learned about the meaning of politics, political life, affiliation, and organization, and began to develop a true political culture. However, as the conflict escalated and regional and international parties became involved, the movement turned into an armed conflict, leading to a complex state of confusion and conflict of interests among different political and military divisions in Syria.

The security concerns surrounding the migration of numerous Syrians, specifically the youth, cannot be overlooked. They have moved to neighboring or European countries and successfully assimilated into their new societies. However, the asylum conditions have resulted in a preoccupation with economic, social, and legal concerns, resulting in a lack of engagement in political affairs. This disinterest is especially prevalent among younger individuals who migrated to these countries as children.

Despite this, there has been a lack of political structures on the opposition side that have political weight and can attract young people to their ranks, exacerbating the problems that Syrians still face. Therefore, this study aims to examine the general political trends of Syrian youth, both

positively and negatively, and their aspirations for political engagement in life in Syria and their future.

Second: Study Objectives and Research Questions

The study aims to address the following questions:

1. What is the stance of Syrian youth towards the current political landscape in Syria?
2. What are the aspirations of young people for the form and structure of political life in Syria's future?
3. What is the current state of political engagement by Syrian youth?
4. What factors influence youth political engagement in Syria's future?

Third: Methodology

This study employs a descriptive analytical approach, which involves collecting sufficient and accurate data on the phenomenon and analyzing it objectively to identify the constituent and influencing factors. The approach relies on various methods of data collection, which are summarized in two main stages: the survey stage and the objective description stage.

To encompass the subject of the study in its various aspects, a sample social survey method will be used through the use of a questionnaire within the framework of the analytical descriptive approach. The sample social survey method is considered one of the most appropriate methods for researching social reality and its characteristics. It allows for the study of the determinants of young people's political engagement in the current stage and their future aspirations, as well as the possibility of generalizing the results obtained through it.

Fourth: Data Collection Methods

For data collection in this research, a questionnaire was employed. After defining the fundamental aspects of the study and their corresponding indicators, a questionnaire comprising 65 main and sub-questions was developed. The questionnaire was divided into six sections and incorporated three fundamental measures: **1)** assessing the level of Syrian youth's knowledge of the political reality, **2)** measuring the extent of their actual participation in Syrian political life, and **3)** determining their attitudes towards some issues related to the representation of women in the future political scene.

Fifth: Original community and Study Sample

In this study, due to the lack of precise statistics regarding the number of young people in some areas of Syria, determining the total sample size was challenging. To overcome this, the sample was drawn using Simpson's law, which requires a minimum sample size of 384 respondents. The study areas were divided into seven primary regions, including the areas of the interim government, the areas of the Syrian Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria (SDF), the areas of the Syrian government, the areas of the Salvation Government in Idlib and its countryside, the Arab neighboring countries, Turkey, and Europe[1]. This approach allowed for the collection of a representative sample of the study population in each of the listed regions. The minimum total sample size was set at 2688 individuals, and to ensure accuracy, it was increased to 3000 individuals. The data collection team consisted of 50 field researchers and data collectors, and during data collection, independent variables such as gender, level of education, employment status, marital status, and age were taken into account to ensure that each is represented proportionally to its existence in the original community. The study areas included Syrian Interim Government areas, Syrian regime areas, northwestern Syria regions (Idlib and its administrative dependencies), Syrian Democratic Forces areas, Arab neighboring countries, Turkey, and European countries.

Sixth: Statistical Data Processing and Analysis Methods

After completing the data collection and extraction process, the gathered data was analyzed using the "Statistical Package for Social Sciences" SPSS program. The data was subjected to initial analysis and various statistical treatments, including correlated coefficients, in accordance with the direction of the analysis. Following this, the sociological analysis of political engagement and its influencing factors was conducted based on the correlations extracted from the study data. A social, cultural, and political reading of the relationship between the study variables was also taken into consideration during this analysis.

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1 | It is worth noting that the names adopted by authorities on the ground are considered reliable and accurate.

II. Results of the field study

First: General Characteristics of the Study Sample

1- Gender Distribution:

The gender variable was considered and balanced between males and females as it is one of the fundamental variables in the study. The respondents were distributed by 50.6% for females and 49.4% for males, as illustrated in the following figure:
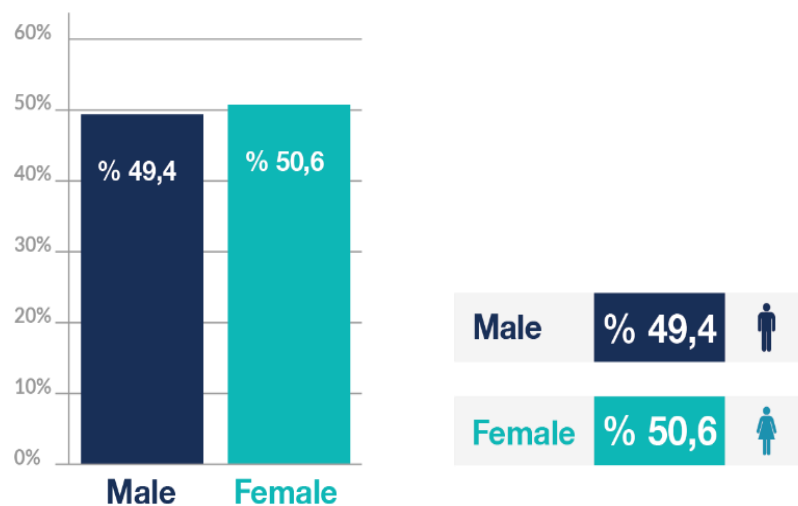
Figure No. (1) shows the distribution of the study sample based the respondents' gender

2- Age Distribution:

The study sample was categorized into three age groups. The first group comprised individuals aged 18 to 23 years, accounting for 27.6% of the sample. The second group included participants aged 24 to 29 years, representing 36% of the sample. The third category consisted of individuals aged 30 to 35 years, comprising 36.4% of the sample. The distribution of respondents according to age is illustrated in Figure 2.

Age Group	Percentage	%0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32 %36 %40 %44 %48 %52
18-23	% 27,6	
24-29	% 36,0	
30-35	% 36,4	
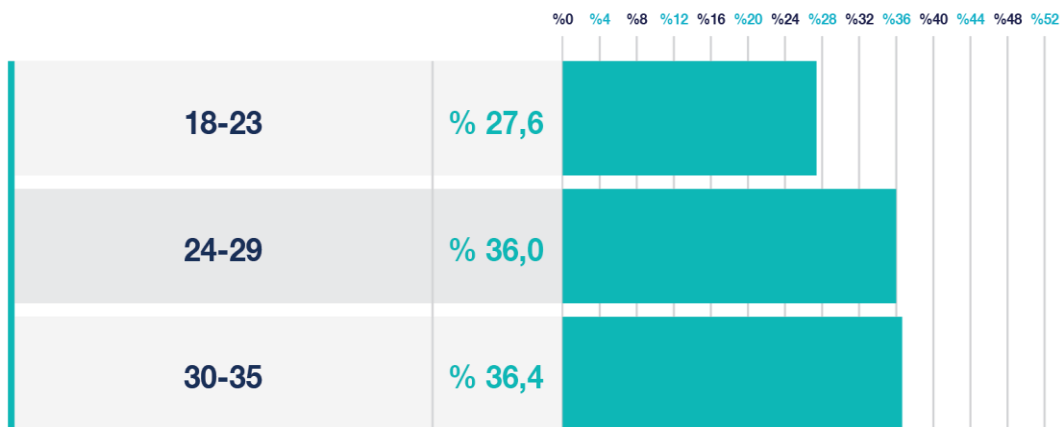
Figure No. (2) shows the distribution of the study sample based on the respondents' age group

3- Marital Status Distribution:

The study sample was distributed based on the respondents' marital status. The majority of the sample was either single or married, accounting for 51.6% (single) and 41.9% (married), respectively. The distribution of respondents according to marital status is illustrated in Figure 3.

		%0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32 %36 %40 %44 %48 %52
Single	% 51,6	
Married	% 41,9	
Divorced	% 4,6	
Widowed	% 1,9	
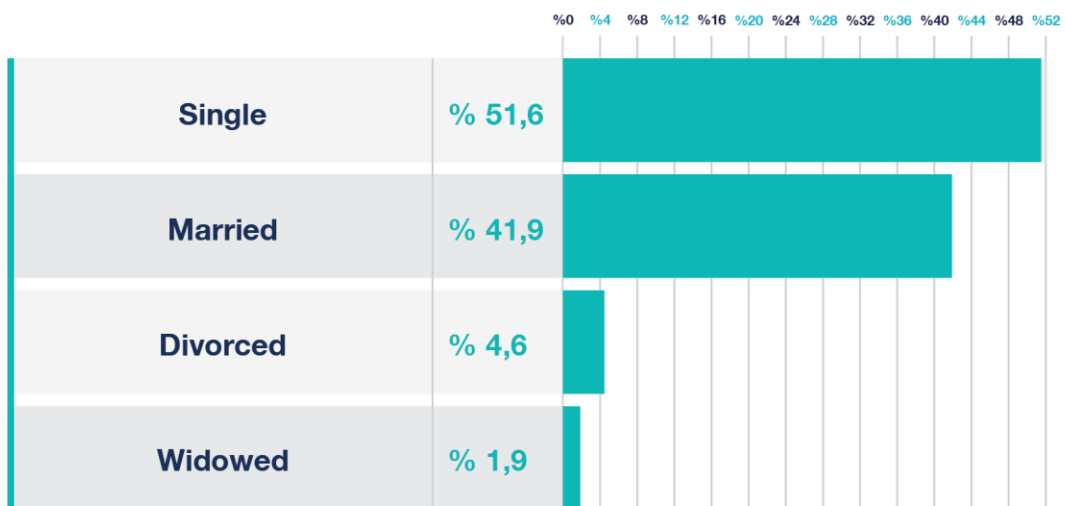
Figure No. (3) shows the distribution of the study sample based on the respondents' marital status

4- Education level Distribution:

The study sample as categorized based on the respondents' education level. The majority of respondents had a university education, accounting for 46.8% of the sample. The second-largest category was participants with a secondary education, representing 31.1% of the sample. The distribution of respondents according to education level is presented in detail in Figure 4.
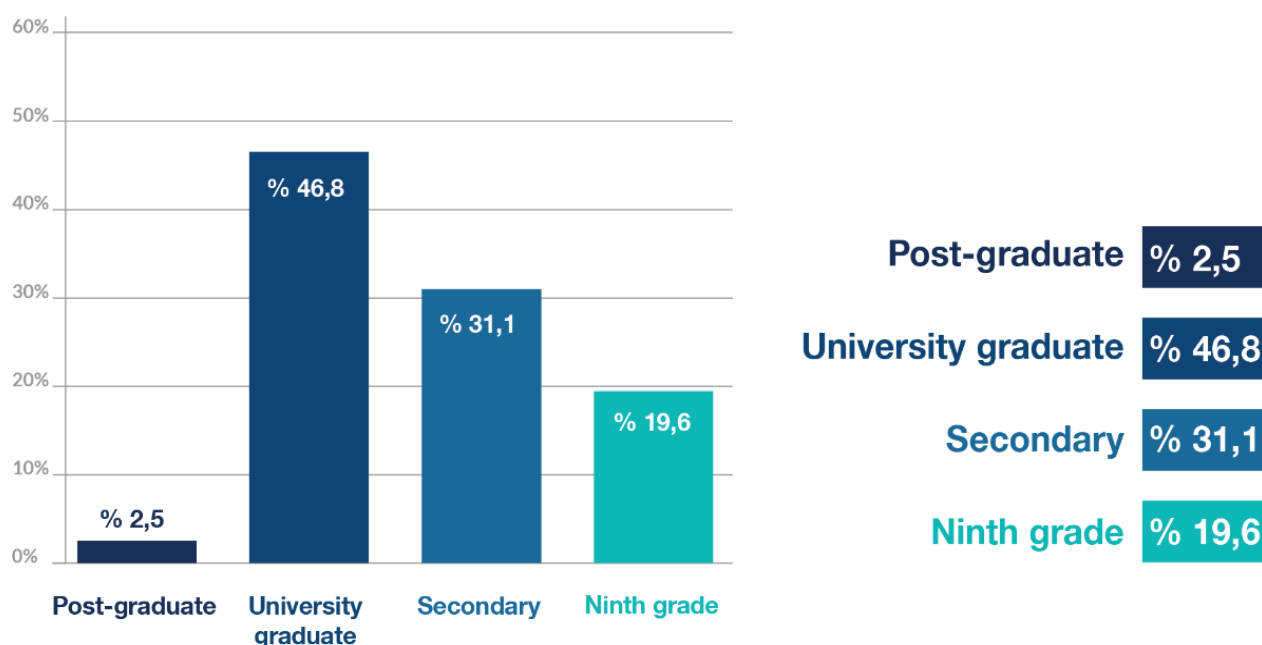
Figure No. (4) shows the distribution of the study sample based on the respondents' educational level

5- previous Place of Residence

Place	%	%0	%1	%2	%3	%4	%5	%6	%7	%8	%9	%10	%11	%12	%13	%14	%15	%16	%17	%18	%19	%20
Idlib	% 15.3																					
Aleppo	% 13.9																					
Hama	% 11.1																					
Homs	% 9.8																					
Damascus countryside	% 9.6																					
Al-Hasaka	% 9.3																					
Al-Raqqa	% 8.1																					
Lattakia	% 7.2																					
Damascus	% 4.4																					
Deirezzor	% 4.1																					
Tartous	% 2.9																					
Dara'a	% 2.6																					
Al-Sweida	% 1.1																					
Al-Quneitra	% 0.4																					
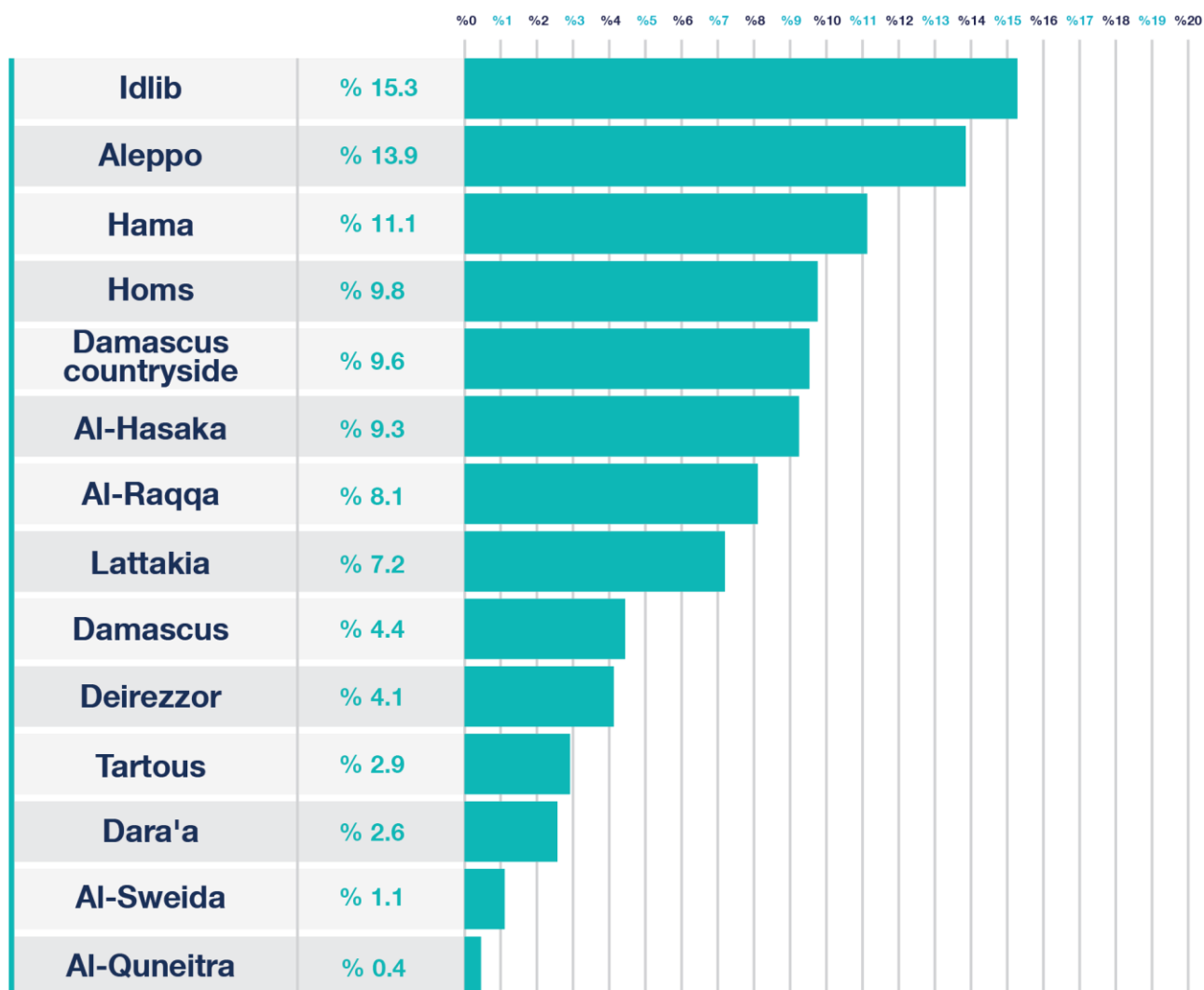
Figure No. (5) shows the distribution of the study sample based on the respondents' previous place of residence

6- Current Place of Residence

The study sample included Syrian men and women residing both inside and outside Syria and was divided into seven regions. The largest percentage of respondents were from regions governed by the Syrian government, which is mainly due to the fact that this region has the largest population of Syrians. As a result, it was necessary to increase the sample size in this region to better represent Syrian youth in this area. The distribution of respondents according to their current place of residence is shown in detail in the figure below:

