



In Malawi, women lag behind men in political participation and activism

Findings from Afrobarometer Round 6 Surveys in Malawi



At a glance



- **Discussing politics and interest in public affairs.** The survey results show that women in Malawi are less likely to be involved in political discussions as well as interest in public affairs as compared to men. When looking at the gap from 2002 to 2014, the results show that women are perpetually lagging behind men and there is almost no improvement.
- **Political participation and activism.** Women in Malawi are less likely to participate in political activities and activism than men. For instance more men than women attended a political rally, attending campaign meetings, persuade others to vote for a candidate and work for a political candidate.
- **Support for women leadership.** Although a greater proportion of Malawians believe that women should have same chance as men for leadership positions, 2014 survey results shows that the percentage of those not in favour of women leadership is increasing.



What is Afrobarometer?

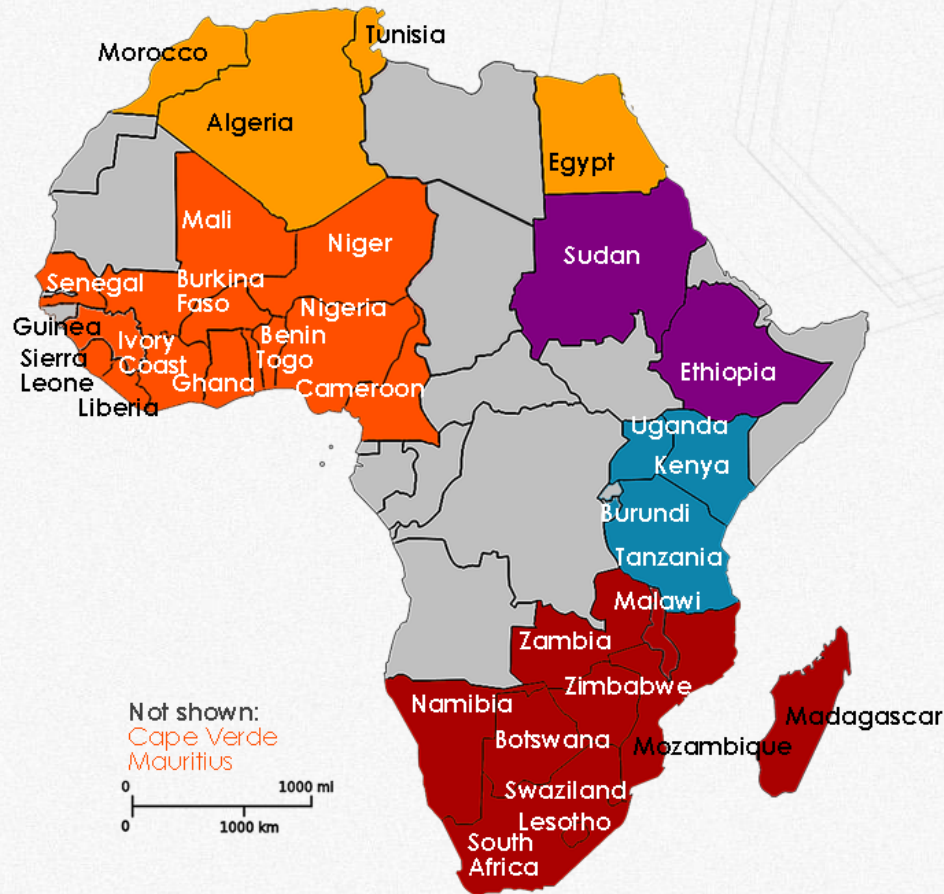


- An African-led, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.
- Started in 12 countries in 1999, expanded to 35 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013).
- **Goal:** To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.
- National Partners in each country conduct the survey. In Malawi, Afrobarometer Round 6 survey was conducted by the Centre for Social Research, university of Malawi.

