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**Global Trends in Women's
Access and Leadership
Data from Five IFES Surveys**

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MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

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For the Twenty-first Century*

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INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades the United Nations has strived to promote women's development in the political, economic, and social spheres throughout the world. In particular, the UN has focused on increasing women's rights in relation to social, economic and political structures in contemporary societies. The Fourth UN Conference in Beijing in 1995 evaluated the progress made in women's participation, definitions of women's rights and human rights, and on issues of female empowerment worldwide. A "Platform for Action" was drafted that all the member nations could adopt to redress gender inequalities in their social systems.

These actions have coincided with a general dispersion of democracy throughout the world, which has led to optimism that women can acquire important political, economic, and human rights in these new democracies. The goal of the present Special Session of the UN General Assembly, "Beijing+5", is to examine how the Platform for Action has been implemented in different parts of the globe during the last five years, and to continue the process of empowerment of women worldwide.

Through this paper, IFES seeks to utilize public opinion data to show that despite the efforts of the UN and member countries, there still exist large differences between men and women and how they see themselves as members of the society and political system at large. This paper presents survey data from five developing democracies in which IFES has conducted research over the past five years: Belarus, Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. This paper will analyze how women in these countries differ from men on important socio-political issues. At the same time, differences among women from the five countries on these issues will be compared.

Critical areas of concern observed and analyzed in this paper include the following:

- Women's participation in national and local elections (number and reasons),
- Women's access to political and economic information (sources and amount of information);
- Women's assessment of their economic well-being and economic situation in their countries;
- Women's knowledge about political matters (attitudes toward political parties, human rights, market, and democracy);
- Women's attitudes toward non-governmental organizations and understanding of the importance of such organizations;
- Women's assessment of corruption and crime in their respective countries;
- Women's trust in social institutions;
- Women's level of education, well-being, and employment compared with men; and
- Differences in attitudes among women by age, education, and location.

The methodological information for the five surveys utilized in this report is as follows:

Belarus

Fieldwork: April 28 - May 7, 1999

Sample Size: 1,012

Method: Face-to-face

Ghana

Fieldwork: Feb. 26 - April 16, 1997

Sample Size: 2,295

Method: Face-to-face

Indonesia

Fieldwork: Dec. 1998 - Feb. 1999

Sample Size: 1,507

Method: Face-to-face

In addition to data from this survey, this report also utilizes data from a post-election IFES survey in Indonesia conducted in August 1999 with a sample of 1,520 persons.

Kazakhstan

Fieldwork: Nov. 26 - Dec. 16, 1996

Sample Size: 1500

Method: Face-to-face

Ukraine

Fieldwork: June 16 - 23, 1999

Sample Size: 1484

Method: Face-to-face

In addition to data from this survey, this report also utilizes data from a post-election IFES survey in Ukraine conducted in January and February 2000 with a sample of 1,484 persons.

The report also utilizes contextual information from IFES regional staff working on the countries incorporated in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A general analysis of survey data from Belarus, Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine shows that there are significant differences between men and women on many important political, social, and economic issues:

- **Levels of Information about Political and Economic Matters.** In each of the five countries, with the exception of Kazakhstan, significantly more women say that they have less information about political and economic matters than men. In Indonesia, 61% of men versus 45% of women say that they have at least an adequate level of information about political matters. In Ghana, the figures are 51% men versus 35% women, Belarus - 39% men versus 25% women, and Ukraine - 42% men versus 37% women. The same trend is evident with information about economic matters. Kazakhstan is the only anomaly, as men and women report very similar levels of information. However, it should be noted that the percentage of men and women saying they do not have adequate levels of information is much higher in Kazakhstan (83% men, 85% women) than the other four countries.
- **Interest in Matters of Politics and Government.** Given the differences in levels of information about political and economic matters, it is not surprising that more men than women profess an interest in political matters in all five countries. Those who reported being somewhat or very interested in matters of politics and government are as follows: Kazakhstan (43% men, 35% women); Ukraine (53% men, 35% women); Belarus (63% men, 49% women); Ghana (56% men, 41% women); and Indonesia (45% men, 32% women).
- **Satisfaction with Country's Situation.** There were no significant differences between men and women on levels of satisfaction with the country's general situation (this question was only asked in the three former Soviet republics). There were uniformly high levels of dissatisfaction in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. When asked about current economic conditions in their country, a majority of both Indonesian and Ghanaian women saw the situation as either bad or very bad. There were no significant differences between men and women in Indonesia (although in post-election survey, 65% overall say the situation is good, and 34% it is bad); however, women in Ghana were more pessimistic about the economic situation than men.
- **Preferences for Type of Economic System.** Women are more reluctant to endorse the adoption of a free-market economy than men in all these countries. However, in Ukraine, Belarus, and Indonesia, a significantly higher percentage of women are also likely to say "Don't Know" to this question than men. For example, on this question 35% of Indonesian women answered, "don't know" or did not give a response.
- **Is Your Country a Democracy?** In each country except Ghana, more men than women are likely to respond that their country is not a democracy. "Don't know" answers are higher for women than men in all cases, but most significantly in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia. In Indonesia, fully 40% of women do not answer or do not know what democracy means, as compared to 24% of men. In Ghana, nearly four out of five respondents (both men and women) say that Ghana is a democracy. We find that throughout the survey, respondents in Ghana, and to a lesser extent, Indonesia, are more likely to have more positive views of their country's general political systems than the other three countries.

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- **Age Differences and Democracy.** In three of the countries, except Ghana and Belarus, young women are more likely to say their country is a democracy than older women.
 - **Meaning of Democracy.** When asked what comes to their minds when thinking about democracy, respondents (both men and women) are as likely to state liberal conceptions such as freedom of speech or freedom of criticism, as they are to state economic benefits and security, such as higher standards of living and jobs for everyone. Thus, democracy is valued as much for its intrinsic values as for the material benefits it is expected to provide. This would account for the pessimism evident in the former Soviet republics after 10 years of democratic transition.
 - **Rights and Freedoms.** Significant majorities of both men and women grant great importance to human rights and civil liberties such as freedom of association, speech, criticism, etc. (Indonesians were not surveyed on this subject). However, men are slightly more likely than women to say that these rights and freedoms are important. In Belarus, Ukraine, and Ghana, attitudes toward rights among women were influenced by education. Higher-educated women stated more liberal opinions than lesser-educated women. Age was also a significant factor in Belarus; younger respondents expressed more liberal opinions. In Ukraine, a rural-urban divide was evident on this issue, especially when comparing Kiev with rural areas.
 - **Significant Factors for Assigning Importance to Liberal Values.** Although majorities of women say that freedom of speech, association, minority and property rights are important, there are differences based on education and age among women. Generally, younger women and women with at least some university education are significantly more likely to attach importance to these rights than are older women and those with lower levels of education.
 - **Expectations for the Efficacy of Voting.** In both Ghana and Indonesia, almost three out of four women say voting gives ordinary citizens a chance to influence decision-making in their country. In Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, however, only a third of women believe in the influence of voting while majorities or near majorities do not believe in voter efficacy. It should be pointed out that men are as pessimistic as women on this issue in the three former Soviet republics, while men in Indonesia and Ghana are more optimistic than women on this issue.
 - **Elections and Voting.** Given the findings above, it is perhaps not surprising that women in Ghana (96%) and Indonesia (96%, post-election survey) were more likely to have voted in the most recent elections before the surveys were conducted, than women in Ukraine (76%), and Belarus (72%). Respondents in Ghana, Belarus, and Ukraine were asked about the importance of honest and fair elections. Ghanaian women (and men) attached far greater significance to honest elections, than women in Belarus and Ukraine. On a practical level, only 48% women in Belarus and 38% of women in Ukraine evaluated the most recent elections as honest and fair, while 85% women in Ghana and 83% in Indonesia said elections were honest and fair.
 - **Political Parties.** In all five countries, majorities of women agree that at least two political parties are necessary for democracy in their country. Yet, the proportion of men voicing this opinion is greater than the proportion of women in each country. Also, percentages of women voicing no opinion on this question are significantly higher than men (up to 29% and 23% in Indonesia and Belarus, respectively). However, very few women are members of any political party, and few agree to volunteer for a political party or candidate. In Ghana, women in rural

areas express a greater willingness to join or volunteer for a political party than their urban counterparts.

- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).** Women in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan mirror men when asked about the necessity of NGOs. Women in Belarus (47%) and Kazakhstan (46%) value the necessity of NGOs more than women in Ukraine (21%). A higher percentage of women in Ghana feel that NGOs are necessary (59%), but that is still less than men in Ghana (72%). On the other hand, women in Ukraine are just as likely as women in Ghana to entertain the possibility of ordinary citizens uniting to form NGOs (52%). The percentage among women is lower in Kazakhstan (42%). Still, these percentages are higher for men in all three countries. Environmental, educational, charitable, and women's organizations are the most popular types of NGO's among women (Indonesians were not asked these questions on NGOs).
- **Corruption and Confidence in Legal Institutions.** In all these countries (Indonesians were not surveyed on this topic), majorities of both men and women say corruption is a common and serious problem. There are no significant differences with regard to age, education, or locality. Women's confidence in legal institutions differs from country to country. In Indonesia and Ghana, pluralities or majorities of women say they have confidence in the police (44% Indonesia, 53% Ghana). A majority of women in Ghana have confidence in the country's courts (55%). By contrast, one third or lesser percentages of women have confidence in these institutions in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus. This might be a function of the totalitarian legacies that women in these countries were raised within. However, women have more confidence, than not, in the President in Ghana, Belarus, and Indonesia. Confidence in elected officials does not, however, extend to parliament members. Only in Ghana do a majority of women profess confidence in the parliament. At the time of the surveys, pluralities in Ukraine, Belarus, and Indonesia did not have confidence in parliament.
- **General Patterns.** The political and economic instability evident in the three post-Soviet republics provides a dampening effect to increased civic and political participation among women. As the economic situations in these countries have deteriorated over the past ten years, women (and men) have felt increasingly alienated from the political process in these countries, which in turn has led to declines in political and voter efficacy, as well as general political participation. While this is a troubling trend, it is especially so for women, because these new democracies in the former Soviet Union should provide a unique opportunity for women to become an active part of the political process. By contrast, the expectations engendered by the new democracies in Ghana and Indonesia have led to increased expectation for civic participation among women in these countries. It remains to be seen whether the opportunity presented in these two countries is utilized to make women an integral part of civic and political life. Besides the length of experience with democracy, women's education and age were also found to be important factors affecting attitudes. Generally, younger and higher-educated women were more likely to hold liberal attitudes and a willingness to become active participants than older and lesser-educated women in these countries. The rural-urban divide is less important for the three former Soviet republics, but it is important for Indonesia and Ghana.

Gender Issues Addressed in the IFES Surveys

The aim of the IFES surveys utilized in this report was to gather data on the socio-political environment and elections in each of the countries analyzed in this study. This data was employed in the design of IFES programming in each country and also serves as a baseline for program development and evaluation. However, each survey contains enough demographic information to enable select demographic analyses of the data. In each country there was an assessment of the social and economic condition of the respondents, personal information about their occupations, living conditions, religion, ethnicity, family status, membership in different organizations, etc. In most cases, the election preferences and expectations of respondents were examined, as well as their political attitudes, knowledge on political and economic matters, evaluation of corruption, confidence to social institutions, etc. On the basis of the data, one could examine the factors that account for the differences between the countries, regions, and smaller women's groups.

It should be noted that for some questions, it was not possible to do a comparative analysis for all five countries, as similar questions were not included on all surveys (for example, there were no questions on human rights in the Indonesia survey and in Ghana, questions on this matter were slightly different). In all such cases, our comparative analysis was limited to the surveys that shared similar topics.

It is important to mention some regional differences among the five selected countries that determine different methodological approaches to the interpretation of the data. First of all, historical background influences the present situation. There are still significant differences between the industrialized, post-Soviet, and developing countries, including their level of economic and democratic development, and culture. Such countries as Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine have a communist legacy: many people strongly support welfare programs, the idea of gender equality, and social justice. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, when these countries developed free-market economies and democracy (in their non-Western variants), there were high hopes among the citizens of these countries that democracy and markets would bring prosperity for all. But several years and elections later, the political leadership's promises have not matched reality, and a majority of the population has experienced a negative effect of "tiredness" of unsuccessful reforms and is dissatisfied with the results of these reforms. As a Freedom House survey states, there appeared "new opportunities for elites, new disadvantages for population" in non-Russian successor states (Freedom in the World, 1997-1998. New York: Freedom House, 1998, p.28). The survey data from these three countries reflects the tiredness and dissatisfaction experienced by citizens of these countries rather than the real level of democratic and economic development.

Second, there are regional differences among the post-Soviet countries. For example, in spite of the fact that Ukrainian economy and "politics are in turmoil" (*ibid.*, p.32), Ukraine is considered to be among the partly democratic states from the perspective of political rights and civil liberties present in the country. According to this particular criterion, Belarus and Kazakhstan have been placed among the non-free countries (*ibid.*, p. 600), although per capita GDP in terms of international dollars (the purchasing power parities) in Kazakhstan and Belarus are higher than in Ukraine (*ibid.*, pp. 603-604).

Third, the stage of democratic development is important. Because both Ghana and Indonesia are at the beginning of their democratic development process, people have high expectations and hopes in these countries. Ghana continues to move toward democracy since President Rawlings returned to power in December 1996 and seems to be experiencing real hope and optimism focusing on the 2000 presidential election. Indonesia significantly eased restrictions on freedoms and improved its economic situation after the resignation of President Suharto in May 1998 and the parliamentary elections in June 1999. These changes influenced public opinion in both countries. It does not mean that we can conclude which country is more democratic; survey data usually gives the opinions and shows people's perceptions of their surroundings rather than giving an objective assessment of the country.

The annual survey of political rights and civil liberties for 1998-1999, made by Freedom House, places Ghana, Indonesia, and Ukraine among the "partly free" countries, while Belarus and Kazakhstan are among the "not free" countries (Freedom in the World. 1998-1999. New York: Freedom House, 1999, p. 52).

The following section analyzes tendencies in each country separately and on a comparative basis. Several factors were selected to help understand how women's access to information and their chances for political leadership and equality can be improved.

FINDINGS

Information about Political Matters

An important prerequisite for assuring equal access for all actors in society is the provision of adequate information. In the case of political equality, information about the matters of political affairs is essential to engage individuals in the political process. In four out of five countries in this study, men report having access to more information about political affairs and development than women. The gap between men and women is bigger in Indonesia and Ghana than in Belarus and Ukraine. There is only a small difference between the attitudes of men and women in Kazakhstan; yet respondents in this country report the lowest level of information among the five selected countries for both women and men.

Figure 1. Percent Informed about Political Developments, by Gender

	Men	Women
Indonesia	61%	45%
Ghana	51%	35%
Ukraine	42%	37%
Belarus	39%	25%
Kazakhstan	16%	14%

Question: How much information do you have on political developments in [Country]?

In Indonesia, women report their level of political information in the pre-parliamentary election survey to be significantly higher than in the other four countries. However, this might have been caused by the level of attention afforded to the democratic transition in Indonesia at this time, as well as due to the intensive election campaigning taking place throughout the country. In the IFES post-election survey, the percentage of men and women who reported having adequate political information dropped to 36% and 25%, respectively. This seems to indicate a paucity of information about political developments in developing democracies during periods between elections or political crisis.

While the analysis found that education is a significant factor affecting levels of information among women in all countries, this factor is much more important in Indonesia and Ghana. For example, in Ghana, only 26% of women with less than a high school level of education say they have at least a fair amount of information about political developments versus 53% of women with some university education. In Indonesia, the gap is even larger: 18% of lesser-educated women versus 74% with at least some university education say they have a fair amount or great deal of information. In Ukraine, 30% of lesser-educated women report having adequate information about political affairs compared to 57% of women with at least some university education. The difference between women of differing education is not as pronounced in Belarus: 25% of lesser-educated women versus 36% with at least some university education say that they have adequate information about political developments.

Age is a significant factor in Indonesia: 52% of young women (18-29 years old) say they have a great deal or fair amount of information, while 42% say that they are poorly or not at all informed. At the same time, only 12% of older women (50 and above) say they have adequate

levels of information, 63% say they are poorly or not at all informed, and 25% answer "don't know" or did not respond.

There is also a slight rural-urban gap in Indonesia. Women in the rural areas in Indonesia are much less informed than their urban counterparts: 52% of women in the rural area are poorly or not at all informed, while an additional 16% do not know or did not answer. In urban areas 45% of women are poorly informed and 6% do not know.

Information about Economic Matters

The pattern for information about economic matters is similar to the one described for information about political developments. The general trends are: (a) men in all countries have more information about economic matters than women, and (b) few women think they have adequate levels of economic information. Only in Indonesia do more women say they have a great deal or fair amount of information about economic developments than the number of women who say they do not have enough information or none at all (45% versus 43%), but this difference is not statistically significant. In other countries significant majorities or a plurality of women feel that they do not have enough information about economic matters (in Kazakhstan, 85% women say they are not informed; in Ukraine and Belarus, more than three out of five women say the same).

Figure 2. Percent Informed about Economic Developments, by Gender

	Men	Women
Indonesia	60%	45%
Ghana	42%	32%
Ukraine	42%	33%
Belarus	37%	25%
Kazakhstan	16%	14%

Question: How much information do you have on economic developments in [Country]?

Interest in Politics and Government

Public interest in politics is the necessary basis for any political or civic activity. However, during the last decade, many people in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus have lost interest in political matters because the democracy and supposed liberal reforms have not brought the prosperity that these people expected at the beginning of the 1990s. On the contrary, due to the democratic openings in Ghana and Indonesia, the level of political interest during the last few years has been increasing, especially among men. These two cases illustrate the effect that euphoria associated with democracy can have on expectations and attitudes among ordinary people.

In all five countries in this study, men are still more interested than women in matters of politics and government. What is also important to stress is that women are significantly less likely to say that they are "very interested" in politics and government than men. Differences between countries are not significant, while the common trend is stable and similar: decrease of political interests and therefore low involvement in public activities as a consequence of dissatisfaction

with the “decade of reforms” in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus, and growing interests in Indonesia and Ghana as a consequence of high political expectations.

**Figure 3. Percent Interested in Matters of Politics
 And Government, by Gender**

	Men	Women
Belarus	63%	49%
Ghana	56%	41%
Ukraine	53%	35%
Indonesia	45%	32%
Kazakhstan	43%	35%

Question: How much interest do you have in matters of politics and government?

In Ukraine younger women (18-29) are less interested in politics than middle-aged (30-49) and older (50+) women: 29% young, 36% middle-aged, and 37% of older women are interested in politics. Decrease in political interests among the youth may be a result of unsuccessful reforms that have alienated people from politics and resulted in political apathy among the youth. There is no significant difference by age in either Kazakhstan or Belarus.

In Indonesia, the age gap demonstrates results opposite from those in Indonesia: 41% of younger women, 33% middle-aged, and only 12% of older women are interested in political matters. In Ghana, both younger and older women have similar levels of interest in political matters.

Education is an important factor for political interest: women with at least some university education usually have more political interests than women without a high school education. Thus, 62% of women with at least some university education versus 38% women with less than high school education in Belarus have an interest in politics. There are similar differences in Ukraine (45% versus 29%, respectively) and Indonesia (61% versus 19%). There were smaller differences due to education in Kazakhstan (45% versus 32%) and Ghana (46% versus 37%).

Access to information about political matters is a significant factor in explaining interest in politics among women in all five countries. In Indonesia, women who have at least some information about political matters have greater interest in politics (62%) than women who have little or no information (15%). Similar numbers are found in Ghana (72% versus 27%), Belarus (75% versus 39%), Kazakhstan (66% versus 30%), and Ukraine (42% versus 31%).

Satisfaction with the Country's Socio-Economic and Political Conditions

Satisfaction with the country's general situation is very low among both men and women living in Ukraine: only 4% of men and 2% of women say they are satisfied with the situation in the country. Satisfaction is a little bit higher in Kazakhstan (14% men versus 12% women) and Belarus (21% versus 21%). In total, more than four out of five respondents in Ukraine and Kazakhstan and three out of five respondents in Belarus are dissatisfied. This question asked about the respondents' satisfaction with the overall situation, economic, political, and social, of the country.

In Ghana and Indonesia there was no direct question about satisfaction with the country's overall situation. However, when asked about current economic situation, more women say the situation is bad or very bad (56% in Ghana and 51% in Indonesia), than good or very good (37% in Ghana and 44% in Indonesia). In the post-election survey in Indonesia, however, only 34% said that the economic situation is bad, while 65% say it is good. This indicates a perception of an improvement in the country's economic situation by respondents.