Region	Percentage
Regime-held areas (Damascus govt.)	% 23,3
Idlib	% 14,9
Neighboring countries	% 14,4
SDF areas	% 13,5
Turkey	% 12,7
European countries	% 11,2
Syrian Interim Government areas	% 10,0
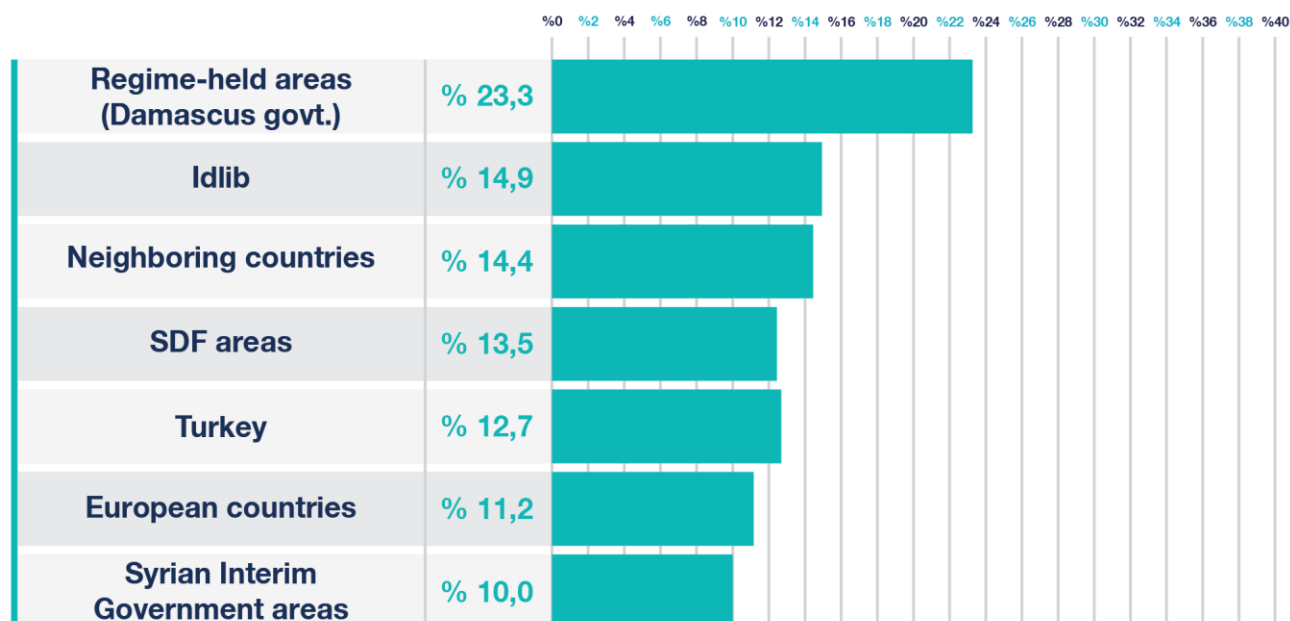
Figure No. (6) shows the distribution of the study sample based on the respondents' current residency in Arab neighboring countries and other countries

As for the distribution of the sample according to the Arab neighboring countries, it was as shown in the following figure.
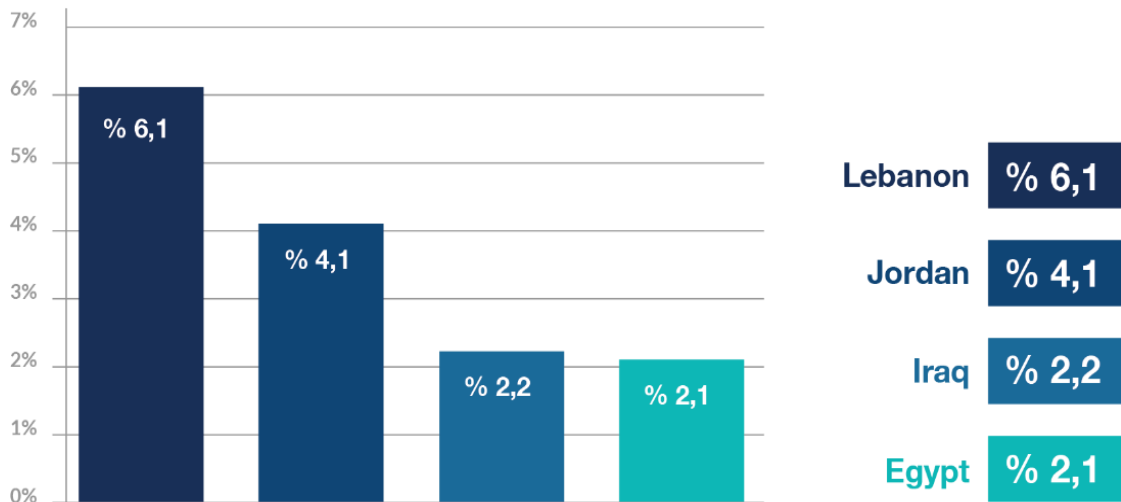
Figure No. (7): Sample of neighboring/Arab countries

Lebanon	% 6,1
Jordan	% 4,1
Iraq	% 2,2
Egypt	% 2,1

7- Employment Status

Respondents were categorized based on their employment status. The highest percentage of respondents, accounting for 45.6%, were working men and women, while 28.2% were unemployed. The remaining percentage of the sample was composed of students. The distribution of respondents according to their employment status is illustrated in the figure below:

Employed	% 45,6
Unemployed	% 28,2
Student	% 26,2
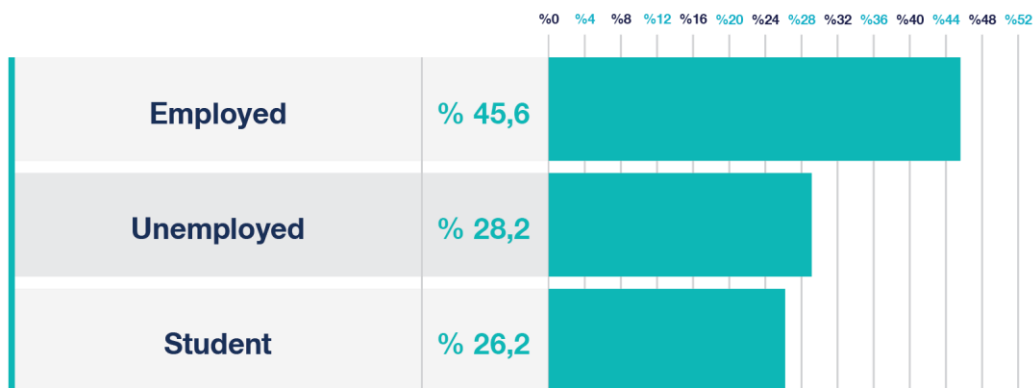
Figure No. (8) shows the occupational status of the respondents

8- Second Nationality Status of Sample Members

As a result of Syrians residing outside of their home country for an extended period, some have obtained the nationality of their host country. Among the sample members, 7.1% reported having obtained a second nationality, while the remaining 92.9% did not.
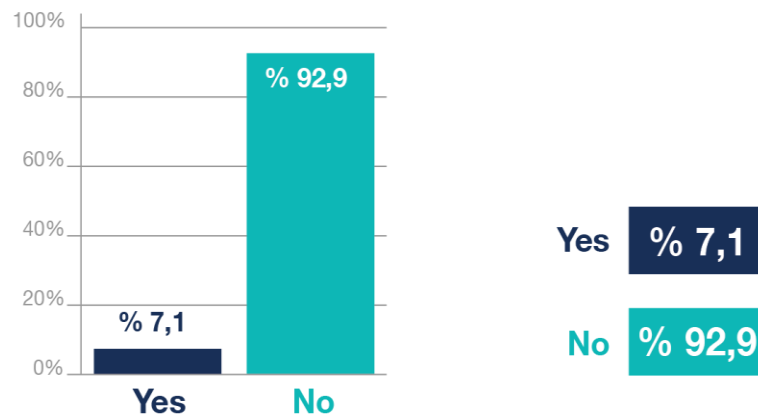
Figure No. (9) illustrates the distribution of respondents according to their second nationality status

9- Respondents distributed based on their standard of living

In terms of their living standards, the majority of respondents (53.7%) had an average standard of living. 26.9% fell into the low standard of living category, while the high standard of living category had the smallest percentage, not exceeding 10%. The following figure provides a detailed representation of these ratios.

Category	Percentage
Very low	% 6,9
Low	% 26,9
Average	% 53,7
High	% 9,6
Very high	% 3,0
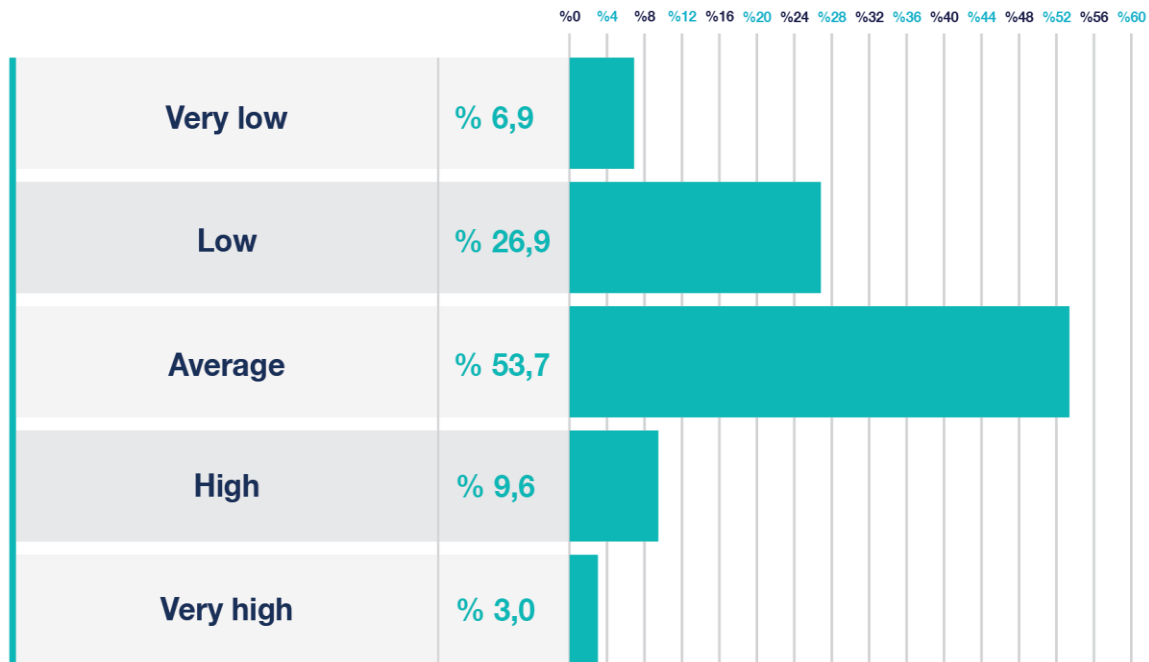
Figure No. (10) shows the standard of living of the respondents

Second: Declining Interest in Following Political News in Syria

The results of the field study indicate a clear lack of interest among the sample in following political news related to Syria. While 26% of the sample reported not following political news at all, 19.5% reported following it regularly. The majority of the sample, accounting for 54.5%, reported following political news to a medium or occasional extent, which is still a relatively high rate. This trend reflects the changing level of interest among young people, which we believe is closely linked to political developments in Syria. The lack of stability and tangible progress towards political solutions has led to a decrease in motivation for following political news among Syrian youth. This ultimately underscores the need for new solutions that can change the current political climate in the country.

Always % 19,5

I don't follow the news % 26,0

Sometimes % 54,5
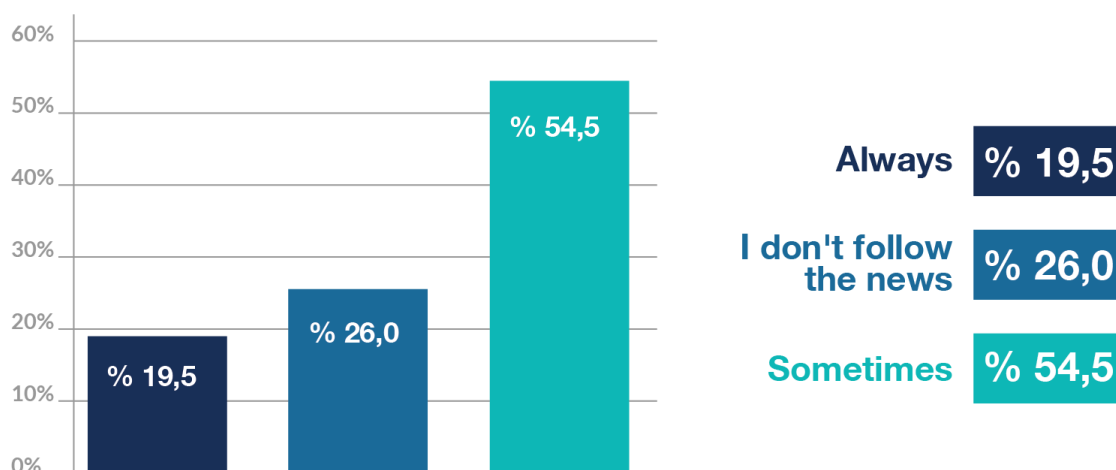
Figure No. (11) shows respondents' following of Syrian political news

In relation to the gender variable, the study found that males tend to follow political news related to Syria more than females (27.6% versus 11.5%).

This finding is generally consistent with the trend of higher interest in political affairs among males compared to females. However, the study also revealed that both males and females exhibit intermittent interest in political news, which may reflect a sense of "disappointment" among young people regarding the lack of change in the political situation in Syria, despite their desire for it to happen. This observation offers insight into the intermittent follow-up behavior among young people in the study sample.

Females	% 11,5	Always
Males	% 27,6	
Females	% 55,1	Sometimes
Males	% 53,9	
Females	% 33,4	I don't follow the news
Males	% 18,5	
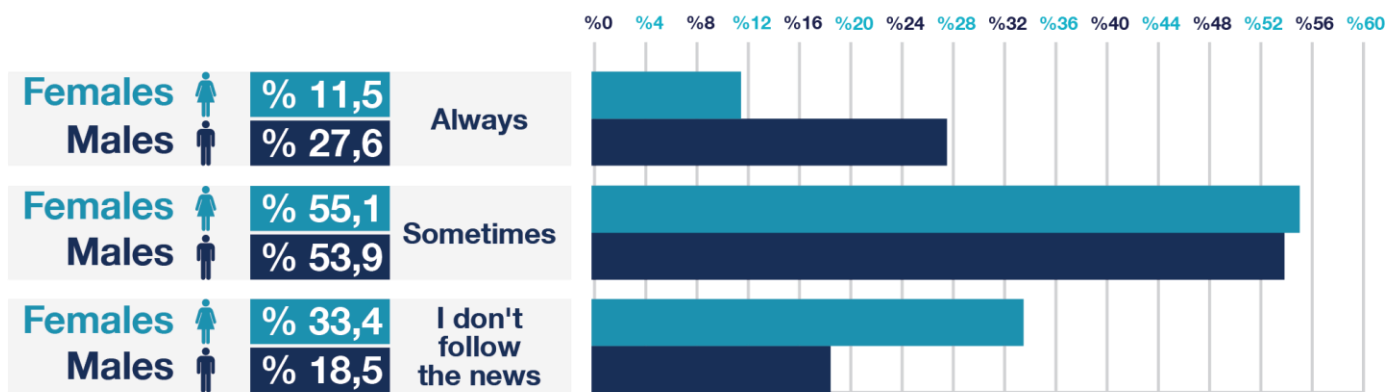
Figure No. (12) shows the respondents' distribution of following Syrian political news by gender

The study found that age is a significant factor in young people's interest in following political news related to Syria. Specifically, the older the age group, the higher the level of political news follow-up. However, the study also notes that the rates of permanent follow-up are generally low across all age groups, and intermittent follow-up behavior is prevalent. However, the rates were occasionally similar across all age groups. Figure 16 shows that the age group with the highest follow-up rate is between 30-35 years old, with a percentage of 28.7%.

The possible explanation for this trend is that older age groups have had more experience with the political situation in Syria over the past decade, from the beginning of the revolution until the present day, which may have led to a stronger attachment to political life among this group. It also highlights the need for relevant programs and workshops to engage all segments of youth, as there seems to be a fragile relationship between the new generation and the available political platforms (such as media and civil society organizations) both inside and outside Syria.
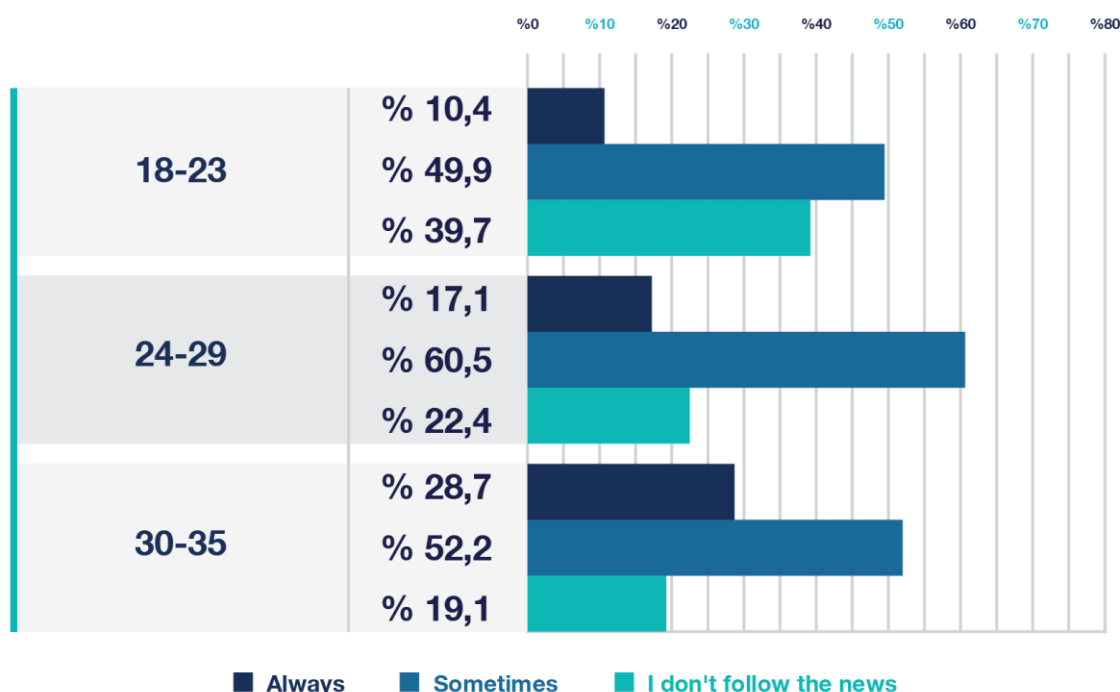
Figure No. (13) shows respondents' following of political news by age

The level of education was a significant factor in following political news among the youth. The results indicated that higher education levels were associated with greater interest in Syrian political news. The following rate for post-university education level was the highest, reaching 47.3%, while the following rate for individuals with an education level of "ninth grade and below" was only 11.4%.

