

**THE BAHÁ'Í ELECTORAL PROCESS:  
SERVANT LEADERSHIP OR A NEW PARADIGM?**

By

**Vickie Hu Poirier  
New Mexico State University  
Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholar**

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**1816 South Chaparro Street  
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001 USA**

Email: [vickie@newmexico.com](mailto:vickie@newmexico.com)

Phone: 505-650-9009

Fax: 303-362-8465

Contact Information in India until May 11, 2007  
c/o Barli Development Institute for Rural Women  
180 Bhamori New Dewas Road  
Indore, MP 452008

Phone: 91-731-554066

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABSTRACT 3

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
Background	4
The Research Questions	9
Purpose and Scope	10
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>10</b>
Servant Leadership	10
Transformational Leadership	13
Table 1 Comparison of Servant, Bahá'í, and Transformational Leadership Characteristics.	15
Bahá'í Leadership	17
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>24</b>
Data Collection	25
Results	26
Table II Age and Experience of Respondents	26
Table III Percent of Elected and Appointed Positions Held Among all Respondents.	30
Table IV Location and gender of participants	33
Table V Ethnicity of Respondents	33
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS &amp; IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>LITERATURE CITED</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>APPENDIX I</b>	<b>41</b>
Questionnaire	41
<b>APPENDIX II</b>	<b>48</b>
Survey Narrative Answers [sic]	48
<b>APPENDIX III SURVEY DATA</b>	<b>84</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

How a society chooses its leaders influences the quality of leadership as well as the decision-making processes those leaders use. The electoral processes of nomination and electioneering affect who will choose to run for office, why they will run and the leadership traits that are necessary to win positions. After election, the contributions of money and manpower used to reelect the leader may adversely influence his/her decisions. Elected leadership does not always reflect the diversity of the population with respect to ethnicity and gender. Women, in particular, are often excluded from elected positions and find it difficult fully participate in local and national communities.

This paper will examine, using an exploratory survey, a unique electoral and leadership model which exists in the Bahá'í community. Leaders are elected locally, nationally, and internationally totally without nomination, public discussion of candidates, and campaigning. All members have the power to vote for anyone in the Bahá'í community in a genuinely universal participative process. The paper will explore the extent of servant and transformational leadership in the Bahá'í model, its conceptual basis, and the participation of women and minorities in the process. It will also illustrate how Bahá'ís view themselves, their relationship to their leaders and the process of choosing qualified leaders. The Bahá'í model has implications of leadership that transcend merely political applications. The attitudes and skills fostered in the Bahá'í model maximize human capacity in both leaders and followers and carry over into the workplace as well as the home. The model is based on spiritual principles that foster active participation and performance of all members in any organizational setting.

# Introduction

## *Background*

How a society chooses its leaders influences the quality of leadership as well as the decision-making processes those leaders use. The electoral processes of nomination and electioneering affects who will chose to run for office, why they will run and the leadership traits that are necessary to win positions. After election, the contributions of money and manpower used to reelect the leader and the desire to remain in office may influence his/her decisions. Harm to the quality of leadership is done by forming coalitions and voting blocs rather than looking at the qualities of character. In western society, electing leadership requires a lot of money and time to campaign, which deflects financial and personal energy resources that could be otherwise devoted to the benefit of the electorate. For example, in the 2004 United States presidential election alone, candidates received over 880 million dollars in campaign contributions (Open secrets, 2004). Much focus is on individual personalities which necessitate self-promotion to get elected. The process of running for office also puts increased pressure on the candidate to oppose positions of the opposite candidate in order to win instead of agreeing and cooperating on solutions to problems purely for the sake of the public good. The need for personalized power can overcome the need for socialized power. This influences leadership and decision-making in ways that are sometimes detrimental to both the leader and to the governed. Elected leadership does not always reflect the diversity of the population with respect to ethnicity and gender. Increased cynicism and feelings of disenfranchisement are prevalent in western electoral systems. Participation is decreasing as people feel ‘Why should I even try? My vote won’t make a difference’. Many citizens become weary of the constant negativity and wrangling between office holders. Michael Waldman stated in the New York Times, “Unfortunately, just as often scandals lead merely to cynicism and fatigue...”

As people who are in elected positions are often referred to as public servants, this title implies that elected office is a type of servant leadership. Reality often indicates otherwise. Charismatic, autocratic, and directive styles are often desirable leadership traits of office holders. The system also inflicts incredible pressure towards corruption. Economist Paul Krugman (2005), a New York Times Op-Ed columnist commented, "... inquiring minds want to know: Who else is on the take? Or has the culture of corruption spread so far that the question is, who isn't?"

However, other societies may experience better outcomes in the quality of leadership, decision-making and development of grass roots leadership capacity using completely different electoral and leadership models. This paper will focus on one such society, the Bahá'ís. The Bahá'í Faith is a community whose adherents are drawn from all races, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is an independent monotheistic religion with a worldwide population of some five million people. They come from more than 2,000 different tribal, racial, and ethnic groups and live in 132,000 locations in 236 countries and dependent territories. Its foundational principle is the unity of all peoples and religions. The decentralized structure of the Bahá'í administrative system, although unified on a global level, allows for initiative and to a large degree authority to be vested at the local level. Although it is primarily a religious system of organization, its leadership and electoral methods can apply in many organizations, both governmental and non-profit. Some features of its system are sought after and included in training of non-Bahá'í organizations and governments (BIC, 1985). Bahá'í tablets and letters have been addressed by its Founder to kings and leaders of the world:

In the Bahá'í writings, those individuals who are engaged in government service are exhorted to *"approach their duties with entire detachment, integrity and independence of spirit, and with complete consecration and sanctity of purpose."* Their personal fulfillment comes not from material reward but from *"the devising of methods to insure the progress of the people,"* from experiencing the *"delights of dispensing justice,"* and drinking from *"the springs of a clear conscience and a sincere intent."* In the end, the *"happiness and greatness, the rank and station, the*

*pleasure and peace" of the public servant does not consist in "his personal wealth, but rather in his excellent character, his high resolve, the breadth of his learning, and his ability to solve difficult problems." [emphasis original] (BIC, 2001)<sup>1</sup>*

There are three major, unique factors in developing effective leadership in the Bahá'í model. They are (1) the process of selecting the leader, (2) the rules of consultation and conduct governing the administrative decision-making process, and (3) the injunction to individual believers to study and “deepen” themselves in the principles and teachings of Bahá'í Faith. Trust in the consultative process and in the institutions (more than the individuals comprising the institutions) is an important factor. This paper will focus more on the leader selection process and only touch lightly on the decision-making process of the elected leadership and individual responsibility for personal development, even though they are equally important factors in ultimate leadership effectiveness.

The Bahá'í model of electing leaders is unique in political and religious systems. This model was envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892) in the mid 1800's, described in greater detail during the lifetime of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921) and formally organized on a worldwide basis by Shoghi Effendi (1899-1957). Since there is no clergy, leadership of the Faith consists of group leadership. Two institutions, one elected by the community and the other appointed by the elected leadership manage the affairs of the community. Three leading figures of the Faith in its formative years were Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. They all exhibited strong charismatic, transformational and servant leadership traits. Since their passing, the mantle of leadership has passed, by their directives, to the community in the form of institutions currently made up of the elected local, national, international and appointed bodies of leadership with specific responsibilities and powers. Trust is paramount the relationship between the voters and the institutions:

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<sup>1</sup> Quotes in this citation are taken from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

<sup>2</sup> See Glossary.

Governance is referred to in the Bahá'í writings as an expression of trusteeship, as the administering of a trust. Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the governors and administrators of society as "*trustees*" or the "*trusted ones*" of God. He also warns leaders that the vulnerable and the poor "*are the trust of God in your midst.*"<sup>3</sup> The concept of trusteeship implies, in some sense, a covenant between those who are in positions of authority and the members of the social polity that they are obligated to protect and serve. Consequently, trustworthiness is a vital characteristic of governance; it is the source of true accountability. Bahá'u'lláh describes trustworthiness as the "*greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people,*" and "*the supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world.*"<sup>4</sup> "*All the domains of power,*" He avers, "*are illumined by its light.*"<sup>5</sup> (BIC, 2001)

Since there is no formal clergy in the Bahá'í Faith, governing bodies which are administrative in nature are elected to administer the affairs of the Faith. The local and national bodies control local and national issues which include owning property in trust for the membership, admitting new members, and organizing education and other projects that the community wants carried out. In addition, the international body, the Universal House of Justice, which gives guidance and direction to national bodies as well as individuals, has unique powers of establishing laws governing the community that are not explicitly defined in the written works of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. They are also the institution of last resort in deciding disputes and appeals. The local community elects the Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA) and also elects a delegate who votes for the National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) in yearly elections. Members of all NSAs in the world elect the Universal House of Justice (UHJ) every five years. All elections are by secret ballot. The membership on each of these bodies is nine in number. The appointed bodies are advisory, beginning with the Continental Counselors (continental in territory), chosen by the UHJ, who then choose Auxiliary Board (regional in territory) members to assist them, who in turn, choose Assistants to the Auxiliary Board (multiple communities within an area). Both of these institutions work closely together and are complementary. Currently, there are 183 National Spiritual Assemblies, 9,631 Local

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<sup>3</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, 1983, p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, 1978, pp. 37-38

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Spiritual Assemblies, 81 Continental Counselors, and 990 Auxiliary board members representing 2,112 indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups in 238 countries and territories (The Bahá'ís, 2005). While both institutions are essential to the Bahá'í leadership model, this paper will focus more on the elected institutions.

The Bahá'í model uses a purely democratic process of electing leaders, but it is done entirely without nomination or subsequent electioneering of a specific candidate in local, national and international bodies. Each voter must choose nine persons to serve according to the voter's conscience as to which persons best exemplify certain traits that will characterize an effective leader.

“To be able to make a wise decision at election time, it is necessary for him to be in close and continued contact with all of his fellow believers, to keep in touch with all local activities, whole heartedly participate in the affairs of the community and through these actions develop a true social consciousness and acquire a sense of responsibility.” (Shoghi Effendi as cited in Hornby, 1997).

Thus, it is incumbent for the voter to become “an intelligent, well informed and responsible elector” and through this action, increase the capacity of leadership in the voting individual.