Preferences for Country's Economic Development

When asked about their preference for a free market-oriented economy or state controlled economy, more women in each of the five countries prefer state controlled (or government owned) economy than they prefer market-oriented economy. On the other hand, men in all five countries are more prone to support a free-market economy than women.

Figure 4. Women's Preferences for Market or State-Controlled Economy

	Market	State
Indonesia	25%	41%
Ghana	26%	44%
Ukraine	23%	31%
Belarus	19%	41%
Kazakhstan	43%	48%

Question: When thinking about our economic future, should our country strive to develop an economy with little government control, or should we strive for an economy which is basically controlled by the government?

Note: The percentages in this figure and other figures in the report might not add to 100% either due to rounding error, or because certain items such as "Don't know" or "No response" are not reported.

Women were also more likely to reply, "Don't know" to this question than men. For example, in Ukraine 15% of men did not know versus 27% of women; in Indonesia, the percentages were 23% and 25%, respectively. The lower levels of information about political and economic matters reported by women contribute to this trend. Levels of information also have a big influence on the preference for a market economy. In Ghana, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia, preference for free market is higher among those who have more information about political and economic matters, than among those who have little or no information.

Women's Attitude Towards Democracy

Country as a Democracy and the Meaning of a Democracy

This section of the report compares how men and women differ in their evaluations of their countries' political systems, in particular, democratic processes. Generally, men seem to be more critical and knowledgeable about political development in their countries. Also, men are more optimistic about political matters than women; and are likely to give more definitive answers than women.

When questioned whether their country is a democracy or not, more men than women in Indonesia and Ukraine responded that their country is a democracy. But higher percentages of

men in Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia also answered that their country is not a democracy. There is no significant difference between men and women in Ghana on this question. In fact, Ghana is the only country where the majority of the overall population thinks that the country is a democracy (80%). The following chart illustrates how women answer this question.

Figure 5. Women's Opinions on Democracy in Country

	Democracy	Not a Democracy	Don't Know
Ghana	79%	17%	5%
Indonesia	32%	28%	40%
Kazakhstan	37%	41%	22%
Belarus	31%	22%	24%
Ukraine	16%	56%	18%

Question: In your opinion, is [Country] primarily a democracy or is it not primarily a democracy?

The percentage of women who responded with "don't know" to this question is significantly higher than the percentage of men in all countries except Ghana. The lack of information available to women seems to lead to a low level of understanding or, in extreme cases, ignorance about democracy. It should be noted that in Ghana, this question was only asked of women who were able to give a definitive response when asked what democracy meant to them. 48% of women in Ghana did not give a definitive answer to this question. The percentage of men who responded, "don't know" was 25%. Comparing women by age, almost 50% of women aged 18-29, more than 40% of women aged 30-49, and almost two thirds of women aged 50 and above say they do not know what a democracy means.

Education is also a relevant factor when assessing democracy in Ghana. Two-thirds of women without a high school education do not know what a democracy means, and only 12% of women with at least some university education answer the same way.

In Indonesia, the level of information about political matters significantly influences whether the country is perceived as a democracy or not. In Indonesia, women who are not politically informed more often say it is a democracy, while better informed women say it is not. In other countries, there is no significant correlation between these two factors. Younger women (18-29) and those with at least some university education are more likely to think that Indonesia is a democracy than women older than 50, and those with less than a high school education. Also, rural women are more optimistic about democracy than urban women in Indonesia. Incredibly, almost 64% of women older than 50 answered "Don't know" to this question or they answered "Don't know what democracy means." 65% of women with less than a high school education answered the same way. This data indicates that there is a great need for civic education programs in Indonesia to target these groups in the population.

It is necessary to mention that an open-ended question about the meaning of a democracy gave women an opportunity to indicate what democracy means to them. In most cases, women mentioned three different components of their vision of democracy: political liberties (rights and freedoms), economic components (economic prosperity, economic equality, employment), and a social component (hopes for the future, social welfare, etc.). These conceptions of democracy coincide with the view described in the United States Information Agency surveys on democracy

worldwide (*The People Have Spoken: Global Views of Democracy*; Washington: USIA, 1998, p.10).

Turning to the former Soviet republics, in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, younger women are more likely to think that their country is a democracy than older women. In Belarus, older women are much more likely than middle-aged women, and slightly more likely than young women to say that Belarus is a democracy. The chart below illustrates this point.

Figure 6. Percent of Women who Think Country is a Democracy, by Age

	18-29	30-49	50+
Ukraine	22%	15%	13%
Belarus	31%	25%	36%
Kazakhstan	39%	39%	32%
Indonesia	38%	33%	22%
Ghana	78%	78%	84%

When asked about the meaning of a democracy, more than half of women in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan stressed that, to them, a democracy primarily means a system where human rights and political freedoms are respected. Almost 25% of women in Kazakhstan and Belarus stressed economic elements of democracy or security issues, as did a sizable minority of women in Ukraine (37%).

It is interesting that so many women in Ukraine see democracy's core value in the material benefits it is supposed to provide. Referring back to Figure 5, we can see that the predominant number of women in Ukraine who gave an answer besides "don't know," think that Ukraine is not a democracy. Because of the recent instability in Ukraine's economic situation, and because of the emphasis on the material prosperity that democracy can bring, more women in Ukraine conclude that their country is not a democracy.

At the same time, about 30% of women in Ukraine, 25% of women in Kazakhstan and 22% in Belarus say they do not know the meaning of a democracy. In these countries, education is a more significant factor for this question than age or location: better educated women are less likely to respond "Don't know".

Importance of Political and Civic Rights

Given that core democratic values include political liberties, freedoms, and human rights for all citizens, it is necessary to understand how women in these prioritize human rights and freedoms.

IFES designed questions to measure how women evaluate the importance of different rights and freedoms in the former Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Our findings show that although both men and women place similarly high importance on most freedoms and rights, there is a significant difference in women's evaluation in regards to individual rights and political liberties.

Women's views differ than those of women when surveyed on traditional individual rights, such as private property, freedom of religion, and minority rights and more explicitly on political and

collective rights, such as the right to form political parties, to organize an association or NGO, and to criticize government. Usually, women are more familiar with individual rights, because these rights are personal. Women are less familiar with political or "collective" rights as these require some level of political information and interest to be utilized. For many women, these rights are more abstract and seem less important than personal rights. As many women in these countries are not interested in political matters, these rights are not relevant for their day-to-day activities. There are, however, differences among women by age and education on the importance of these rights.

Figure 7. Percent of Women in Former Soviet Republics Who Think Select Rights Are Important

	Private Property	Minority Rights	Freedom of Religion	Right of Criticism	Freedom of Association
Ukraine	84%	73%	84%	63%	47%
Belarus	88%	75%	86%	64%	55%
Kazakhstan	98%	86%	87%	82%	Not asked

Question: How important is it for you that each of the following rights is protected by the government of [Country]?

In responses to questions regarding individual liberties, almost 4 out of 5 women in all three countries evaluate them as important. Difference among women by age is relevant only for the second group of rights where younger women are more likely to place importance on such rights than older women.

Level of education is also a key determinant. There is a gap between "individual" rights and "collective" rights. For example, almost twice as many women with at least some university education in Belarus place importance on political rights than the number of women with less than a high school education. In Ukraine, the proportion is less, but also significant. Lesser-educated women are also more likely to respond, "don't know" when asked about the importance of political rights.

Two questions in the Kazakh survey show that women may have other priorities than democratic freedoms. Perhaps due to their unstable economic situations, many women value stability and social order more than democratic ideals. Thus, in Kazakhstan, a statistically similar percentage of women (40%) as men (37%) agree that it is necessary to limit political and civil rights to maintain order. Additionally, 35% of women in Kazakhstan are even willing to countenance a dictatorship to preserve political order. Older women are more likely to agree with these propositions than younger women. However, a majority of women do not agree with restricting rights and accepting dictatorship for the price of maintaining order and discipline. Democratic rights are still important for the majority of women in Kazakhstan.

The question on limiting rights to keep order was also asked in Indonesia. 33% of women agreed that it is necessary to limit rights to establish order (less than Kazakhstan), but only 39% disagreed with this proposition. 28% of women in Indonesia did not know or didn't answer (as compared to 12% of men).

Kazakhs and Ghanaians were asked about their satisfaction with the level of political and civic freedoms in their respective countries. The satisfaction with the level of political and civil freedoms in Kazakhstan is very low among the women. In Ghana, 75% of men and women say

they are satisfied with the level of political freedoms in the country, and only 20% of men and 15% of women are not (an additional 6% men and 11% women do not know).

Figure 8. Differences between Kazakh and Ghanaian Women
On Satisfaction with Political and Civil Freedoms

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Ghana	74%	16%	11%
Kazakhstan	32%	57%	12%

Question: Please tell me whether you are completely satisfied, fairly satisfied, fairly dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with each of the following: level of political and civil freedoms?

In another indication of the relative satisfaction with personal rights in Ghana, 44% of women say that government respects individual rights in Ghana (21% women and 23% men - a little, 12% women and 15% men - not at all).

Age is also a determining factor in attitudes toward personal freedoms in Kazakhstan. 31% of younger women and 23% of older women were satisfied with the level of personal freedoms, while 65% of younger women (25% - completely) and 42% of older women (11% - completely) were not satisfied.

Respondents in Belarus were also asked about their levels of information about individual rights. 59% of Belarusian women and 51% of men say they do not have much information about these rights. There is a slight difference among women by age: younger and middle-aged women are slightly less likely to be uninformed than older women.

Less educated women often are less informed about their rights in Belarus (64% less educated versus 49% women with university education say they are poorly informed). The overall pattern is one of a lack of information about personal rights. 66% of women living in Minsk say they do not have little or no access to information.

This tendency also extends to knowledge about the Belarusian Constitution. For example, only 27% of women and 31% of men say they know well or rather well the Belarusian Constitution, while 36% of women and 40% of men responded that they do not know much about the legal framework of their country, and 31% of women responded they know nothing at all.

Civic Culture

The role of ordinary citizens in expanding and solidifying civic culture in a country is well understood. In order to increase civic participation, citizens have to believe that the government generally acts in the public's interest and that citizen involvement will impact government decisions. Survey data from these five countries shows that this might not always be the case, especially in the former republics of the Soviet Union.

In Belarus, for example, only 16% of men and 15% of women agree with the statement that government acts in the best interest of society, while 72% of men and 65% of women disagree. In Ukraine, only 22% of men and 20% of women agree with this statement when talking about the national government, whereas 68% of men and 66% of women disagree.

Furthermore, pluralities in Belarus and Ukraine are of the view that citizens do not act in the best interest of society. In Belarus, only 26% of men and 23% of women say that citizens generally act in the best interest of society, while 50% of men and 46% of women disagree with this statement. In Ukraine, only 28% of men and 29% of women believe in their fellow citizens, while 55% of men and 48% of women hold the opposing view. This high level of dissatisfaction with government and fellow citizens has implications for involvement in civic culture.

Most noticeably, these attitudes lead to a lack of political efficacy on the part of citizens. For example in Belarus, 77% agree with the statement that people cannot influence political matters. In Ukraine, 71% echo this sentiment. There is no significant difference between men and women on this matter. 72% of respondents in Belarus and 62% of respondents in Ukraine feel that politics is too complicated. There is no difference between men and women in Belarus on this matter, but in Ukraine more women (71%) than men (54%) voice this opinion.

Corruption

There are many factors that undermine women's belief in democracy in their respective countries and their free access to power. One of them is the high level of corruption and a general perception that government does not fight corruption.

Figure 9. Percentage of Women Citing Frequency and Seriousness of Corruption

	Corruption Common	Corruption Serious
Ukraine	86%	88%
Belarus	68%	64%
Kazakhstan	86%	90%
Ghana	57%	60%

Question: How common is the problem of official corruption?
How serious is the problem of official corruption?

In Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Belarus, and Ghana, for the majority of men and women (almost two thirds of women and even more men), corruption is a common and serious issue. Ukraine and Kazakhstan have the highest percentage of both men and women who say corruption is common and serious. These perceptions have a further consequence: lack of confidence in social institutions.

Confidence in Social Institutions

Confidence in social institutions is generally low for both men and women in all the five countries surveyed. It is especially low for women with regard to the new social institutions like political parties (no data for Ghana and Indonesia) because women have less access to information about how these institutions work. Usually, more women say, "don't know" when answering about these institutions. Confidence in existing political parties is rather low either because these parties do not reflect the interests of the majority of the population (or women's interests) and/or these parties do not meet the high political expectations people had before the transition period in the post-communist countries. There are similarly less-than-positive responses for the parliament in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

The institutions that inspire the most confidence include the president, military forces, and state security – especially in post-soviet countries. Both men and women, all ages and locations, evaluate these institutions higher than others. It is a sign that women still respect power and trust such institutions as they expect more influence from them than from the political parties or even parliaments. Attributable reasons could be that these institutions are better known than other institutions or because they wield disproportionate power and visible influence in society.

Figure 10. Percentage of Women with Confidence in Select Social Institutions

	President	Parliament	Militia/Police	Local Admin.
Ukraine	32%	21%	24%	25%
Belarus	50%	25%	32%	34%
Indonesia*	51%	35%	44%	41%
Ghana	77%	70%	53%	52%

Question: How much confidence do you have in each of the following institutions?

*Indonesians asked how responsive each institution is to the needs and concerns of people.

In Ghana, the level of confidence in institutions is very high for all groups; the most confidence-inspiring institutions are the president, parliament, then courts, police, and local government (more than 50%). It is interesting that women with university education in Ghana have less confidence in these institutions than women with a low level of education: for example the difference is 10% for the president and local government. This might be due to the higher levels of information available to women with at least some university education.

In Indonesia, respondents were asked about the responsiveness of several institutions. The responses show no significant differences between men and women. Only the president (Habibie at the time of the survey) was regarded as responsive by a majority of women. About 40% of women say that the military forces, local administration, and police are responsive to the needs of the people, and only one-third say that the parliament is responsive. As for many other questions in Indonesia, more women than men are likely to say "don't know" (from 22.4% for the police to 35.4% for the provincial governor). Women with at least some university education see these social institutions as being less responsive than did women with the lowest level of education.

Women's Leadership

Voting

Honest and fair elections have traditionally been a prime indicator of democratic development. Elections also provide women with an effective way to take part in the political process. Both the number of participants and women's motives to vote are important: women should want to vote and believe that elections can give them an opportunity to be included in the political process.

Although women are less politically active than men in all five countries, there are no significant differences in their voting patterns. In four countries (there was no data on voting pattern for Kazakhstan), majorities of women (almost as many as men) prefer to vote: in Indonesia, 96% of men and women voted in the 1999 general elections; in Ghana, 96% of men and women voted in the 1997 presidential and parliamentary elections; in Ukraine, 77% of women and 75% men

voted in the 1998 parliamentary elections and 76% voted in the 1999 presidential elections; and in Belarus, 72% of women and 71% of men voted in 1999 local election.

Following the ideal model of democratic elections, a majority of men and women in Belarus, Ghana, and Ukraine says that honest and fair elections are important (very or somewhat important): in Ghana, 90% of women feel that honest elections are important; in Belarus, 79%, in Ukraine, 82%. However, when evaluating the most recent elections in their countries, women and men were more critical in their assessment of the election's fairness. The gap between the percentage of women who think that honest and fair elections are important versus their actual evaluation of the most recent elections was significant in Belarus (31%) and Ukraine (44%), but small in Ghana (5%):

Figure 11. Percentage of Women Citing Importance Of Honest Elections Versus Perceived Honesty of Most Recent Elections

	Elections Should be Fair	Actual Fairness of Elections
Ukraine	82%	38%
Belarus	79%	48%
Ghana	90%	85%
Indonesia	Not asked	83%

Question: How important is it to you that the following rights be respected in the country where you live: Honest elections are held regularly?

As for main motives, or reasons to vote, people mention their civic duty first. However, the number of people who follow their duty when voting differs from country to country. In Ghana, 56% overall say it is their civic duty to vote, Indonesia (62%), Belarus (41%), and Ukraine (21%). Other reasons for voting included hopes for the future and support for the party candidate. In Belarus, 11% of women say the reason to vote is hope for the future. In Ukraine, hope for the future (34%) was the response with the highest percentage, while an additional 17% mentioned impact of their vote on the elections.

It seems that people in Ghana and Indonesia are more motivated by their civic duties than people in Belarus or Ukraine, countries in which both men and women seem to be disappointed and highly dissatisfied with the first decade of post-communist development. This is a general finding from the five different surveys. The three countries which are further along in their experience with democracy (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus) are much more pessimistic in their evaluation of democracy and liberal ideals than respondents from the two countries that had just embarked on the democratic path when the surveys were conducted in these countries (Ghana and Indonesia). The unrealized high expectations from democratic development combined with some of the undemocratic actions taken by their leaders have led to a general sense of apathy and alienation for citizens of Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.

For example, respondents in Ghana and Indonesia have a greater belief in the effectiveness of their votes than respondents from the other three countries. When asked whether voting gives people an opportunity to influence decision-making, only about one-third of the respondents in Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine agree. In Belarus, only 35% of women and 33% of men say that voting gives people a chance to influence decision-making (55% men and 48% women say no). In Kazakhstan, 39% of women and 38% of men agree that voting gives them a chance to

influence decision-making, while 57% of women and 59% of men do not agree. In Ukraine, 34% women and 37% men agree while 58% both men and women do not agree.

However, in Indonesia the case is the opposite: a majority of people are very optimistic about influencing the decision-making process through voting. Many men and women have tremendous faith in the power of the ballot. 77% of women say that elections make officials accountable, 79% say that elections make officials respect human rights, and 71% say that voting gives people the opportunity to influence decision-making (79% for men). In Ghana, 73% of men and 64% of women also believe that voting gives citizens an influence on decision-making.

Figure 12. Voter Efficacy among Women

	Voting Influences Decision-Making	Voting Doesn't Influence Decision-Making
Ukraine	34%	58%
Belarus	35%	48%
Kazakhstan	39%	57%
Ghana	64%	21%
Indonesia	71%	5%

Question: Agree or Disagree - Voting gives people like you a chance to influence decision-making in our country?

The reasons that these attitudes are so different may be numerous, including economic and historical causes. For many years Indonesia suffered under anti-democratic authority, so that now people are eager for democracy and consider elections and the voting process as a major step toward democracy. This is clearly a period of high hopes for the people of Indonesia.

However, as the following discussions of political parties and NGOs will show, neither Indonesian, Belarusian, nor Ukrainian women are very active in the political or civic process, beyond the formal process of voting. Many of them do not know about parties or NGOs in their countries, and those who are familiar with these organizations are not very enthusiastic about them.

Political Parties

In four out of five countries (Indonesians not asked this question), more than a half of women say that at least two parties are important or necessary. However, the percentage of women supporting this proposition is less than the percentage of men who support a multi-party system. Younger women are more supportive of political parties than older women: for example, in Ukraine, 62% of young women (18-29), 62% of middle-aged women (30-49), and 49% of older women (50+) agree that at least two political parties are necessary. Also, 59% young, 55% middle-aged, and 43% of older women agree that political parties are generally necessary for Ukraine.

Figure 13. Percentage Who Think at Least Two Parties Are Necessary or Important

	Men	Women
Ukraine	68%	56%
Belarus	62%	56%

Kazakhstan	65%	58%
Ghana	75%	71%
Indonesia*	70%	70%

Question: How important do you think it is for [Country] to have at least two parties competing in an election?

*Indonesians asked for ideal number of parties.

Ghana seems to be the one country where there is a great deal of grassroots support for political parties. 74% of men and 63% of women say political parties are very important, and 12% men and 17% women say parties are somewhat important. Only 12% of men and 10% of women say they are not important. There are other important indicators of women's civic activities in Ghana. 73% of men and 63% of women say they would join a political party. In addition, 56% of men and 43% of women would work for a party without payment, while 38% of men and 48% of women would not. For comparative purposes, in Kazakhstan, 12% of women and 20% of men say they would join a political party.

Age is a significant factor for attitudes on these questions in Ghana. For example, younger women are more likely to join a political party than middle-aged or older women: 63% of younger versus 59% of older women agree, while 27% of younger and 32% of older women do not agree.

However, women with university education are less prone to join a political party in Ghana than less educated women: 67% women with high school and 60% women with at least some university education would agree to join a party, while 26% women with high school and 34% women with university education do not agree.