Education Level		Always	Sometimes	I don't follow the news
Post-graduate	% 47,3	■		
	% 40,5		■	
	% 12,2			■
University graduate	% 23,4	■		
	% 58,0		■	
	% 18,2			■
Highschool	% 16,4	■		
	% 53,6		■	
	% 30,0			■
Ninth grade and below	% 11,4	■		
	% 49,3		■	
	% 39,3			■
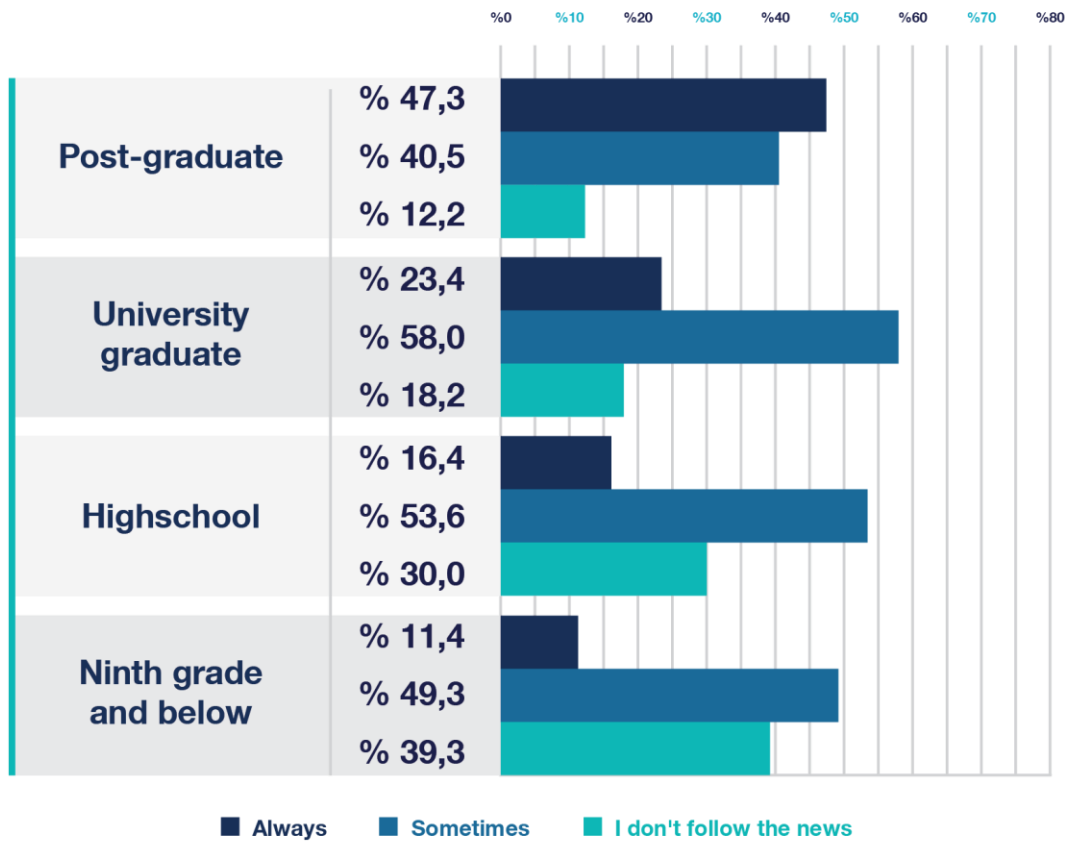
Figure No. (14) shows respondents' following of political news by educational level

Regarding the employment status variable, the study found that the employed respondents had the highest following rate at 25.9%. It is worth noting that the majority of respondents fell under the category of "sometimes" when following political news, regardless of their employment status. The higher following rate among workers can be attributed to their greater interaction with society and its diverse groups compared to unemployed youth or students. The latter may prioritize other goals such as securing employment or focusing on their studies, leading to a decline in their interest in following political news.

| | %0 | %10 | %20 | %30 | %40 | %50 | %60 | %70 | %80 |

Employed
% 25,9
% 56,0
% 18,0

Unemployed
% 14,1
% 54,2
% 31,7

Student
% 14,0
% 52,3
% 33,7

■ Always   ■ Sometimes   ■ I don't follow the news
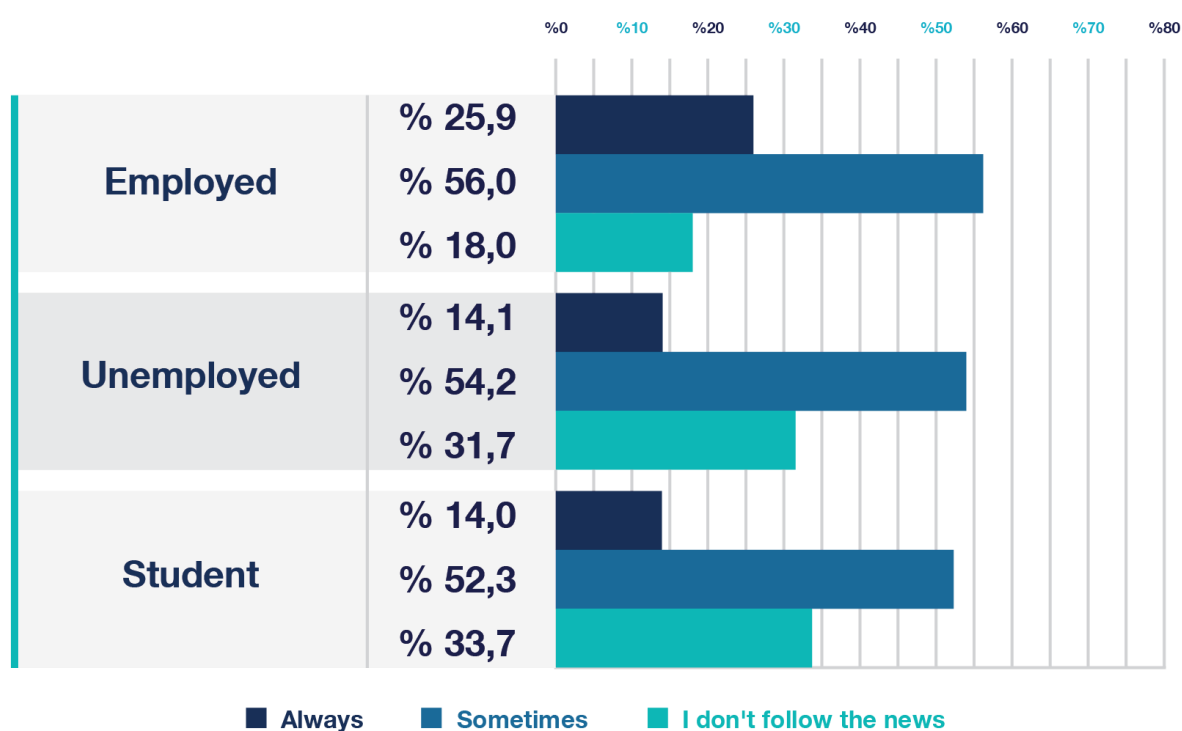
Figure No. (15) shows respondents' following of political news according to employment status

Regarding the current place of residence variable, the highest following rates were for young people who *sometimes followed* political news. The lowest following rates were for those living in the regions of the Syrian government and European countries (13.9% and 15.8% respectively). It appears that the complexities of daily life have led to a disinterest in political news, whether due

to preoccupation with securing a livelihood in government areas of Damascus, or adjusting to work and life in new European societies.

	%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60	%70	%80

Syrian regime areas
- % 13,9
- % 54,3
- % 31,9

Syrian Interim Govt. areas
- % 23,3
- % 49,7
- % 27,0

Idlib and countryside
- % 23,7
- % 55,6
- % 20,8

Northeast (SDF)
- % 22,0
- % 59,9
- % 18,1

Turkey
- % 21,8
- % 57,1
- % 21,1

Neighboring countries
- % 19,9
- % 51,3
- % 28,9

European countries
- % 15,8
- % 52,8
- % 31,3

■ Always   ■ Sometimes   ■ I don't follow the news
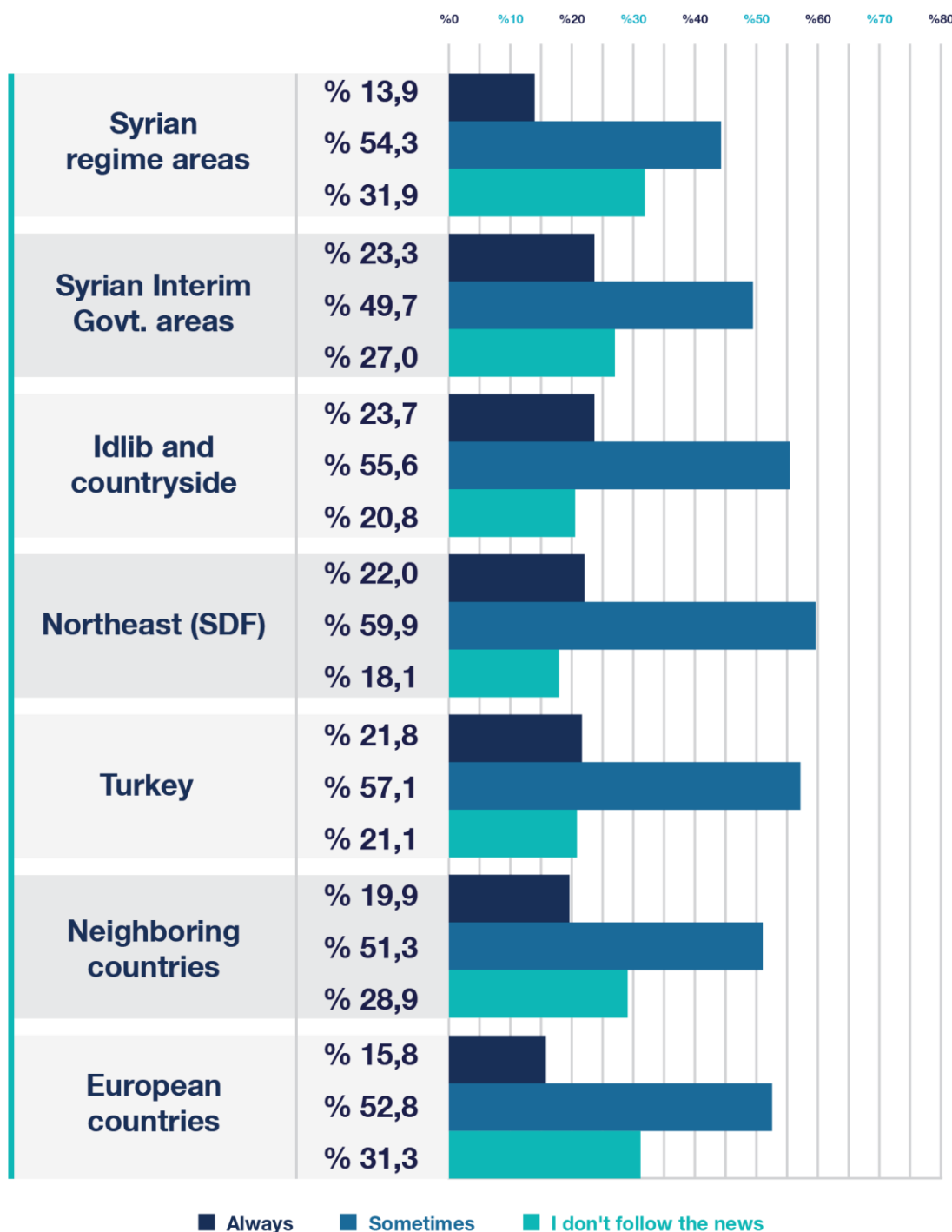
Figure No. (16) shows respondents' following of political news according to their current place of residence

A- Constraints to Syrian Youth's Engagement with Political News and Information

Among the sample of young people who do not follow Syrian political news (26%), there are several inhibiting reasons. The main reason is the lack of interest in politics in general, followed by economic and livelihood priorities that take precedence. The third reason, in terms of importance, is the general lack of trust in all political organizations and institutions in Syria, and other reasons. Figure No. (17) displays the percentage breakdown of these reasons, with additional reasons shown in Figure No. (19).

		%0	%1	%2	%3	%4	%5	%6	%7	%8	%9	%10
Lack of interest in politics	% 10,0											
Economic and livelihoods priorities take precedence	% 7,0											
Lack of trust in all political organizations and institutions in Syria	% 4,1											
The desire/decision to leave Syria	% 2,7											
The decision to permanently stay in country of asylum	% 1,7											
Busy with education	% 0,2											
Syria's news is too painful	% 0.1											
Hopelessness that there will ever be a solution to the Syrian crisis	% 0.1											
All the above	% 0.1											

Figure No. (17) shows respondents' constraints in following political news

The Syrian youth's interest in the political situation seems to have been overshadowed by the lack of progress, with their priorities shifting towards economic problems, finding solutions to personal issues, and pursuing personal achievements.

B- Declining Interest in Political Action

There are many reasons why young people who follow political news permanently or intermittently have shown a declining interest in political action. The most prominent reasons are "the impact of the political situation in Syria on their daily lives" and "the presence of family or relatives in different regions of Syria" as shown in Figure (18). These reasons suggest that the news is followed for non-political reasons related to personal affairs of the respondents.

Only a low percentage of 5.7% follow a desire to participate in Syrian political life in the future. This is a regression in some of the gains in the Syrian political situation after the revolution, which is the interest of young people in politics and the desire for political action. This can be attributed to the ambiguity of political life in Syria and the long-standing status quo without change, which probably led young people to retreat from political life.

Because of the impact of politics on my daily life	% 32,6	
I have friends and family members living in various parts of Syria	% 20,2	
I am very interested in politics	% 6,9	
My desire to engage in politics in future Syria	% 5,7	
The nature of my work forces me to follow political news	% 4,8	
I still have interests in Syria (property, business)	% 2,8	
To stay updated with current events	% 0.6	
The will to return to Syria	% 0.1	

Figure No. (18) shows respondents' motives in following political news

Third: Limited Knowledge of Political Formations and Tracks in Syria

Over a decade has passed since the Syrian uprising in 2011, and in the years that followed, numerous political bodies were formed, and a multitude of international decisions and laws were enacted, which significantly impacted the Syrian political landscape. To assess the level of political knowledge among young people, a study was conducted using a scale consisting of 16 components. The scale was designed to measure the degree of understanding among Syrian youth regarding political formations and bodies, as well as the international laws that relate to the Syrian situation over the past decade.

Determine the level of political knowledge among Syrian youth, we conducted a statistical analysis that assigned numerical scores to each of the 16 political bodies and international laws that make up the components of the study. From this analysis, we were able to extract three scores indicating the level of political knowledge: high, medium, and low. The components evaluated included the Caesar Act, local councils, the Syrian Interim Government, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the Syrian Democratic Forces, the Syrian Opposition's Negotiations Commission, the Moscow Platform, the Cairo Platform, the National Coordination Commission for the Forces for Democratic Change, the National Reconciliation Commission, the Sochi negotiations, The Constitutional Committee, the Geneva negotiations, the Syrian Coalition for Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, and the Salvation Government in Idlib. It's important to note that the degrees of knowledge assessed in this study refer specifically to knowledge of political bodies and international laws related to the Syrian revolution, rather than a general understanding of Syrian political climate or history.

The results were as shown in Figure (19):

Great knowledge	% 13,7
Average knowledge	% 48,5
Little knowledge	% 37,8
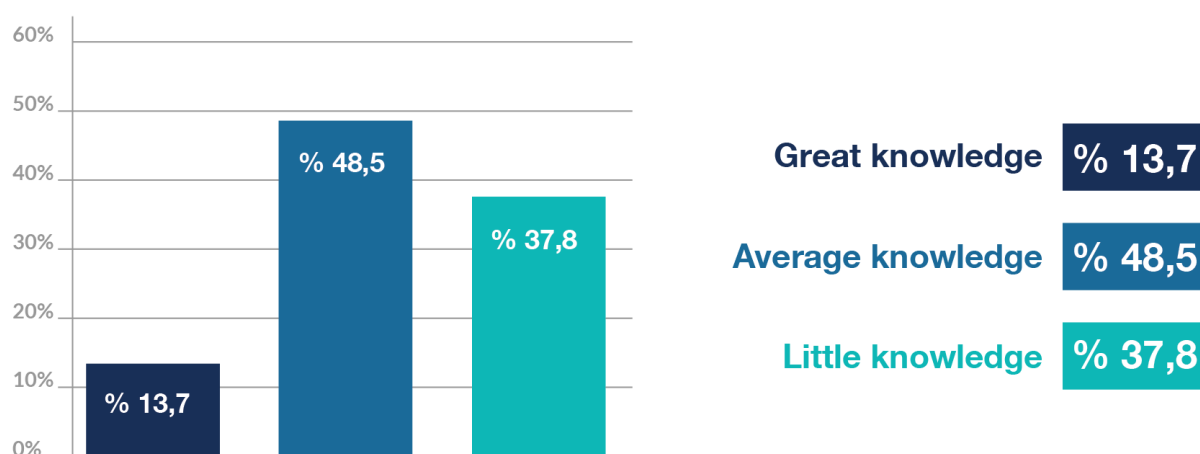
Figure No. (19) shows the degree of young people's knowledge of the political climate in Syria

The study revealed that a majority of the participants had medium to low levels of knowledge regarding Syrian political bodies, formations, and the international laws related to the Syrian situation. Despite the fact that some of these organizations and negotiations have since expired or are no longer active, the lack of knowledge among the youth suggests a clear gap in understanding the organizational structure of the Syrian political climate. This gap must be addressed by political and civil bodies involved to promote greater engagement and understanding among the younger generation.

Following, are the most and least known components among Syrian youth based on the study's findings:

Components with the highest percentages of knowledge:

1. Caesar's Law: **26.2%**
2. Local councils: **19.4%**
3. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant: **18.6%**
4. Syrian Democratic Forces: **16.7%**
5. Syrian Interim Government: **16.4%**

Components with the least percentages of knowledge:

1. Moscow platform: **80.4%**
2. Cairo platform: **79.3%**
3. National Coordination Committee for the Forces of Democratic Change: **77%**
4. National Reconciliation Commission: **72.5%**
5. Sochi: **64.4%**

It's important to note that the percentages indicate the proportion of study participants who had not heard of or had little knowledge about the respective components.

Regarding the independent variables analyzed in the study, no statistically significant differences were found, indicating that the decline in knowledge affected all participants equally, regardless of any other factors. As an illustration, we present the following example:

In terms of gender, there were no discernible differences between male and female participants, as shown in Figure 20.