This strict adherence to not discussing names of potential leaders may produce a different outcome in the quality and type of leadership traits and a different outcome of the decisions of that elected leader. A distinguishing feature of the Bahá'í system is that the institution to which the person is elected possesses the power in the community, not the individual:

While governance is often equated with government, it in fact involves much more. Governance occurs at all levels and encompasses the ways that formal government, non-governmental groups, community organizations and the private sector manage resources and affairs. Three factors that largely determine the efficacy of any system of governance are the quality of leadership, the characteristics of the governed, and the nature of the structures and processes employed to exercise authority and meet human needs.

Bahá'ís attach great importance to cooperative decision-making and assign organizational responsibility for community affairs to freely elected governing councils



at the local, national, and international levels. This hierarchy devolves decision-making to the lowest practicable level—thereby instituting a unique vehicle for grassroots participation in governance—while at the same time providing a level of coordination and authority that makes possible collaboration on a global scale. A unique feature of the Bahá'í electoral process is the maximum freedom of choice given to the electorate through the prohibition of nominations, candidature and solicitation. Election to Bahá'í administrative bodies is based not on personal ambition but rather on recognized ability, mature experience, and a commitment to service. Because the Bahá'í system does not allow the imposition of the arbitrary will or leadership of individuals, it cannot be used as a pathway to power. Decision-making authority rests with corporate bodies. All members of the Bahá'í community, no matter what position they may temporarily occupy in the administrative structure, are expected to regard themselves as involved in a learning process, as they strive to understand and implement the laws and principles of their Faith. Significantly, in many parts of the world, the first exercises in democratic activity have occurred within the Bahá'í community (BIC, 2001)

The Bahá'í system appears to choose a high percentage of servant and transformational leaders who are diverse in race, gender, formal education and socio-economic status. Servant leadership is characterized by an attitude of service towards others (Greenleaf, 1997).

Transformational leadership uses appeals to followers' values and their sense of higher purpose (Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2002). Although elections are yearly, except in the case of the UHJ, which is every five years, those elected to office tend to be retained, especially in the national and international bodies. Bahá'í elections are practiced successfully in both tribal and industrialized societies. Corruption and disaffection by the electorate appears to be markedly low when compared to the current democratic systems. Knowing more about leadership as it is expressed in the Bahá'í community would add insight into effective democratic leadership. Lessons learned from this case study of the Bahá'í leadership model can help to illuminate how servant leadership is represented in a global community, which provides a meaningful contribution to the management literature on leadership.

### ***The Research Questions***

The research questions for this study are: Does the Bahá'í system foster servant and transformational leadership? Does the Bahá'í model diverge from the current definition cited in

leadership literature of servant and transformational leadership? What are the characteristics, if any, that increase leadership quality, and the quality of the election process? These issues are important to study for in a world of increasing strife and disunity, current leadership models seem, at times, to inadequately address the needs of the world community made up of diverse peoples and ways of governing. Society itself is changing rapidly and old models, once adequate, can no longer fully serve the needs of the age.

## ***Purpose and Scope***

Although servant and transformational leadership are closely interrelated, it is beyond the scope of this paper to conduct a detailed analysis of the differences between these two bodies of literature. Thus, in this paper I will integrate published Bahá'í principles and teachings on the subject of leadership, as well as survey data collected in the Baha'i community, and compare them to existing literature on servant and transformational leadership in management. My discussion of this exploratory study will highlight whether the participants perceive their elected leaders to possess the traits of servant and transformational leaders, and whether or not they feel they can select qualified leaders without nomination or electioneering. Other issues to be discussed are whether the process develops the Bahá'ís' own leadership capacity, reflecting leadership diversity in terms of gender and ethnicity.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Servant Leadership***

Greenleaf developed the concept of "Servant Leadership" in which he proposed that the "servant-leader is servant first" (Greenleaf, 1977). A servant is one who serves others. He also states that the servant-leader holds the organization in trust to the public it serves and the leader's behavior is grounded in a strong sense of values, more specifically, values of trust, respect and

service. He further states that it is the leader's attitude of service towards his or her followers that distinguishes the servant-leader from other types of leaders.

Greenleaf contrasts servant-leadership with the more traditional model of leadership where the individual may begin with an aspiration to lead others. He presented the leader-first and servant-first types of leaders as two opposite ends of a continuum. Greenleaf emphasized the importance of a leader's motivation to serve or to lead as an identification of servant-leadership. Greenleaf claimed that leadership is primarily the result of personal characteristics rather than special leadership techniques.

In Greenleaf's vision of servant-leadership, the leader is first seen as a servant to others. The servant assumes a non-focal position within the group, providing resources and support without an expectation of acknowledgement. Through repeated servant behaviors, these individuals eventually emerge as pivotal for group survival and are thrust into leadership positions. Greenleaf suggests that these people were not initially motivated to be leaders, but assume this position in response to the urgings of others and in response for the need for group success. A servant-leader views leadership not as a position or status, but as an opportunity to serve others. Personal development is not limited to the followers, but the leaders also benefit from the developmental process (Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko, 2004).

Spears (1998) and Laub (1999) propose ten key elements of servant-leadership: listening, empathy, healing (of oneself and others and awareness of others, situations and oneself), persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Reinke (2004) further refines the definition as one who is committed to the growth of both the individual and the organization, and who works to build community within organizations and links servant-leadership to an organizational culture of trust. She describes servant-leadership as based on the idea that leadership is a relationship, not a position.

Servant-leadership, according to Greenleaf, improves organizational performance because it fosters trusting relationships. Reinke further theorizes “that for trust to have its most influential effects, it must be imbedded into the organization’s culture rather than existing only among individuals”. In asking what creates or contributes to the culture of trust, Reinke states that theory and empirical studies suggest that leadership, through the control of communication channels and work conditions, plays a major role in building an organizational culture of trust. She concludes by defining three components of a culture of trust: openness, vision, and stewardship as a way to operationalize servant-leadership, and defines servant-leadership as “leadership that puts the needs of others and the organization first, is characterized by openness, vision and stewardship, and results in building community within organizations” It is also related to the creation of trusting relationships which then result in improved organizational performance.

Reinke also suggests further avenues of research, namely, that an organization’s culture could play a powerful role in influencing how leaders behave, and in perceptions of trust. She suggests using a more demographically diverse sample than she used in her own survey to find out if cultural or racial differences affect how individuals perceive leadership and trust in organizations. Cross cultural applicability of the servant-leadership concept is shown in “Servant Leadership in the Bedouin-Arab Culture” by Yasin Sarayah as mentioned in Cunningham (2004).

Marilyn Smith (as cited in Cunningham) focuses on the concept of Stewardship as a component of servant-leadership in her article, “Steward Leadership in the Public Sector.” She maps the concept of Stewardship from its religious roots to its application in the practice of Public Administration. Servant leadership views a leader as a servant of his/her followers...interest of followers before interest of leaders, ...personal development and

empowerment of followers. Servant leader is a facilitator for followers to achieve a shared vision.

Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) discuss at length the example of Christ as a servant leader and imply the root of this leadership model is in religion. They also discuss the “Being” self concept of servant-leaders, intent and motivation of servant leaders.

Feminist writer Eicher-Catt (2005) views servant leadership with more skepticism. She posits that servant-leadership is not gender neutral and it is not possible to de-gender it because “culturally we define and distort particular qualities such as empathy for others and persuasion as naturally feminine or masculine characteristics.” Servant-leadership is a “myth” which has overriding masculine connotations stemming from religious and patriarchal ideology.

In summary, the prevailing view in current literature defines servant leadership as a relationship based in a strong organizational culture of trust and relationship that focuses on service to others as the primary group dynamic. A few key elements or traits of servant leaders include listening, empathy, healing, foresight, and stewardship (Spears, 1998). I will focus on these characteristics for the purposes of this paper. A different type of leadership, which is transformational leadership, is often considered similar to or related to servant leadership. The next section will describe transformational leadership from the management literature.

## ***Transformational Leadership***

Transformational leadership occurs when a leader inspires followers to share a vision, empowering them to achieve the vision, and provides the resource necessary for developing their personal potential. Transformational leaders serve as role models, support optimism and mobilize commitment, as well as focus on the followers’ needs for growth. (Bass, 1996, Bass & Avolio, 1998, 1994a, 1994b) as cited in Smith (2004). Transformational leadership contains four

behavior components: charismatic leadership/idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

According to Bass (1996) transformational leaders are tolerant of follower's mistakes. Transformational leaders involve followers in problem solving and are open to new ideas. Individualized consideration refers to the role a transformational leader plays in developing follower's potential and paying attention to their individual needs for achievement and growth. Intellectual stimulation refers to a leader's behavior that encourages follower's creativity. Individualized consideration refers to the role a transformational leader plays in developing followers' potential and paying attention to their individual needs for achievement (Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko, 2004). A transformational leader strives to create new learning opportunities for followers and tends to act as a coach or mentor. Howell and Costly (2006) also include coaching as part of servant leadership. Transformational leaders create and utilize two-way personalized communications with followers (Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko, 2004). Burns (1978:20) asserted that:

Transforming leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality... But transforming leadership ultimately becomes *moral* (italics in original) in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, thus it has a transforming effect on both.

Smith compares the components of transformational and servant leadership between Bass and Laub. Transformational leadership is defined as having four conceptually distinct elements: Charismatic leadership/idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1996). Servant leadership has six distinct components: valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership sharing leadership (Laub, 1999).

Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) examine the conceptual similarities of transformational and servant-leadership and analyze the contribution both theories make to the

understanding of leadership. Transformational and servant-leadership are also rooted in the study of charismatic leadership. A study by Graham (1991) compared Weberian charismatic authority, personal celebrity, charisma, transformational leadership, and servant-leadership and argued that charismatic leadership is the theoretical underpinning for each of these leadership models. She concluded that both transformational and servant-leadership are both inspirational and moral. She further suggested, however that the two models differ, and that servant-leadership allows for more *passive followers* (emphasis added). So the separation between leader and follower is more distinct, and followership is not an active component.