As for working for a political party or participating in an election campaign (working for a candidate) without payment, there is no significant difference by age or education in Ghana. However, location is a strong factor here; women in rural areas often agree to join a party and work for a party or a candidate without payment while women in urban areas are less likely to voice these sentiments, and women in Accra are even more reluctant.

Indonesians, especially women, are not quite as enthusiastic about political parties as Ghanaians. In Indonesia, 44% of women say they have at least a fair amount of information about political parties while 38% say they do not have very much, and 7% nothing at all. This is in comparison to men, 60% of whom say they have at least a fair amount of information about political parties, while 32% say they do not have much, and 4% none at all. This is perhaps why fewer women (43%) than men (53%) say that political parties have differences. The percentage of "don't know" responses for this question was 45% for women and 28% for men. Women's membership in political parties is extremely low in all five countries.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Women do not evaluate the possibility of ordinary citizens uniting into NGOs very highly and they accord it a lesser possibility than men in all cases. In Ghana, 63% of men think it is possible for citizens to form organizations without government involvement. The percentage of Ghanaian women who agree with this sentiment is 52%. Ukrainian men are also more positive in this regard than women, 58% versus 52%. In Kazakhstan, a minority of both men and women are optimistic about citizens forming NGOs (42% for both).

Also, women in Ghana and Ukraine are less likely than men to believe that NGOs are essential or necessary.

Figure 14. Percentage Who Think NGOs Are Necessary

	Men	Women
Ukraine	26%	21%
Belarus	45%	47%
Kazakhstan	45%	46%
Ghana	72%	59%

Question: How necessary are these organizations?

In reality, there exist several women's non-governmental organizations in all five countries. In Kazakhstan there are more than 30 women's NGOs officially registered, but the membership is not significant. In Indonesia, one third of respondents (both men and women) are members of religious organizations, but it is not clear whether these organizations can help women become more active members in their communities. In Ghana, people are involved in community development activities: 43% of women and 56% of men spent more than one day per month for community development. In general, both men and women are equally involved in such community activities in Ghana without any payment.

The data shows that there are several types of NGOs that are more attractive to women than others. For example, in Kazakhstan, more than a half of women say they would join organizations working for environmental protection, for educational aims, and helping people in trouble. Even more women (56%) say they would like to work in women's organizations. Other types of NGO (religious, ethnic, youth, etc.) are less attractive for women and even less attractive for men.

When asked whether they would work for NGOs without payment, 19% of men and 23% of women in Kazakhstan say they would definitely work for free (more older women than younger women responded this way), 15% of men and 18% of women would probably work, but more than a half of men and women would not. This statistic signifies that these women (and men) would need some stimulus to make NGOs attractive for them. Otherwise, the chance they will participate in NGO activities is small.

In Ukraine, 5% of women say they would definitely work for NGOs, an additional 20% say they would probably work, but more than a half say they would not work for NGOs. In Belarus, 46% of men and 47% of women say that NGOs are important to address social problems: among these respondents more younger women than older women (56% versus 38%), and more women in the urban area than women in the rural area (48% versus 42%) would agree with the importance of NGOs.

This is a very clear and positive sign that illustrates the role of NGOs in all these countries to decrease the gap between male and female leadership and to make women more active citizens. The more programs that NGOs provide for women, the better their chances of becoming more active and less underprivileged. In any case, NGOs seem to be the most practical instruments to include women into social and political life in their countries and to influence public opinion.

Conclusions

Until lately there was no Western research data on the former Soviet Union and many African and Asian states, so that we could only guess about people's attitudes toward their socio-political environment in these regions. Now that these data are available, one can discuss the similarity in many aspects of life in different regions.

There are some common factors influencing women's status and the role women play in society: (1) their economic level, (2) patriarchal heritage, and (3) the level of democratic development.

1. Two of these countries (Ghana and Indonesia) traditionally belong to the "developing" world, and they were less industrialized and relatively poor during the period of time preceding IFES research. The other three (Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan) belonged to the former Soviet Union, i.e. they were industrialized during Soviet rule. To some extent, all of these countries have colonial or semi-colonial economic heritage that influenced their development. Recently, for differing reasons (among them, world economic crisis, unsuccessful market reforms, corruption), their economic development has not been a success and has not brought any progress to the population. The level of GDP has fallen, unemployment has increased, annual per capita income has decreased, and the level of poverty has increased in all of these countries. By 1999, the highest nominal per capita income was in Kazakhstan (\$1,350), then Indonesia (around \$1,000), Belarus (\$900), Ukraine (\$730) and Ghana (around \$400). This means that at least three countries (Belarus, Ukraine, and Ghana) hardly overcame the UN official threshold of the world poorest countries with less than \$2 a day as their average income. To improve the gender situation, these countries first must improve their economy. Otherwise, all efforts are concentrated on simple survival.

When asked to assess their socio-economic status (SES), in all five countries a majority or plurality of women say that their SES is "lower than moderate/lowest" (Ukraine - 86%, Belarus - 77%, Kazakhstan - 50%, Ghana - 49%, Indonesia - 34%) or "moderate" (Ukraine - 14%, Belarus - 20%, Kazakhstan - 45%, Ghana - 34%, Indonesia- 63%). Only a few women say they have higher than average SES. These answers show the perception of the situation by women, rather than the situation itself; however, such self-assessment reflects women's everyday feelings about their life.

The employment situation is much harder for women than for men. The number of women who are not involved in the national economy (they are either housewives, or pensioners, or officially unemployed) is much higher than the number of men in each country. In three countries, a majority of women are not employed, while a majority of men are either self-employed or employed. Let's compare the percentage of men and women who are not students but not employed/self-employed in the national economy.

Ukraine: 41% men and 58% women
Kazakhstan: 34% men and 53% women
Indonesia: 41% men and 51% women
Belarus: 28% men and 40% women
Ghana: 16% men and 30% women

It is not a surprise that women feel alienation and discrimination. They can hardly improve the situation themselves if there are no special governmental and international aid programs for them. It would appear that active participation in political life and in NGOs, including work without payment, goes hand-in-hand with government responsiveness to basic needs. This speaks to the need for increasing dialogue and exchange between government-civil society in order to prompt increased political and civic participation by women.

2. Traditional culture and a long history of gender inequality lead to the dominance in political life of the traditional patriarchal relations between men and women that negatively influence women's status and potential opportunities. Religion also supports gender inequality, especially in the countries where traditional religions prevail. In Indonesia, 90% are Muslims, in Ghana, 15% are Muslims and 30% are traditional believers, in Kazakhstan, only 18% say they are Muslims, but rural patriarchal culture prevails here and keeps traditional gender stereotypes alive as well. Traditional heritage sees women's primary role as maintaining the family, and does not generally emphasize women's participation in political life.

It is especially true for women living in rural areas in the largely rural countries (Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan). Women in rural areas are less interested in political matters, they are less informed and less educated. The majority of older women live in the rural area and that also contributes to the higher level of women's conservatism in the country.

As a result, feminism as a theory and practical movement is not very common and popular among women (especially among older women). To overcome this obstacle, the entire system of education and media resources would have to be focused on changing traditional stereotypes and giving positive images of women as political leaders, public figures, and the like. Only joint efforts of men and women can bring success in this area, because still many women in rural areas and less educated women are more oriented toward men's opinions in public life rather than to their own opinions.

3. The level of democratic development in all five countries is not very high. In every country except Ghana, much less than half of the population thinks that its country is a democracy (even lower among women). These countries are very far from the Western model of democracy, although, officially speaking, they all are moving toward democracy. With the battle between capitalism and socialism now won by the former, democracy is still rather an ideal than a reality in many of the less industrialized countries, and this is a common feature of public opinion in these countries as well.

With more stable democratic trends, periodic and fair elections, free media access, and less limited freedoms in each country, there will be more opportunity for women to participate in NGOs, parties, decision-making processes. To enjoy these opportunities, women have to prepare themselves by getting a higher level of education, more information about all matters of domestic and international life, on their rights and liberties, and the like. The very idea of democracy is still popular among women. However, a plurality of the population (including women) thinks that their country is not democratic and is hardly moving towards democracy.

At the same time, there are some significant differences among the five selected countries.

The economic and political crisis of 1997-1998 destroyed Indonesian economic growth and hopes for a quick improvement in the standard of living. However, successful national elections in June 1999 as well as the start of economic recovery changed the situation for the better in Indonesia and put this country closer to Ghana from the perspective of democratic development and women's access to power resources. When asked in the post-election survey whether it is possible for a woman to be an effective president of Indonesia, 62% of the people (no gender differences) answered it is possible for a woman to be effective in this role.

As for the post-Soviet countries, economic and political reforms did not improve the standard of living in general nor the situation for women's development in particular. On the contrary, the last five years have revealed the social weaknesses of the transition, and pointed up the necessity of positive change for all people. The reality of women's situation has worsened. The past optimism about free market reforms and democratic political changes has disappeared, so that many people have become pessimistic and have stopped supporting social reforms in general. Majorities of women in these countries are relatively poor and alienated from power. In many cases, social conditions have become worse and caused inequality and marginalization. The fact that the majority of women say their economic situation is fairly bad and income is lower than moderate shows that they have suffered from the rapid changes and still cannot adapt to them.

However, on the positive side, post-soviet republics have a level of education (including women) that is much higher than the level of education in Indonesia or Ghana. This factor gives women a chance to be better informed about political and social life, to be more interested in political matters, and to participate more actively in political and social life.

Another important issue that distinguishes these two groups of countries is the level of employment in formal paid work in the national economy. In Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, more women are employed: Ukraine - 38%, Kazakhstan - 42%, Belarus - 45%. Therefore, fewer women are housewives/homemakers in Ukraine (10%) and Belarus (5%) than in Ghana (13%) or Indonesia (41%) and have more potential opportunities for being active in public life.

The level of information (especially regarding civil society matters) and political interests of women in the three post-soviet republics is lower than for men, but still sufficient to let women become more involved. Part of the reason for the lower levels of information could be due to the fact that middle-aged and older women were not taught such concepts as civil society and rule of law during their formal education. However, the fact that they complain about the lack of information can be interpreted as their desire to have more information and be more involved in decision-making. Although their knowledge about democracy is not very high (so that women in these countries need better civic education and special training on democracy matters), it is still higher than in Indonesia and Ghana.

In Indonesia 40% of women could not say what a democracy means. In Ghana, only 5% of women directly answered "do not know" whether their country is a democracy or not, while in Ukraine -18%, Kazakhstan - 22%, Belarus - 24%. However, as stated earlier, fully 48% of women in Ghana could not define democracy.

It will take a lot of time and assistance to give the women of these countries adequate access to political life - through better information sources, training courses, increasing women's interests

in politics, involving them in different civic and political actions (membership in the political parties, NGO activity) etc.

In order to improve women's access and leadership in social and political life, there exist several possible and practical methods on the international level, such as:

- 1) Develop educational programs for women at all levels (including special topics, or lessons at community public lectures and Sunday schools for adults) with a focus on political education to give women of all age groups the necessary knowledge about civil society, democracy, freedoms and liberties, citizen's duties and responsibilities, etc.;
- 2) Include special courses on women's leadership and civic education into the high school and university curricula, with a focus on basic knowledge and practical training;
- 3) Develop programs for regional media to promote the issue of gender equality and spread more information about political and economic matters, support discussions on democracy and women's leadership, etc.,
- 4) Support existing NGOs and establish new organizations to meet communities' needs and to encourage women to participate in public life;
- 5) Organize special training programs on election matters to encourage women's participation in election campaigns (as candidates and as activists) and improve their level of political culture;
- 6) Encourage existing NGOs to actively participate in all public discussions on important domestic issues and influence the government through legislation, media, church, etc.,
- 7) Encourage NGO cooperation through the local, regional, national and international network (NGOs need help to provide them internet access, so that they can provide more information for all members),
- 8) Develop special programs for women-activists to receive training, to participate in the international conferences, workshops, and seminars on the same level as men. Work to involve women of all age groups in such programs in order to heighten their interests in important social issues;
- 9) Stimulate and support different types of NGOs (educational, environmental, cultural, religious, etc.) to reflect varieties of women's groups and to show them on a practical level how plurality of opinions and interests can co-exist in a democratic society.

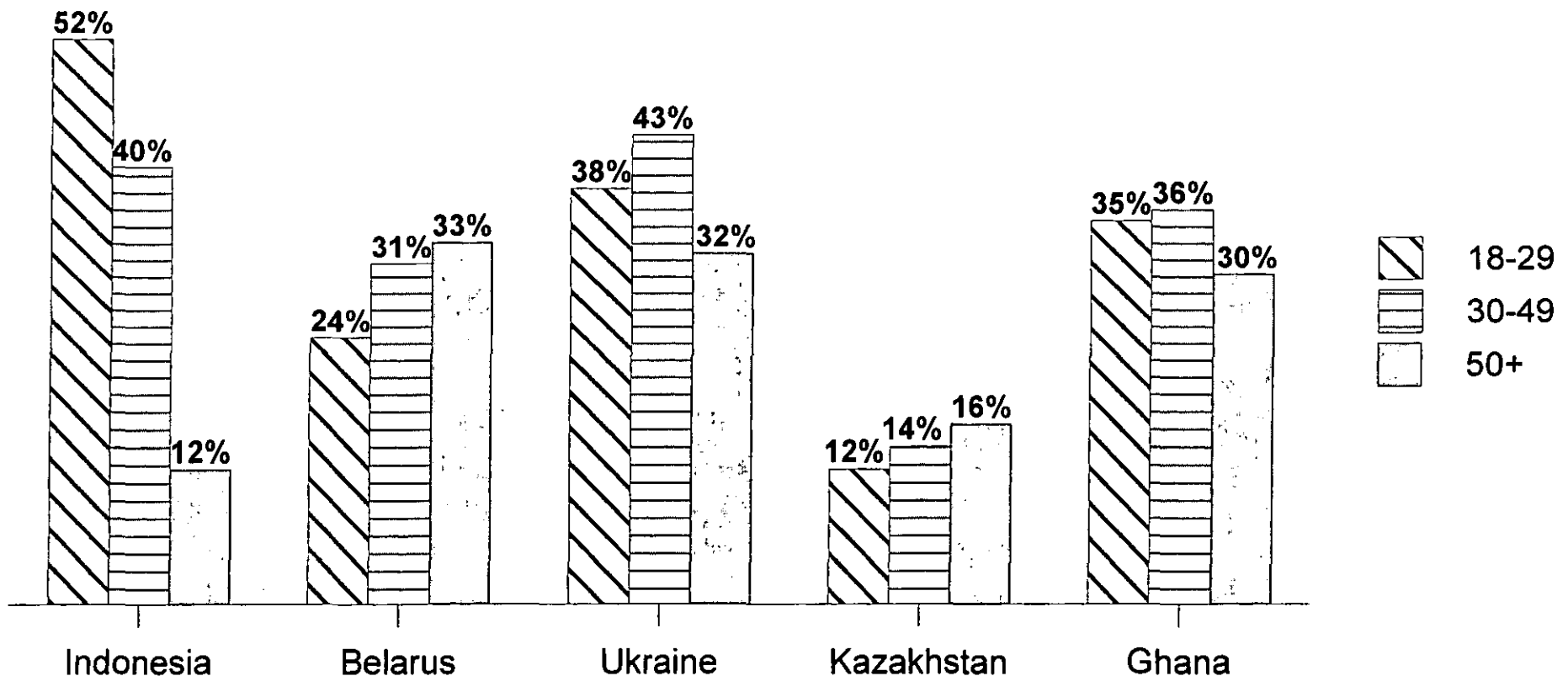
Appendix

Selected Data Charts

Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

The level of political information is also significantly affected by age in Indonesia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Percent of Women with a Great Deal or Fair Amount of Information, by Age

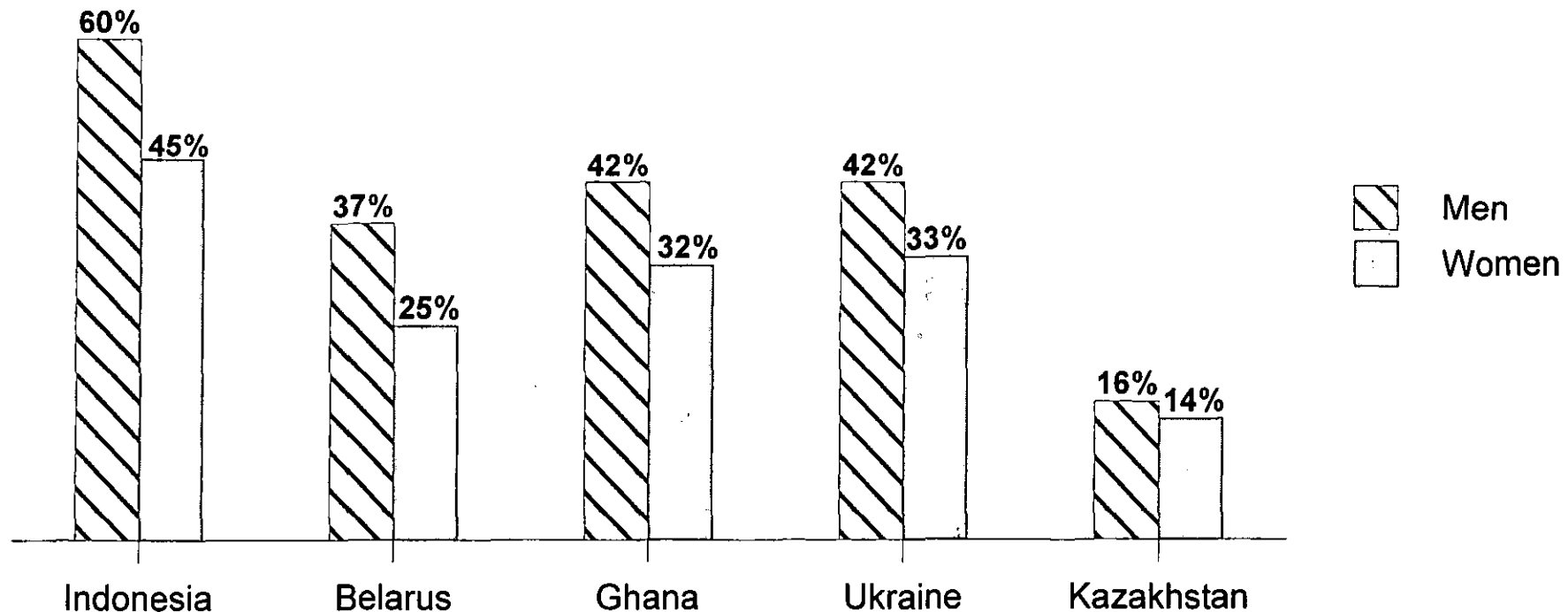


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Women are also less likely to have information about economic developments than men (except in Kazakhstan).

Question: "How much information do you have about economic developments in [country]?"

Percent with a Great Deal or Fair Amount of Information

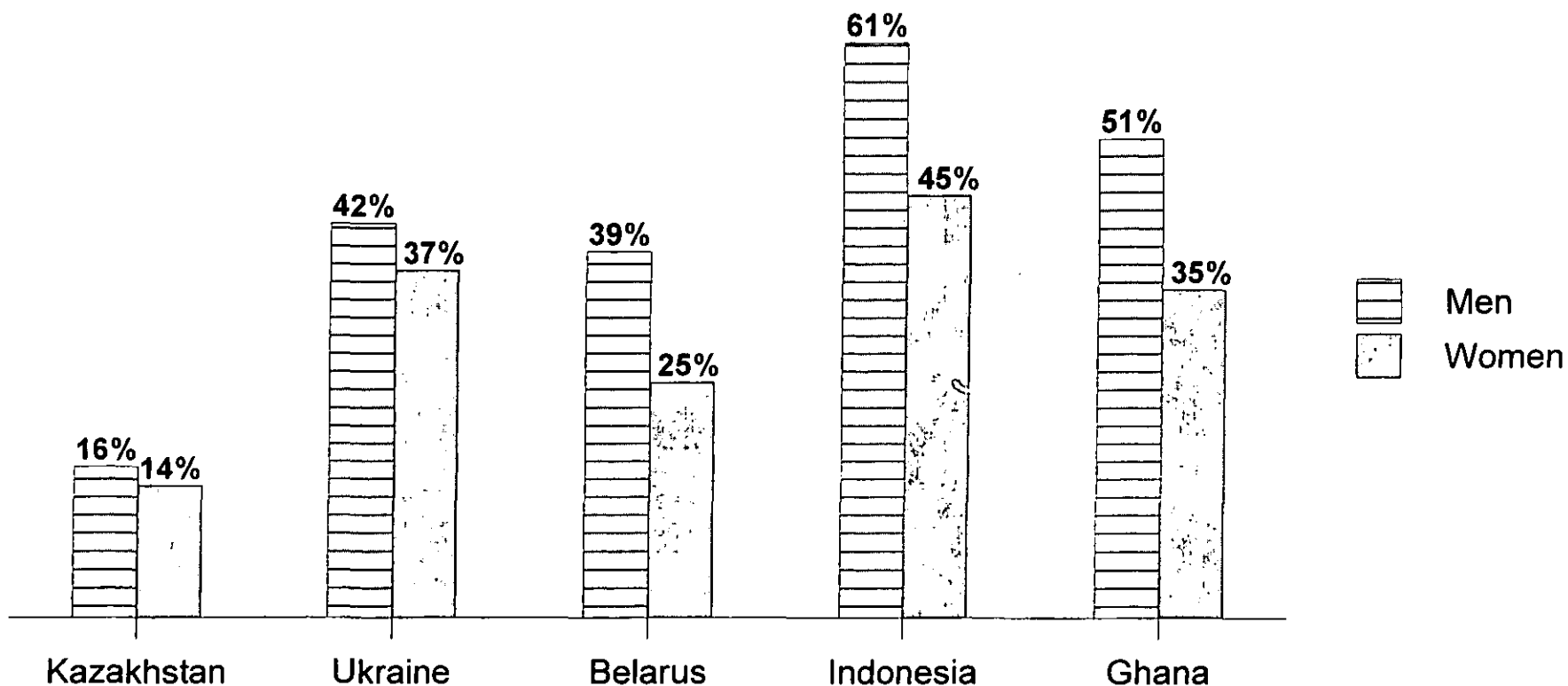


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Women are less likely to have information about political developments than men

Question: "How much information do you have about political developments in [country]?"