Female	% 14,3	Great	
Male	% 13,0	knowledge	
Female	% 49,5	Average	
Male	% 47,5	knowledge	
Female	% 36,2	Little	
Male	% 39,5	knowledge	
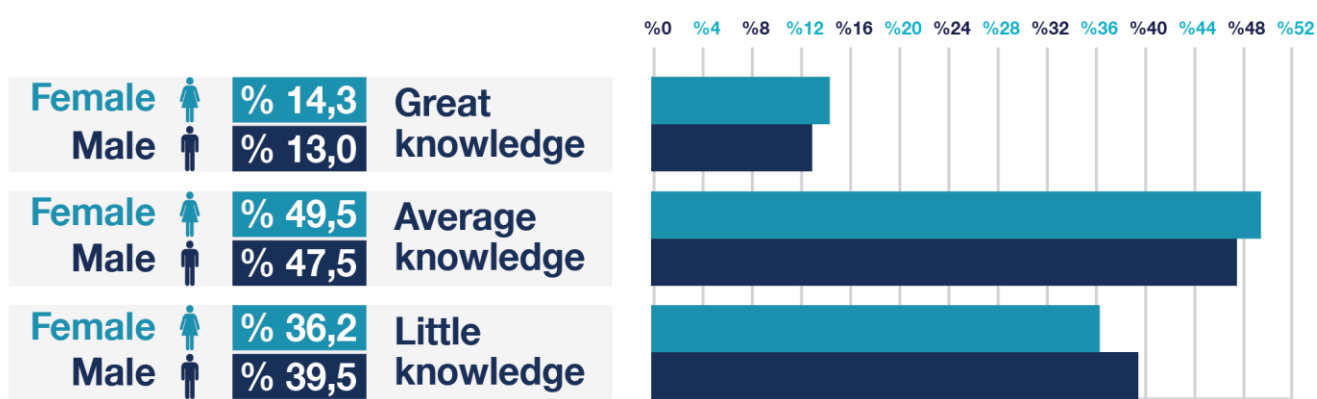
Figure No. (20) depicts the relationship between degrees of political knowledge and gender

The same applies to the relationship with the age group variable. Figure (21).

Age group		Great knowledge	Average knowledge	Little knowledge
18-23		% 12,7	% 48,7	% 38,6
24-29		% 13,1	% 47,4	% 39,6
30-35		% 15,0	% 49,5	% 35,5
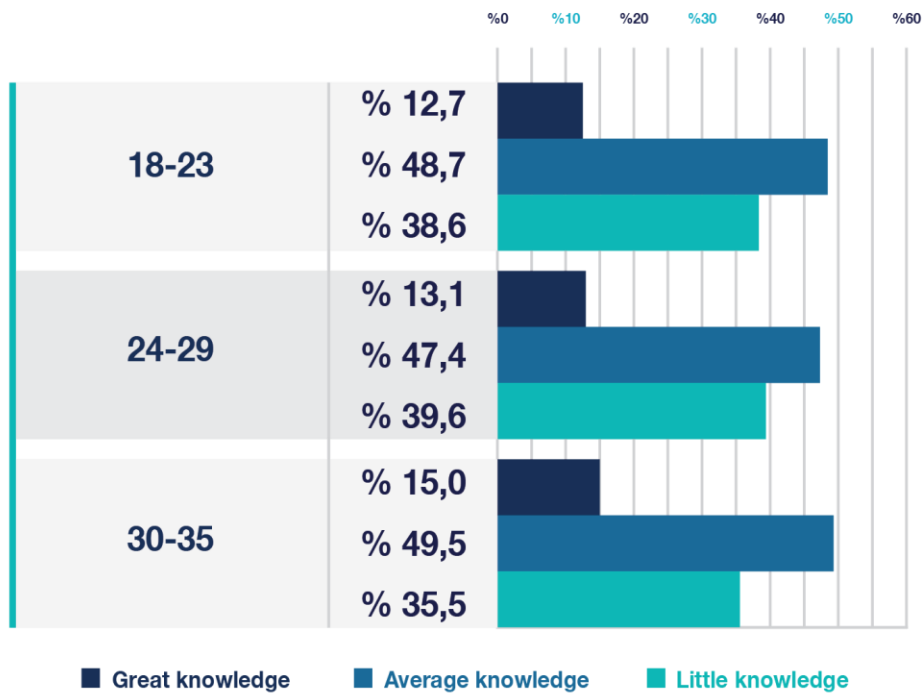
Figure 21 illustrates the relationship between degrees of political knowledge and age

The same applies to the relationship with the educational level. Figure (22).

		%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60

Ninth grade and below	% 12,8	
	% 51,2	
	% 36,1	
High school	% 13,6	
	% 46,9	
	% 39,5	
University graduate	% 14,2	
	% 48,6	
	% 37,2	
Post-graduate	% 12,2	
	% 44,6	
	% 43,2	

■ **Great knowledge**   ■ **Average knowledge**   ■ **Little knowledge**
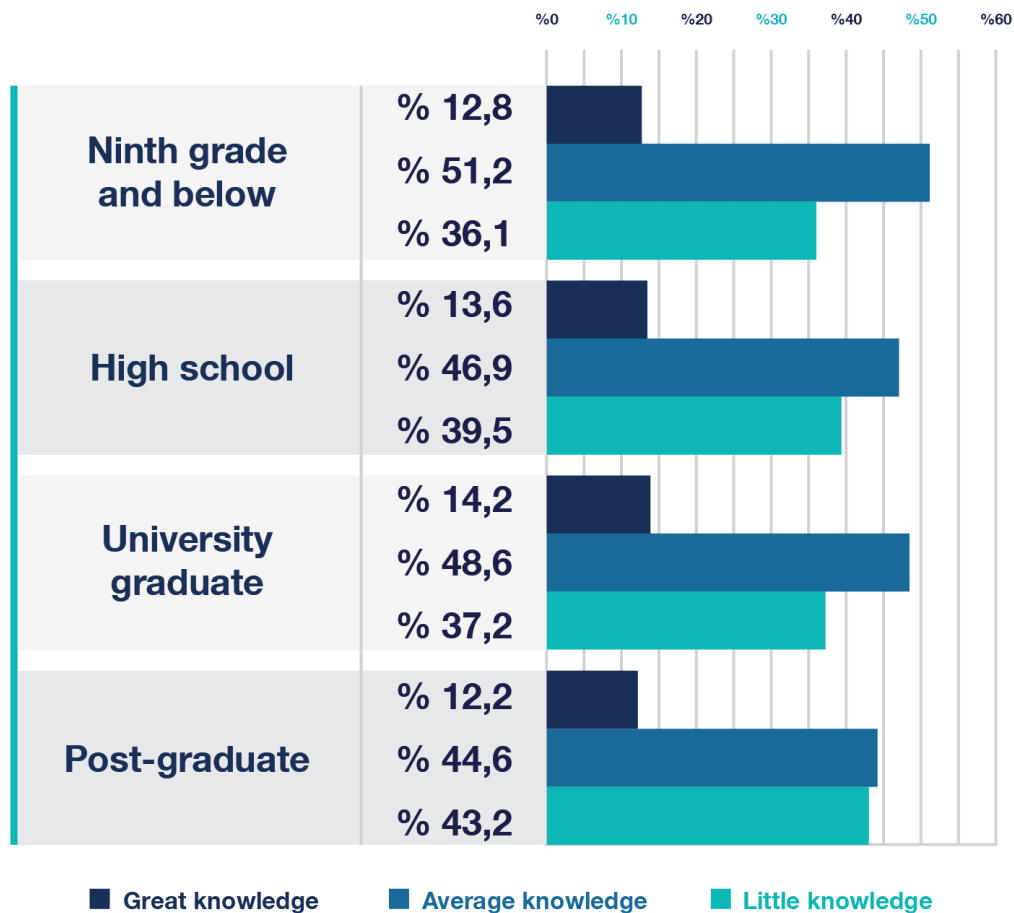
Figure 22 displays the relationship between degrees of political knowledge and education level

The results also apply to the relationship with the occupational status variable. Figure (23).

		%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60
Employed	% 14,5							
	% 48,4							
	% 37,0							
Unemployed	% 13,4							
	% 49,9							
	% 36,7							
Student	% 12,5							
	% 47,1							
	% 40,5							

■ Great knowledge   ■ Average knowledge   ■ Little knowledge
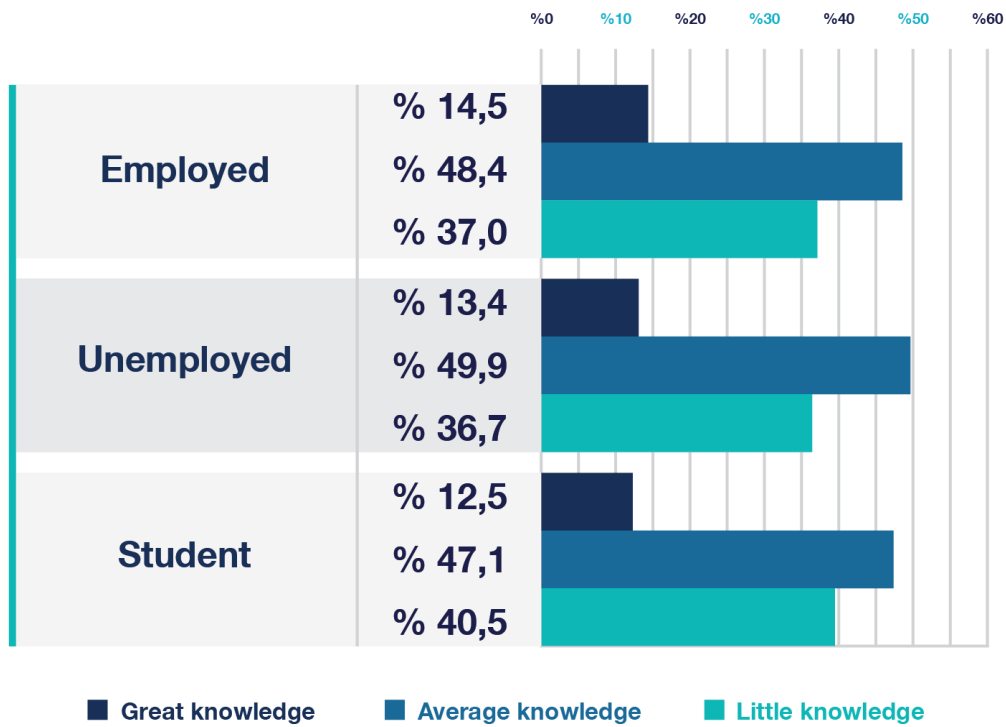
Figure 23 showcases the relationship between degrees of political knowledge and employment status

Despite differences in the societies hosting the study sample, there were no significant differences in political knowledge based on current place of residence, except for a slight increase among young people in European countries. This is depicted in Figure 24.

	%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60

Syrian regime areas	% 13,7	% 48,0	% 38,3
Syrian Interim Govt areas	% 10,0	% 55,3	% 34,7
Idlib and countryside	% 11,6	% 48,2	% 40,2
Northeast (SDF)	% 14,6	% 52,0	% 33,4
Turkey	% 13,9	% 45,0	% 41,1
Neighboring countries	% 14,8	% 44,3	% 40,9
Europe	% 16,7	% 49,0	% 34,3

■ Great knowledge　　■ Average knowledge　　■ Little knowledge
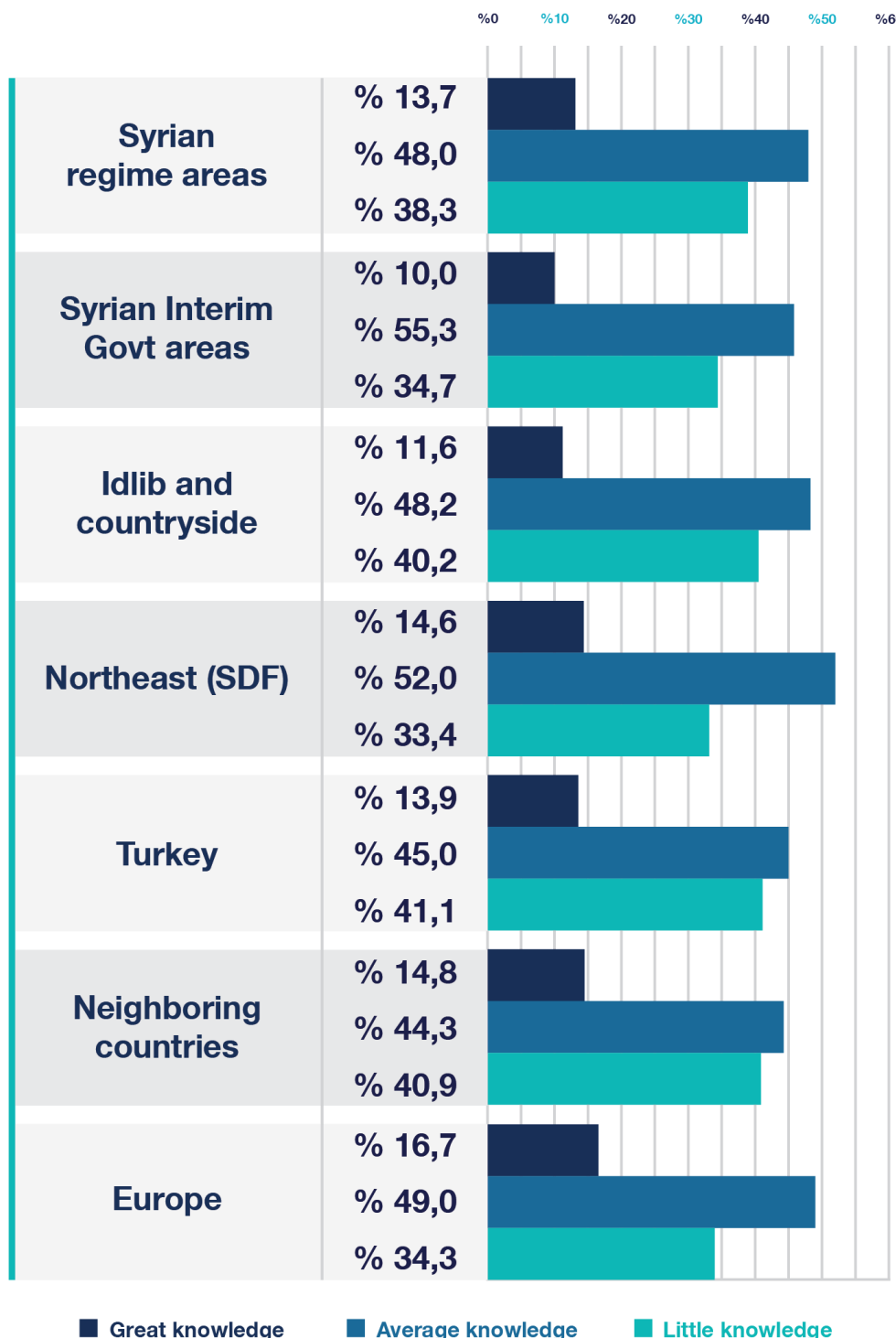
Figure No. (24) shows the relationship between political knowledge and current place of residence

Fourth: Absence of Legitimacy of Existing Authorities in Syria

Collectively, the authorities in Syria have failed to satisfy the Syrian youth, to varying degrees. This is consistent with previous studies, which showed that Syrian youth generally do not follow political news in Syria, and lack confidence in all political currents and bodies in the country.

Of all the authorities in Syria, the Syrian government in Damascus has the highest rate of opposition among Syrian youth at 70.8%, followed by the Syrian Democratic Forces at 68.6%, and the Salvation Government in Idlib at 63.1%. The interim government has the lowest rate of opposition at 58.8%.

These figures indicate a loss of legitimacy of existing authorities in Syria among the country's youth, due to their failure to connect with the needs of young people and provide viable alternatives to previous authorities in areas no longer under the control of the government in Damascus. The de facto authorities have adopted exclusionary, corrupt, and discriminatory policies, reproducing those of the pre- and post-revolution government in Damascus.

		0 4 8 12 16 20 24 28 32 36 40 44 48 52 56 60	
Salvation govt in Idlib	Very supportive		% 2,3
	Supportive		% 8,5
	Neutral		% 26,1
	Opposed		% 24,8
	Very opposed		% 38,2
The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)	Very supportive		% 4,0
	Supportive		% 6,0
	Neutral		% 21,5
	Opposed		% 24,2
	Very opposed		% 44,3
The Syrian Interim Govt (Turkish-controlled)	Very supportive		% 2,2
	Supportive		% 11,9
	Neutral		% 27,1
	Opposed		% 25,6
	Very opposed		% 33,2
Syrian Government in Damascus	Very supportive		% 6,6
	Supportive		% 7,0
	Neutral		% 15,6
	Opposed		% 18,6
	Very opposed		% 52,2

■ Very supportive ■ Supportive ■ Neutral ■ Opposed ■ Very opposed

Figure No. (25) presents the respondents' attitudes towards the existing authorities in Syria

The field results indicate that the Syrian youth are dissatisfied with the de facto authorities in all regions, regardless of their place of residence. These authorities have not gained clear support from those living under their control or outside of it.

Fifth: A significant weakness in the political participation of the Syrian youth

Furthermore, the study revealed a significant weakness in the political engagement of Syrian youth. To measure their level of political engagement, the study sample was presented with a range of activities related to public affairs. These included participation in elections (presidential, local councils, people's council/federations, unions, etc.), taking part in marches and demonstrations, distributing campaign publications, engaging in political discussions with relatives, friends, attending political seminars and conferences, participating in electoral campaigns for candidates, advocacy campaigns of a political nature, signing political messages addressed to countries or international or local political bodies, publishing political content on social media, and commenting on political issues on social networking sites.

We used a statistical weighing process to assign numerical scores to each form of political engagement. Based on these scores, we identified three levels of political engagement: high, medium, and low. The forms of participation included in the study were: participation in elections (presidential, local councils, people's council/unions, trade unions, etc.), taking part in marches and demonstrations, distributing campaign leaflets, engaging in political discussions with relatives and friends, attending political seminars and conferences, participating in election campaigns for candidates, advocacy campaigns of a political nature, signing political messages addressed to countries or international or local political bodies, posting political content on social media, and commenting on political issues on social networking sites.

It is worth noting that these levels of participation indicate the involvement of young people in public affairs even before the study was conducted.