Howell and Costley (2006) cite another style of leadership that is related to transformational leadership styles. Participative leadership includes followers in the decision-making process in varying degrees. Participative leaders exhibit traits that include: integrity, a socialized need for power, effective self-monitoring, listening skills, assertiveness skills, empathy, social insight, and ability to manage conflict among followers. This type of leader usually has legitimate, connection/resource, and expert power. However, for this paper I will concentrate on servant and transformational leadership. A summary of the elements of servant and transformational leadership and how they compare the Baha'i principles can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1 Comparison of Servant, Bahá'í, and Transformational Leadership Characteristics.**

<b>Servant Leadership</b> (Sears, 1998; Laub, 1999)	<b>Bahá'í Leadership</b> Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í International Community	<b>Transformational Leadership</b> (Bass and Avolio, 1988, 1994a, 1994b; Bass, 1985, 1996)
<b>1. Valuing people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oneness of mankind and</li> </ul>	<b>1. Charismatic</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe in people</li> <li>• Serve other’s needs before his or her own</li> <li>• Receptive, non-judgmental listening</li> </ul>	<p>elimination of prejudice</p> <p>foundational ethic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equity foundational ethic</li> <li>• Service to others highest virtue</li> <li>• Service to others expression of love for God.</li> <li>• Emphasis on high moral and ethical behavior</li> </ul>	<p><b>leadership/idealized influence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role modeling</li> <li>• Emphasis on the needs of others</li> <li>• High ethical and moral conduct</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Develops people</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities to learn and grow</li> <li>• Model appropriate behavior</li> <li>• Encouragement and affirmation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Let deeds, not words be your adorning”</li> <li>• All are responsible for self development and action.</li> <li>• “Not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship”</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Inspirational motivation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivate and inspire followers</li> <li>• Display enthusiasm and optimism</li> <li>• Communicate expectations and create share value.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Builds community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong personal relationships</li> <li>• Collaboration with others</li> <li>• Values other’s difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions are made by consultation in all things</li> <li>• “through the clash of differing opinions, the spark of truth will be found”</li> <li>• Diversity of thought, ethnicity, and culture is critical for good outcome of decisions.</li> <li>• “ Present system lamentably defective” “Abandon outworn institutions”</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Intellectual stimulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage innovation and creativity</li> <li>• Willing to abandon not useful practices and systems</li> <li>• Risk taking is necessary for long term success</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Displays authenticity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open and accountable to others</li> <li>• Willing to learn from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustworthiness paramount and emphasized in Bahá’í literature</li> <li>• Strong culture of trust. Leaders</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Individualized consideration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention to followers’ needs for achievement and growth</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain integrity and trust</li> </ul>	<p>must be trustworthy and followers must trust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions made by group consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create new learning opportunities</li> <li>• Empower to make decisions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Provides leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Envision the future</li> <li>• Take initiative</li> <li>• Clarify goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters from Shoghi Effendi and the UHJ describe goals and future vision</li> <li>• Founding Central Figures, visionaries, charismatic.</li> <li>• Current elected and appointed leadership engage in systematic goal setting</li> <li>• Encourages initiative among rank and file.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. Shares leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a shared vision</li> <li>• Share power and release control</li> <li>• Share status and promote others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion as the foundation of unity</li> <li>• Final authority is the authenticated Bahá'í literature</li> <li>• Concept of the institution having the power and not the individual members of the institution</li> <li>• Individuals cannot control others</li> <li>• Leadership not control, but responsibility</li> <li>• Truly democratic method of elections</li> </ul>	

***Bahá'í Leadership***

Bahá'í leadership is rooted in several foundational ethics. The most influential are: the oneness of mankind, elimination of prejudice, and gender equity. These ethics set the stage for servant leadership, for one cannot serve others whole heartedly without a genuine regard for them. The servant leadership characteristics of receptiveness, listening, strong personal relationships, valuing differences, and putting other's needs first, as mentioned in Greenleaf (1977), Sears (1998), and Laub (1999) are difficult to achieve without a true connection of hearts and recognition of equality. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) imply that the root of the servant-leadership model is religion. In the Bahá'í Faith, service is paramount. This example was set by the sacrificial service of its founder and initial leaders, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and continues abundantly among the adherents of the Faith. Service is a theme throughout all the Bahá'í scriptures and elevates the stations of servitude and humility to that of drawing near to God. The Universal House of Justice reaffirms the virtues that are part of the servant-leadership model in a letter to the U.S. governing body in 1991.

These instructions of the beloved Guardian get to the very heart of what must be more deeply internalized by the members of your Assembly at this time. We repeat for emphasis the terms "extreme humility", "open-mindedness", "candor", "modesty"; and we underscore the openness which is implicit in candor,...

Assemblies, not individuals, constitute the bedrock of leadership in the Bahá'í model. This emphasis on institutional over individual leadership is a unique feature of the Bahá'í leadership model and gives the power to the community. As noted earlier, Assemblies are the elected local, national and international institutions which decide the affairs of the Faith. Members who are in appointed positions, which closely collaborate with the Assemblies, must also exhibit the same virtues of humility and obedience to group decisions. The Bahá'í teachings strongly discourage individual personalities from seeking personal power and popularity. This does not preclude, however, initiative and service offered by capable individuals. The balance is

“not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation.” (Shoghi Effendi, 1968)

As to the responsibilities of the members, service before self as stated by Greenleaf (1977) is the standard to which Bahá'í leadership must aspire.

The members of these Assemblies, on their part, must disregard utterly their own likes and dislikes, their personal interests and inclinations, and concentrate their minds upon those measures that will conduce to the welfare and happiness of the Bahá'í Community and promote the common weal.(Shoghi Effendi, 1923)

Leadership becomes another avenue of service rather than a position. Greenleaf (1977) also emphasized that leadership was not a position or status, but an opportunity to serve others. The Bahá'í model strongly emphasizes this concept.

They should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should approach their task with extreme humility, and endeavour by their open-mindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candour, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they should serve, but also their esteem and real affection. (Shoghi Effendi, 1968).

Relationships with the institutions and community are stressed in the Bahá'í literature, advising members to consult with assemblies before embarking on initiatives, and even consulting with them about personal matters. The close and complimentary collaboration between the elected and appointed institutions also mirror this emphasis on relationship. This does not, however, imply that an individual must obtain permission from the institution before any action. Rather, it is the idea that collective wisdom is more effective than one individual, and collaboration produces the best outcome. Decisions involving more than one or two individuals take more time, and are cited as one of the disadvantages of group decision-making. However, one could

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<sup>6</sup> From a letter dated 12 March 1923 written by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of America, Australasia, France, Germany, British Isles, Italy, Japan and Switzerland, published in "Bahá'í Administration: Selected Messages 1922-1932", p. 41

also posit that time is saved by not having to remedy poor decisions that individuals acting alone can make. Developing the habit of consultation in organizational and personal relationships fosters an egalitarian ethic and develops capacity of all the participants.

The essence of the relationships between Bahá'í institutions is loving consultation and a common desire to serve the Cause of God rather than a matter of rank or station (UHJ, 1999).

The Bahá'í writings in numerous places mention the elected leadership as “trustees” and state that their actions must exhibit the highest level of service, virtue and trustworthiness. The electorate is exhorted to choose those individuals, upon conscientious reflection, who best exhibit these qualities.

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. (Compilations, 1991)

Bahá'ís are enjoined to be trustworthy in all their dealings and to trust the decisions of the institutions.

Trustworthiness and an active morality must become the foundation for all leadership if true progress is to be achieved. Moral leadership, the leadership of the future, will find its highest expression in service to others and to the community as a whole.(BIC, 1998)

One unique aspect of the Bahá'í consultative process happens when the institution makes a collective decision. After all views have been heard and a vote taken, all must “wholeheartedly” support the decision, even if some feel it is incorrect. The wisdom underlying this is that if the decision is in error, but all are united behind it, it will soon become apparent and rectified. If all do not support the decision, it will never be clear whether the decision failed because it was incorrect or that it was undermined by lack of support. This implies a level of trust in the institution as well as the process and creates a culture of trust as described by Reinke (2004). It

is also another one the many instances in the Bahá'í model that demonstrates the powerful role the organizational culture plays in influencing how leaders behave.

The transformational qualities of leadership as cited by Bass (1996) also exist in the Bahá'í model. As outlined in Laub (1999), Bahá'í institutions are active in fostering individual development and act as a coach or mentor spurring the followers on to greater achievements. They play a central role in developing community, serve as a facilitator in the development and maintenance of the community and its unity, are expected to be authentic, and motivate the community through inspirational appeals. Bahá'í institutions are encouraged to allow for margins for mistakes as the community grows and encourage each other rather than resorting to criticism at the slightest provocation. When problems arise, consultation is the preferred method to solve them. A feeling of empowerment should be fostered within the community and encouraging the involvement of individuals in the work of the community at the grassroots is a primary goal. Since it is the institution, and not the individuals that make it up, that possess the leadership position, leadership is shared because of the model structure.

The attitude of those in leadership positions should be such that:

They must at all times avoid the spirit of exclusiveness, the atmosphere of secrecy, free themselves from a domineering attitude, and banish all forms of prejudice and passion from their deliberations. They should, within the limits of wise discretion, take the friends into their confidence, acquaint them with their plans, share with them their problems and anxieties, and seek their advice and counsel...(Shoghi Effendi, 1968)

Moral leadership is an important aspect of both transformational and Bahá'í leadership models. It influences both the leaders and the governed.

Trustworthiness and an active morality must become the foundation for all leadership if true progress is to be achieved. Moral leadership, the leadership of the future, will find its highest expression in service to others and to the community as a whole. It will foster collective decision-making and collective action and will be motivated by a commitment to justice, including the equality of women and men, and to the well-being of all humanity. Moral leadership will manifest itself in adherence to a single standard of conduct in both public and private life, for leaders and for citizens alike.  
(BIC, 1998)

Transformational leadership fosters empowerment and shared leadership. This is exhibited in Bahá'í consultation methods. The operating principles in the Bahá'í model of consultation follow a set pattern that require a discipline of frankness and courtesy in expressing views with the goal of finding the truth of a matter and attaining a solution rather than pushing an individual's agenda. It is a critical factor in the Bahá'í model of leadership, but is only touched upon for the purposes of this paper.

The second principle is that of detachment in consultation. The members of an Assembly must learn to express their views frankly, calmly, without passion or rancour. They must also learn to listen to the opinions of their fellow members without taking offence or belittling the views of another. Bahá'í consultation is not an easy process. It requires love, kindness, moral courage and humility. Thus no member should ever allow himself to be prevented from expressing frankly his view because it may offend a fellow member; and, realizing this, no member should take offence at another member's statements. (UHJ, 1965)

Another marker of shared power, which can also motivate and inspire followers, is whether or not the leadership reflects the diversity of the population led. This also influences the transformational leadership criteria of role modeling, ethical conduct, fostering followers' needs for achievement and growth, and creating new learning opportunities. If the leadership in the Bahá'í model is freely elected, we would expect it to reflect the diversity of ethnicity and gender in its leaders. The foundational principle of the oneness of mankind in the Bahá'í Faith is the driving factor in its culture.