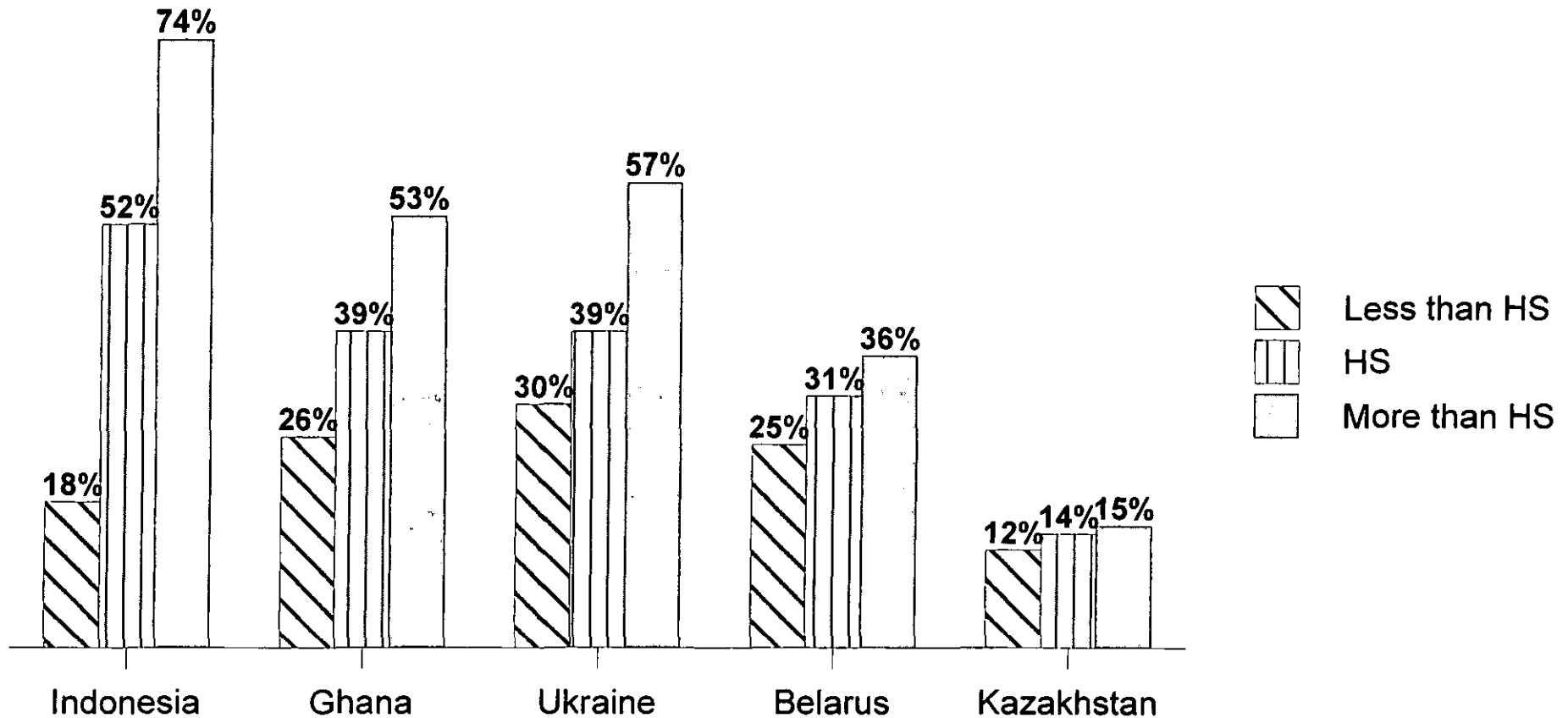
Percent with a Great Deal or Fair Amount of Information



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Among women, the level of education is a significant factor affecting level of political information in each country, excluding Kazakhstan.

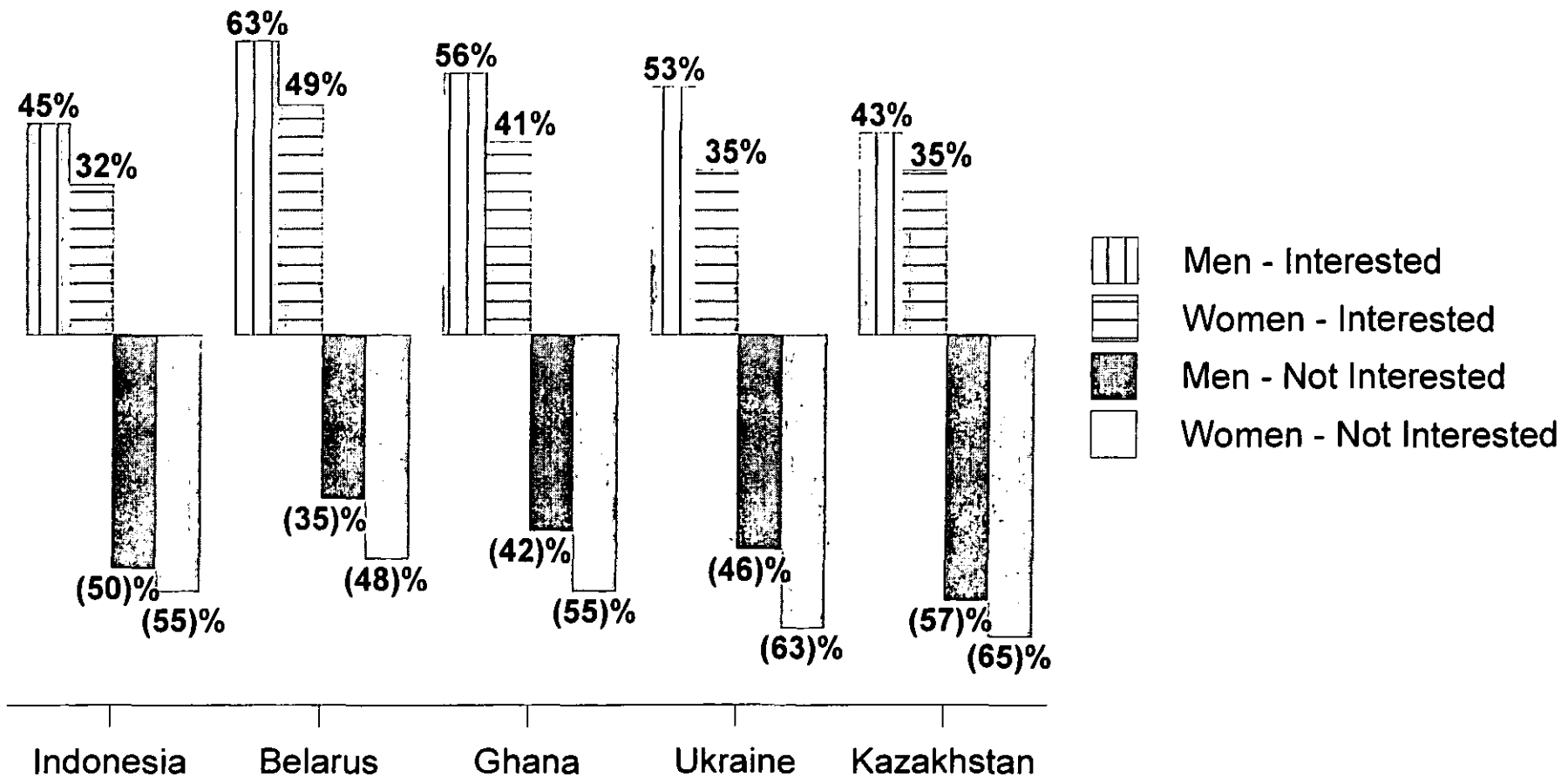
Percent of Women with a Great Deal or Fair Amount of Information, by Education



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Men are more interested in political affairs than women in all five countries. Women also exhibit more disinterest than men.

Question: "How interested are you in matters of politics and government?"

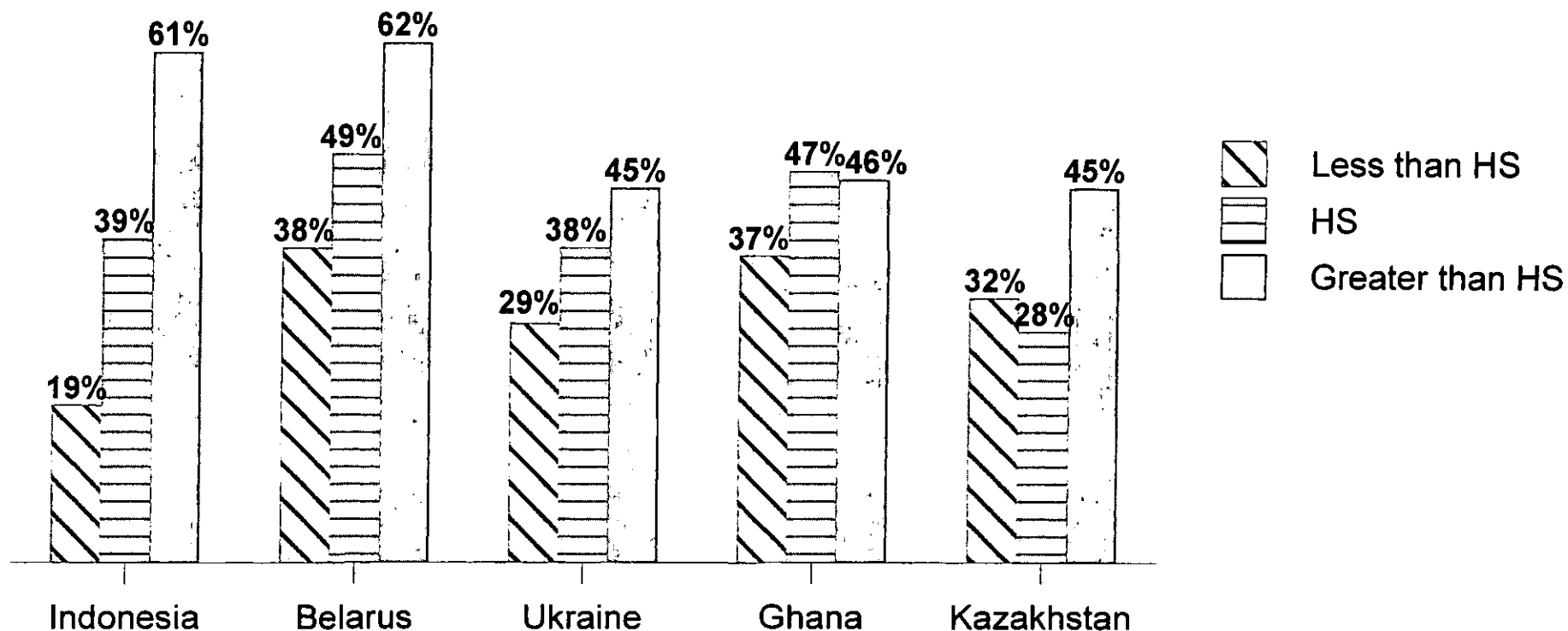


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

The level of interest in politics among women is strongly influenced by the level of education, especially in Indonesia and Belarus.

Question: "How interested are you in matters of politics and government?"

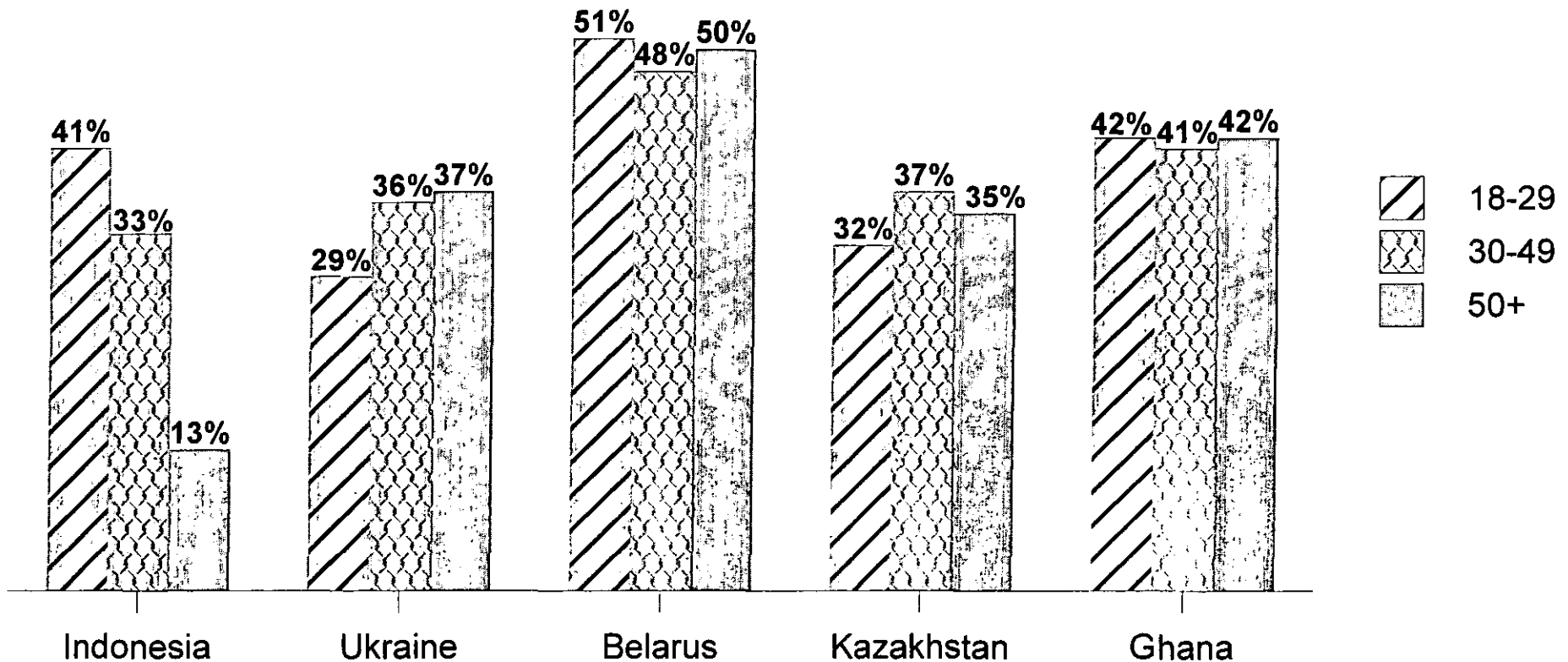
Percentage of Women Very or Somewhat Interested in Politics, by Education



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Indonesian women differ in their interest in matters of politics by age. Younger Ukrainian women show less interest than their older counterparts.

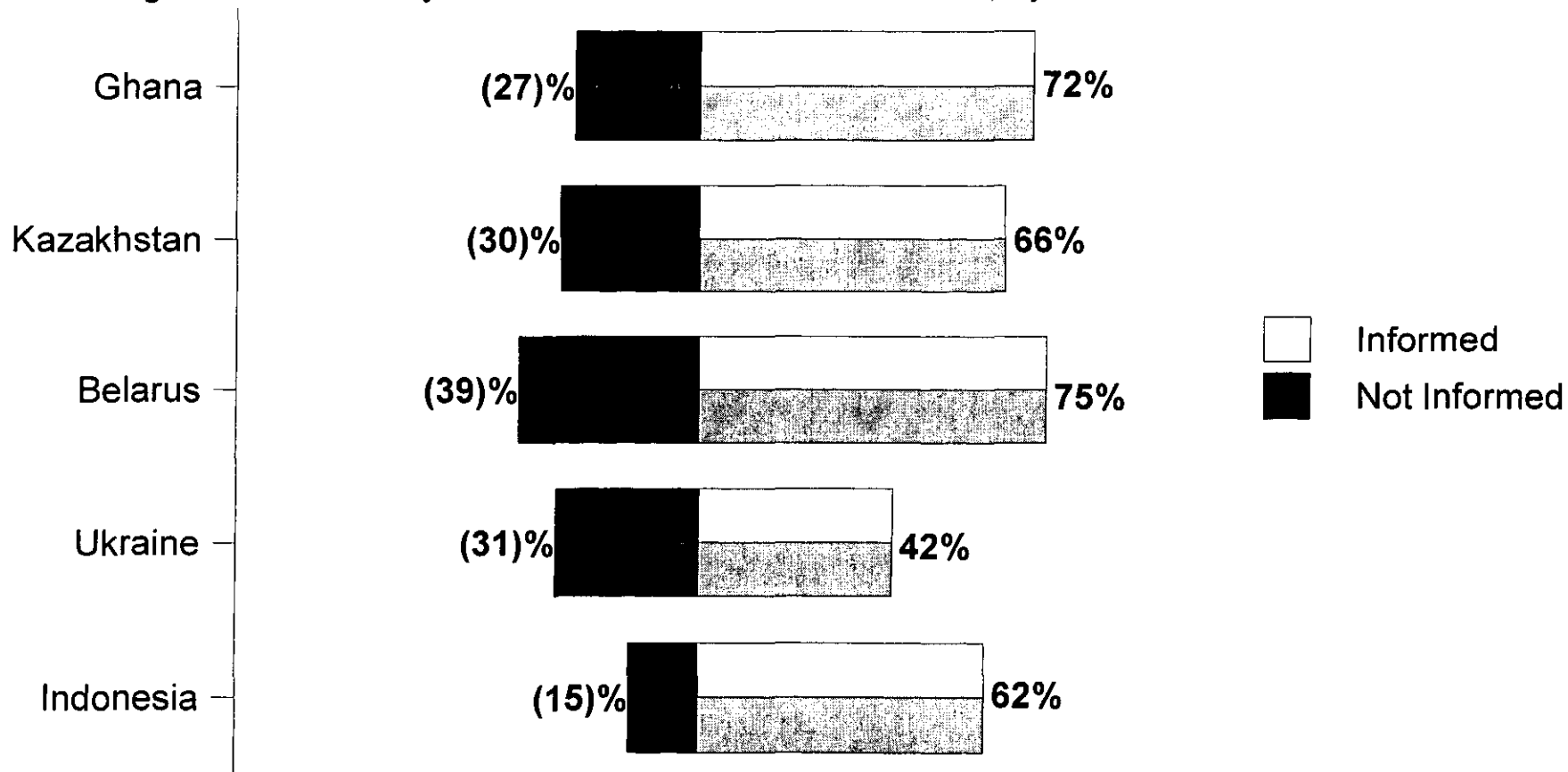
Percentage of Women Very or Somewhat Interested in Politics, by Age



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

In all five countries, women's level of interest in politics is directly correlated with the level of information about political matters.