According to Figure (26), the results of the scale were as follows:

Strong engagement % 3,6

Average engagement % 31,9

Weak engagement % 64,5
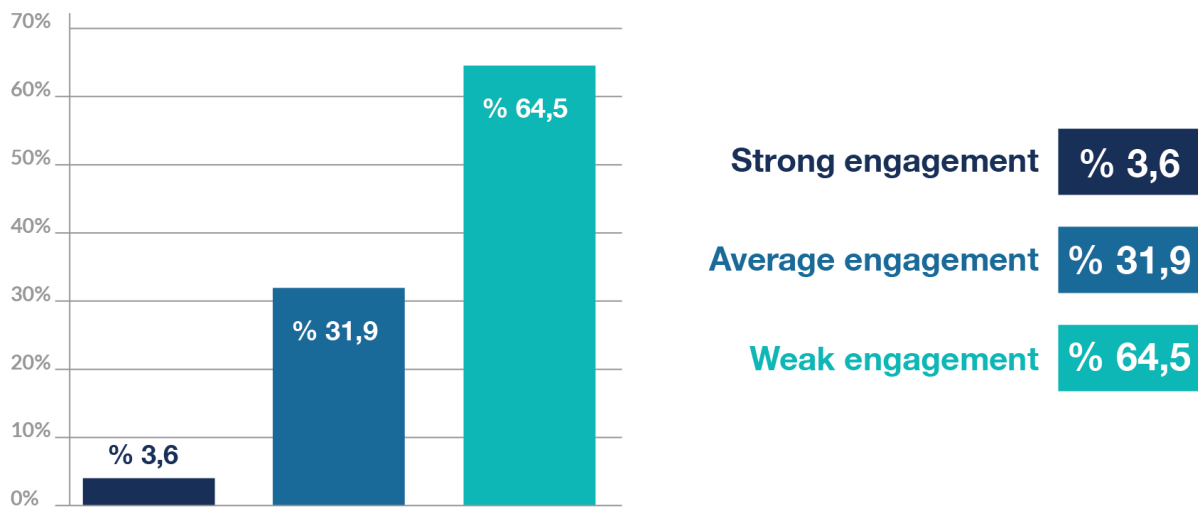
Figure No. (26) shows the results of the degree of youth political engagement

The study sample revealed a significant weakness in youth political engagement. While the result may appear surprising, it can be attributed to the societal reluctance in Syria to engage in political action beyond what's deemed satisfactory by the political authority, especially in a repressive climate. During the revolution, however, young people had the opportunity to break into political life. Unfortunately, with the end of peaceful demonstrations and the formation of military bodies, the youth once again withdrew from political action due to the bloody conflict that erupted in 2012 and continued afterward. The lack of clarity in their vision and the inadequacy of their political programs caused the political bodies to fail in attracting young people. Consequently, more than a decade after the revolution, their activities didn't yield fruitful results. Furthermore, they might have deliberately excluded young people.

Figure (27) represents the different forms of large and medium political engagement of young people in the study sample, including:

- Political discussions with friends

- Political discussions with relatives

- Participation in demonstrations

- Making political comments on social media

- Political posts on social media

- Joining marches

- Attending political seminars and conferences

Voting in elections for the presidency, local councils, people's council, federations, syndicates, and other entities.

Category	Frequently	Somewhat	No
Making political comments on social media	% 17,5	% 36,8	% 45,7
Political posts on social media	% 14,5	% 31,4	% 54,1
Signing political petitions addressed to authorities and the international community	% 4,8	% 15,2	% 80,0
Advocacy campaigns of a political nature	% 6,1	% 19,0	% 74,9
Election campaigns for candidates	% 2,0	% 11,1	% 86,9
Political seminars and conferences	% 8,4	% 21,7	% 69,9
Political discussions with friends	% 34,1	% 45,3	% 20,6
Political discussions with relatives	% 31,6	% 48,6	% 19,8
Distribution of pamphlets campaign	% 5,6	% 17,5	% 76,9
Demonstrations/Protests	% 15,7	% 29,9	% 54,4
Marches	% 6,6	% 22,8	% 70,6
Elections (for presidency, syndicates, organizations, unions etc)	% 8,8	% 30,7	% 60,4

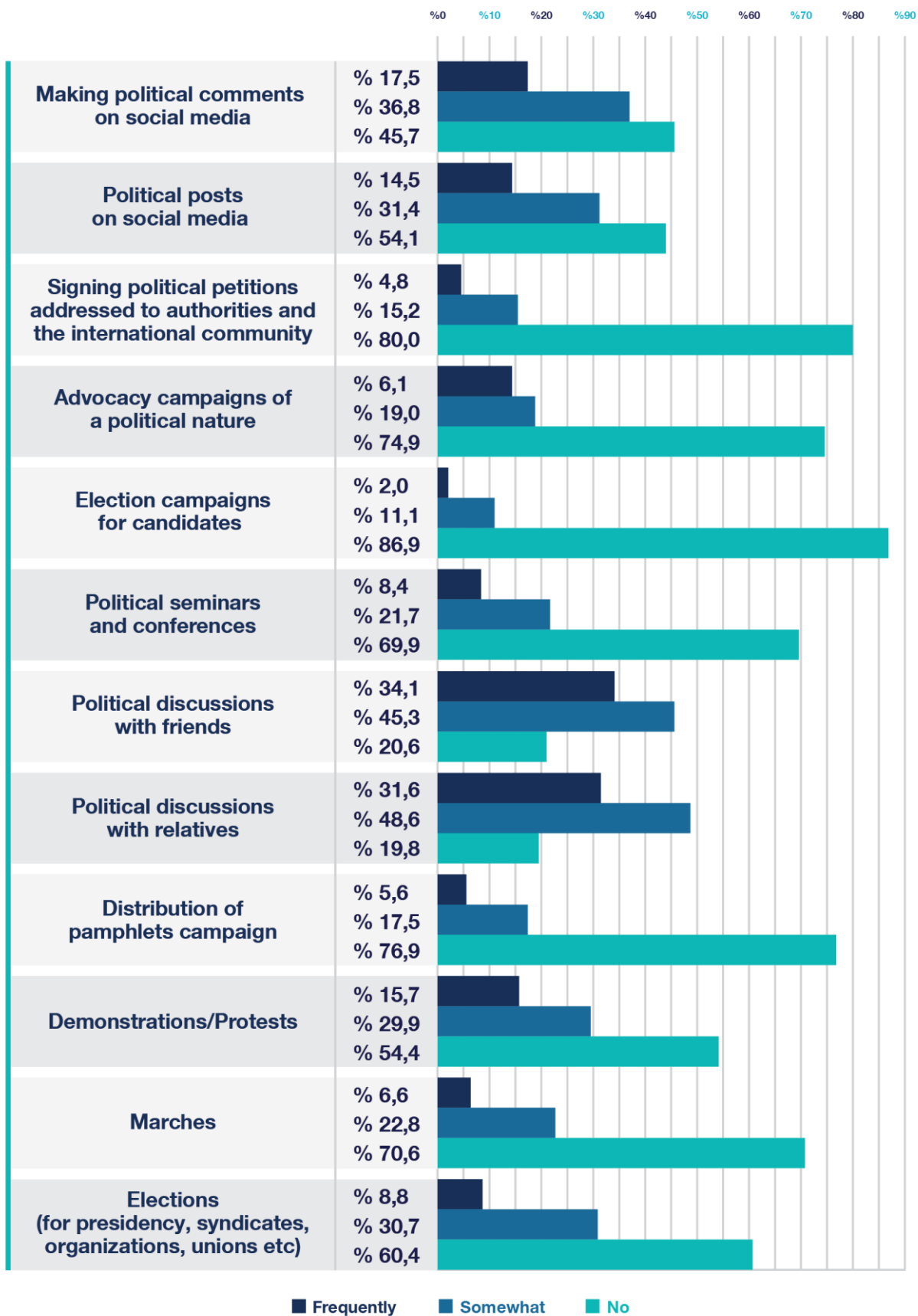■ Frequently   ■ Somewhat   ■ No

Figure (27) displays the various forms of political engagement reported by the respondents

Sixth: Absence of Organizational Dimension of Political Action among Syrian Youth

Figure (28) indicates a significant decline in the political affiliation of the respondents based on the field results.
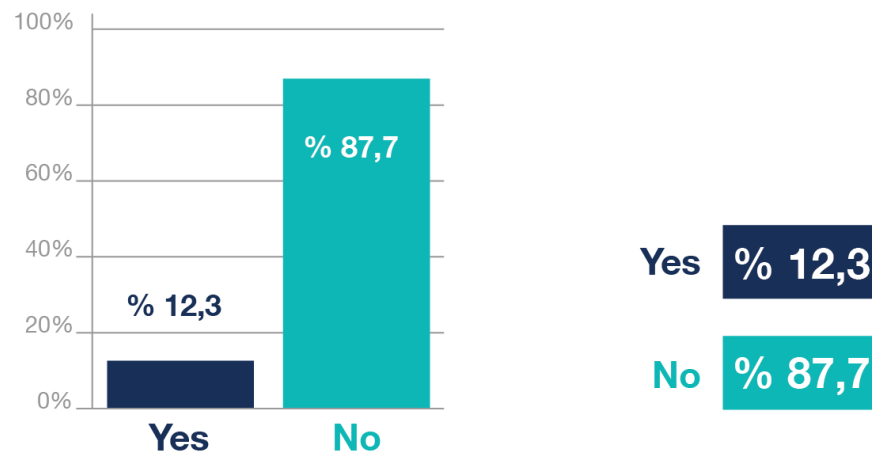
Figure No. (28) shows respondents' affiliation with political parties

The political parties and organizations that young people belonged to had a Syrian national orientation2 in the majority (56%). These parties and organizations primarily focused on Syrian issues and internal affairs, followed by those with a national orientation (28%), religious orientation (8%), and liberal orientation (8%) as well. Please refer to Figure (29) for details.
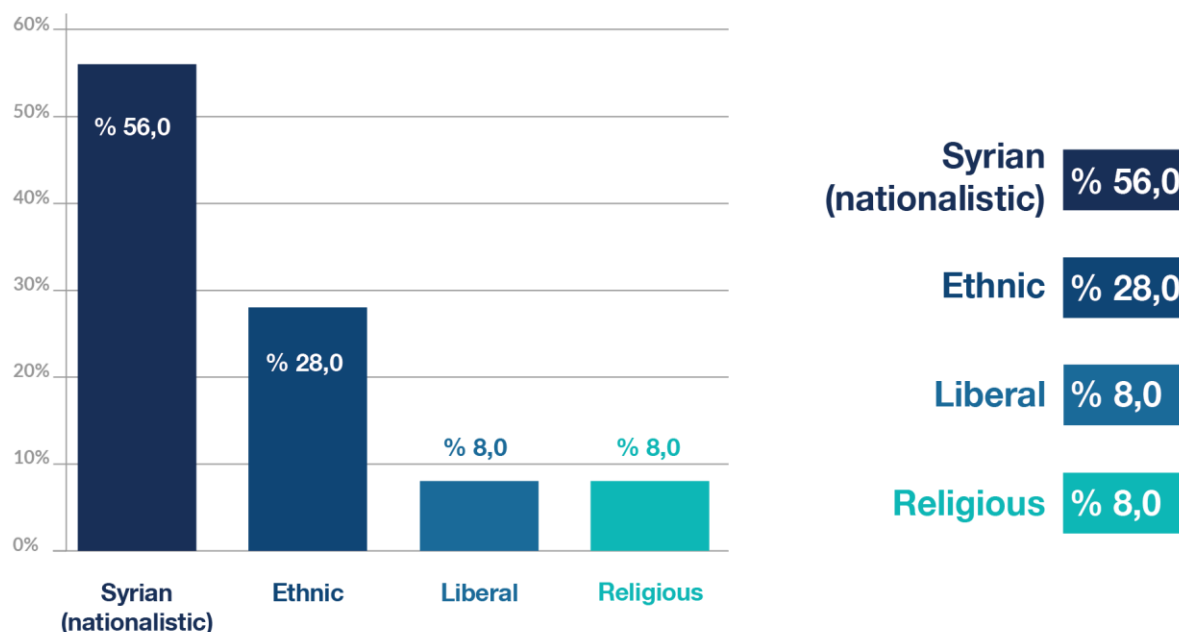
Figure No. (29) illustrates the orientation of political groups that politically organized youth are affiliated with

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2 | It should be noted that parties designated as nationalistic prioritize Syrian issues and internal affairs, but this does not diminish the nationalism of parties with a national, religious, or liberal orientation. The distinction being made is based on the fundamental direction of the party or political organization.

Seventh: Root Causes of Limited Support for Political Parties and Institutions

The study sample revealed a significant decline in the percentage of support for political organizations and parties among Syrian youth. This decline is consistent with their declining engagement in those entities, as shown in Figure (30).
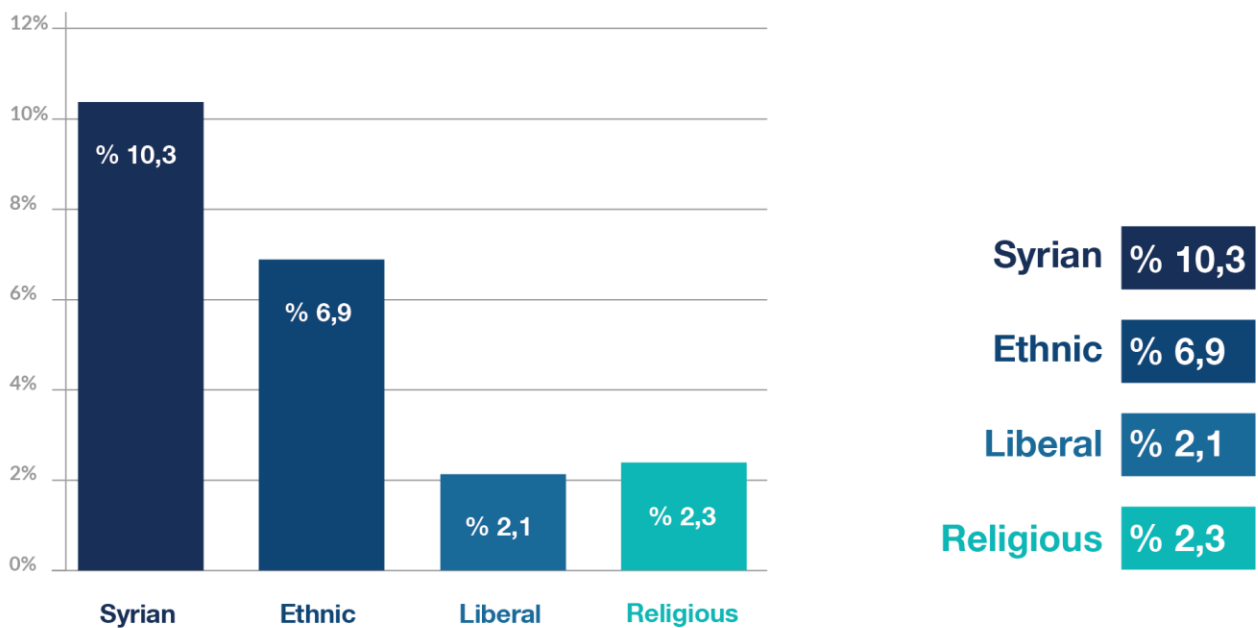
Figure No. (31) shows the trends of the parties supported by the respondents

Regarding the political parties and organizations they endorse, as shown in figure (31), their orientations were consistent with the earlier findings among those engaged in political activism. This is a promising sign of a political alignment that emphasizes Syria's national identity and can serve as a foundation for the country's political future.

Syrian % 10,3
Ethnic % 6,9
Liberal % 2,1
Religious % 2,3
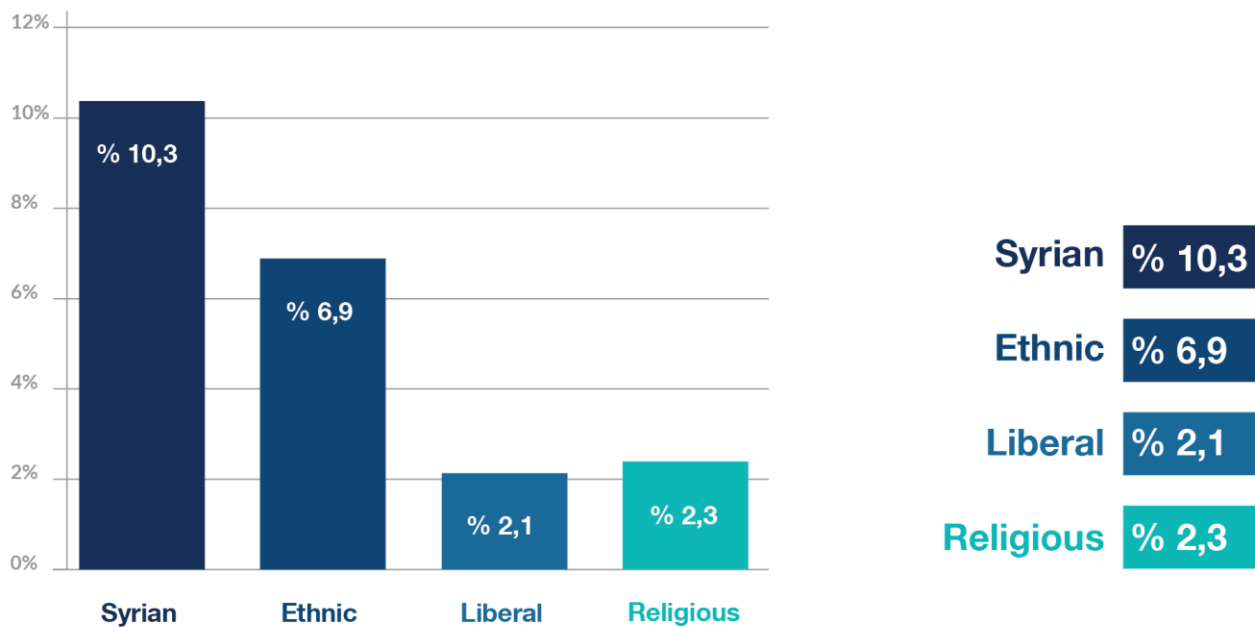
Figure No. (31) shows the trends of the parties supported by the respondents

Eighth: Marginalized Youth Representation in Political Institutions

According to the study's sample, Syrian youth are not adequately represented in various political parties and organizations, as shown in Figure (32). Specifically, 47.7% of respondents reported that young people are not represented at all, while 27.6% acknowledged some degree of representation, and only 6% reported the existence of meaningful representation. Additionally, 18.6% of youth in the sample expressed a lack of knowledge about this issue, which may reflect a broader lack of interest or awareness among Syrian youth.

		%0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32 %36 %40 %44 %48 %52 %56 %60
Yes	**% 6,1**	
To a certain extent	**% 27,6**	
No	**% 47,7**	
I don't know	**% 18,6**	
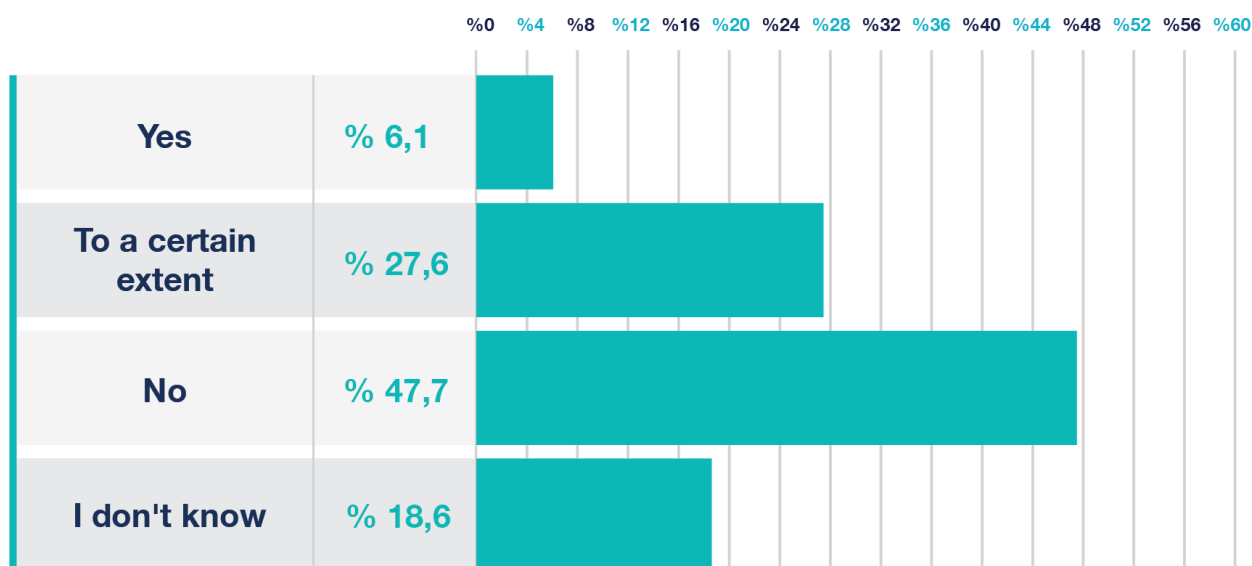
Figure No. (32) Syrian youth's opinion of their representation in political institutions

According to Figure (33), a significant proportion of the study sample expressed dissatisfaction with the representation of young people in these parties and organizations.