Where Afrobarometer works

Face-to-Face Interviews | 35 Countries

Surveys by state, region



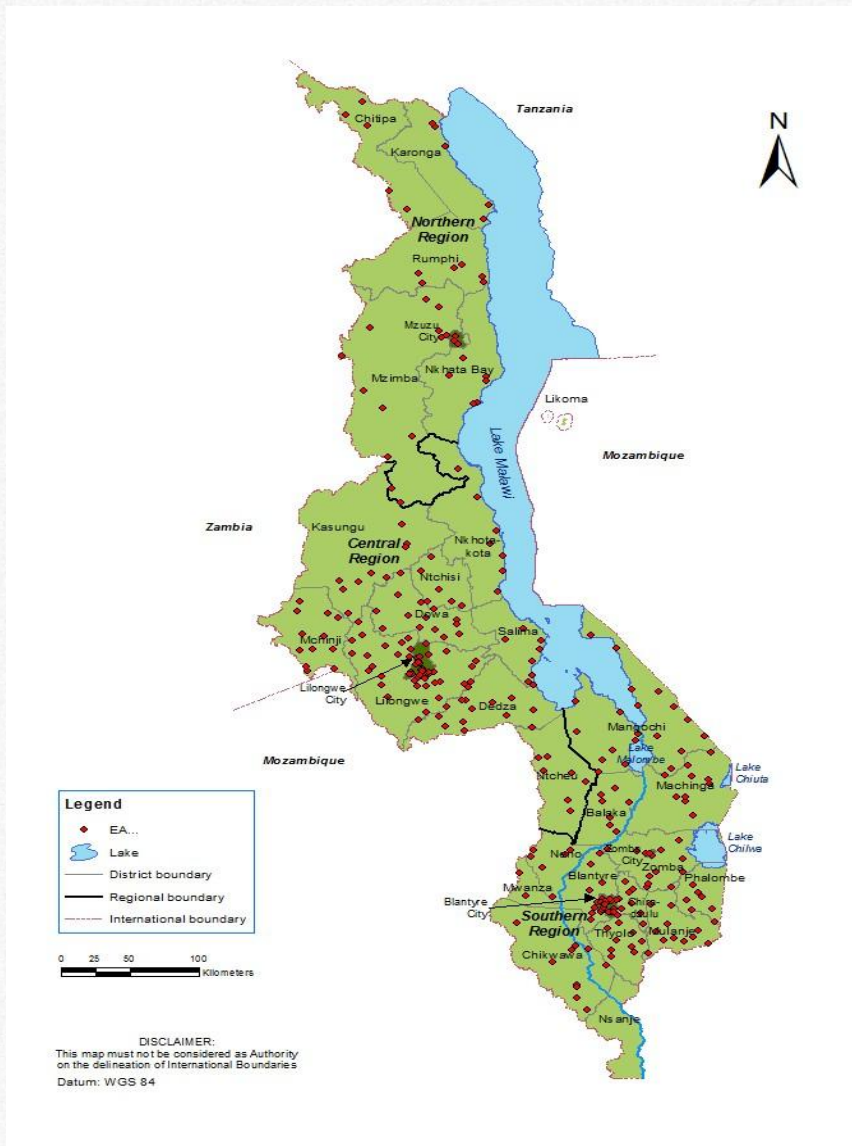
Methodology



- Nationally representative sample of adult citizens
 - ❑ All respondents are *randomly* selected.
 - ❑ Sample is distributed across regions and urban/rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
 - ❑ Every adult citizen has an *equal* chance of being selected.
- Face-to-face interviews In the language of the respondent's choice.
- Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.
- Sample size in Malawi of 2400 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level.
- Fieldwork for Round 6 in Malawi was conducted between 24 March and 5 April 2014.