Percentage of Women Very or Somewhat Interested in Politics, by Information

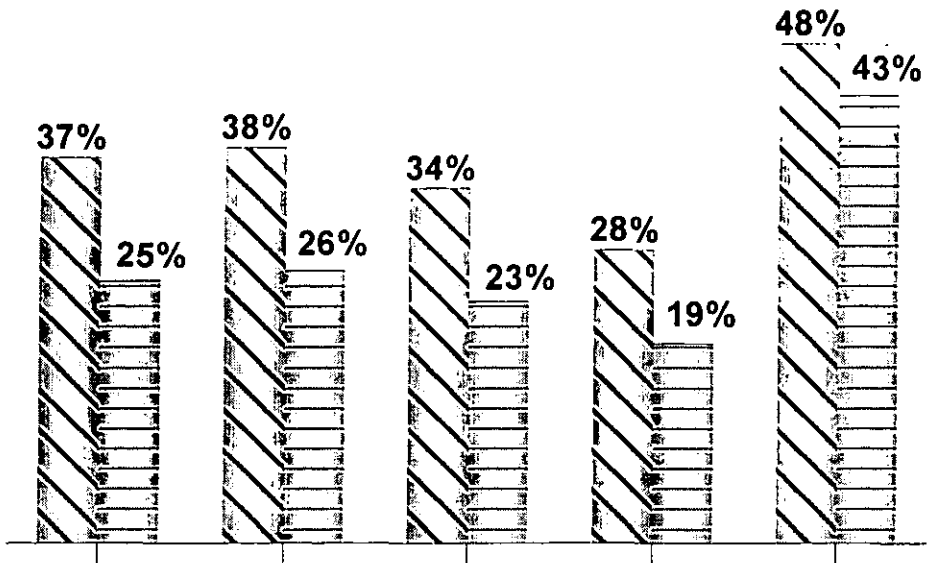


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

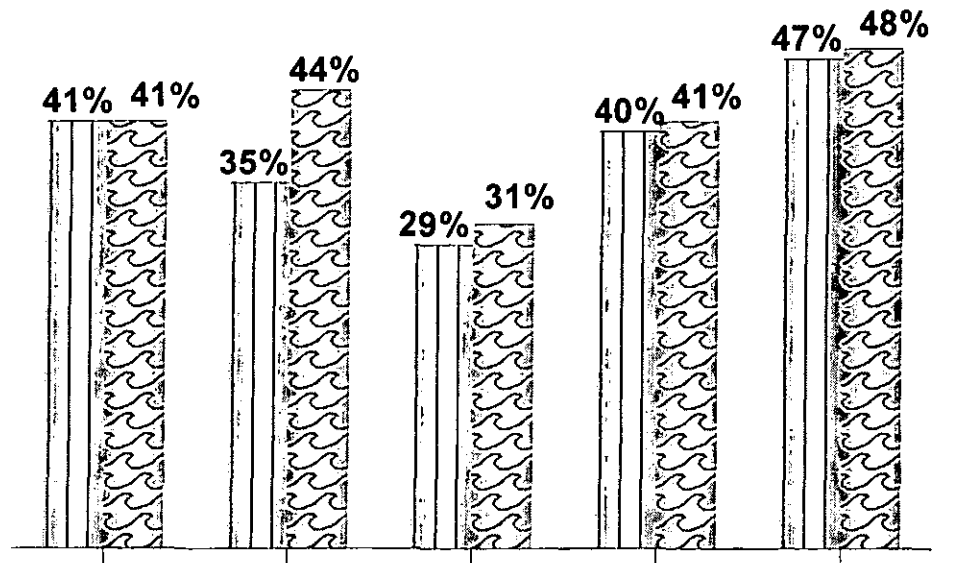
Women in all five countries are less likely to prefer a market economy than men. Women in all five countries generally prefer state over market economy.

Question: "When thinking about our economic future, should our country strive to develop an economy with little government control, or should we strive for an economy which is basically controlled by the government?" (Note: In Ghana, respondents asked if businesses should be owned by private investors, the government, or both.)

Percent Who Prefer Free-Market Economy



Percent Who Prefer State-Controlled Economy



Indonesia Ghana Ukraine Belarus Kazakhstan Indonesia Ghana Ukraine Belarus Kazakhstan

 Men

 Women

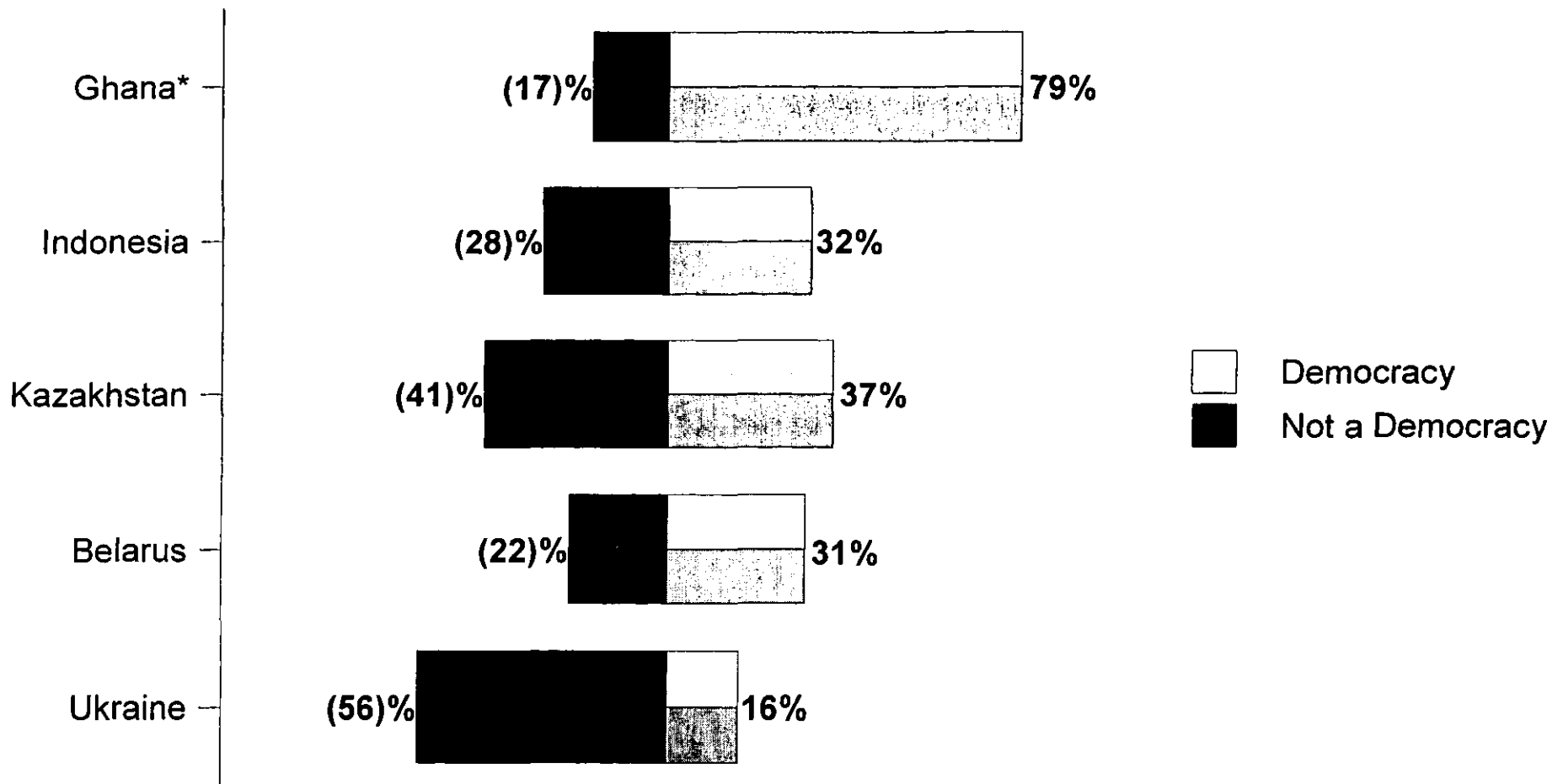
 Men

 Women

Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Women in the former Soviet republics are more likely to say their country is not a democracy than are women in Ghana or Indonesia...

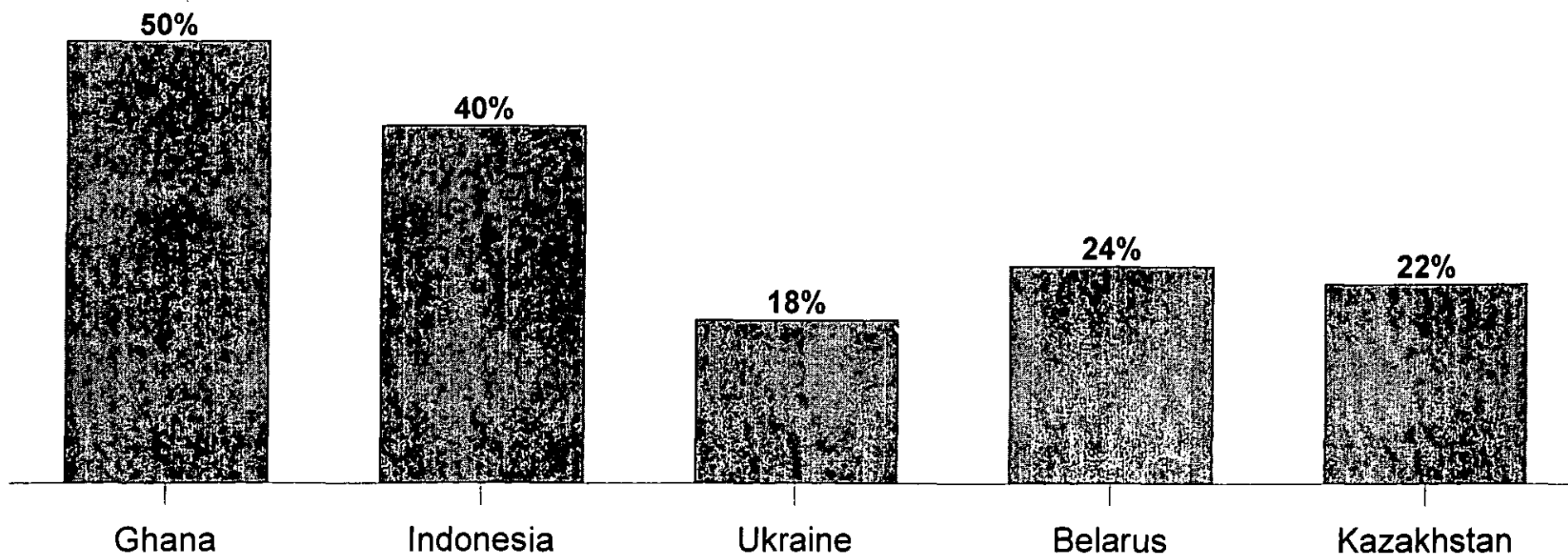
Question: "In your opinion, is [Country] primarily a democracy or is it not primarily a democracy?"



*Only respondents who knew what democracy meant were asked this question.

Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

...however, women in Ghana and Indonesia are more likely to answer "Don't know" to this question than women in the former Soviet republics.

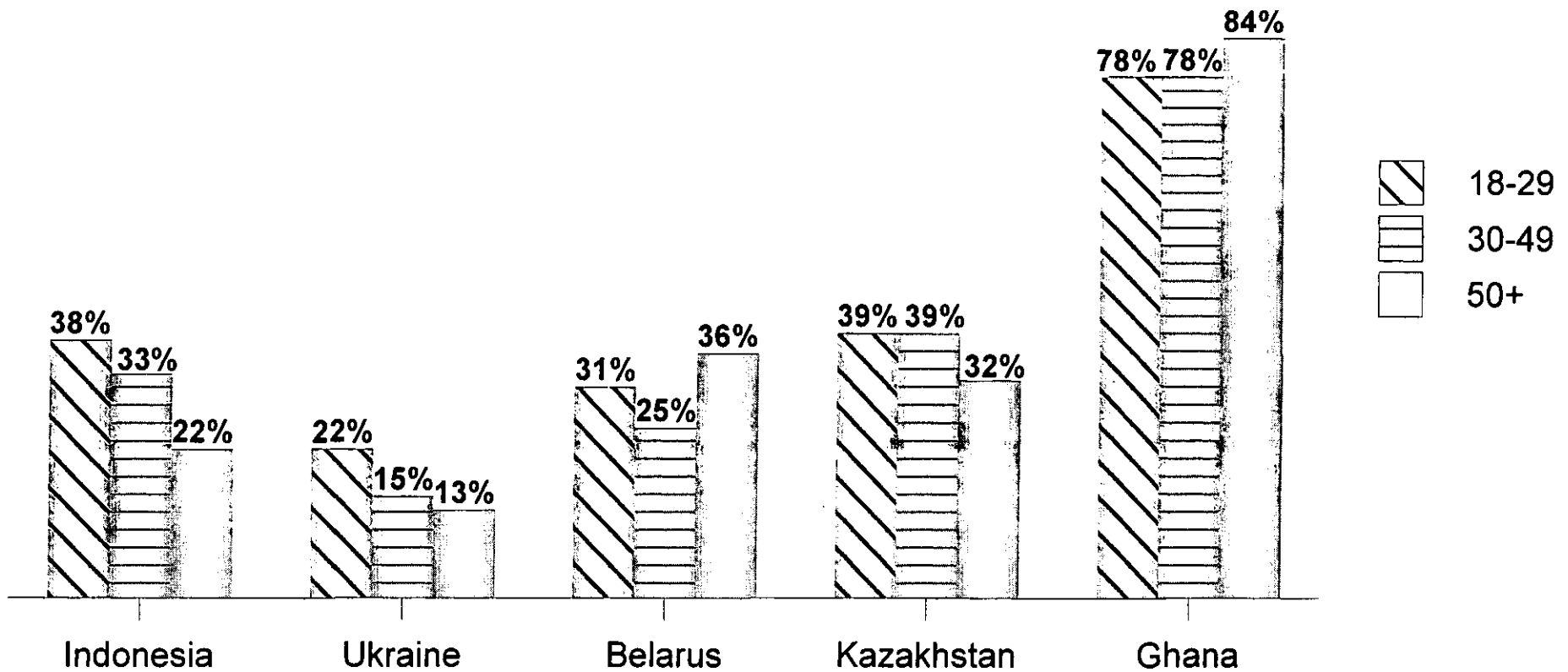


Note: Respondents in Indonesia answered either "Don't know, or "Don't know what democracy means." Respondents in Ghana were first asked what they thought democracy meant. "Don't know" percentage on this chart is a combination of DK answers on this first question as well as the question asking whether Ghana is a democracy.

Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Younger women in Indonesia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan are more likely to think their country is a democracy.

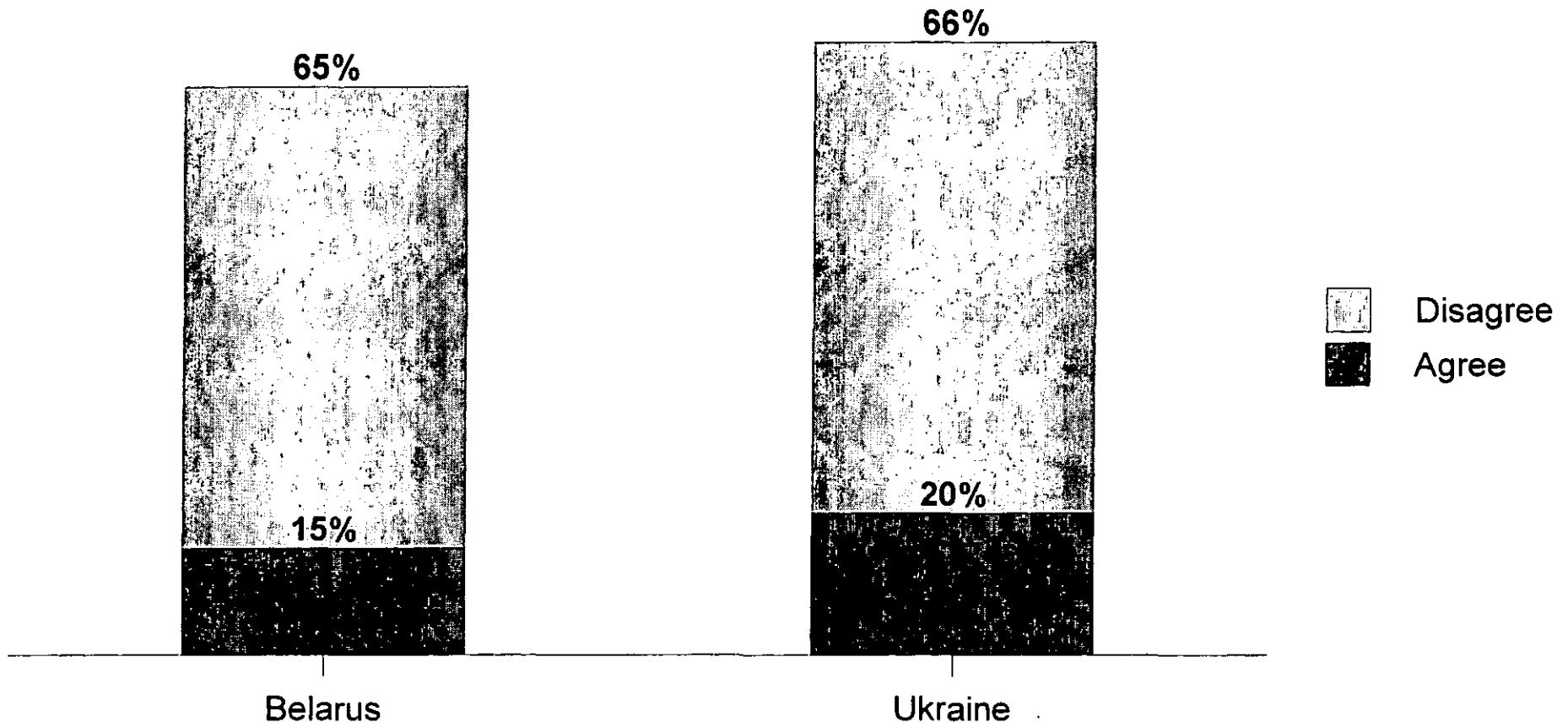
Percentage of Women Who Say Country is a Democracy, by Age



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Ukrainian and Belarusian women overwhelmingly disagree with the statement that government officials act in the best interests of society.

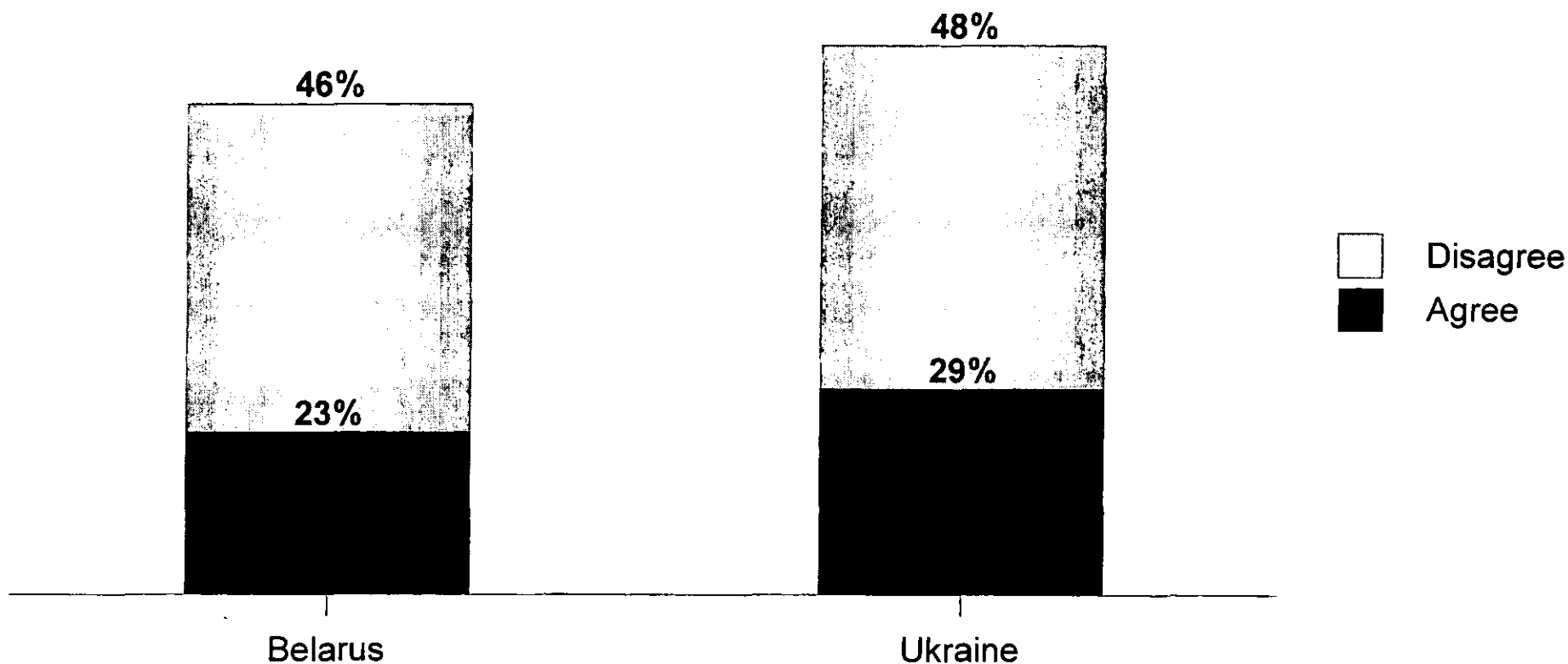
Question: "Agree or Disagree: Government officials generally act in the best interests of society."