		%0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32 %36 %40 %44 %48 %52 %56 %60
Very satisfied	% 1,2	
Satisfied	% 11,3	
Neutral	% 30,4	
Very unsatisfied	% 16,3	
Unsatisfied	% 40,8	

Figure No. (33) shows respondents' level of satisfaction with youth representation in political action

The study sample identified several reasons for the poor representation of young people in these political parties and organizations, as shown in Figure (34). One major factor was the dominance of traditional political bodies and blocs on the Syrian political landscape. Additionally, many young people are preoccupied with securing their daily needs and may lack interest or confidence in political engagement, especially given the authoritarian nature of the state. Other reasons included deliberate exclusion of young people from the political scene and various interests and power struggles within Syrian political institutions.

Reason	%	Chart
The domination of traditional Syrian bodies and blocs on the Syrian political space	% 22,2	
Young people prioritizing securing their daily lives	% 21,2	
Security-related fear hindering engagement	% 18,8	
Relationships within the Syrian bodies and blocs that are based on mutual interests and personal goals	% 10,8	
Deliberately excluding young people from the political scene	% 10,7	
The inadequacy of political action among Syrian youth	% 8,1	
Young people's unwillingness to work in politics	% 8.0	
Conscription	% 0.1	
The weaponizing of the Syrian political scene	% 0.1	
I don't know	% 0.1	

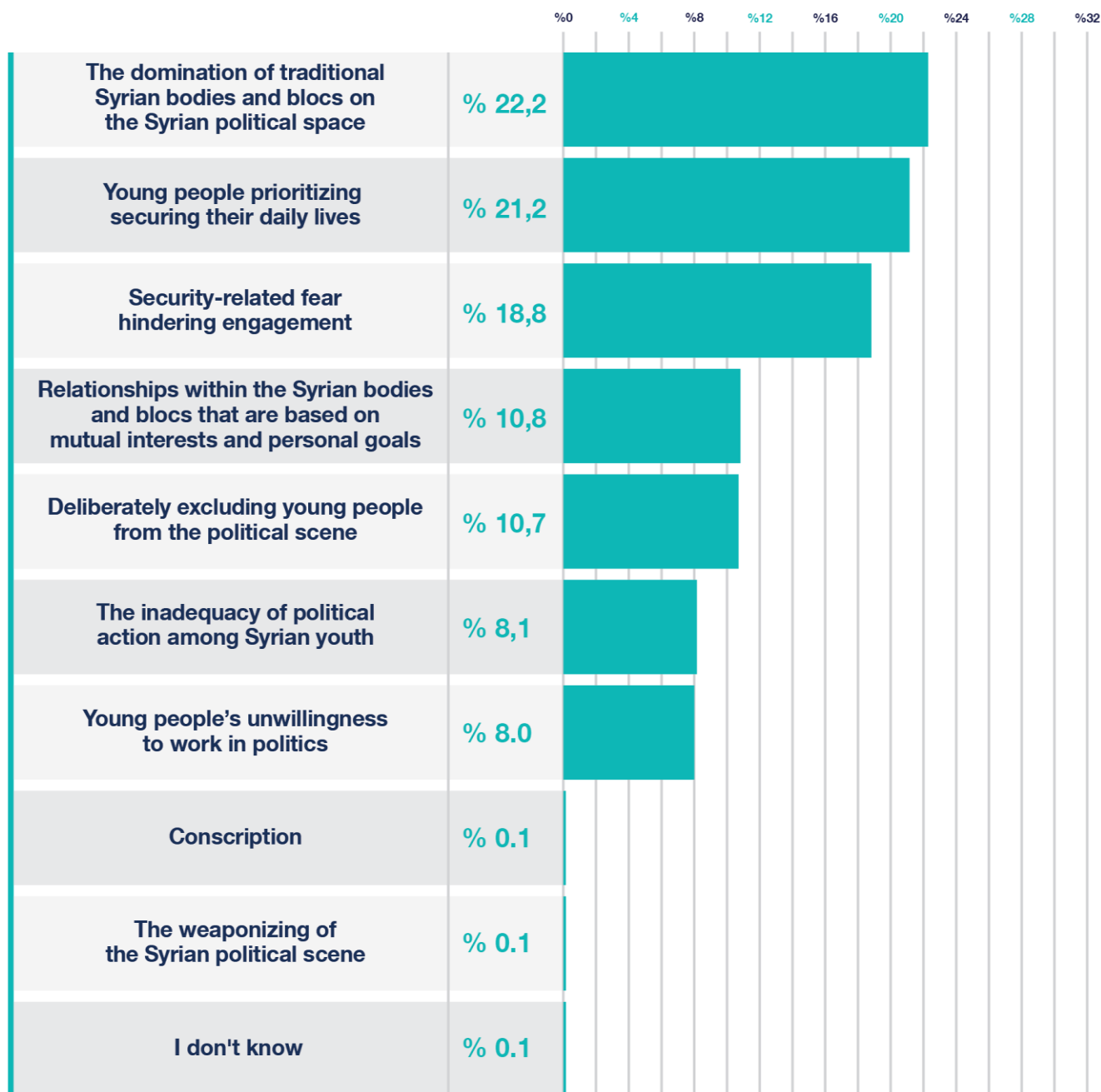Scale: %0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32

Figure No. (34) shows the reasons why young people are not represented in politics

Ninth: Contemporary Perceptions of the Future Shape of the State in Syria

A.   New Trends Towards Decentralization and Federalism

When asked about their preferred form of the state, Syrian youth exhibited an increasing trend toward the idea of a "decentralized state," as evidenced by 43.7% of the sample choosing this option, according to Figure (35). Meanwhile, 38.9% of respondents preferred a centralized state, 13.9% supported a federal state, and only 2.3% endorsed the separation and division of Syria into multiple states.

This shift in preferences among young people may reflect the challenges of achieving a political solution and reaching consensus on the Syrian issue. Additionally, exposure to alternative political experiences that address national and ethnic diversity may have played a role in shaping these attitudes toward a decentralized or federal state, as opposed to the centralized state model that existed in Syria.
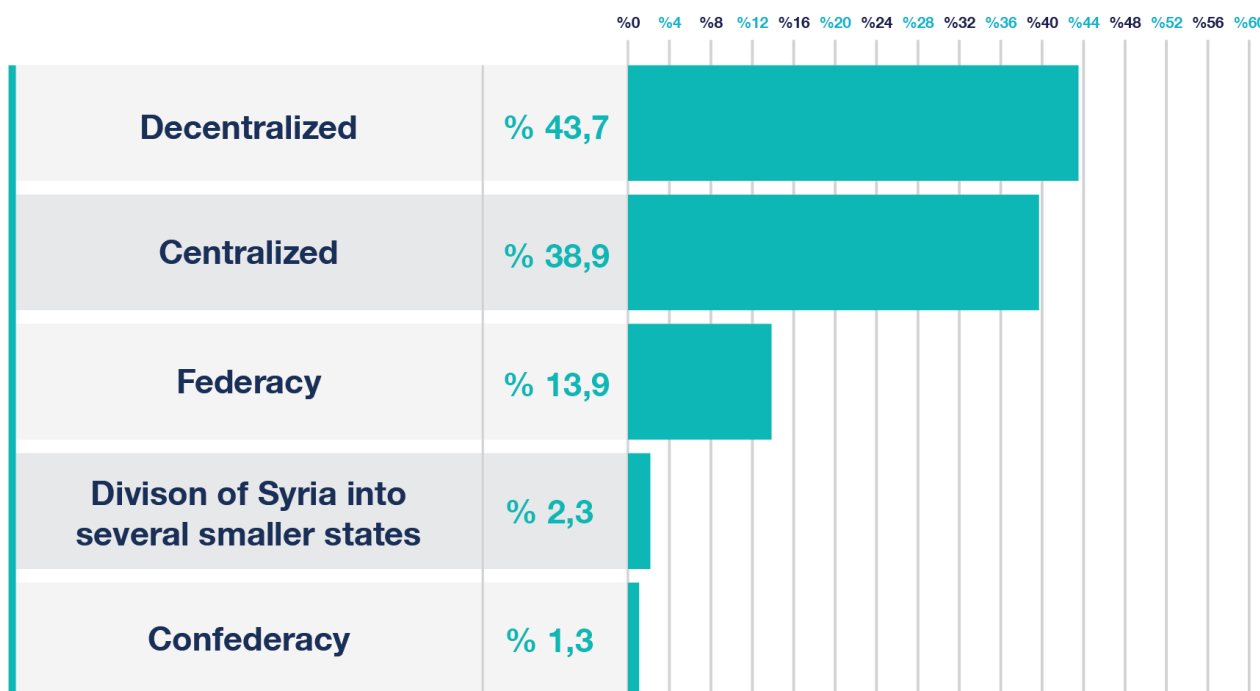

Figure No. (35) shows respondents' preference for the future shape of the state of Syria

These findings are in line with a previous report issued by The Day After in 2021 titled "Impressions of Syrian Men and Women on the Concept and Dimensions of Decentralization." That report demonstrated a clear tendency among Syrians to embrace decentralization as a positive force for change and a transformative political tool that can support stability, peacebuilding, and democratic transition in Syria[3].

In fact, 77.6% of the research sample in the previous report confirmed that future decentralization in Syria would play a supportive role in the country's democratic transition process. Similarly, 77.5% of respondents believed that decentralization would help to mitigate conflicts and build local peace, while 59% thought it could contribute to achieving justice for victims and providing compensation.

B. Syria's Future Constitution between Islamic Jurisprudence and Existing Laws

Regarding the future constitution of Syria, the study sample showed support for a constitution based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international laws and agreements as a primary source of legislation, along with other sources. This option was chosen by approximately 40% of respondents. Meanwhile, 36.7% preferred a constitution that relied on Islamic jurisprudence as one of the primary sources of legislation, in addition to other sources. Only 19% favored a constitution based solely on Islamic jurisprudence as the source of legislation, as shown in Figure (36).

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3 | Syrians' Perceptions on the Concept and Implementation of Decentralization- The Day After
https://tda-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/DecentralizationEN.pdf

	%0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32 %36 %40 %44
The state recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international laws and agreements as one of the main sources of legislation, in addition to other sources of legislation	% 39,9
The state adopts Islamic jurisprudence as one of the main sources of legislation, alongside other sources	% 36,7
A sole reliance on Islamic jurisprudence as the source of legislation	% 19,0
I don't know	% 3,9

Figure No. (36) shows the respondents' preference for the constitution in future Syria

It is worth noting that these findings align with and validate previous results presented in The Day After's 2021 report on Syrian perceptions of citizenship and identity. The report demonstrated that a higher percentage of the sample preferred adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international laws and agreements as one of the sources of legislation in addition to other sources, with 45.5% of respondents. This was followed by 36% who believed that Islamic Sharia should be one of the sources of legislation along with others, while the lowest percentage of 14.6% believed that Islamic Sharia should be the sole source of legislation in the country[4].

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4 | The Opinions of Syrians about Citizenship and Identity (Survey)- The Day After
https://tda-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/citizinship-en.pdf

C.   Pattern of government in future Syria

The study sample expressed preferences for various forms of governance for future Syria. The parliamentary system was the most favored with 37%, followed by the mixed "presidential and parliamentary" system at 32%, and presidential rule at 30.5%. A very small percentage of respondents preferred monarchy. Refer to Figure No. (37).

		%0 %4 %8 %12 %16 %20 %24 %28 %32 %36 %40 %44 %48 %52 %56 %60
Parliamentary	% 37,0	
Mixed (parliamentary and presidential)	% 32,0	
Presidential	% 30,5	
Monarchy	% 0,2	
I dont know	% 0,3	
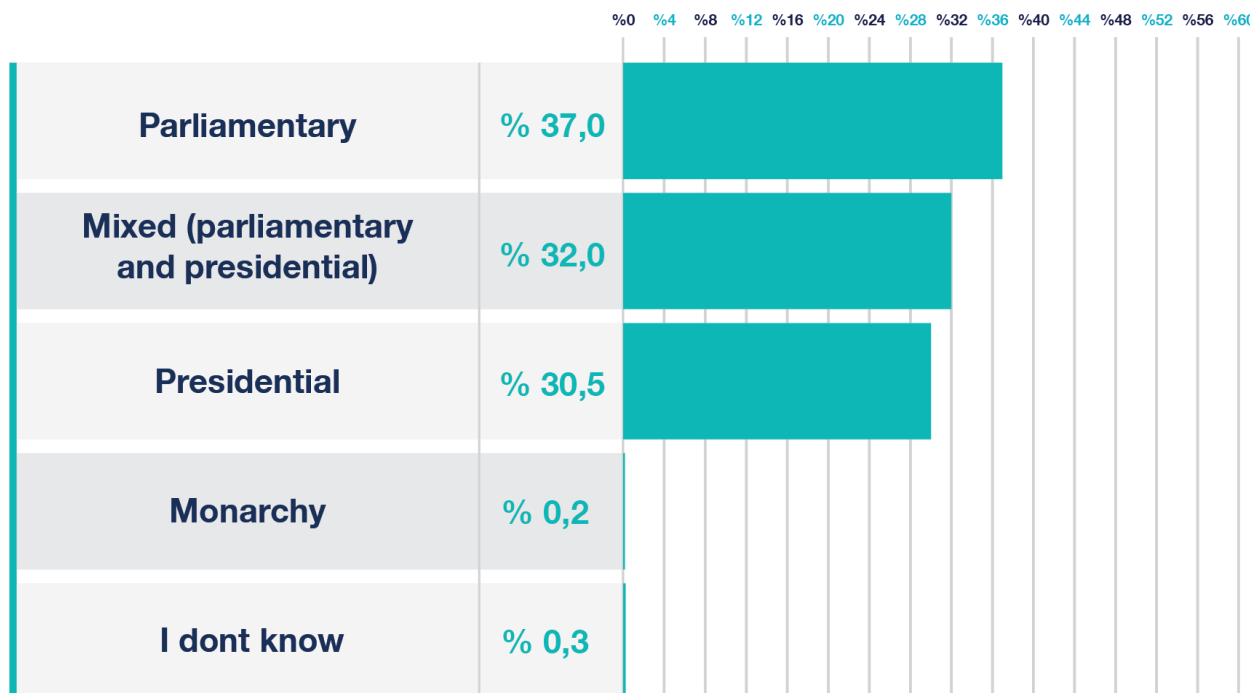
Figure No. (37) shows respondents' preference for the system of government in future Syria

The varied preferences for the future constitution and style of government in Syria are positive indicators of the youth's interest in political life and their openness to different political and constitutional experiences. These preferences reflect their concerns about the future of Syria and their aspirations for a democratic and secure future. It is noteworthy that these preferences also reflect their experiences in countries of asylum.

Tenth: Advanced Positions and Roles of Women in Public Life

Recognizing the crucial role of women in the reconstruction of Syria, including their participation in the political sphere, this study delved into the Syrian youth's perceptions of the future positions and roles of women in political and public life. Encouragingly, the study found an overall increase in support among Syrian youth for women's rights in public life, particularly their role in politics.

We utilized a statistical method of assigning numerical scores to various forms of women's rights in political and public life, resulting in three levels of support: supportive, moderately supportive, and opposed. It is important to note that these levels of support pertain to the rights of Syrian women in public affairs and their participation in political life. This includes areas such as the state's role, political party leadership, setting a minimum level of women's representation in elected institutions (such as local administration and parliament), and participation in negotiating delegations (such as those in Geneva, Astana, and Sochi).
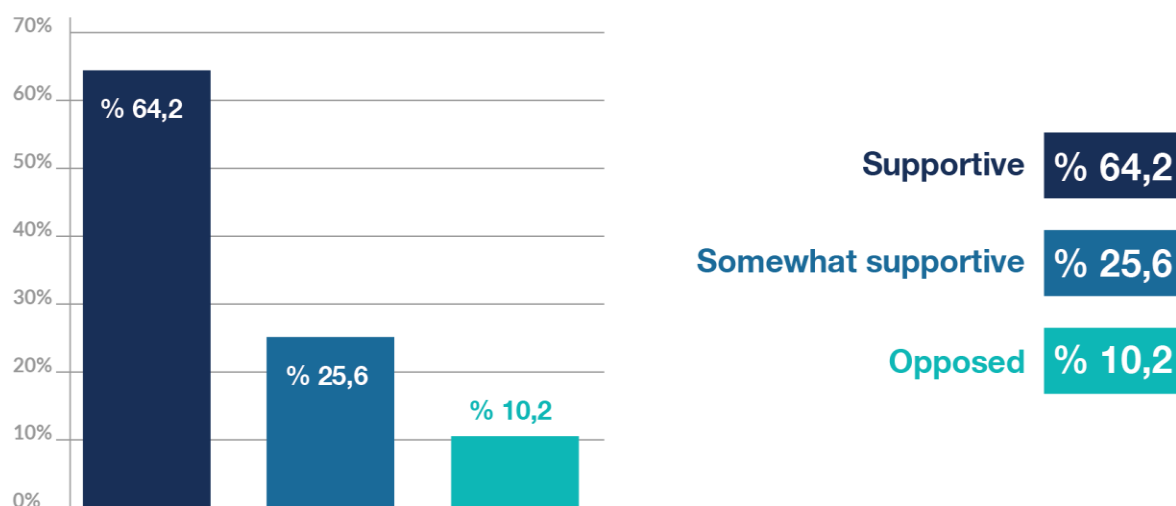
Figure (38) shows the results of the scale:

Supportive	% 64,2
Somewhat supportive	% 25,6
Opposed	% 10,2

Figure No. (38) Scale of support for women's rights

The results indicate a positive shift in Syrian youth's perception of women's roles and status in society, particularly in terms of their rights in public life. This change in mindset suggests a recognition of the importance of including all members of society, including women, in building a new and inclusive society. The difficult conditions endured by young people during the Syrian conflict may have contributed to this conviction.

study findings revealed the following forms of support for women's rights in public life:

- Women's right to vote: **91.2%**

- Women's right to run for local administrations and parliament: 80.7%

- The right to participate in negotiating delegations (Geneva, Astana, Sochi...): **72.4%**

- Women's right to lead political parties: **70.5%**

- The right of women to hold leadership positions in the state: **70%**

- Allocating a minimum level for women's representation in elected institutions (local administration and parliament) (a quota): **64.8%**

The right of a woman to run for the presidency of Syria and for the president of Syria to be a woman at rates of 62.8% and 54.7% respectively.