## Some Bahá'í Local & National Institutions



NSA of Zaire



LSA in the Philippines



LSA in South Africa



LSA of Bratislava Czechoslovakia



First LSA of Sitka, Alaska 1963

## Research Methodology

The research questions for this study are: Does the Bahá'í system foster servant and transformational leadership? Does the Bahá'í model diverge from the current definition cited in leadership literature of servant and transformational leadership? What are the characteristics, if any, that increase leadership quality, and the quality of the election process? Thus, the methodology aims to explore to what extent aspects of servant and transformational leadership are reflected within Bahá'í community by collecting data on perceptions of leadership among members of the Bahá'ís community, and more particularly, to see, via an email survey, the attitudes Bahá'ís have regarding leadership. Also, I will examine members' perceptions of other issues such as trust, which is a critical factor in Bahá'í leadership. Do they trust the process, their leaders, themselves? Individual responsibility for one's own actions is another important aspect that I will examine.

I have been a Bahá'í since 1969 and my husband since 1971. I have participated in local and national elections and served on a LSA. I have always noticed a marked contrast in the prevailing spirit of Bahá'í elections and current American political elections, not to mention the enormous savings in campaign and election costs. Locally, the quality of leadership varies because of the small pool from which to choose, and in cases of only nine members in a community, all are elected. But nationally and internationally, I was amazed at the quality of the chosen leaders.

I was a teller, responsible, along with twenty others, for tallying the votes, during the election for the first regional Bahá'í Council, in which members of LSAs of the Western states voted for a newly instituted body. Since this was the first election, voters had no previously elected Council members to reelect and the territory was large, in fact, so large that later the



region was divided into two new regions, Western and Southwestern. I was able to see first hand how the votes fell when there was no campaigning or nomination of candidates and voters were completely free to vote for any Bahá'í they chose. It was fascinating to see hundreds of people receive votes, yet nine highly capable people were elected with a significant number of votes. As a result, these observations raise questions about this model that warrants further study.

## ***Data Collection***

A nonrandom, exploratory email survey was sent to about 50 Bahá'ís around the world who are known to myself and to my husband. Because of the diversity in the Bahá'í community, we knew people of many races and ethnicities. Recipients were also asked to forward the survey to one or two people they knew who were new Bahá'ís. Several recipients decided to forward to regional general lists of Bahá'ís. Two hundred and forty nine responses were received during the one week window of acceptance. Some responded with messages or questions, but the survey was unreadable or appended unanswered. Those responses were not counted. Only people who were English and computer literate could be included for logistical reasons. A series of questions reflecting aspects of trust towards leaders and institutions, how the respondents chose people, and respondents' view of their own development of leadership capacity, were asked using a Likert scale. The scale had a five point answer range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' and 'all of the time' to 'never'. Values were assigned as following; Strongly agree = 4 strongly disagree = 0 and Always = 4, Never = 0.

Additional questions were asked that reflect the criteria of servant and transformational leadership, such as: listening, empathy, healing, fairness, openness, vision, putting the needs of others first, stewardship, and relationship to the institutions. Appendix I includes a copy of the survey. Three open ended questions were asked which gave the participants the opportunity to express in their own words their opinions about what they feel during Bahá'í elections, what are

the most effective Bahá'í leadership qualities, and opinions regarding those elected. A total of 244 email survey responses were received. Some demographic questions were included such as gender, location, ethnicity, age, English as a first or second language, length of time as a Bahá'í, whether or not the respondent served on an elected or appointed institution and, if so, which one(s) and length of service. Two hundred forty samples received, with four samples unreadable and twentyone with corrupted or omitted questions. As responses were received, they were entered into an Excel spreadsheet which corresponded with the specific questions. Narrative answers were simply copied and pasted as is from the open ended questions. These are located in Appendix II. Sometimes the respondent made significant comments to clarify a specific answer in questions 1-43 and those were included under a heading, 'Comments in Questions 1-43'.

## ***Results***

The Bahá'í model includes aspects of servant, transformational, and participative leadership as well as previously unmentioned characteristics. The survey addresses some, but not all of the characteristics of servant and transformational leadership. Respondents in this survey tended to be older, with a mean age of 46, although there was a larger standard deviation of 1.24238. They were experienced Bahá'ís with a mean time as Bahá'ís of 3.704, with a rating of three being equal to 11 to 20 years and a rating of four being equal to over 20 years.

### **Table II Age and Experience of Respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Under 20 years	1	0.42%
20-29	22	9.17%
30-39	19	7.92%
40-49	25	10.42%
50-59	102	42.50%
60+	61	25.42%
No answer	10	4.17%
	240	100.00%

<b>Years a Bahá'í</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Less than one year	1	0.42%
2-5 years	5	2.08%
6-10 years	7	2.92%
11-20 years	18	7.50%
Over 20 Years	137	57.08%
Born into a Bahá'í Family	60	25.00%
No answer or incorrect answer	12	5.00%
	240	100.00%

Responses from the survey listed on Appendix III that include listening, empathy, healing, and fairness, which are servant leadership characteristics as stated by Greenleaf (1977) and Spears (1995) are important characteristics of Bahá'í leaders to the respondents. These four scored high with a mean of the four characteristics of 3.57 out of a scale of 4 (strongly agree). Healing was the least important with a mean of 3.064 and a higher standard deviation of 1.08845 and listening was the strongest of Greenleaf (1977)& Speer's (1995) servant leadership characteristics with a mean of 3.851. Perceptions of Bahá'í leaders putting the needs of others first and exhibiting stewardship were high with means of 3.481 and 3.297 respectively. Responses to the question, "The most effective Bahá'í leadership qualities are" demonstrated that the respondents view Bahá'í leadership very closely to servant and transformational leadership models. In the open ended response to the question, words such as; listening, humility, honesty, trustworthy, self-sacrificing, ability to live with mistakes, consultative skills. etc., were prevalent.

Relationship factors stated by Sears (1998) and Laub (1999), such as being heard by the institutions is slightly lower than needs of others and stewardship with means of 3.103, 2.913, and 3.114 for the local, national and international institution respectively. The respondents scored higher in perceptions of having a relationship with the local, national and international bodies with respective means of 3.513, 3.165, and 3.355.

Trust in the institutions and in their decisions is also high. Trusting that wrong decisions made by the institution functioning as a body will be corrected in the long run had a mean of 3.629 with a lower standard deviation of .78765. Decisions made by LSAs, NSAs and the UHJ were perceived as fair with decisions made by the UHJ the highest with a lower standard deviation of .70621. This also reflects that as the institutions go from local to international, trust in the decisions as well as the capacity of its members increases.

As for feeling empowered as a quality of transformational leadership, respondents felt their vote counted with a mean of 3.664 and they voted 80 to 100 percent of the time with a mean of 5.491 with five being equal to 80-100% of the time and six being equal to every time. There were a few who never voted but their answers also scored lower in the other characteristics listed above. Examples of narrative responses to the question, "When I participate in Bahá'í elections, I feel," are: discharging my sacred duty, empowered, privileged, happy, responsible, honored, privileged to be part of process, connected, and hopeful for future.

Respondents felt their leadership capacity increased as a result of serving on various institutions. They felt that they gained leadership and listening skills, with means of 3.330 and 3.397 respectively, that were useful, with a mean of 3.617, and were transferable into work and family life. Those respondents who were members of elected institutions maintained trust in the process and decisions of their respective institutions, although from the narrative answers, they recognized the problems inherent in nascent bodies that need maturation and which have limited resources of human capacity.

Another dynamic, outside of leadership models, emerged. I was curious to see if the respondents felt they could elect a quality leader without the ability to nominate or campaign by voting either for people they knew or didn't know. The responses indicated they did not have difficulty knowing who to vote for with a mean of 1.065 with 1=seldom. Servant leadership is a vibrant, participative, inclusive and active process in the Bahá'í model. Since the power resides in the institution instead of individuals, and the institutions consist of the followers, the Bahá'í model is not passive as Graham would conceive.

Although the Bahá'í model is similar, there is a distinction between Christian modes as mentioned by Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) of servant leadership and Bahá'í models. Christian modes only say that the greatest among you are those who love and serve. But Christ was not addressing matters of governance; He was addressing simply a community of individuals, not governments. The Baha'i model includes the need for there to be ranks, but those possessed of rank must be humble. However, they must not be bashful about asserting the authority when it is appropriate, because otherwise the structure fails. So "servant" does not mean "no structure" and "no telling people what to do", nor does it mean no deference and no obedience from the rank and file.

Above all else, leaders for the next generation must be motivated by a sincere desire to serve the entire community and must understand that leadership is a responsibility; not a path to privilege. For too long, leadership has been understood, by both leaders and followers, as the assertion of control over others. Indeed, this age demands a new definition of leadership and a new type of leader. (BIC, 1995)

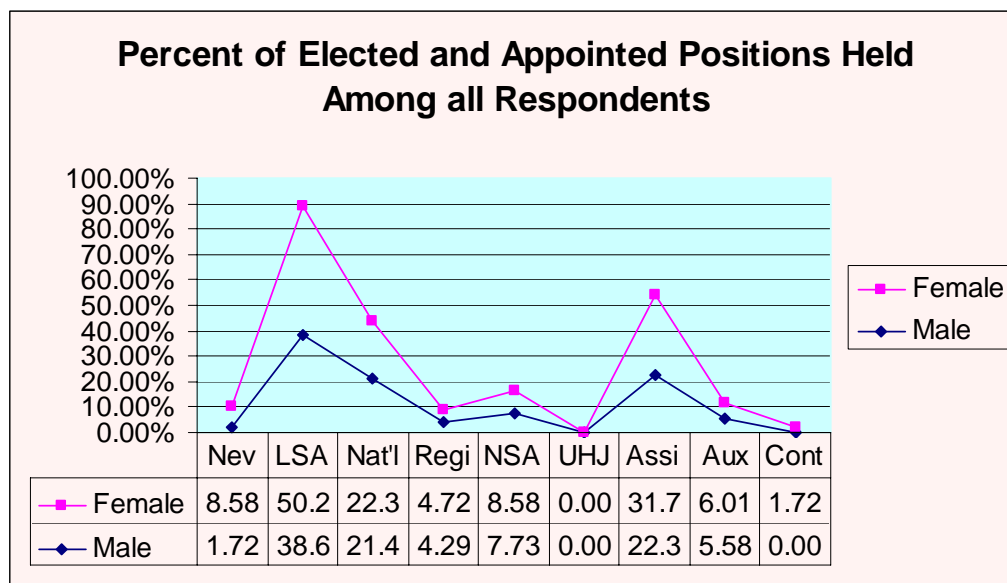
Naturally, old ways of exercising power and authority must give way to new forms of leadership. Our concept of leadership will need to be recast to include the ability to foster collective decision making and collective action. It will find its highest expression in service to the community as a whole (BIC, 1996).