Enumerator map



Survey demographics

	Unweighted	Weighted
Gender		
Male	50%	50%
Female	50%	50%
Location		
Urban	15%	15%
Rural	81%	81%
Education		
No formal education	13%	13%
Primary	56%	56%
Secondary	26%	27%
Post-secondary	5%	4%

	Unweighted	Weighted
Religion		
Christian	83%	83%
Muslim	14%	14%
Other	3%	3%
Regions		
Central	43%	43%
North	13%	13%
South	44%	44%



Results





WOMEN LAG IN DISCUSSING POLITICS AND SHOWING INTEREST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Key findings

- Women in Malawi are less likely to be involved in political discussions as well as interest in public affairs as compared to men. While 79% of men indicate that they **discuss politics** only 65% of women do so.
 - For instance, in 2002, the gap was 14% and it widened to 21% in 2005. In 2008 the gap narrowed to 11% but only to go back to the 2002 gap of 14% in the 2012 and 2014 surveys.
- The results show that there is a 13% gap between men and women who show **interest in public affairs**. When compared to the 2012 survey, the gap has significantly widened from 6% in 2002 to 13% in 2014.
- With the exception of 2014 results, there has been a downward trend in the percentage of men and women in showing **interest in public affairs**.
 - For instance the percentage of men and women who showed interest in public affairs in 2002 was 88% and 83% respectively but the percentage went down to 65% and 59% respectively in 2012.

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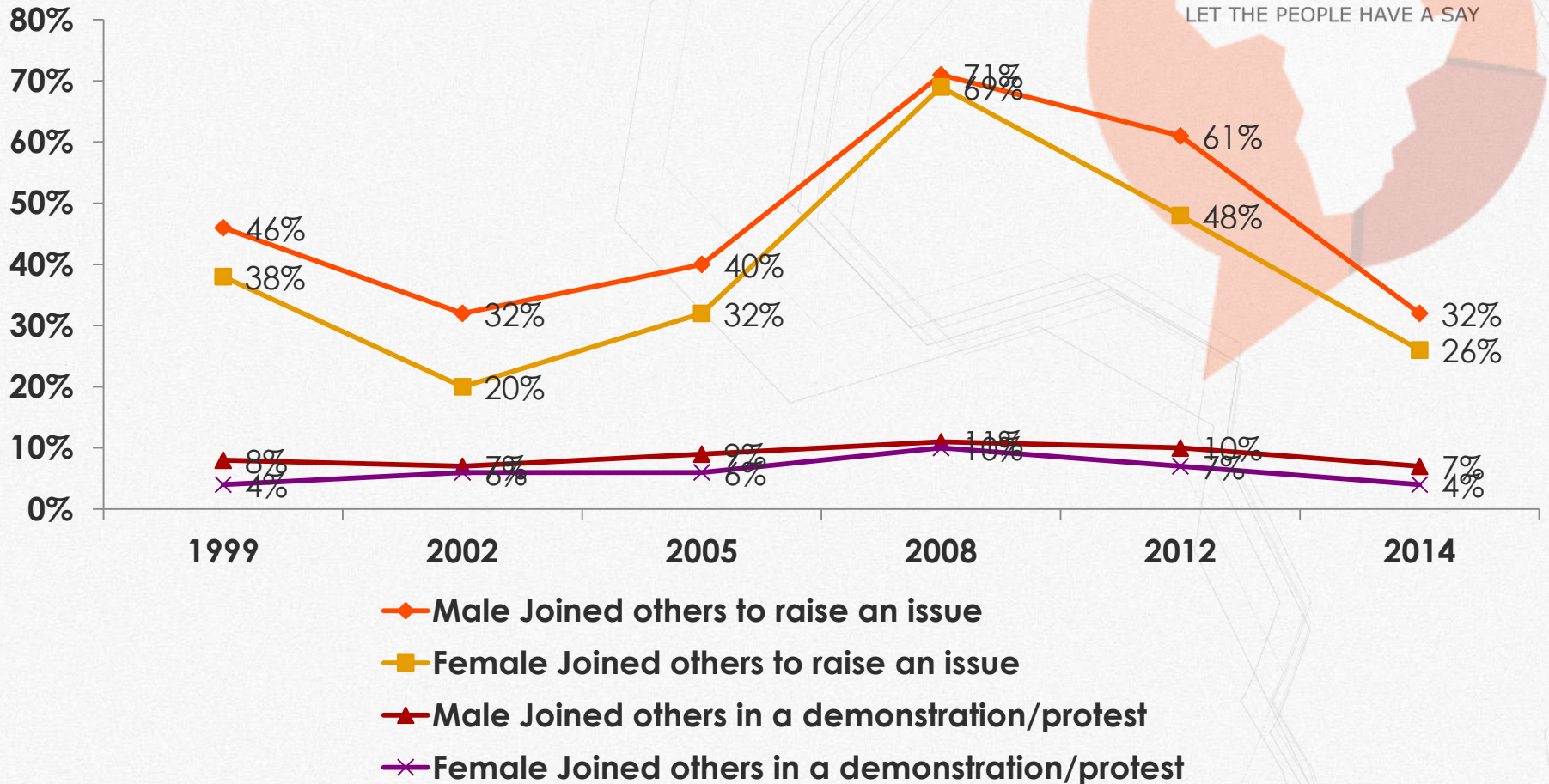