Upon comparing the results of this study with a previous report titled "Perceptions of Syrian men and women about the reality of women in Syria" issued by The Day After in 2022, we find a great similarity in the opinions of the two samples. In the previous report, 87.6% of the sample approved of granting women the right to run for local councils, while 89% expressed their support for women's right to run for the People's Assembly/Parliament. These percentages were slightly higher than those in our current study. However, there was a significant decrease in the

percentage of those who supported women's right to run for the presidency of the republic, reaching 64.9% in the previous report and 62.8% in our current study[5].

It is important to note that the convergence of percentages in these reports confirms the accuracy of the data collection and its representation of the study population, reflecting the reality of Syrians as closely as possible.

Regarding the gender variable, the percentages of support for women's rights in public life, including the right to education, the right to work, and political and civil rights, were found to be equal between the sexes. Figure No. (39).
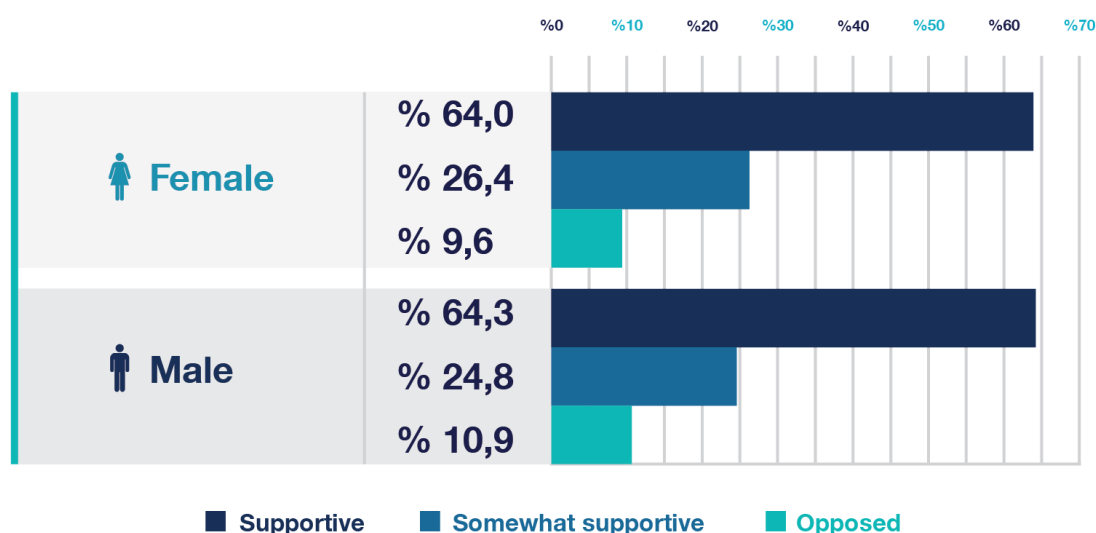
Figure No. (39) Supporting women's rights according to respondents' gender

5 | Perceptions of Syrian Men and Women On the Situation of Women in Syria (Opinion Poll)- The Day After https://tda-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/women1EN.pdf

This applies to approval rates according to the age group variable (Figure 40).

		%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60	%70	%80

18-23
% 64,7
% 24,9
% 10,4

24-29
% 63,6
% 27,2
% 9,2

30-35
% 64,3
% 24,5
% 11,2

■ Supportive   ■ Somewhat supportive   ■ Opposed
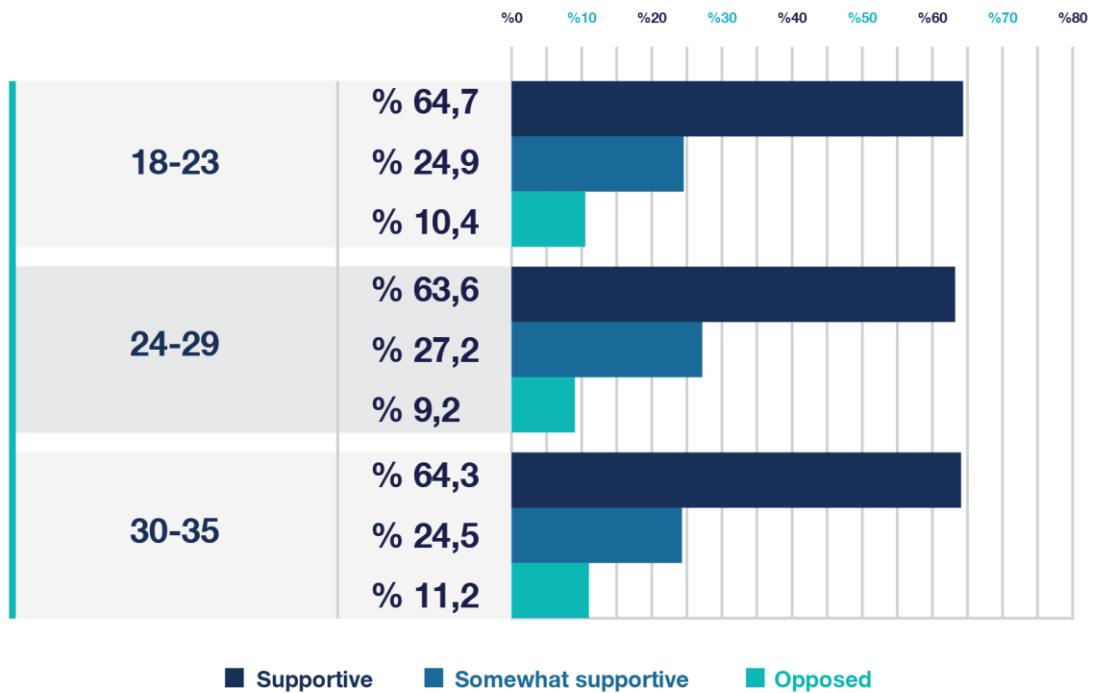
Figure No. (40) Supporting women's rights according to respondents' age group

Similarly, the distribution of support for women's rights in public life was found to be consistent across all education levels, with negligible differences between them, as shown in Figure (41).

		%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60	%70
Ninth grade and below	% 63,8								
	% 26,9								
	% 9,4								
Highschool	% 63,8								
	% 25,7								
	% 10,5								
University graduate	% 64,6								
	% 25,0								
	% 10,4								
Post-graduate	% 63,5								
	% 25,7								
	% 10,8								

■ Supportive   ■ Somewhat supportive   ■ Opposed
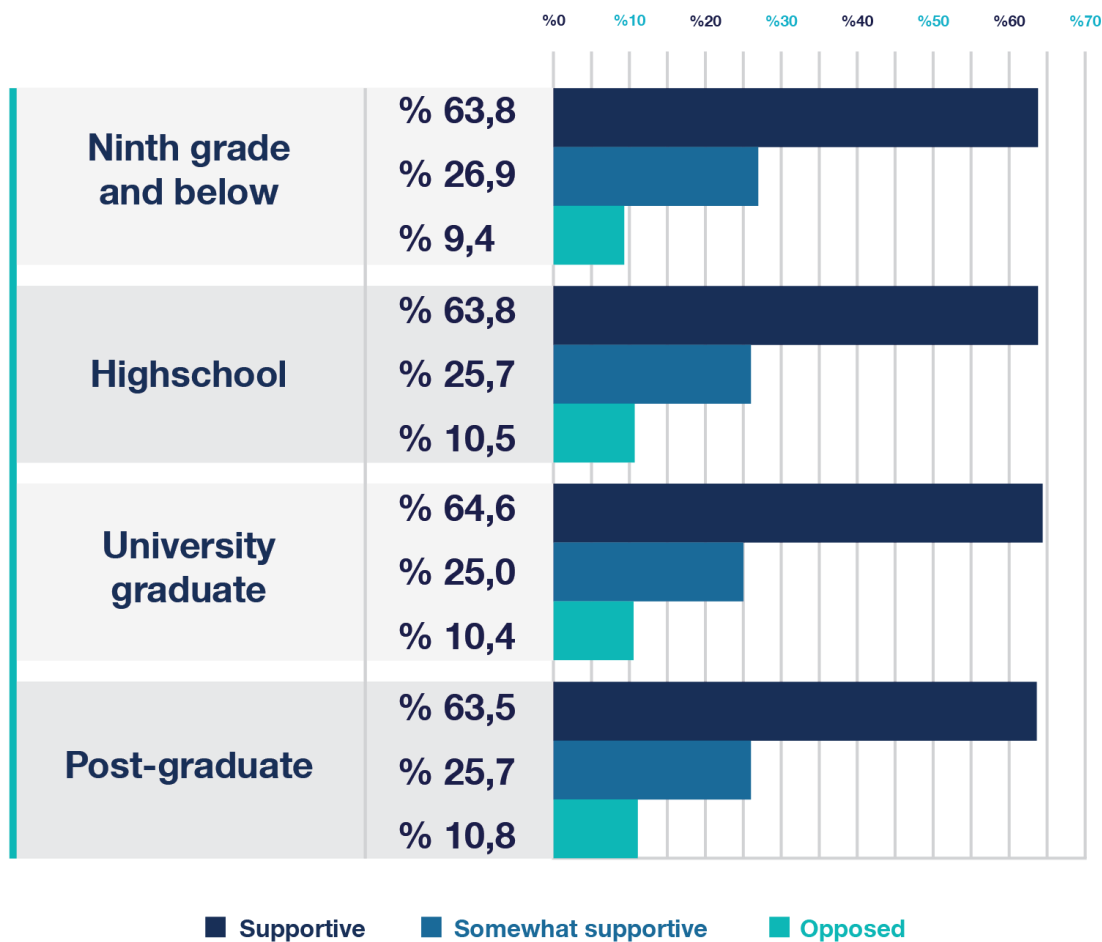
Figure No. (41) Supporting women's rights according to respondents' education level

Similar to the findings related to education level, the percentages of support for women's rights in public life were also high across the respondents' various employment status. Figure (42) illustrates these results.

		%0	%10	%20	%30	%40	%50	%60	%70
Employed	% 64,6								
	% 25,0								
	% 10,4								
Unemployed	% 63,3								
	% 27,2								
	% 9,5								
Student	% 64,4								
	% 24,9								
	% 10,7								

■ Supportive   ■ Somewhat supportive   ■ Opposed
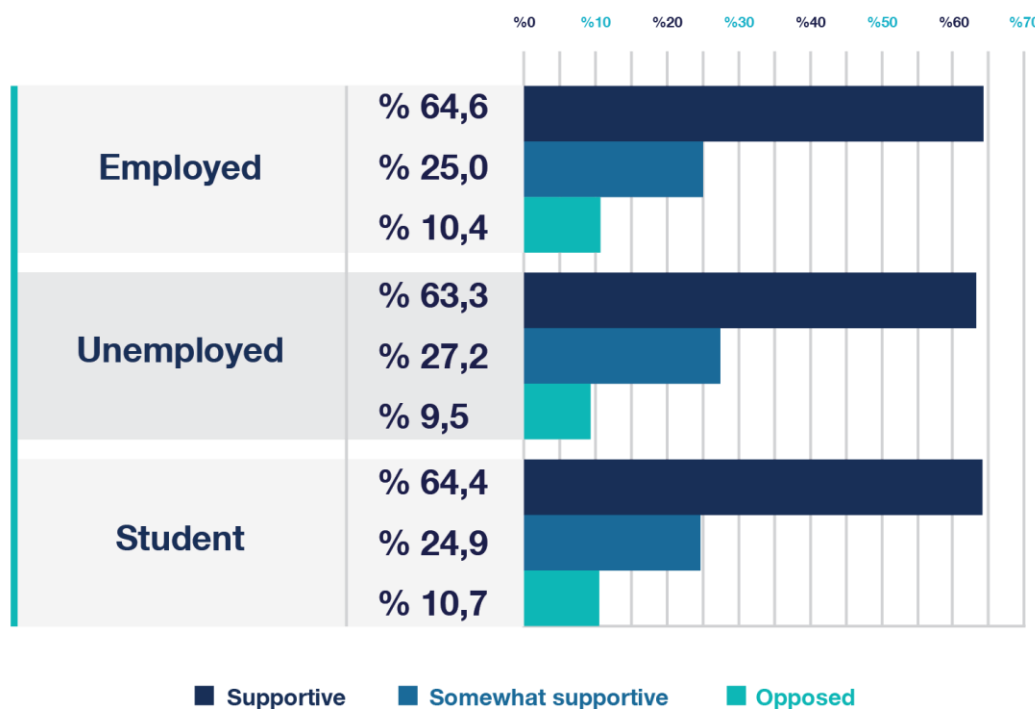
Figure No. (42) Supporting women's rights according to respondents' employment status

Eleventh: Determinants of Youth political engagement in Future Syria

Part A) Obstacles to political engagement Among Syria's Youth

The study revealed several inhibiting factors that could hinder youth participation in politics in future Syria. Figure (43) shows that the most prominent obstacle is "fear of the security services." This fear reflects the fact that political life in Syria is still fresh in the minds of young people, especially considering that more than three-quarters of the sample are from areas not controlled by the Syrian regime. This indicates that Syrian youth may perceive change in the structure of Syrian political life as unattainable.

Other obstacles identified in the study include "the opaqueness of the political scene" and "the lack of sufficient information about political issues." Additionally, 8.6% of the study sample believed that Syrian youth are not qualified to engage in political work and lack political experience. The remaining obstacles were distributed across several reasons.

| | | %0 | %4 | %8 | %12 | %16 | %20 | %24 | %28 | %32 | %36 | %40 |

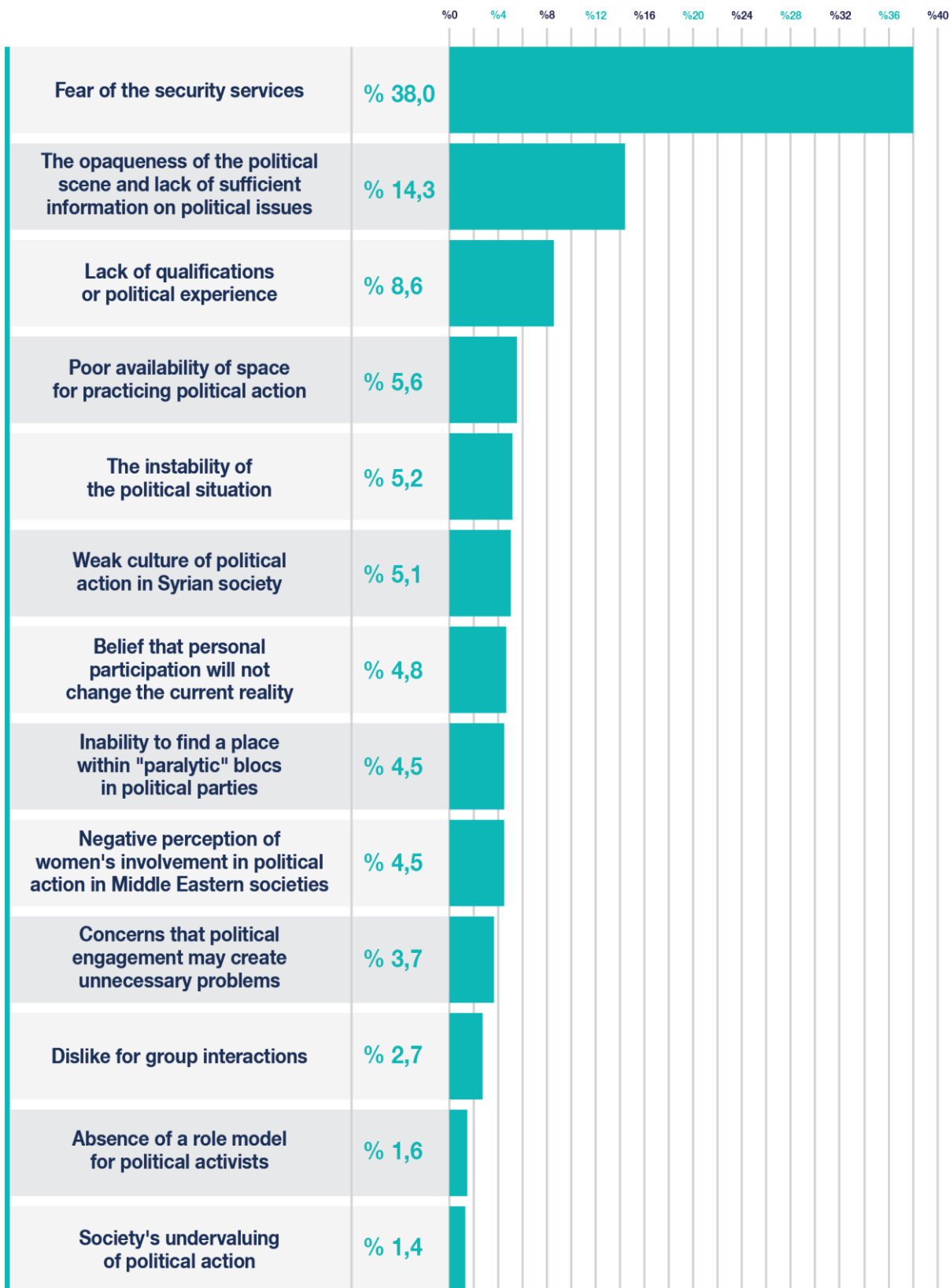| Fear of the security services	% 38,0	██████████████████████████████████
The opaqueness of the political scene and lack of sufficient information on political issues	% 14,3	██████████████
Lack of qualifications or political experience	% 8,6	████████
Poor availability of space for practicing political action	% 5,6	█████
The instability of the political situation	% 5,2	█████
Weak culture of political action in Syrian society	% 5,1	█████
Belief that personal participation will not change the current reality	% 4,8	████
Inability to find a place within "paralytic" blocs in political parties	% 4,5	████
Negative perception of women's involvement in political action in Middle Eastern societies	% 4,5	████
Concerns that political engagement may create unnecessary problems	% 3,7	███
Dislike for group interactions	% 2,7	██
Absence of a role model for political activists	% 1,6	█
Society's undervaluing of political action	% 1,4	█

Figure No. (43) Reasons that inhibit political engagement in the future

B) Preconditions for youth political engagement

The study sample identified several conditions that are necessary for enabling youth to engage in political action in the future Syria, as shown in Figure (44). 30% of the sample stated that it is essential to "separate the roles of the security services from political institutions and movements." This finding reinforces the notion that the fear of the security services remains a major obstacle to youth political engagement, as discussed in the previous section.