An important diversity indicator is gender. Deborah Eicher-Catt's (2005) proposition that servant leadership is not gender neutral and that qualities of service to others is viewed with less

value because of masculine and feminine characteristics does not fit the Bahá'í model. Service to others is a human characteristic and is the highest aspiration of an individual. Service to others is not subjugation to another human being, but a path of nearness to God. Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi set the highest example of servant leadership by sacrificing their all for the unity and betterment of humanity. Narrative responses described qualities of individuals needed for election and did not refer to gender. In response to the question, “people who are elected to Bahá'í institutions are:” words typically used were: “servants of Bahá'u'lláh”, “people who are willing to serve” and “the best suited to the position”.

Participation by gender showed an interesting pattern with respect to participation by females in the leadership process. The following graph shows the percentage of all respondents worldwide who have held an elected or appointed position. Nev indicates never elected.

**Table III Percent of Elected and Appointed Positions Held Among all Respondents.**



Because of time constraints for this paper, appointed positions of leadership and their effect on elected positions of leadership will be discussed at greater length in the future.

However, the graph suggests a strong participation of women, especially in the local positions.

To compare one country as an example, the following are the statistics of women holding elected office in the United States.

In 2006, 81 women serve in the U.S. Congress. Fourteen women serve in the Senate, and 67 women serve in the House. The number of women in statewide elective executive posts is 79, while the proportion of women in state legislatures is at 22.8 percent.

**Congress:** women hold 81, or 15.1%, of the 535 seats in the 109th US Congress — 14, or 14.0%, of the 100 seats in the Senate and 67, or 15.4%, of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives. In addition, three women serve as Delegates to the House from Guam, the Virgin Islands and Washington, DC.

**Statewide Elective Executive:** In 2006, 79 women hold statewide elective executive offices across the country; women hold 25.1% of the 315 available positions. Among these women, 35 are Democrats, 40 are Republicans, one is an independent, and 3 were elected in nonpartisan races.

**State Legislature:** In 2006, 1,686, or 22.8%, of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States are women. Women hold 409, or 20.8%, of the 1,984 state senate seats and 1,277, or 23.6%, of the 5,411 state house seats. Since 1971, the number of women serving in state legislatures has increased more than four-fold. (CAWP, 2006)

Of the Bahá'í respondents currently living in the United States, 65.77% are women. Of those elected to positions, both men and women, women comprise 63.37% of those elected to an LSA, 55.17% were elected delegates to the National Convention, 66.67% have served on Regional Councils, and 66.67% have served on an NSA. These statistics reflect those who have *at some time* in their lives held an elected position. Bahá'ís tend to live all over the world and move to new locations at different times in their lives. The United States statistics may include offices held in the past in other countries. However, the proportion elected seems to closely follow the proportion of the population.

Other statistics published in 1995 by the Bahá'í International Community indicate that the proportion of female participation in Bahá'í leadership positions is less than this survey finding but more than elected leadership in the general world. The survey found that women make up 30% of the membership of the elected national governing councils (NSAs) and 40% of the membership of local governing councils (LSAs). Moreover, 47% of those (Auxiliary Boards)

appointed to inspire and advise the community at the sub-national and regional level are women (BIC, 1995). The report also observes that:

For the vast majority of the Bahá'ís in the world today, many of whom are the first in their families to become Bahá'ís, the values and habits they have been brought up with are not easy to shake. But by becoming Bahá'ís they commit themselves to a process of individual and social transformation, based on the fundamental reality of this age: the oneness of humanity. The equality of men and women is one important aspect of this principle. Thus the entire Bahá'í community is engaged in a shared struggle to overcome a variety of traditional prejudices, and its members are assisted in this struggle by the Bahá'í administrative institutions(BIC, 1995).

One method of overcoming gender bias in local elections is the appointment by the UHJ of female Continental Counselors who, in turn, appoint Auxiliary Boards and Assistants. Close collaboration of capable women with the LSAs and NSAs demonstrate to the community the leadership capacity of women and help change attitudes in patriarchal societies. Another is the strong advocacy in the Bahá'í and public arenas of gender equity through education of women and girls. One principle in the Bahá'í Faith is universal compulsory education and all parents are accountable to God for educating their children. In cases of limited resources, the guiding principle for the parent is education of the girl before the boy.

Another striking observation that emerged was the ethnic, cultural and gender diversity of the respondents. Voting for someone of a different race was common with a mean of 3.406 with 4 = all the time and 3 = most of the time. Of the 40 initial surveys sent out, 240 responses returned and of those, 111 were from the United States.



**Table IV Location and gender of participants**

Answer number	Male	Female	Total	Location
1	6	3	9	Africa
2	21	16	37	Asia
3	1	3	4	Latin America
4	5	3	8	East Asia
5	3	3	6	Europe
6	3	3	6	Middle East
7	38	73	111	United States
8	7	10	17	North America not US
9	7	12	19	Australia
10	3	6	9	New Zealand
11	3	0	3	South Pacific
	2	2	4	Location Not Answered
			7	Missing Question

**Table V Ethnicity of Respondents**

**Number of Respondents by Ethnicity**

Answer number	Male	Female	Total	Ethnic Group
1	13	11	24	Asian
2	3	7	10	African descent
3	53	76	129	European descent
4	3	0	3	Hispanic descent
5	1	3	4	Native American or other Tribal People
6	0	5	5	Middle Eastern
7	12	17	29	Persian
8	7	12	19	Multi ethnic or bi-racial
9	1	0	1	Pacific Islander
10	4	6	10	Not answered or blank

## Discussion

As previously mentioned, Bahá'ís are extremely diverse, not only in ethnicity but also in culture, socio-economic status, and former religious background. This would imply that the Bahá'í leadership model is effective across cultures, for the rules governing Bahá'í election and leadership are the same world wide. This system not only allows for diversity of thought and expression, but actually encourages and fosters it.

The primary difference in the Bahá'í model from current theories of servant and transformational leadership is the concept of collective leadership. Current concepts of servant

or transformational leadership imply an individual who is the leader and his/her effect on the followers. This leaves the followers open to an imposition of the arbitrary will or leadership of individuals. The Bahá'í model does not allow this. The individual is responsible for his or her own development. The culture of the Bahá'í community has a profound effect and impetus on its leaders as well as its followers for it mandates a change in old notions and ineffective habits of leadership.

This touches upon a distinguishing characteristic of Bahá'í life which such spiritual relationships foster, namely, the spirit of servitude to God, expressed in service to the Cause, to the friends and to humanity as a whole. The attitude of the individual as a servant, an attitude pre-eminently exemplified in the life and person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is a dynamic that permeates the activities of the Faith; it acquires collective, transformative force in the normal functioning of a community. In this regard, the institutions of the Faith stand as channels for the promotion of this salient characteristic. It is in this framework that the concepts of rulership and leadership, authority and power are properly understood and actualized.(BIC, 1995)

For too long, leadership has been understood, by both leaders and followers, as the assertion of control over others. Indeed, this age demands a new definition of leadership and a new type of leader. (BIC, 1995)

The Bahá'í leadership model exhibits a high level of trust, listening, empathy, healing, fairness and stewardship. The members feel personally empowered and responsible for their own growth. The members are relatively diverse with respect to ethnicity and gender. Despite these interesting findings the study has several limitations which are discussed in the following section.

## **Limitations of the Study**

This was a preliminary survey to test the waters, so to speak. As such, there are limitations in its methodology. The following are some of the limitations of this study:

1. Nonrandom, “snowball” sample—limits generalizability of findings.
2. Computer literate and English speaking sample—potentially biases results.
3. Much more data received than time period for analysis, and the scope of the paper could manage.

4. Survey not pretested and no reliability established—thus, these results are considered very preliminary.
5. Ethnicity and gender in specific countries may not be native born.
6. Survey did not reflect enough new Bahá'ís—therefore the study reflects the views of mostly experienced Bahá'ís.

## **Conclusions & Implications for Future Research**

This exploratory study set out to determine any similarities or differences in the Bahá'í model of leadership compared to current literature on servant and transformational leadership. Using literature research and an email survey of nearly 250 Bahá'ís, I found that the Bahá'í model strongly exhibits the characteristics of both servant leadership and transformational leadership, although there are certain characteristics unique to the Bahá'í system. The Bahá'í community is extremely diverse which indicates that it is a model that works in many cultures. They seem to have created a system of elections and leadership that selects effective leaders without the necessity of nominating candidates or campaigning for office. Observations of leadership types and diversity have applications in general world. The Bahá'í method may shed light on how effective, participatory leadership is developed in grassroots as well as national and international organizations.

There are implications for reduction of corruption in leadership, for the electorate is fully empowered to freely choose the best candidate without being coerced or unduly influenced in the process. This, in turn, requires those elected to be fully accountable for their actions and thus have a greater incentive to make decisions that are not self-serving. In the words of the respondents, “The election is extremely fair....there is not the politicking that is so prevalent in normal democratic elections” and “I also am continually amazed at how different Baha'i

elections are from the secular world. It is good to be involved with a process where I have to pray for a decision as opposed to being bombarded by propaganda and media.”

The Bahá'í model envisions a higher, nobler definition of democracy, in which those in positions of leadership are trustworthy, and selfless servants of the public good and the electorate is fully empowered. The model provides for development of effective leaders, for every individual has the opportunity to grow and learn as well as the obligation to be both a responsible voter and leader. In response to the question, “People who are elected to Bahá'í institutions are,” the overriding theme from the respondents was, “People who are elected to institutions and serve are ordinary Baha'is who have arisen to the call of the Beloved to be of service to the Bahá'í community and to humanity” and “Ordinary people asked to do extraordinary things.”