WOMEN LAG IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVISM

Key findings

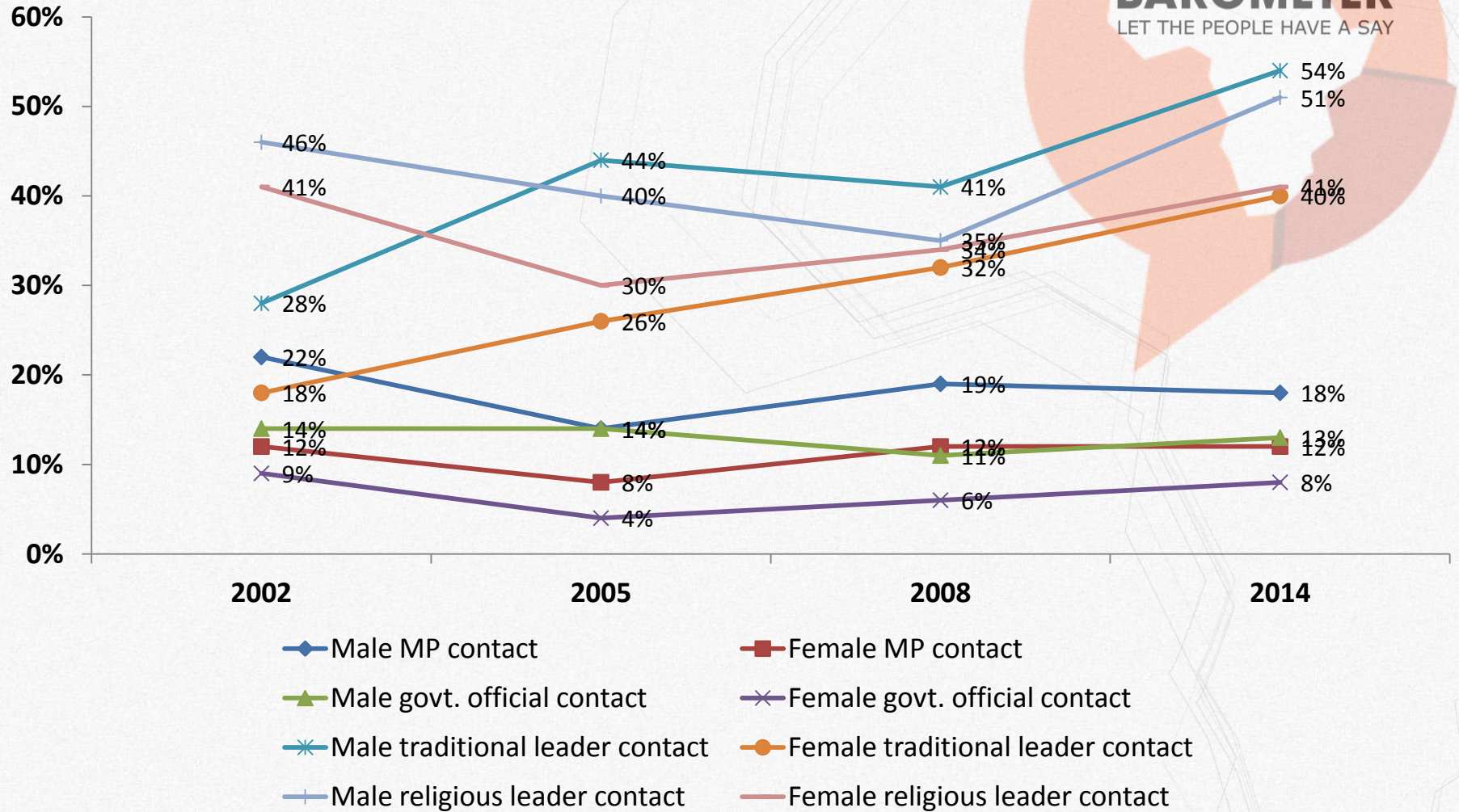
- Women in Malawi are less likely to participate in political activities and activism than men.
- For instance 56% of men reported that they attended a political rally whilst only 44% for women. There is a gap of 10% for attending campaign meetings, an 8% gap for persuading others to vote for a candidate and another 8% in those who worked for a political candidate.
- Men are most likely than women to join others to raise an issue or demonstration/protest marches. For instance, in 1999 the gap between men and women who join others to raise an issue was 8% (46% men and 38% women) but it remained almost the same in 2014 at 6% (32% for men and 26% for women).
- Further, the survey results reveal that men are more likely to contact local officials and leaders than women. Only 12% of the women had made contact with an MP as compared to 18% of their male counterparts.