Another precondition highlighted by the sample is the need to "incorporate political action into school curricula," which would help young people develop the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in politics. This is particularly important given the lack of experience among many Syrian youth in political activism. The third precondition is the need for flexible laws that allow for youth political engagement.

Overall, these findings suggest that separating politics from security services and promoting political education among young people are crucial for enabling youth to participate effectively in political life in the future Syria.
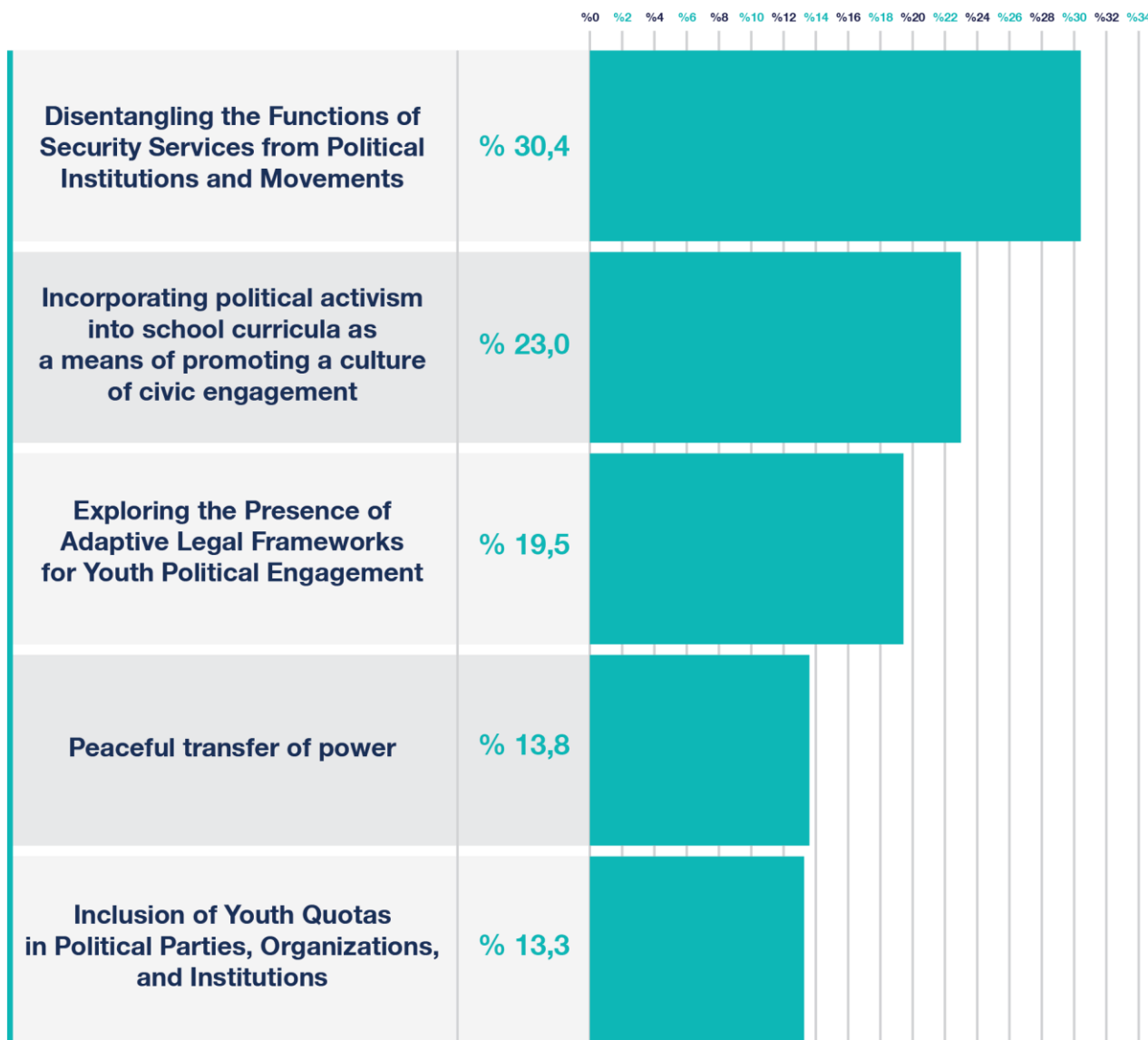
	%0 %2 %4 %6 %8 %10 %12 %14 %16 %18 %20 %22 %24 %26 %28 %30 %32 %34
Disentangling the Functions of Security Services from Political Institutions and Movements	% 30,4
Incorporating political activism into school curricula as a means of promoting a culture of civic engagement	% 23,0
Exploring the Presence of Adaptive Legal Frameworks for Youth Political Engagement	% 19,5
Peaceful transfer of power	% 13,8
Inclusion of Youth Quotas in Political Parties, Organizations, and Institutions	% 13,3

Figure No. (44) Conditions for political action in the future

III. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to report on the findings of a field study on the opinions and perceptions of Syrian youth towards the current political landscape in Syria. The main areas covered by the study are as follows:

Insights of Syrian Youth on the Present Political Landscape in Syria

1. The study revealed a significant lack of interest among Syrian youth in keeping up with political news related to Syria.

2. Male respondents showed more interest in Syrian political news than female respondents (27.6% compared to 11.5%).

3. Older youth, both male and female, demonstrated a higher level of interest in Syrian political news. However, overall rates of sustained engagement with political news were low across all age groups.

4. The level of education appeared to play a significant role in shaping youth engagement with Syrian political news. Respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to follow the news than those with lower levels of education. Post-university education showed the highest follow-up rate at 47.3%, while the follow-up rate for those with ninth-grade education or lower was only 11.4%.

5. Working men and women showed the highest level of interest in Syrian political news, with a follow-up rate of 25.9%. In comparison, unemployed and student respondents showed lower follow-up rates. However, it's worth noting that the follow-up rates varied among the three categories (employed, non-employed, and students).

6. Young people from the Syrian government regions and European countries demonstrated the lowest percentage of sustained engagement with Syrian political news (13.9% and 15.8%, respectively).

7. The study identified several reasons for the lack of interest among Syrian youth in political news, including the lack of interest in politics in general, the presence of economic and living priorities that need to be addressed first, and the lack of confidence in all political entities and movements in Syria.

8. The primary reasons cited by young followers for keeping up with Syrian political news were the impact of the political situation on their daily lives and the presence of family or relatives in different regions of Syria.

9. The study found that both male and female Syrian youth had average to low levels of knowledge about Syrian political bodies, formations, and international laws related to the Syrian situation.

10. The study found that Syrian youth overall were dissatisfied with the political authorities on the ground, to varying degrees. This dissatisfaction was in line with the lack of interest in following political news related to Syria, and extended to all political currents and bodies in the country.

11. The study found that Syrian youth showed a high level of opposition to the authorities on the ground, and that the Syrian government in Damascus had the highest rate of opposition among Syrian youth at 70.8%. This was followed by the Syrian Democratic Forces at 68.6%, and the Salvation Government in Idlib at 63.1%. The Interim Government had the least opposition among Syrian youth at 58.8%.

12. The study found that Syrian youth expressed dissatisfaction with the de facto authorities in all regions, with no clear support from those living under or outside their control.

The Reality of political engagement among Syrian Youth

1. The study revealed that political engagement among Syrian youth is significantly low. Only 3.6% of young people are highly involved in political work, while 64.5% have weak participation. The rest have an average level of political involvement.

2. Syrian political bodies fail to attract youth due to their poor political programs and lack of clear vision.

3. political engagement among Syrian youth primarily occurs through discussions with friends and relatives, attending demonstrations, writing political comments on social media, and participating in marches, seminars, and conferences.

4. The study's field results indicate a significant decline in the political affiliation of Syrian youth. Only 12.3% of the study sample are affiliated with organizations or bodies involved in political work, indicating a weakness in the organizational dimension of political action among both parties and youth.

5. Syrian youth's affiliations (12.3%) are primarily with Syrian national orientations (56%), followed by nationalist orientations (28%), and finally parties and organizations with religious or liberal orientations.

6. The percentage of support for political bodies, organizations, and parties by Syrian youth is decreasing and only reached 21.6%.

7. The attitudes of political parties and bodies supported by Syrian youth (21.6%) are similar to those who are regularly involved in political work.

8. The study's sample revealed that Syrian youth do not have adequate representation in various political parties and bodies, according to 47.7% of the respondents. Only 6% of the sample believes that they are well represented.

9. The vast majority of Syrian youth expressed dissatisfaction with their representation within political parties and bodies.

10. The main reasons for weak representation of young people in political parties or bodies are the domination of traditional political bodies and blocs over the Syrian political scene, young people's preoccupation with securing daily life matters, and the fear of political engagement at the security level.

Envisioning the Future of Politics in Syria through the Aspirations of Syrian Youth

1. The study reveals an increasing trend among Syrian youth for a "decentralized state" with 43.7% in support. In contrast, 38.9% prefer a "central state," while 13.9% support a federal state, and only 2.3% support secession or dividing Syria into several states.

2. The sample of Syrian youth favors a constitution based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international laws and agreements as the main source of legislation, along with other sources, by about 40%. Meanwhile, 36.7% of the sample chose a constitution based on Islamic jurisprudence as one of the main sources of legislation, in addition to other sources of legislation, and 19% opted for a constitution that relied solely on Islamic jurisprudence as the source of legislation.

3. Among Syrian youth, the parliamentary system is the preferred form of government for 37% of them, followed by a mixed "presidential and parliamentary" system at 32%, and finally the presidential rule with 30.5%.

Perspectives of Syrian Youth on the Future of Women's Representation and Involvement in Politics and Public Life

1. The study aimed to explore the perceptions of Syrian youth regarding the role and position of women in political and public life in Syria's future. The results indicated that Syrian youth widely support women's rights to participate in political and public life, with 64.2% of respondents strongly supporting these rights, and an average support of 25.6%. The percentage of opposition to women's access to their rights was relatively low at 10.2%.

2. There were no statistically significant differences in the degree of support for women's rights to participate in political and public life among different independent variables, including sex, age group, education level, employment status, and other variables. The percentages of support were consistently high across all levels of the variables.

3. Regarding specific rights, Syrian youth showed the highest support for women's right to vote (91.2%), followed by the right to run for local administrations and parliament (80.7%), and the right to participate in negotiating delegations (Geneva, Astana, Sochi...) (72.4%). The right of women to lead political parties and hold leadership positions in the state received a support rate of 70%. In terms of representation, a minimum level of women's representation in elected institutions (local administration and parliament) through a quota system gained a support rate of 64.8%. Finally, the right of women to run for the presidency of Syria and for the president of Syria to be a woman were supported by 62.8% and 54.7% of respondents, respectively.

Factors Influencing the Youth's political engagement in Future Syria

1. The study aimed to investigate the determinants of youth political engagement in future Syria. The findings revealed that Syrian youth perceive fear of the security services as the most significant obstacle to their participation in politics.

2. Additionally, the study sample identified the blurred political landscape, inadequate knowledge of political issues, lack of political experience, and inability to engage in political work as other major hindrances.

3. The Syrian youth highlighted the importance of separating the security services from political institutions and currents as the most crucial prerequisite for political engagement in the future Syria. The second critical condition proposed by the participants was the need to integrate political action into academic curricula to promote a culture of political engagement. Lastly, the Syrian youth emphasized the importance of flexible laws that would frame youth political action.

Appendix – Questionnaire

A study of the determinants of political engagement of Syrian youth
A study in trends, current participation, and future aspirations

First: general data

1	**Gender**	Male
		Female
2	**Age**	(..........)
3	**Education**	Ninth grade and below
		Secondary
		Intermediate/Technical Institute
		University
		Post-Graduate (Masters, PhD)
4	**Previous place of residence in Syria**	City
		Countryside
5	**Marital Status**	Single
		Married
		Divorced
		Widowed
6	**Current place of residence**	Syrian government-held areas
		SiG-held areas
		Idlib and countryside
		Northeast Syria (SDF)
		Turkey
		Arab country (specify)
		European country (specify)
		Student
		Employed

7	**Employment status**	Unemployed		
8	**Do you hold any citizenship other than Syria?**	Yes (please mention)		
		No		
9	**How would you describe your standard of living?**	Very high		
		High		
		Average		
		Low		
		Very Low		

Second: the position of the Syrian youth on the current Syrian political scene

101	**Do you follow what is happening in the Syrian political space?**	Always	Sometimes	I don't follow (move to Q103)
102	**To those who follow Always and Sometimes, why: (move to Q104)**	I am very interested in politics		
		The presence of family and relatives in various parts of Syria		
		The nature of my work forces me to follow the news		
		My desire to participate in politics in the future in Syria		
		I still have interests in Syria (property, business etc)		
		The political situation has a significant impact on my daily life		
		Other (please mention)		
103	**For those who don't follow the news at all, please state why:**	I generally have no interest in politics		
		I decided to stay permanently in country of asylum		
		I have no trust in most Syrian parties and blocs		
		I have other livelihood priorities		
		I have a desire/made a decision to leave Syria		

		Other (please mention)			
104	**Please indicate your degree of knowledge of the following initiatives/tracks (cognitive scale)**	Great	Average	Little	Haven't heard of it
	Geneva Negotiations				
	Astana track				
	Sochi				
	Ceasar Law				
	The Constitutional Committee				
	The Syrian Interim Government				
	Syrian Negotiation Commission				
	The Syrian Coalition				
	Local Councils				
	Syrian Democratic Forces				
	Salvation Government in Idlib				
	ISIS				
	The National Coordination Commission for Democratic Change				
	National Reconciliation Commission				
	Cairo Platform				
	Moscow Platform				

		Fully supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Opposed	Very opposed
105	**Please indicate the level of you support to the following political authorities in Syria**	Fully supportive	Supportive	Neutral	Opposed	Very opposed
	The Syrian Government in Damascus					
	The Syrian Interim Government (Turkish authorities)					
	Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)					
	Salvation Government in Idlib					

	Other (please specify degree of support)					

Third: The reality of the political engagement of Syrian youth

201	Have you ever carried out or participated in the following activities (related to the Syrian political affairs)	Yes, frequently	To a certain extent	No
	Elections (Presidency, local councils, parliament, unions, syndicates)			
	Marches			
	Protests			
	Pamphlet distribution campaigns			
	Political discussions with relatives			
	Political discussions with friends			
	Political seminars and conferences			
	Election campaigns for candidates			
	Advocacy campaigns of a political nature			
	Signing political petitions addressed to nations or to international/local commissions			
	Posts of a political nature on social media			
	Comments of a political nature on social media			
	Other (please mention)			
202	Are you a member or affiliate of a political party, bloc, or association concerned with public political affairs in Syria?		No (Jump to Q204)	

203	If yes, please indicate the political orientation of the party, bloc or association	A Syrian National orientation
		An ethnic orientation
		A religious orientation
		A liberal orientation
		Other (please specify)

| 204 | Are you a supporter of a political party,bloc or association concerned with public political affairs in Syria? | Yes | No (Jump to Q206) |

205	If yes, please indicate the political orientation of the party, bloc or association	A Syrian National orientation
		An ethnic orientation
		A religious orientation
		A liberal orientation
		Other (please specify)

| 206 | In your opinion, is there adequate representation of youth in political parties and institutions? | Yes | Somewhat | No | I don't know |

207	Are you satisfied with the degree of youth representation in Syrian political parties and institutions?	Very satisfied
		Satisfied
		Neutral
		Unsatisfied
		Very unsatisfied
		The domination of traditional Syrian bodies and blocs on the Syrian political space

208	In your opinion, what is the most important reason that Syrian youth are not being represented enough in Syrian political parties and institutions?	Relationships within the Syrian bodies and blocs that are based on mutual interests and personal goals
		Young people's unwillingness to work in politics
		Deliberately excluding young people from the political scene
		The inadequacy of political action among Syrian youth
		Security-related fear hindering engagement
		Young people prioritizing securing their daily lives
		Other (please specify)

Fourth: Aspirations of young Syrians for political life in future Syria

301	What kind of state do you envision for the future of Syria?	Centralized state
		Decentralized state (that supports local authorities)
		Federal state
		Confederate state
		The division of Syria into several smaller states
302	Which of the following statements is the closest to what you deem appropriate:	A sole reliance on Islamic jurisprudence as the source of legislation
		The state adopts Islamic jurisprudence as one of the main sources of legislation, alongside other sources
		The state recognizes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international laws and agreements as one of the main sources of legislation, in addition to other sources of legislation.
		Other (please specify)
		I don't know
303	What type of government do you see fit for the future of Syria?	Presidential
		Parliamentary
		Mixed (parliamentary and presidential)
		Other (please specify)

Fifth: Youth Attitudes Towards Women's Representation in the Future Political Landscape

404	To what extent do you agree with the future vision for Syria?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree	I don't know
	Women's right to vote						
	Women's right to run for local administrations and parliament						
	Women's right to run for presidency						
	For the president of Syria to be a woman						
	The right of women to hold leadership positions in the state						
	Women's right to lead political parties						
	Allocating a minimum quota for women's representation in elected institutions (local administration and parliament)						
	Participation of women in negotiating delegations (Geneva, Astana, Sochi etc)						

Sixth: Exploring the Factors that Influence Youth Political Engagement in Future Syria

501	What do you think are the top three reasons that hinder the participation of Syrian youth in political action, in order of importance?	Fear of the security services.
		Dislike for group interactions
		The opaqueness of the political scene and lack of sufficient information on political issues
		Lack of qualifications or political experience
		Belief that personal participation will not change the current reality
		Concerns that political engagement may create unnecessary problems
		Poor availability of space for practicing political action
		Society's undervaluing of political action
		Weak culture of political action in Syrian society
		Negative perception of women's involvement in political action in Middle Eastern societies
		Inability to find a place within "paralytic" blocs in political parties
		Absence of a role model for political activists
		The instability of the political situation
		Other (please specify)
502	What do you think are the top three appropriate conditions for the political action of Syrian youth in the future, in order of importance?	Incorporating political activism into school curricula as a means of promoting a culture of civic engagement.
		Exploring the Presence of Adaptive Legal Frameworks for Youth Political Engagement
		Disentangling the Functions of Security Services from Political Institutions and Movements
		Inclusion of Youth Quotas in Political Parties, Organizations, and Institutions
		Peaceful transfer of power
		Other (please specify)