Fuller use of human administrative and leadership capacity can emerge when all people are free to choose those whom they feel are best qualified for the position. People who are capable servants, but quiet or shy, find an avenue where their special talents benefit the community. Through the process of participation, members increase their capacity for effective leadership in all areas of their lives. Leaders are challenged to rise above their preferences and limitations and any sense of entitlement.

Inclusion of more diversity in decision making processes, ensures that the fairest fruit of human thought is utilized in a broader model of leadership. Diversity also lessens the likelihood of self-serving, ambitious individuals controlling others. The diversity of views and life experiences balance the decision making process and encourage high quality decisions.

This exploratory study revealed many areas that are fertile for future research on this topic. Several issues are worth exploring further. Bahá'í administration and its leadership model was intended to operate in all cultures around the world. If servant and transformational leadership are useful leadership styles, can they work successfully in all cultures that exhibit diversity of cultural dimensions? If diversity of races, cultures and gender worldwide are

reflected in the body of Bahá'í leadership, this might imply that it does. If servant and transformational leadership models do not work in all cultures, but the Bahá'í model, which exhibits characteristics of both, does, then the question to be explored further, is: what are the unique aspects of the Bahá'í model that enable it to succeed in every culture?

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# Appendix I

## Questionnaire

### Survey on Bahá'í Leadership

Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following questions about Bahá'í leadership. For the purposes of this survey, a Bahá'í leader is defined as someone who is elected to a Local Spiritual Assembly, Regional Council, National Spiritual Assembly or Universal House of Justice.

**Please use your mouse to point and click on the space beside your answer and type an x.**

1. *Listening is an important aspect of leadership for Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

2. *Empathy is an important aspect of leadership for Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

3. *Healing is an important aspect of leadership for Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

4. *Fairness is an important aspect of leadership for Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

5. *I feel heard by local Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

6. *I feel heard by national Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

7. *I feel heard by international Bahá'í leaders.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

8. *I believe capable people are elected to local Bahá'í institutions.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

9. *I believe capable people are elected to national Bahá'í institutions.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

10. *I believe capable people are elected to international Bahá'í institutions.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

11. *Bahá'í leaders exhibit a great deal of openness.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

12. *Bahá'í leaders exhibit a great deal of vision.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**13.** *Bahá'í leaders put the needs of others and the Faith first.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**14.** *Bahá'í leaders exhibit a great deal of stewardship.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**15.** *I vote in Bahá'í elections:*

- Every time
- 80-100% of the time
- 60-80% of the time
- 40-60% of the time
- 20-40% of the time
- 0-20% of the time
- Never

**16.** *My vote counts in a Bahá'í election.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**17.** *I have voted for someone who is different from me in race or ethnicity.*

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Half of the time
- Seldom
- Never

**18.** *I have voted for someone whom I knew but who was not well known by others in the community.*

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Half of the time
- Seldom
- Never

19. *I have voted for someone who was very well known by others in the community but not by me.*
- All the time
  - Most of the time
  - Half of the time
  - Seldom
  - Never
20. *I have voted for someone I did not know personally but knew about.*
- All the time
  - Most of the time
  - Half of the time
  - Seldom
  - Never
21. *I have difficulty knowing who to vote for in Bahá'í elections.*
- All the time
  - Most of the time
  - Half of the time
  - Seldom
  - Never
22. *How long have you been a Bahá'í?*
- Less than one year
  - 2-5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - 10-20 years
  - Over 20 years
  - Born into a Bahá'í family
23. *Where do you live?*
- Africa
  - Asia
  - Latin America
  - East Asia
  - Europe
  - Middle East
  - United States
  - North America not the U.S
  - Australia
  - New Zealand
  - South Pacific
  - Other location not mentioned
24. *What is your ethnicity?*
- Asian
  - African Descent
  - European Descent
  - Hispanic Descent
  - Native American or other Tribal People

- Middle Eastern
- Persian
- Multi Ethnic or Bi-Racial

25. *Is English your first or second language?*

- First
- Second

26. *What is your gender?*

- Female
- Male

27. *Have you ever been elected to an administrative body? Check all that apply*

- Local Spiritual Assembly
- Delegate to National Convention
- Regional Council
- National Spiritual Assembly
- Universal House of Justice

28. *How many years total have you served in an elected capacity?*

- None
- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- Over 20 years

**If you have never been elected to a position in the Bahá'í community, skip to question 34.**

**If you have been elected to any position in the Bahá'í community, please answer the following:**

29. *Since I have been elected, I have discovered that I have developed better leadership skills.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

30. *Since I have been elected, my listening skills have improved.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

31. *The leadership skills I have learned serving on a Bahá'í institution are useful in other areas of my life such as family and work.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

32. *I believe my fellow members can be trusted to make good decisions.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

33. *I feel my opinions are heard during consultation*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

34. *Decisions made by the institution functioning as a body that turn out to be wrong will work out and correct themselves in the long run.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

35. *I believe the local institution as a body will make decisions that are fair to everyone in the community.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

36. *I believe the national institution as a body will make decisions that are fair to everyone in the community.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

37. *I believe the international institution as a body will make decisions that are fair to everyone in the community.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**38.** *I feel I have a relationship with my local Bahá'í institution.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**39.** *I feel I have a relationship with my national Bahá'í institution.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**40.** *I feel I have a relationship with my international Bahá'í institution.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree somewhat
- Strongly Agree

**41.** *Have you ever been appointed to any Institution? Check all that apply.*

- Assistant to the Auxiliary Board
- Auxiliary Board
- Continental Counselor

**42.** *How many years total have you served in an appointed capacity?*

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-20 years
- Over 20 years

**43.** *What is your age?*

- Under 20 years
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60+

**44.** *When I participate in Bahá'í elections I feel: (please type your own words)*

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---

45. *The most effective Bahá'í leadership qualities are: (please type your own words)*

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46. *People who are elected to Bahá'í institutions are: (please type your own words)*

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Thank you for your participation in this survey. Please send it as an attachment and return it to [vh@nmsu.edu](mailto:vh@nmsu.edu) If you do not know how to do this, then press Ctrl A [then press "copy"] and paste it into the body of an email. I will delete any reference to your name from the email.

## Appendix II

### *Survey Narrative Answers [sic]*

S a m p l e #	Comments in Questions 1-43	44. Participate in Elections	45. Effective leadership	46. People who are elected
1		That I discharge an important obligation	Knowledge, loyalty, integrity	Servants of the community
2		A sense of humbleness at the privilege to take part, and seek to fulfill to the best of my ability the trust placed in me to strive to utilise spiritual principle, and detachment from my many failings; to be inspired to ote for those who best manifest the qualities needed to fulfill their duties	Submission before the Creator, detachment and loving regard for all without prejudice.	Servants of the Servants
3		That is is my spiritual obligation and that following the laws we have within the faiththe outcome will be as it is supposed to be with spiritual guidance.	A well trained mind.	Usually people who have proven abilities because they have put the faith first in their life and are willing to keep their focus on the betterment of the Faith.



4		I'm doing my sacred duty. I also feel honored and privileged to do so.	Putting the Faiths interested before any individual or group in the community. Knowing that one is serving Baha'u'llah and His Cause. With such service is humility, dedication, loyalty, love, and patience	Servants and sacrifice in such service
5		Humility, Empathy, Strong sense of justice	Serving the community. It could end up being but typically they are people who have been active in the Baha'i community and show a deep love for the Faith.	No comments recorded
6		I feel I am participating in something very special and divine in nature. Because there is no electioneering or campaigning I do not feel pressured to elect one person over another. I make my choices based on character and whether or not I feel the person I have in mind has the skills and abilities to perform the particular function or duty.	Honesty & truthfulness, openness to ideas of others, listening skills, and drawing on the power of prayer.	selected because they have the necessary skills and abilities to serve in the capacity elected. At the regional, national, and international level I have found all elected persons to be outstanding people in the depth of the faith and certitude that a divine power will guide them to make the right decisions.
7		a sense of responsibility	humility and the feeling that you have been elected to serve because of qualities which come from being a Baha'i, not qualities of your own self.	those best suited to the position at that time, even if I personally don't see it like that
8		That I am helping to establish a new world order.	A strong sense of justice, knowledge of the Sacred Writings and empathy.	Just human beings who are attempting to live the Baha'i life.
9		I am fulfilling my spiritual duty and carrying out an essential service to the growth of the community	Loyalty and devotion to the Cause.	Responsible to God .
10		Attached to the administrative order	Empathy, firmness in the Covenant, good listener, is a servant to the Baha'is and the Cause, good administrative skills, looks beyond the Baha'is and the Cause, square, has a balance of heart and intellect.	Usually committed, usually active(I have lived in small communities where there have been only 9 Baha'is and this makes it difficult to say all are committed or have the qualities I would like to see in an elected Baha'i servant.

1 1		Honored to have the spiritual obligation and chance to serve.	Justice; compassion; truthfulness, Maturity	People who are willing to serve .
1 2		so privileged to be part of the Bahá'í family	reliance on God, detachment and love	
1 3		I am building the administrative of the future.	Empathy, patience, understanding, and knowledge.	Willing to serve the community.
1 4		That I am taking part in something that is extremely important for the security of the world	Compassion, justice, love	under a great responsibility
1 5		Assured that this is the best process in the world to elect leaders who will serve their constituents and not just themselves.	The ability to listen to a situation, to find rapidly spiritual writings discussing that situation, to apply the spiritual writings to the situation, to make a decision to support that application, and to kindly inform the friend(s) of the decision.	In training to run the governments of tomorrow.
1 6		Privileged to be part of this sacred, world embracing Cause and to have a say.	To be able to recognize and use the skills and talents of all the Baha'i community members.	Servants of Baha'u'llah
1 7		Honored to be part of the process and a sacred responsibility to serve and make the right decisions	Well trained mind, humility, spirit of service, sense of justice and ability to care and listen, detachment from ego.	Entrusted with the welfare of the community.
1 8		responsible	love, fairness, trustworthiness, dedication to the well-being and development of the group's members.	responsible for accomplishing the goals set for/by the group and for maintaining the unity of the group
1 9		Honored to be part of a divinely ordained process	Wisdom, fairness, empathy, and having a hearing ear.	The trustees of the Merciful if they know it!
2 0		I am playing a part in building the Kingdom of God on Earth	Humility, Selflessness, Enthusiasm, Courage, Stedfastness, Faith (not necessarily in this order)	Given an exceptional opportunity to serve others, and improve their ownelves at the same time.
2 1		That I am discharging my duty as a Bahá'í and participating in a divinely ordained process.	To have a sense of justice, patience, reliability, skilled in consultation and listening, respect for others, discipline in ascertaining facts, and of course the "five qualities."	Part of a Divine trust.

