



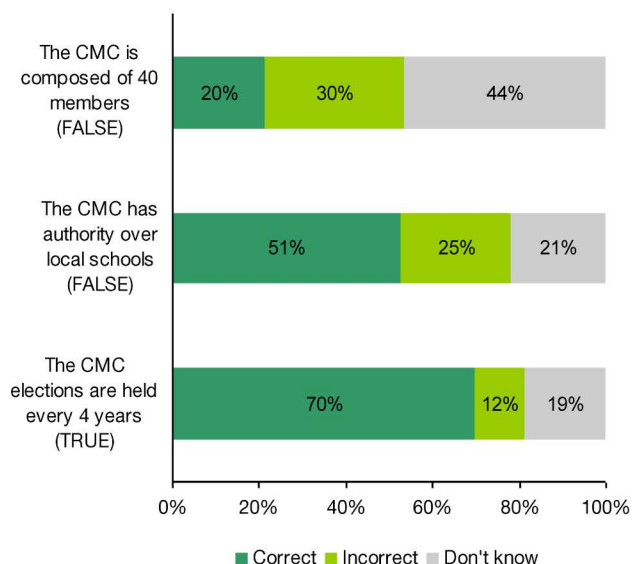
# Qatar Central Municipal Council

## Public Knowledge, Perceptions, and Engagement

On May 13, 2015, Qatar held its fifth elections for the Central Municipal Council (CMC), the body that advises the national government on local issues. To learn more about public participation in and perceptions of the CMC and the elections, SESRI conducted a scientific telephone survey of 811 Qatari nationals during the period from April 5 to 21.

**89% of Qataris report having had no interaction with their Council representative outside of elections.**

The survey results reveal that many citizens lack clear knowledge about both the CMC and the CMC elections. This is especially true of women and individuals below 30 years of age. Less than 14% of respondents were able to answer correctly three true-or-false questions regarding basic details of the institutions; and only half of respondents could answer more than one question correctly. Likewise, just one in three Qatari citizens knew the name of their current CMC representative, and the vast majority – 89% – reported having had no interaction with their representative except during elections.



Satisfaction with the CMC aligns very closely with perceptions of its degree of political authority. Qataris who registered to vote in the 2015 election were more likely to view the Council as having authority over important local issues.

### Summary of Findings

- 1 Clear understanding of the CMC and its role is lacking, especially among women and younger citizens.
- 2 Those most knowledgeable about the Council also tend to be the least satisfied.
- 3 Satisfaction with the Council is closely tied to impressions of its authority.
- 4 Independent of views of the CMC specifically, support for electoral processes is high.

### Recommendations

- 1 Expand outreach to women and youth
- 2 Clarify the responsibilities of the Council
- 3 Advertise CMC successes
- 4 Maintain public interest between elections

The average 45 year-old citizen is **33%** more knowledgeable about the CMC as compared to a 20 year-old citizen.



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How citizens view the CMC and the 2015 elections relate to their views on planned Shura Council elections. Reported interest in the Shura Council was high, especially among men: three out of four respondents indicated an interest in participating if elections were to occur. Those interested in the Shura Council are more likely to report positive views of the CMC.

**Qataris who perceive high CMC authority are 34% more likely to be “very interested” in planned elections for the Shura Council.**

Independent of their views of the CMC, citizens show a high level of support for the electoral process. Almost half of those who registered to vote in the 2015 elections said that “voting in elections is the duty of citizens.” Only 7% of respondents said they did not vote because “elections and voting are not the best way to address problems.” Around one in four respondents did not register because “the CMC lacks the ability to make substantial changes.” A full 19% of all unregistered respondents report that they are not eligible to vote.

**CITIZENS WHO PERCEIVE ...**

**LOW CMC authority**

have an average CMC satisfaction level of **2.4/10**  
are **4% less** likely to have registered for the 2015 elections  
are **16% more** knowledgeable about the CMC than average

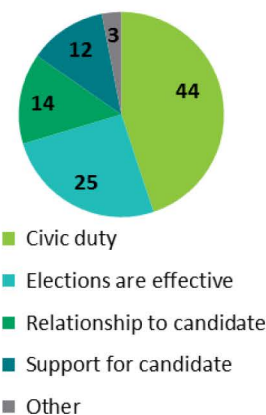
**MODERATE CMC authority**

have an average CMC satisfaction level of **5.5/10**  
are no more or less likely to have registered for the 2015 elections  
are **3% more** knowledgeable about the CMC than average

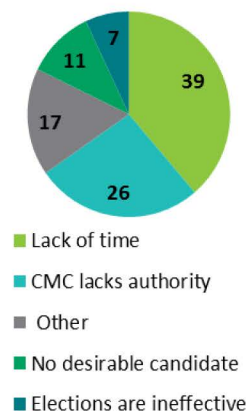
**HIGH CMC authority**

have an average CMC satisfaction level of **7.2/10**  
are **32% more** likely to have registered for the 2015 elections  
are **6% less** knowledgeable about the CMC than average

**Why Citizens Vote**



**Why Citizens Don't Vote**



**Policy Recommendations**

The results of SESRI’s CMC Survey suggest several practical steps to help increase public awareness and appreciation of the role of the CMC and CMC elections:

**Expand Outreach to Women and Youth**

Women and youth know less about the CMC, are less likely to register and vote in CMC elections, and express less interest in planned Shura Council elections. Bolstering female and youth involvement in the electoral process, both as voters and candidates, should increase public knowledge of and participation in the CMC.

**Clarify the responsibilities of the Council**

On the other hand, the survey shows that those citizens with the greatest objective knowledge of the CMC and of CMC elections also tend to be the most critical of these institutions, primarily because they view the Council as

possessing little real authority. The precise authorities and responsibilities of the Council should be clarified and emphasized to prospective voters and constituents.

**Highlight Council successes**

A potential contributor to lower public satisfaction with and participation in the CMC and CMC elections is residents’ inability to tie specific public services and initiatives to the actions of the CMC and its members. Local projects and campaigns initiated by the Council and Council members should be identified as such, either via media or physical markers of attribution (e.g., a dedication plaque at a community park).

**Sustain coverage over the inter-election period**

In order to sustain knowledge and appreciation of the CMC, official coverage of the Council and its initiatives should be sustained throughout the inter-election period.