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Ukrainian and Belarusian women are slightly more approving of their fellow citizens but a plurality is still skeptical of their motives.

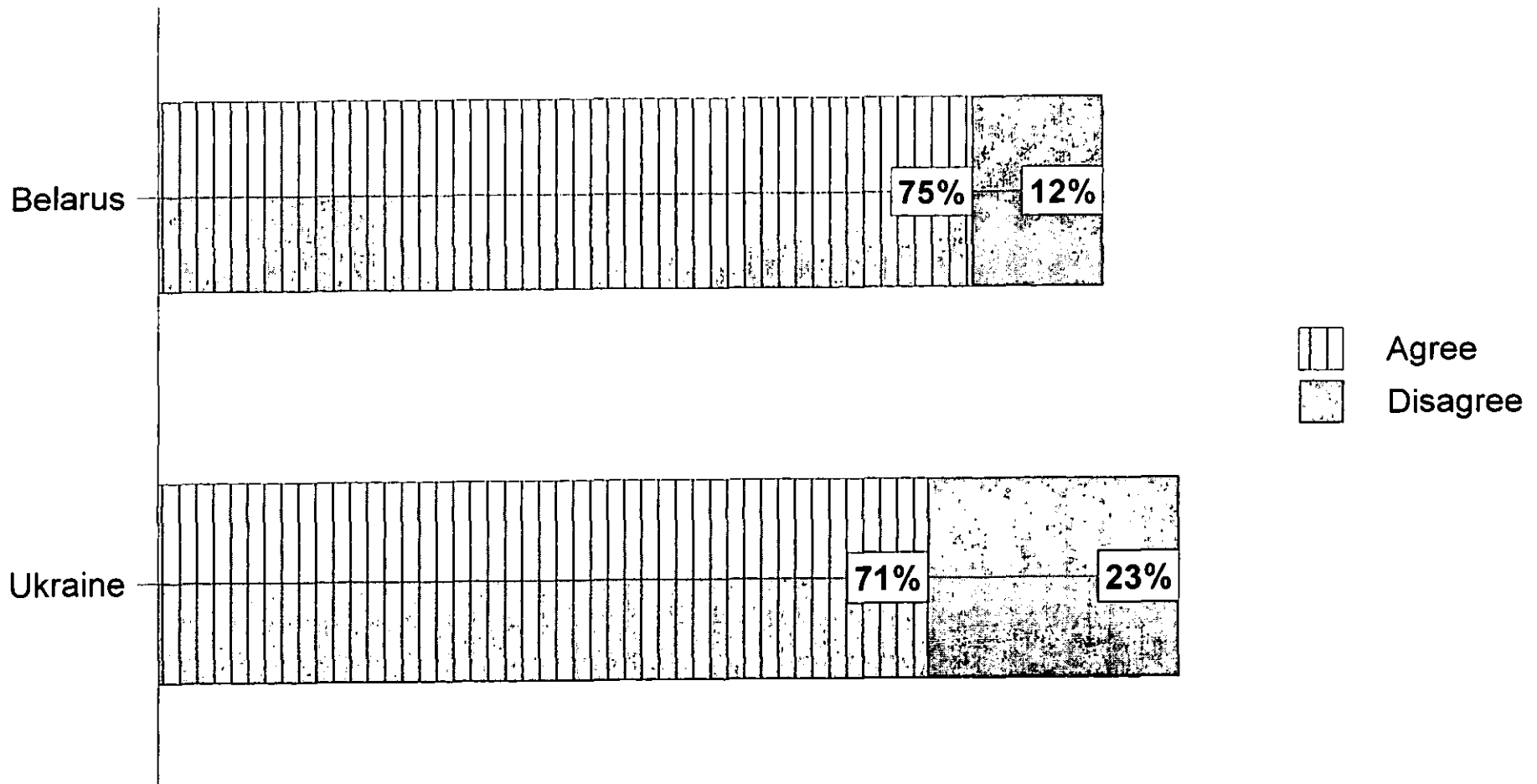
Question: "Agree or Disagree: Your fellow citizens generally act in the best interests of society."



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of women in Belarus and Ukraine agree that politics is too complicated.

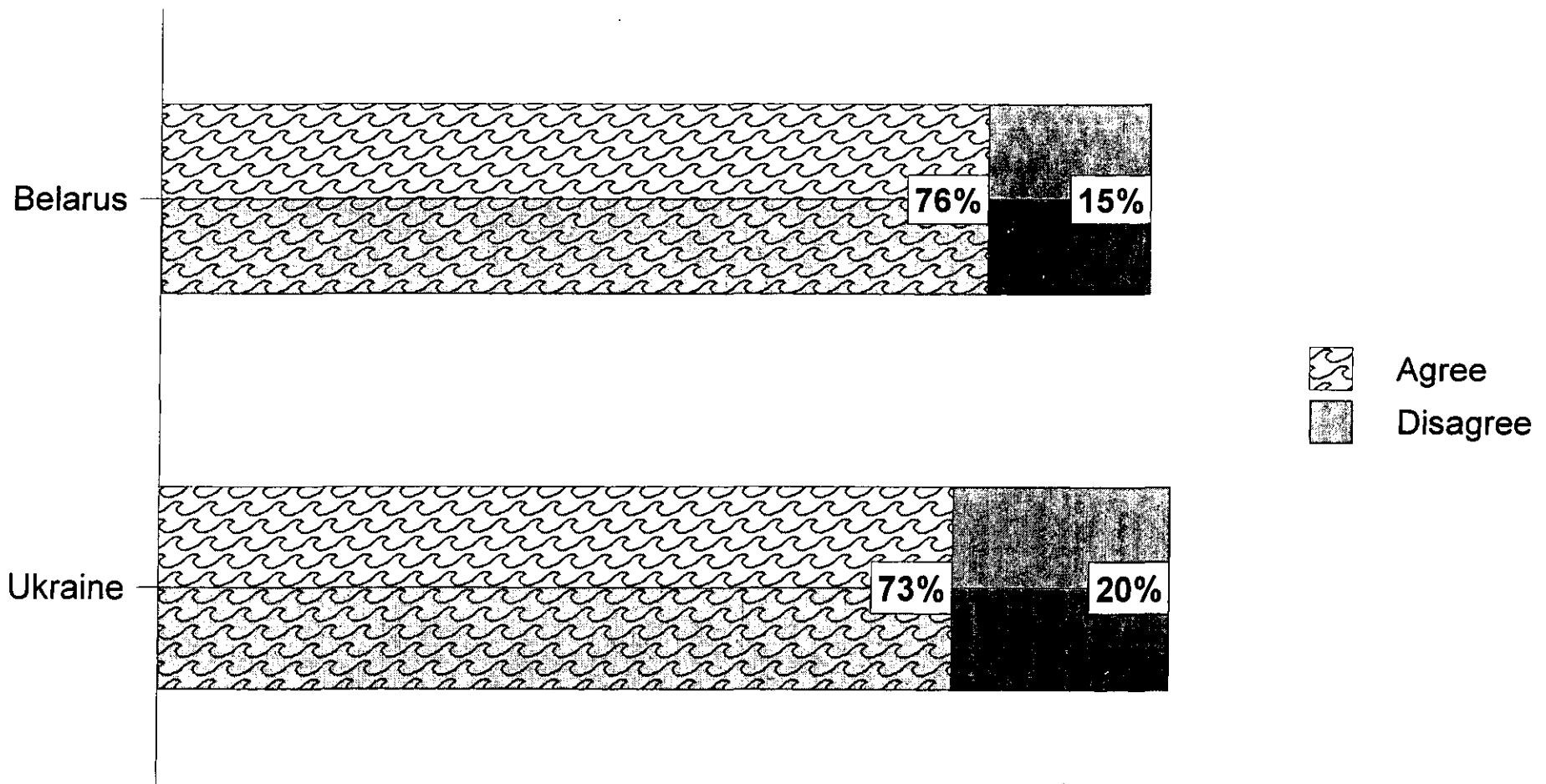
Question: "Agree or Disagree: Sometimes politics is so complicated that people like me can't understand what's really happening."



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of women in Belarus and Ukraine also agree that people like them have no influence in what's going on in their country.

Question: "Agree or Disagree: People like me have little or no influence on what's going on in [Country]."

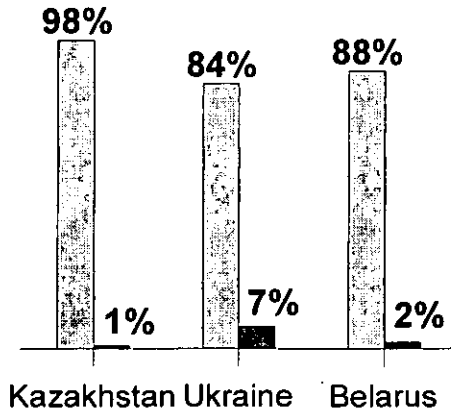


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

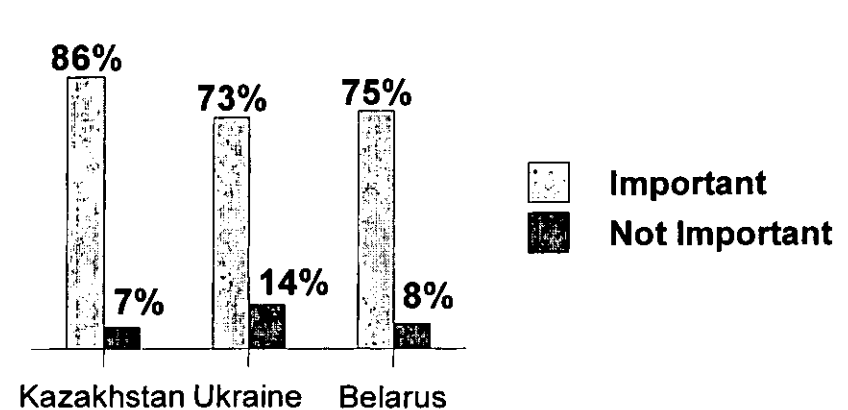
Women in the former Soviet republics overwhelmingly value the importance of personal rights of religion, property, and minorities.

Question: "In your opinion, how important are the following rights for democracy in [Country]?"

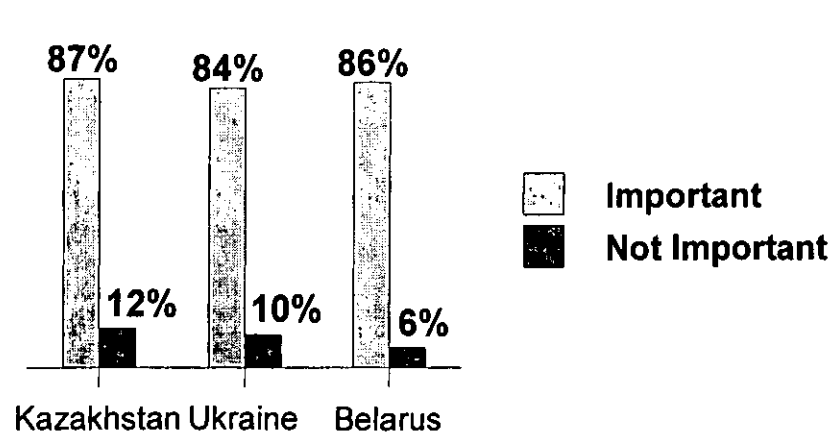
Private Property



Minority Rights



Freedom of Religion

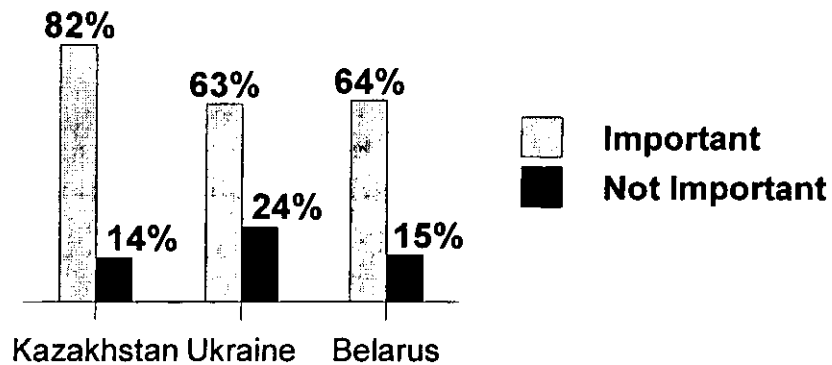


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

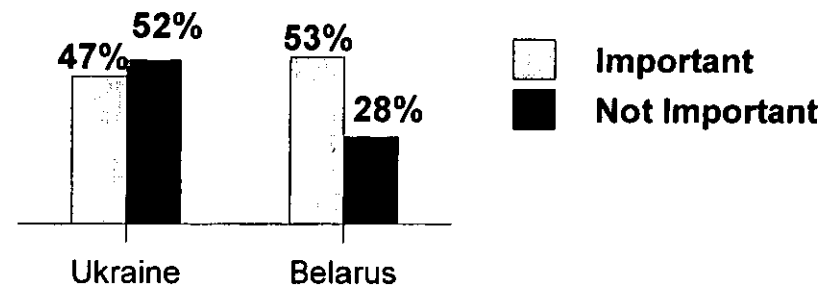
Group rights such as freedom of association and criticism are not as highly valued by women in Ukraine and Belarus.

Question: "In your opinion, how important are the following rights for democracy in [Country]?"

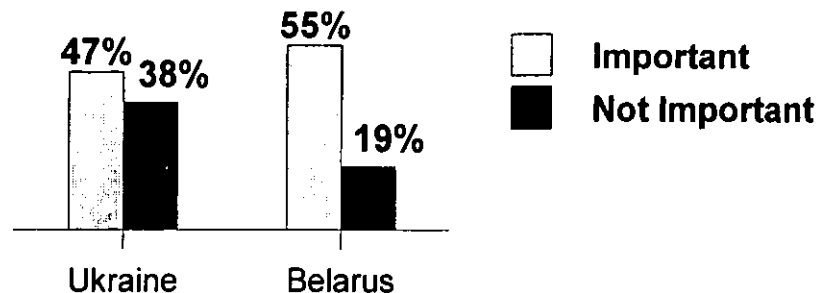
Right to Criticize Government



Right to Form Political Parties



Freedom of Association

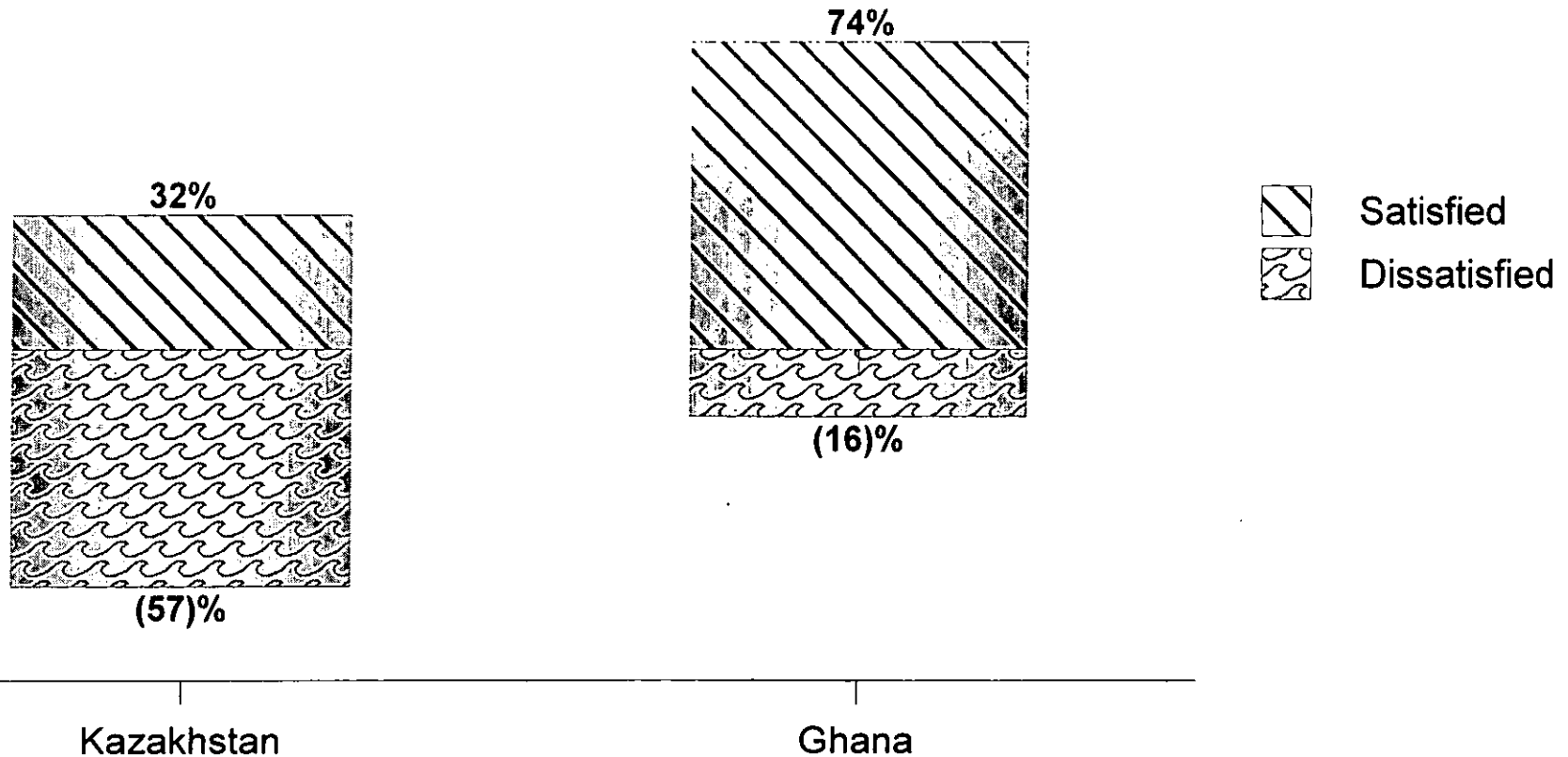


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Ghanaian and Kazakh women have totally opposite assessments of the level of civic freedoms in their country.