2 2		Empowered, happy, excited	Good mind, mature experience, humility, service orientation, wisdom, faithfulness	Doing the best they can with what they have.
2 3		I must keep in mind the prerequisites for those who are best suited to serve on Baha’I institutions, and I weigh anyone who comes to mind as a candidate for office against those prerequisites.	Humility; desire to work for the good of the community as a whole and the welfare of the individuals who make up that community; willingness to be open to the ideas and opinions of others.	Usually those who combine the desired qualities, as the community is reminded at each election of these qualities, so they are no doubt uppermost in the minds of those who are casting their votes.
2 4		It is a Baha’i sacred duty ,it is a test from God to elect the right members of the various Institution	Selfless devotion,dedication to the Faith,capability in service to the Faith,most qualified in leadership .	Members with special skills and capabilities,qualifications,d education,humilities,fear of God.
2 5		Involved in spiritually guided process of evolving world adminstration	Compassion, sense of justice. Tolerance, clarity of mind, Capacity to see outside the square or beyond the obvious; attitude of service	Usually grow into the role – many start out thinking about power and authority But as the assembly rubs off on them they grow into attitude of service and understanding rather than control
2 6	When capacity warrants, race is unimportant	that this is the best way to hold elections.	Patience, Love, Empathy, Knowledge of the Writings, Justice, Compassion	elected because of their service to the Cause.
2 7		I feel I am happily doing my sacred duty/responsibility as a Bahá’í and playing my part in building a New World Order.	Being able to consult, to listen, to share ideas, to be open to change ones ideas after listening to others, to stay cool when there is a clash of opinion, to humble oneself to follow the decision of the majority, to humbly listen to everyone in and out of the institution, to be able to explain any decisions made as a body, to keep things confidential which are confidential, to give everyone a chance to speak, to be able to prayer and follow the Holy Spirit, to be able to overlook others faults, to keep on good terms with everyone, to be able to relate decisions to the Bahá’í Teachings.	Dedicated, selfless, understanding, capable, mature, willing to sacrifice other interests to be part of the institution, humble, lovers of Baha’u’llah, honest and trustworthy, have vision, are knowledgeable and experienced.

2 8	#19,20,21(*depending on how new I may be in a local area*) #22(but I disagree with this question strongly - whether you are born into a Baha'i family or not, you still choose to become a Baha'i. It is never automatic. Therefore, although I was born into a Baha'i family I have been a Baha'i for 13 years - that is when I decided for myself to become a Baha'i) #35(whether members of the community agrees with, or likes, certain decisions is something else completely - however, the question is one of justice. This is, mind you, in a well-running, effective community/institution) #38(in my home community - yes. Not yet here, however, as I have just moved)	Spiritually elated, yet with a strong sense of the immense responsibility I have to vote in the correct spirit.	Humility, willingness and desire to serve, willingness to subjugate Humility, willingness and desire to serve, willingness to subjugate one's ego, ability to communicate and consult in the proper spirit. To be knowledgeable helps but is not vital. Patience, and acquiescence would override it.	This stage of the Baha'i era is still one that is not fully developed. As such, neither are our institutions nor those who serve on them. Therefore, it reverts to the individual and becomes something of a case-by-case effect. For the most part, those elected to the institutions are well-meaning, with a deep sense of their own inadequacies, and a willingness to actively participate and work towards building a new world order. They know that their contributions are small, yet remain aware that it is only through universal participation that deep rooted change can be effected at the grass-roots level. They remain dedicated, and, in spite of a myriad frustrations, optimistic.
2 9		Responsible	Humility	Deserving of that responsibility
3 0				
3 1		Fulfilling spiritual duty, advancing community	Attention to detail, sense of justice, integrity, positive mental attitude	Required to consult about how to best serve the best interests of the community
3 2		No comments recorded	Courtesy, honesty, knowledgeable about the Faith, frank, open, good communicator	Hardworking, sacrifice family commitments, honest, give of their time for the community
3 3		Good about taking part in a truly democratic process	Are to lead by example, which indeed is paramount if one is to be elected to a Bahai body	Committing time and effort for a cause they truly believe in and are passionate about.
3 4		I feel like I have been obedient to Baha'u'llah and I feel happy.	Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception and Eloquent Speech because Baha'u'llah said that these are the fruits of the tree of being.	the rulers.
3 5		My vote is important. I am taking part in a God-ordained electoral process.	Deepened in the Bahá'í Writings; Detached from one's ego; Commitment	At the best that are available at that time; sacrifice personal time for the community to which

			they serve
3 6	I feel that is it a sacred duty, and I try to be as impartial a possible	Mature experience, devotion to the faith, selfless service,	Doing their best to serve the cause
3 7	No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
3 8	Humbled at the experience and impressed with the results of the outcome by the capacity of the newly elected groups, especially at the national level. The local level varies widely with the size of the community.	Deep-rooted understand and love for the Faith and its principles. A sense of wisdom and tact to manage difficult issues in an imperfect world.	Exceptionally gifted, especially at the National and International levels. The size of the local community perhaps limits the potential (hence why I am able to serve). As the community increases in size, its leadership increases exponentially (at least at first)
3 9	Privileged and happy	Understanding, humbleness, the ability to relate to people, and a good sense of humor	No comments recorded
4 0	That it is an exciting process and a very challenging one, so sometimes I feel some perplexity, for example what does it mean to have a well-trained mind? Happy.	Humility, empathy, love, wisdom, fairness, detachment, organizational skills, loyalty, diplomacy	Challenged, and should be willing to change, as well as to make sacrifices, and to be tolerant of others.
4 1	prayer is important	vision, humility, those who study guidance and apply it	in a position to positively influence and encourage many people
4 2	I have no feelings. I am indifferent to the process. Although I understand its importance, I am still indifferent as good people are usually voted in regardless of my attitude.	Truthfulness, honesty, fairness, understanding and tolerance	They are usually highly educated, well versed in the writings of the Faith and natural born leaders
4 3	More an integral part of the community	Purity of heart and motive	Blessed and cursed ...it is not easy to serve if one wants to do a top notch job....
4 4	No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
4 5	Honoured, Privileged, Responsible, Purposeful, Active, Happy	Service, Humility, Love,	Servants of God, Servants of Humanity

4 6		spiritual and enriched .	prayer, meditation, listening, and detachment .	spiritual and dedicated .
4 7		I am exercising my democratic right and spiritual duty.	Deepened in the Faith, firm in the Covenant, spiritual vision, administrative experience, fairness, good communication skills, role model, kindness, hard working, efficient, systematic	Well educated, experienced, spiritual, dedicated, devoted, deepened, good communicator, humble, kind and fair.
4 8		connected to the covenant	seeing with the eyes of others,	often elected due to popularity, I feel,
4 9		I have an important responsibility to God and my fellowmen. And that my voting decision will also have an enormous effect on the direction of the future of humanity	To be deepened in the Faith (i.e.; be research-minded), to have an attentive ear, to be trustworthy and just, to allow other point-of-views to be aired, to have a cooperative and loving attitude, to be resilient, but firm and objective	Human , are praying for guidance, and are conscious of divine assistance. They are servants of the community, and are only responsible to God.
5 0		Like I'm helping shape a new society which is a frontrunner for the rest of the world.	Compassion, trust, spirituality, responsibility, maturity, a sense of guiding the community in a beneficial and benevolent way.	Trustworthy, responsible, spiritual, mature in nature, guides for the future.
5 1		part of a world wide assemblage .	compassion, fairness, contemplative nature .	hardworking and devoted .
5 2		done my duty, sometimes uplifted .	judgement, maturity, selflessness .	frequently dismayed, usually resigned, pleased by the recognition .
5 3		No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
5 4		It my duty to do so an it's a gift given by god to me , I feel that I should keep away all my personal misunderstanding that I possess with all the believers and pray n take a decision when I vote .	Good communication skills, fairness , devotion to the faith, and firmness in the faith	Those who are chosen by god those who are capable who are devoted and who are responsible and has a deep understanding about the faith
5 5		Privileged, a sense of belonging, like I am part of the bigger order of things, obedient,	Sound mind, intellectual capacity, humility, consultative attitude and open, knowledgeable, spiritual, loving and selfless .	servants .
5 6		prayerful and hopeful, sometimes moved deeply by the presence of the friends and the	Firmness in the Covenant, ability to listen, detachment from personal opinion,. sense of humor,	ordinary people who are chosen to serve, who learn to leave their ego at the door. Baha'i consultation is

		atmosphere of positive action to come.	forgiveness, empathy, high moral and ethical standards.	difficult to absorb at first, but then becomes an indispensable part of daily life.
5 7		honored	Honesty, integrity, loyalty, commitment, compassion	Challenged/inspired to attain greater spiritual understanding/insight
5 8		Honored to have the opportunity, blessed to be a member of this Faith community and responsible to actively participate in building the community.	Steadfastness to the cause, heart felt devotion, humility, desire to learn, encouragement of others, intense and active listening, enthusiasm in the implementation of decisions, genuine love and concern for all members of the community.	Arising and struggling, striving to serve, continuously growing.
B		I am exercising my spiritual obligation to vote and quicken world unity	Utter Humility and detachment from all things save God	Answerable to God in carrying out their duties
6 0		Like I am participating in part of a in a divine administration responsible for the well-being of the world.	Justice, fairness, compassion	The ones to shoulder great responsibilities to the betterment of world
6 1		I am serving my community	Knowing the Teachings, being fair-minded, praying for guidance and taking it.	Usually some of the most active in the community
6 2		I am discharging one of the vital duties of a Baha'i. I am assisting to elect "one of the trusted one of God" to look into the affairs of the community.	Complete obedience to the laws of Bahauallah. Educate and guide the others according to the ordinances of the Baha'i Faith. Develop all the qualities of a good Baha'i.	Carry out their duties without any prejudice. Be God fearing and forget self interest when contributing ideas or solutions.
6 3		Privileged that I can exercise this sacred duty, particularly when there are Baha'is in the world who are forbidden to exercise this duty by their national governments.. Feel that I am participating in the creation of a new world order that is so badly needed by the world	Open mindedness, truth-seeking, disciplined by principle, devotion, creativity, love	Placed in a position of trust, have an opportunity to learn and serve at the same time, personally tested regarding how to prioritize their time and resources.
6 4		I used to feel that it was an important part of being a Baha'i; now I feel alienated from my community and do not participate in the elections at all.	In my opinion inclusiveness is huge and is lacking sadly. Confidentiality is important as well and was severely breached in our community.	I don't know anymore.