Joining others to raise an issue or demonstration/protest march: Men vs Women (1999-2014)



Respondents were asked: People sometimes take some action as citizens when they are dissatisfied with government. Please tell me whether you, personally, have joined others in your community to request action from government during the past year/ have participated in a demonstration or protest march during the past year. If not, would you do this if you had the chance? (% who said "Only once", "Few times" or "Often")

Contact with officials and leaders: women vs. men (2002-2014)



Respondents were asked: During the past year, how often have you contacted any of the following persons about some important problem or to give them your views? (% who said "Only once", "Few times" or "Often")



DECLINING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Key findings



- In general almost 6 people in every 10 in Malawi believe that women should have same chance as men for leadership positions.
- Almost a quarter of Malawians believe that men make better political leaders than women. This compares favourably to the 2011-2013 survey of 34 African countries which shows that on average 68% believe women are as capable as men of being political leaders.
- When the 2014 Malawi survey results are compared to that of 2012 survey, the percentage of those who subscribe to the view that women should have same chance as men has significantly reduced from 78% in 2012 to 61% in 2014.
- Interestingly, the proportion of those who subscribe to the view that women should have same chance as men in leadership positions is the same amongst men and women respondents in 2012 and 2014.

Conclusion



- Despite Malawi being a signatory to regional and international protocols encouraging gender equality such as the 2008 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, there seems to be no significant headway towards improving women participation and activism in politics.
- Malawi had the first female president in southern African region but the figures for women representation in parliament have drastically gone down in the year that the incumbent president was female.
- There is a decrease, when compared to the 2012 survey, for those who believe that women make better leaders like men.
- It could be possible that the performance of the first female president might have been deemed as unsatisfactory hence affected the electoral performance of all female parliamentary candidates in 2014 elections.
- Messages and efforts to encourage gender equality should equally target males and females in the same way.
- There is also a need to enhance collaboration, resource mobilisation and a more robust approach to tackle gender inequality in political participation and activism in Malawi.