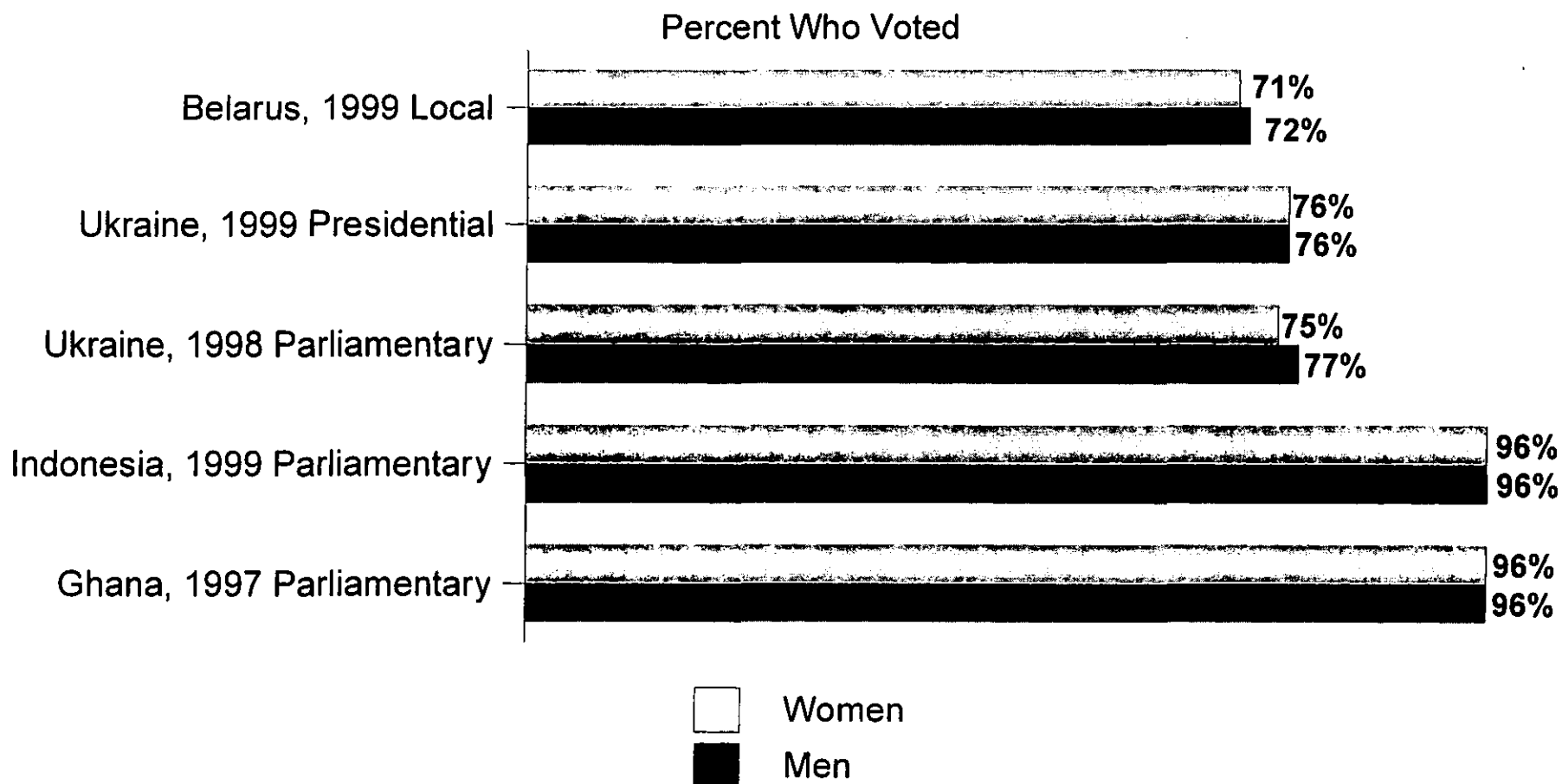
Question: "How satisfied are you with the level of political and civic freedoms in [Country]?"

Percentage Responses of Women



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of women in four countries voted in elections held around the time of the surveys but participation was higher in the younger democracies.

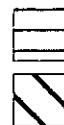
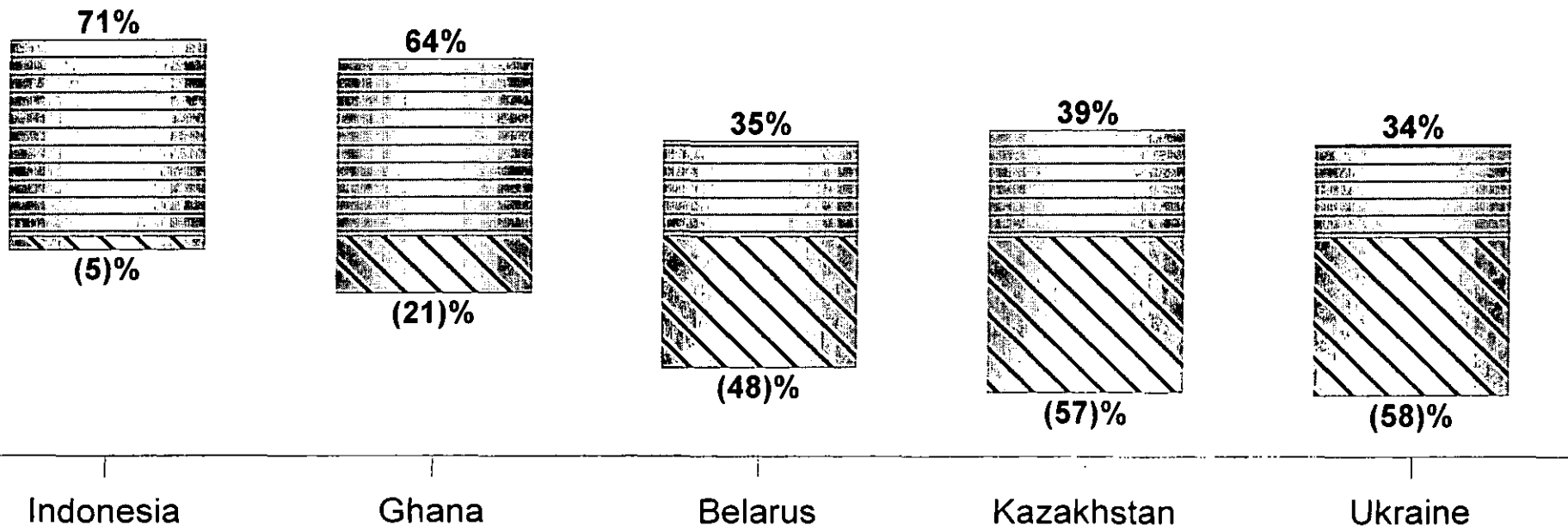


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Women in Indonesia and Ghana are more likely than women in the older post-Soviet democracies to believe that voting influences decision-making.

Question: "Agree or Disagree: Voting gives people like you a chance to influence decision-making in our country?"

Percentage Responses of Women



Voting influences decision-making

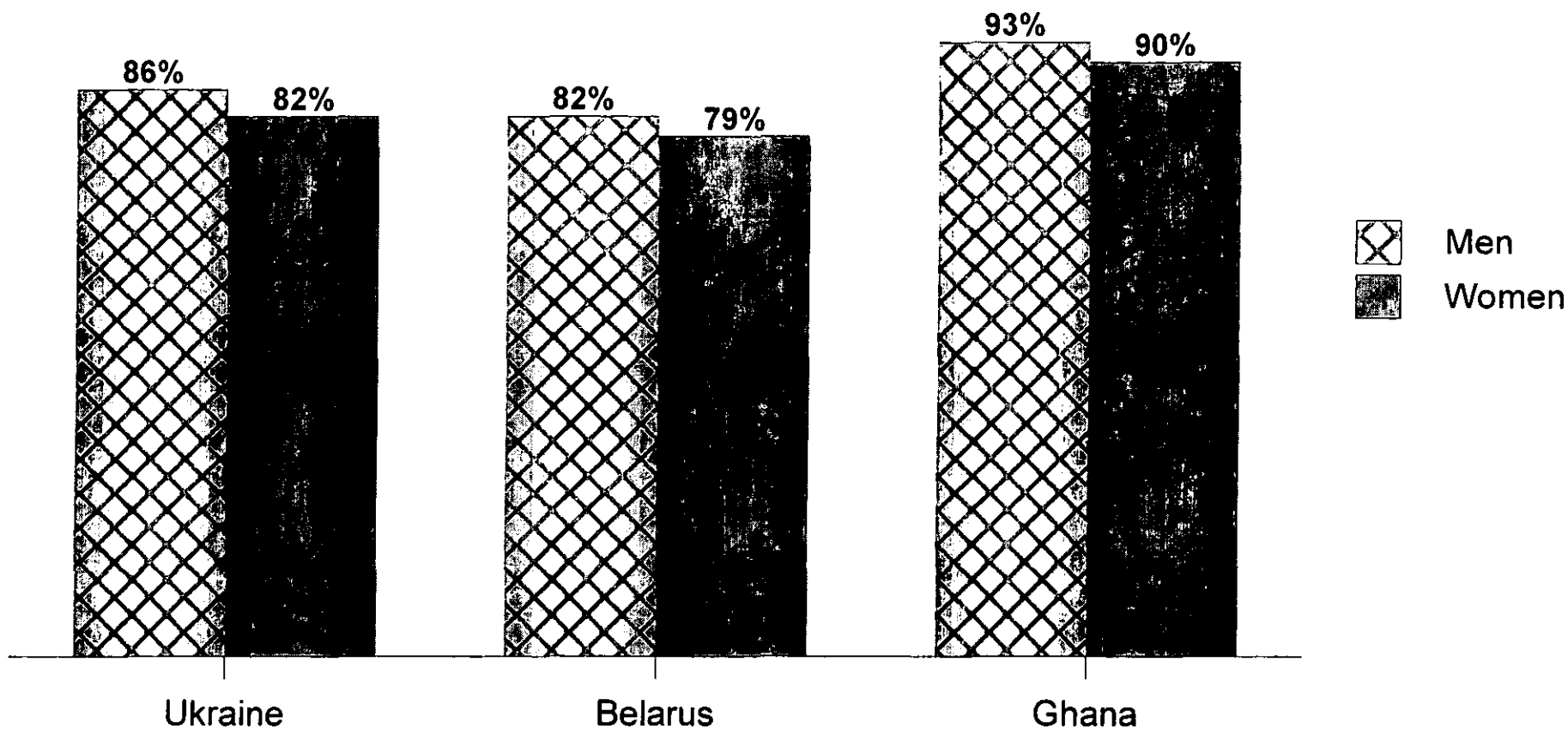
Voting doesn't influence decision-making

Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of women in Ukraine, Belarus, and Ghana consider honest elections to be important.

Question: "How important is it to you that the following rights be respected in the country in which you live: Honest elections are held regularly?"

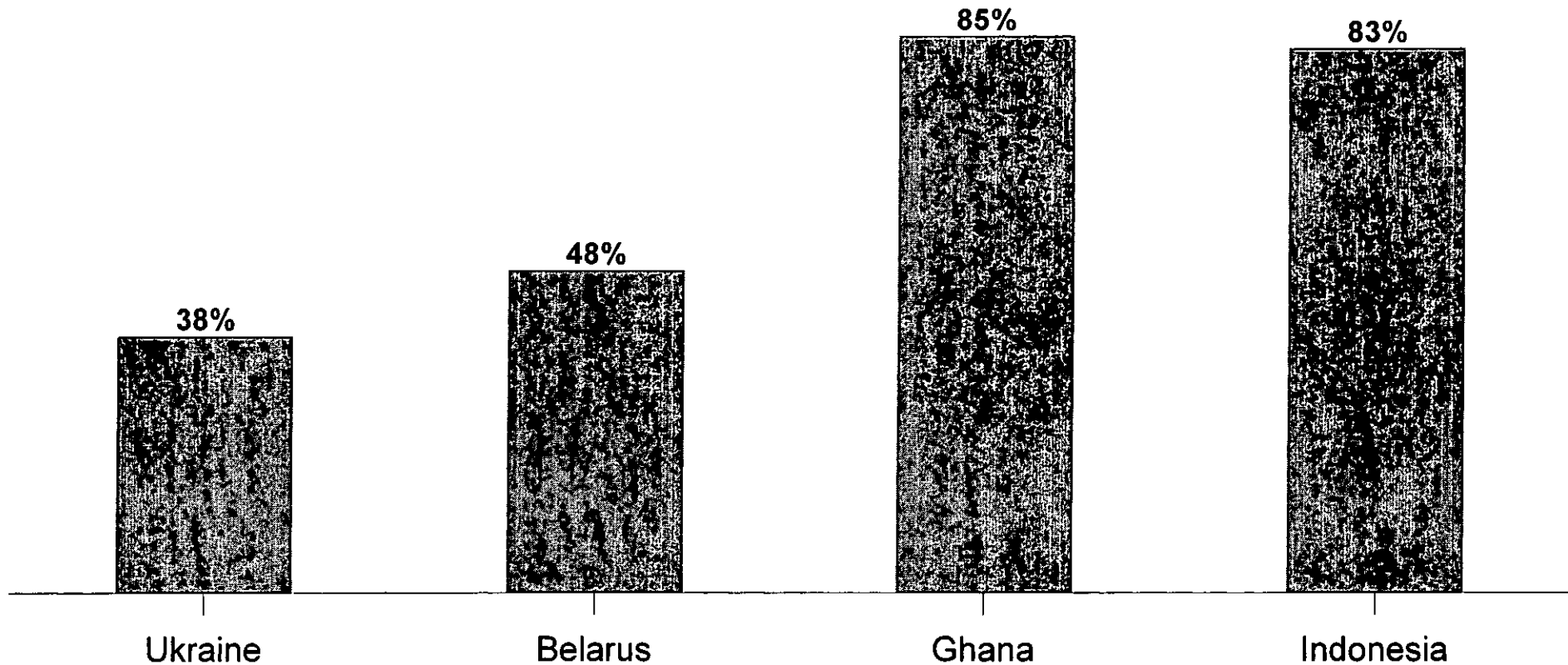
Percentage of Women Who Consider Honest Elections to be Important



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Ghanaian and Indonesian women are more likely to consider the most recent elections as having been honest than women in Ukraine and Belarus.

Percentage of Women Who Considered Most Recent Elections to be Honest

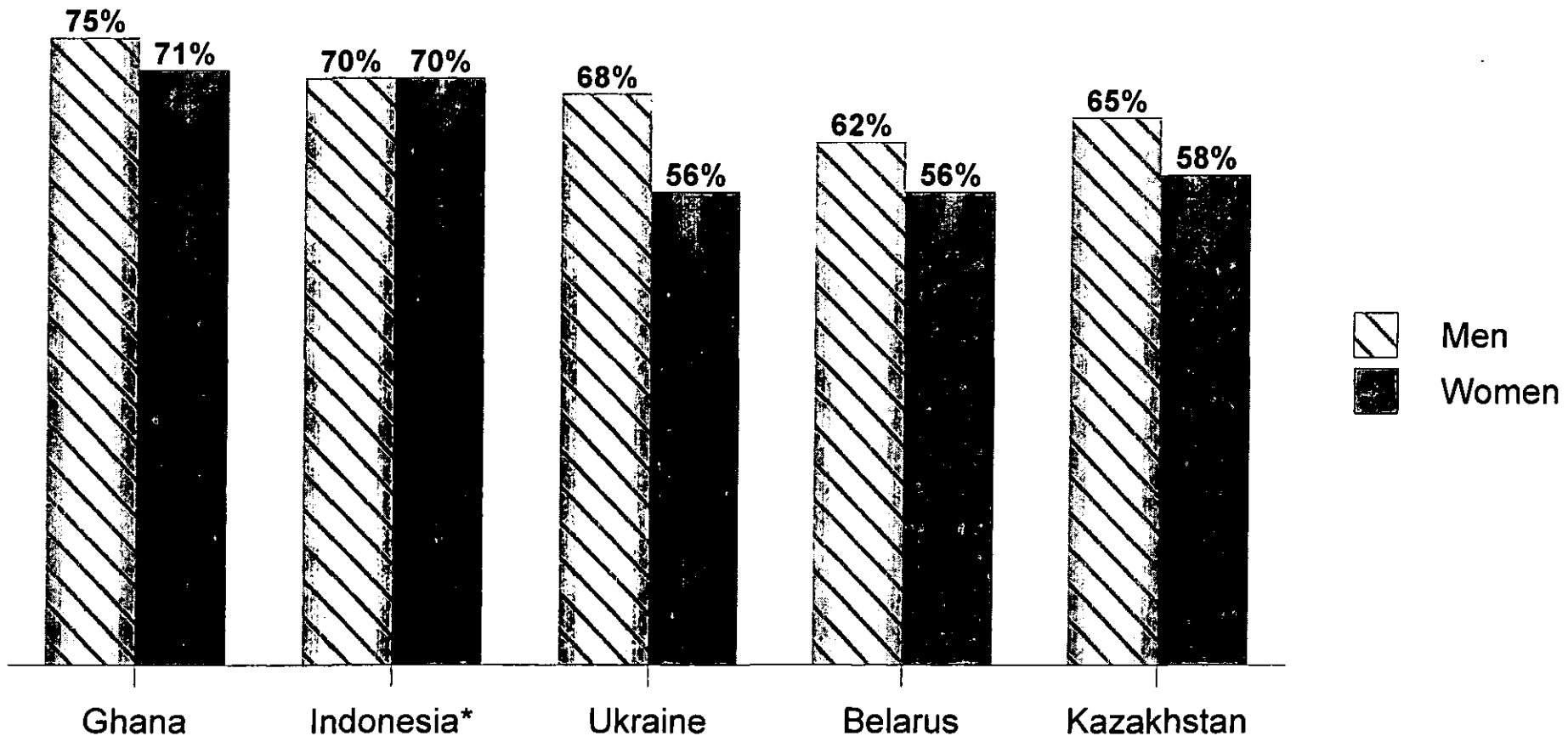


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of women in all five countries consider at least two political parties to be important. Men hold even stronger opinions on this issue.

Question: "How important do you think is it for [Country] to have at least two parties competing in an election?"

Percentage Who Consider At Least Two Parties to be Important



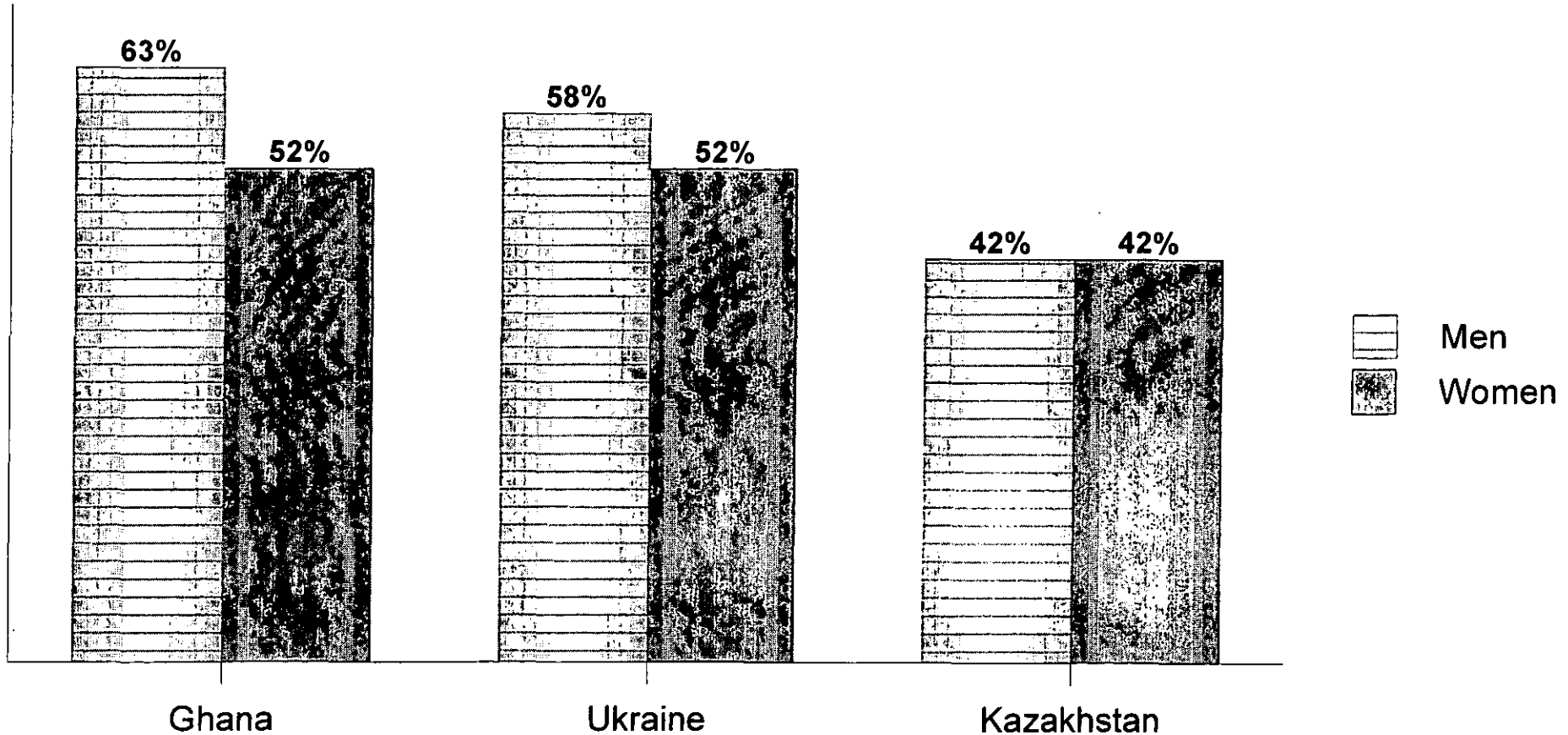
*Indonesians asked for ideal number of parties

Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of women in Ghana and Ukraine think that citizens can form organizations without government involvement.

Question: "In your opinion, do citizens of [Country] have the possibility to unite into groups or form organizations without the participation of the government?"

Percent Who Think Citizens Can Unite into NGOs

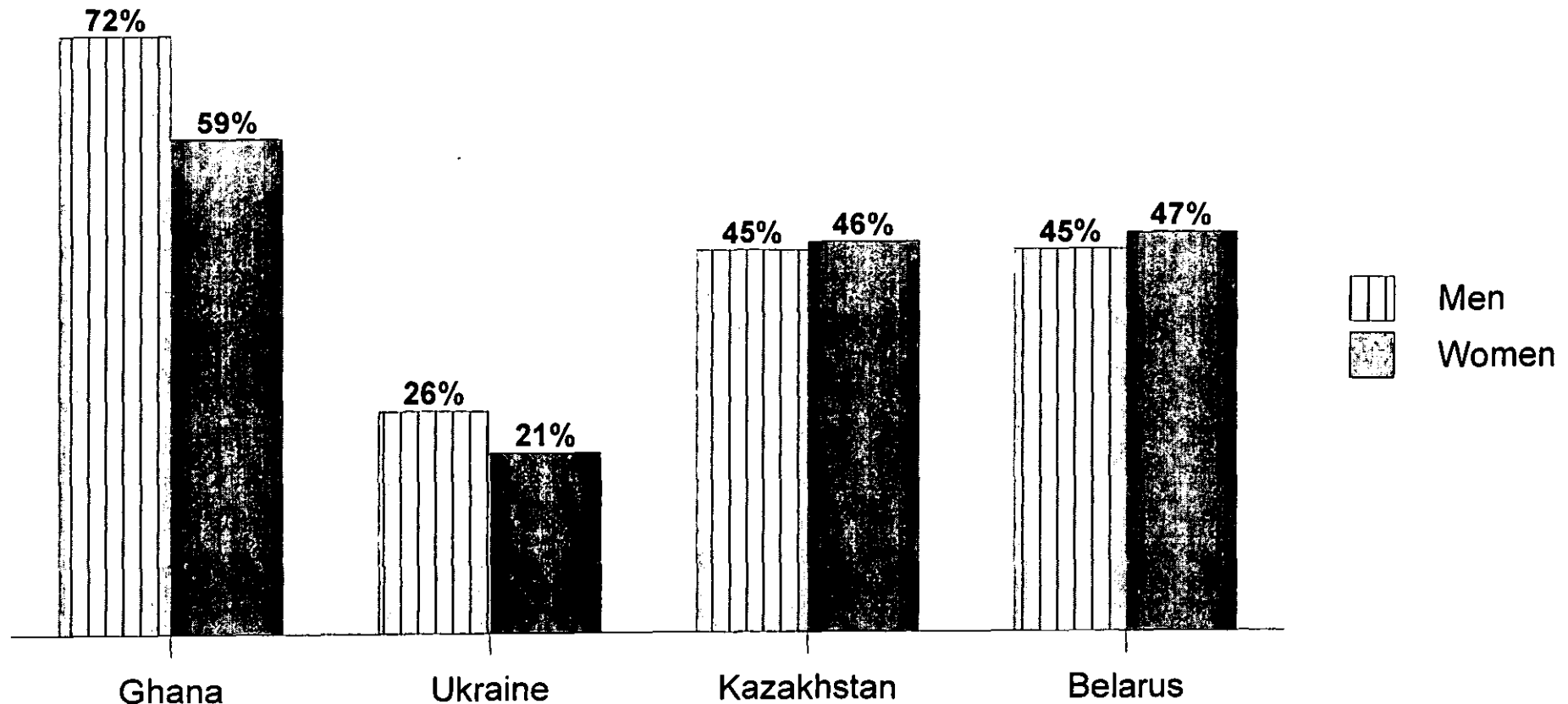


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Only in Ghana do a majority of women feel that NGOs are necessary.

Question: "How necessary are these organizations?" (Note: In Belarus, respondents asked about importance of these organizations)

Percent Who Consider NGOs to be Necessary

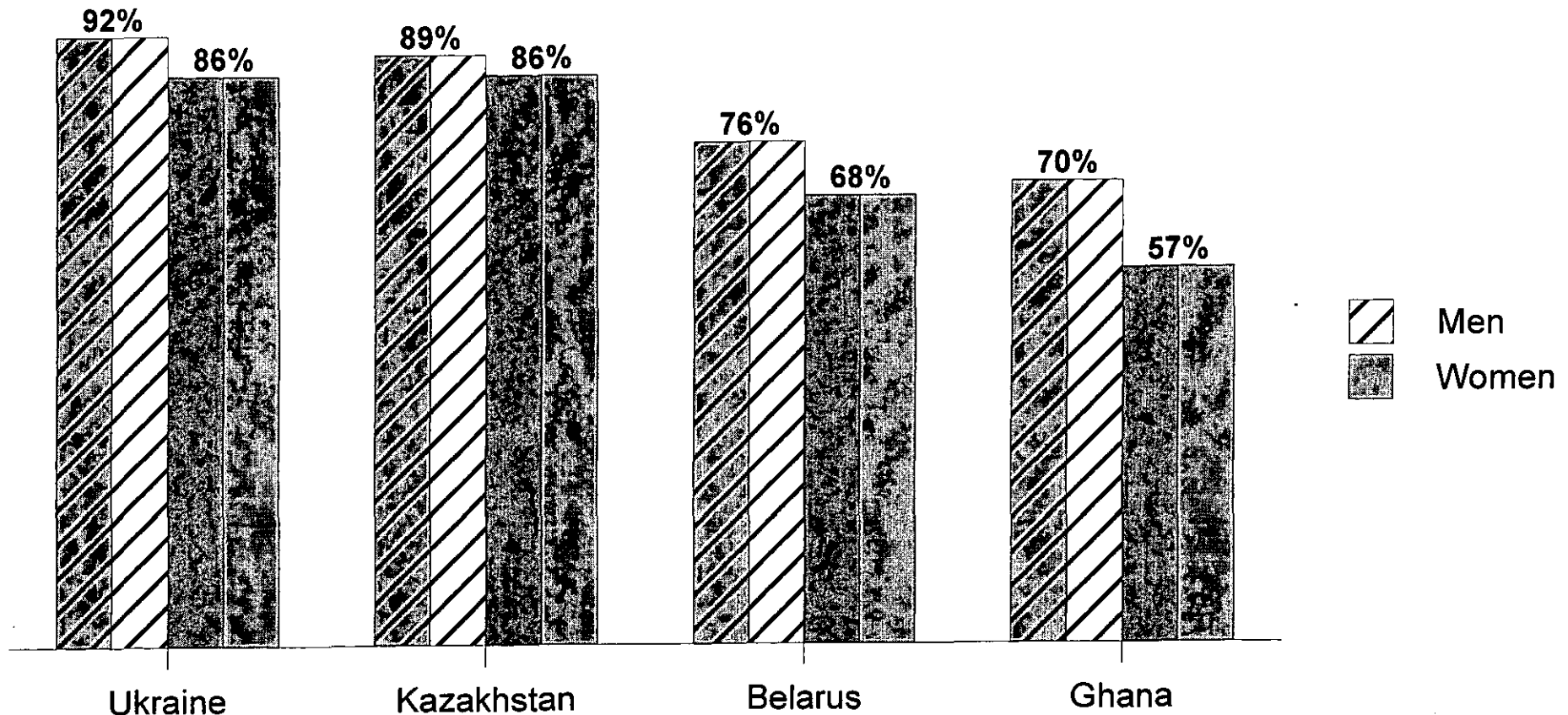


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

A majority of both men and women think that corruption is a common problem in Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Ghana.

Question: "How common is the problem of official corruption?"

Percent Who Think Corruption is Common

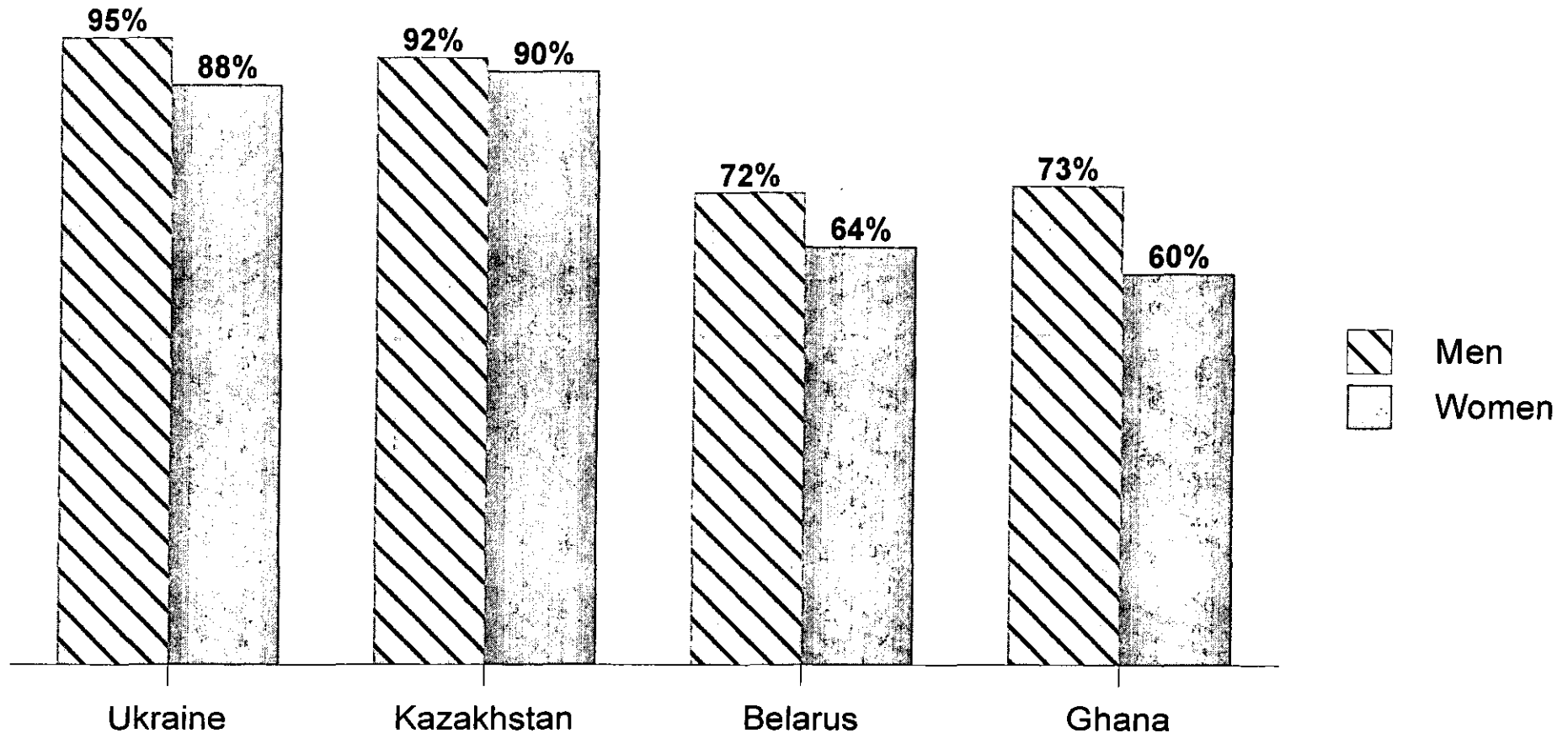


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Overwhelming majorities also think corruption is a serious problem in these four countries.

Question: "How serious is the problem of official corruption?"

Percent Who Think Corruption is a Serious Problem

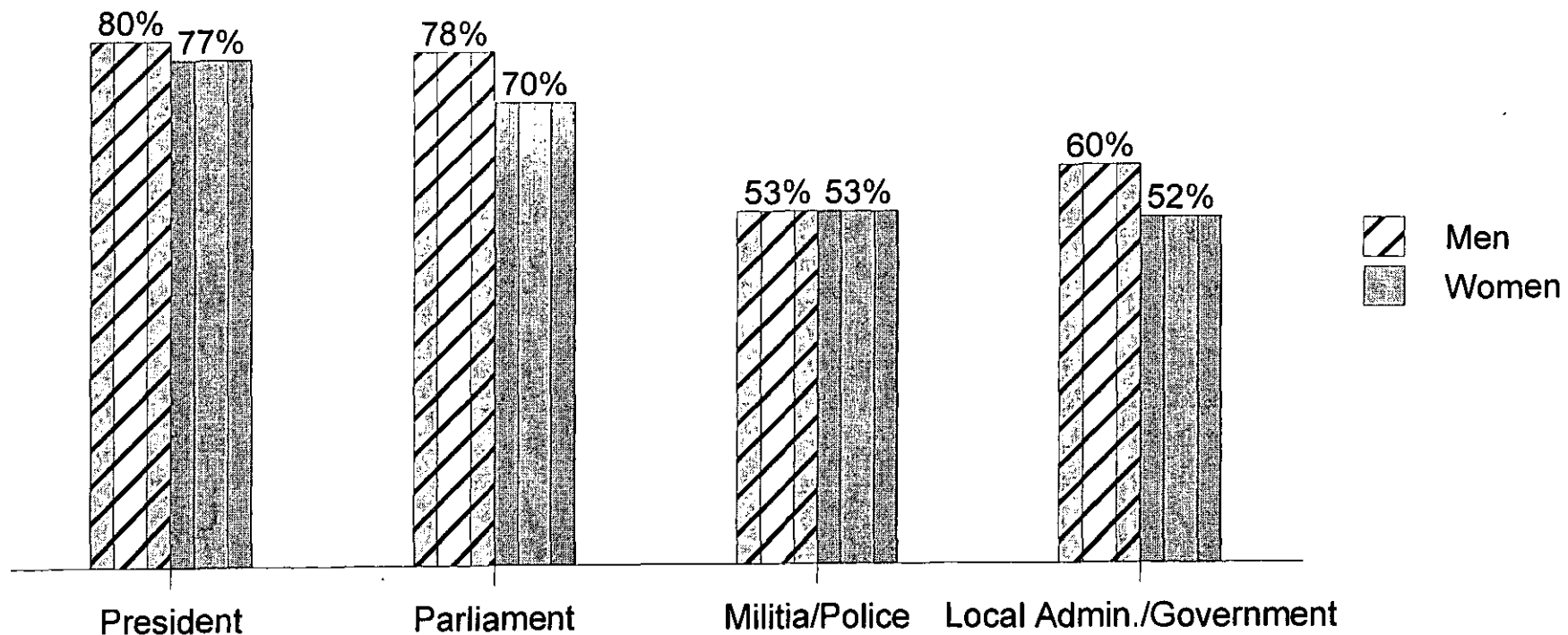


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Respondents in Ghana exhibit the most confidence in selected social institutions.

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?"

GHANA - Percent Who have Confidence in Select Institutions



Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

While respondents in Ukraine exhibit the least confidence in selected social institutions.

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?"

UKRAINE - Percent Who Have Confidence in Select Institutions

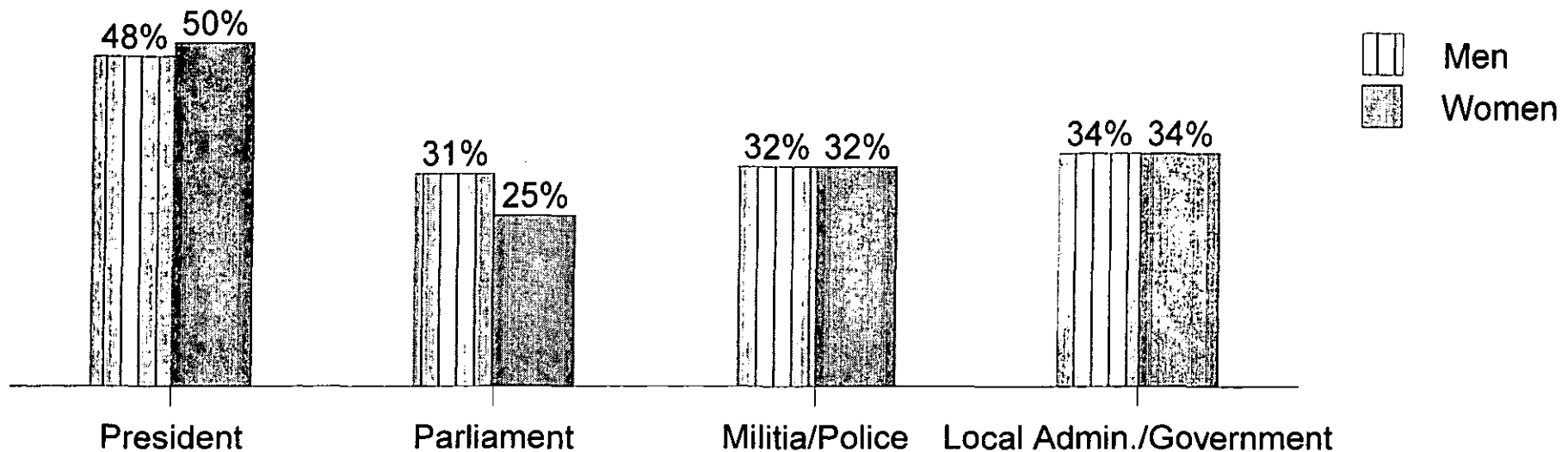


Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Except for the president, respondents in Belarus also exhibit little confidence in these social institutions.

Question: "How much confidence do you have in the following institutions?"

BELARUS - Percent Who have Confidence in Select Institutions

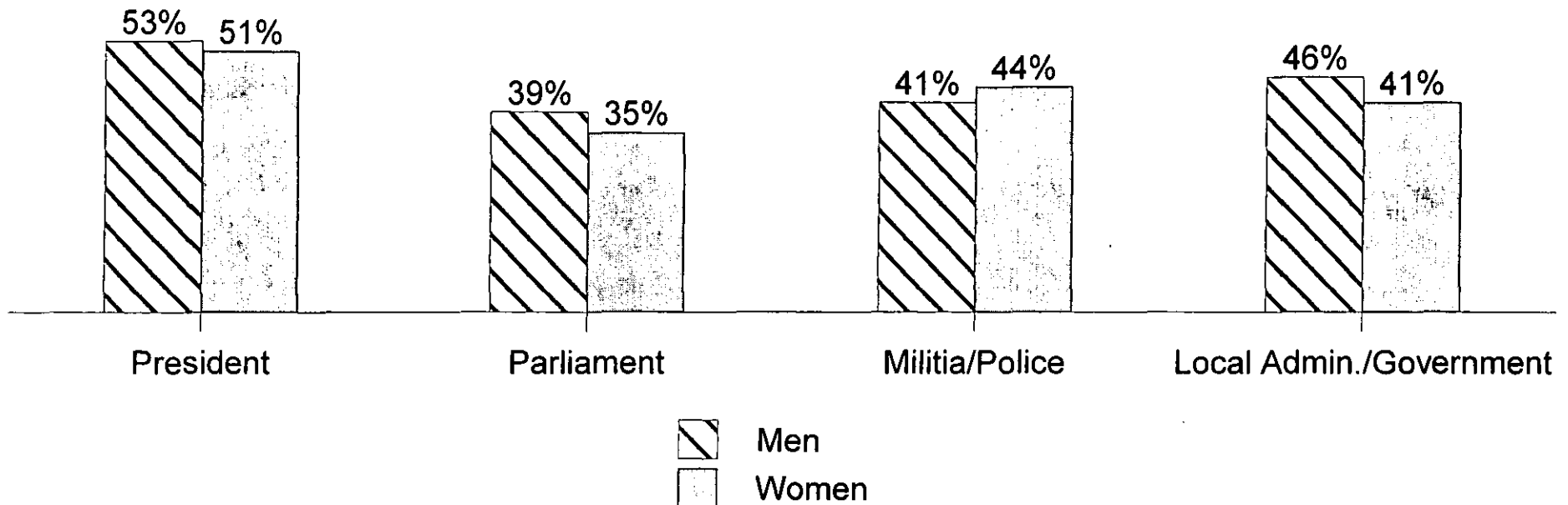


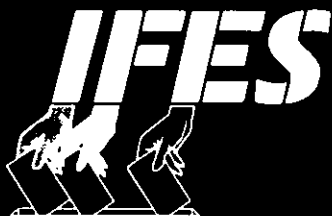
Global Trends in Women's Access and Leadership

Indonesians are generally satisfied that most social institutions in Indonesia are responsive to the needs of the people.

Question: "How responsive are each of the following institutions to the needs and concerns of the people?"

INDONESIA - Percent Who Believe Institutions are Responsive to Peoples' Needs





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