6 5		Participating in a new world order. It may not be perfect or even following the correct procedures but there is progress in the maturity year by year	Able to discuss frankly without need to obligated to anyone or group, make decisions based what is in the Writings, confidence that everything will produce results.	Given opportunity to serve mankind and in turn this is the greatest service. The spiritual benefits are enormous and the growth within the individual is assured.
6 6		I am being obedient to the Laws of God	Encouragement, ability to delegate, detachment, communication, ability to make people feel included in the decision making/ consultation process	The best that are available at the time of election.
6 7		Happy to be participating in th development of a world-wide community. It is not always easy to choose those to elect. It requires a lot of thought and refelection to choose the right people for so important a duty. At this stage in the development of the Faith, thepool of people to choose from is often limited and therefore one has to also look for the enthusiasm and willingness to learn and serve that make up for the lack of capacity...or that perhaps create the capacity.	Humility. A willingness to learn and detachment from one's own opinions so that the truth and the best way can be found in consultation. Also the willingness to read and study the guidance in the Writings and the Messages of the Universal House of Justice that give guidance and direction to the development of the communities.	Devoted; they very often put the needs of the Faith above their own and take on a very difficult responsibility. There is no "glory" in the positions, it is just a lot of hard work. The fulfillment or satisfaction of serving on them is if there is progress in the communities.
6 8		No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
6 9		That I am participating in the World of Bahá'u'lláh	The ability to consult; to stay grounded in the guidance from the Writings and from the Universal House of Justice and to use it.	Elected to serve the community and to infuse the love of Bahá'u'lláh into every aspect of community life.
7 0		Hopeful for the future	Patience and keeping the future of the Baha'I Administration in mind	Too often those who attend Ridvan celebrations with the idea of getting elected, not realizing the time, service and commitment involved in doing a good job
7 1		Bound by honest and sincere appraisal of those who will serve best in a leadership capacity.	Absolute honesty, integrity, commitment to the responsibilities of consultation and meeting as a body for deliberations, and confidentiality. .	Generally those individuals who have demonstrated by service and commitment that they are capable of rendering decisions in consultation.
7 2		I am fulfilling an obligation, but not sure my vote counts.	Wisdom, courage and compassion.	Capable and trustworthy and dedicated to service to the Cause.



7 3		That I am fulfilling a sacred duty.	Compassion, love, service to others, participating in a process of the facilitation of releasing others latent capacities for service to humanity.	Ideally those with mature experience, a well-trained mind, desire and intention to serve the community, willing to listen, be flexible, fair and compassionate.
7 4		It takes too long; but is necessary for the right outcome.	Faith, Respectful, Charismatic, Fun-Loving, Action Orientated.	Ideally: Dependable, Voice their opinion, aware of current affairs, good follow-up, work well as a team player.
7 5		. Blessed, honored, protected and inspired.	. Obedience, Love, Service, Open attitude of learning, Patience, Humility, Truthfulness, Compassion, Submission to God's Will, Knowledge and Wisdom.	. Highly blessed and honored by God's favor to serve with humility.
7 6		I am helping to build the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.	A strong grasp of Bahá'í teachings, good listening skills, a well-trained mind, courtesy.	Usually very conscientious and mindful of the sacred responsibilities entrusted to them.
7 7		It is a sacred responsibility that will lead a step closer to a spiritual civilization based on unity and justice.	Humility, well-trained mind, unquestioned loyalty, selfless devotion, lack of prejudice, a deep sense of fairness, recognized ability and maturity of experience	Stewards of the community, responsible to God for their decisions (rather than to those who elected them), entrusted with a sacred responsibility to put the concerns of the Faith before themselves and to diligently engage in dispassionate consultation rather than advocating for their own opinions in the decision making process.
7 8		Honored.	Justice, cooperation, humility, being a servant for the community, bring unity, love the community and mankind in general.	Selfless, hardworking, cooperative, humane, kind, supportive, attitude of serving, sacrificial and all together.
7 9	I just wanted to add something here...We have been told that there is no concept of Leaders in Baha'i Faith. Where as in christianity you can find clergy and there are religious leaders in Islam..but no such thing is found in the Baha'i faith..so your selection of word "Leader" can be misleading here....	I have been given a great responsibility because the progress of the faith depends on our institutions and its us who elect those institutions.	All the qualities that were there in Soghie Effendi.. we should set his example the way he strengthened the faith through institutions..	No comments recorded
8 0		I am working for the betterment of mankind. There's work to be done, we must do it.	Honesty, humility, compassion, the ability to listen, understanding why we're Baha'is.	Extremely blessed, and sometimes really tired.

8 1		My vote counts.. and I hope my choices are based on prayerful consideration	Those mentioned in the words of Shoghi Effendi..	Servants to the community..
8 2		I am participating in a process that is both mystical (sacred) and practical (essential to good governance and, indeed, to world citizenship--i.e., elections at the grassroots level flow upwards to the international level).	Deep humility, love, a strong sense of justice, ability to exercise critical (analytical) thinking, thirst for greater knowledge of the Bahá'í writings, flexibility, detachment from one's own ideas and expectations, openness combined with discretion.	Challenged to rise above their preferences and limitations and any sense of entitlement. Privileged to serve.
8 3		Honored and humble, to be a part of this faith and this process	Honesty, sense of justice, compassion	Of great spiritual and mental capacity.
8 4		That it is just another popularity contest, no different from prom king. Not prom queen, because there is little serious effort to see beyond gender stereotypes and the absence of acknowledged political process allows for people to kid themselves royally and without accountability that they are doing what the Guardian said to do....	Skills that involve more than umpiring a tennis match..	Highly variable in their abilities, thus all the medium scores from me on this questionnaire. You can't generalize like that and get anywhere..
8 5		I'm carrying out a sacred mission and doing my duty.	Loyalty, devotion, well-trained mind, ability and mature experience	Faithful, sincere, work in a learning mode and try their best to serve their communities .
8 6		Global identity with the entire world	Humility, compassion and a sense of service	Provided the opportunity to serve God by being faithful to his teachings
8 7	1. not in an LSA community now	In awe of the simple process that safeguards against basic problems that are becoming more widespread such as election fraud, miscounting ballots, etc	Concerned with community, yet also individual; flexible and responsive, empathetic, fair	Generally, same as above. Best qualified people are usually elected.
8 8		I have a feeling of satisfaction - that I am involved in a process that is divinely ordained, a process that is an absolute requirement for the spiritual and social evolution of humanity.	Love of God. Obedience to the Covenant. A balanced view of the world.	Dedicated to the Cause of God. Hard workers.

8 9	<p>This is a precious documenty I recently discovered on Baha'i leadership: Tuesday, April 2, 1912 [Mahmud's Diary, aboard the Cedric The Master again spoke on the subject of the spiritual illness and self-serving motives of the heads of various religions. One of the friends asked Him about the leaders and Hands of the Cause in this Dispensation. He said: The Blessed Perfection has extirpated superstitions, root and branch. The Hands of the Cause in this dispensation are not heirs to any name or title; rather, they are sanctified souls, the rays of whose holiness and spirituality throw light on the hearts of all. Hearts are attracted by the beauty of their morals, the sincerity of their intentions, and their sense of equity and justice. Souls are involuntarily enamored of their praiseworthy morals and laudable attributes. Faces turn in spontaneous attraction to their outstanding qualities and actions. 'Hand of the Cause' is not a title that may be awarded to whomever it may please to have it, nor is it a chair</p>	<p>Honoured by a sacred duty</p>	<p>Servitude and love to God and to his creatures</p>	<p>Sometimes unaware of the honour they are entrusted with, and not always freed with the dictatorial and domineering concepts of leadership that contaminate the outside world</p>
9 0		<p>Positive and happy</p>	<p>Listening for the voice of God in others and seeing humanity's virtues</p>	<p>Try to the best of their abilities to serve others</p>
9 1		<p>Amazed at how this whole Administrative Order works. Humbled by the faith of my fellow believers. .</p>	<p>Learning how to use consultation; humility, honesty, trustworthiness; being in this mode for the long haul-visionary, self sacrificing, unconditional love, desire to create unity</p>	<p>Struggling human beings who strive to be better than they are.</p>
9 2	<p>Unreadable</p>			

9 3	<p>( if the community is matured ) ( Because in Baha’I institution this election is second degree that means by elected Deligates )  ( Because this election is by all National Spiritual members of the world) #12. ( If we refer to the writings of Baha’U’llah ,Abdul’Baha ; Shoghi Effendi or UHJ ) #18. ( In Baha’I writings is noted that everybody should vote for somebody that knows him or her perfectly and should have the 4 characters ) Look in LSA hand book. #21.( look in LSA hand book it gives you direction ) #36. ( Because in many cases they consult with UHJ ) #38. ( it is obligation of each member of community to support and respect the LSA &amp; the institutions for unity as a result )</p>	that I am obeying one of orders of Baha’U’llah for creating unity in mankind	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
9 4		guided by the Holy Spirit to make the best possible choice.	Vision, trustworthiness, responsibility and ability to listen to the needs of the people.	people with the qualities of the best leaders. Selfless, spiritual-minded, leading exemplary lives with courage, dedication and devotion.
9 5		Fulfilling a sacred obligation and thrilled to be part of the process of this New World Order.	Attachment to the Covenant, constant reliance, consultative skills, desire to serve, obedience, action	Stewards for a period of time, blessed to serve and practice humility
9 6		I feel part of the faith and the community.	openness, spiritual awarness and honesty, knowledge of the faith	No comments recorded
9 7		Calm. Prayerful.	The same as parenting skills, i.e.: understanding of process and growth, ability to live with mistakes, tolerance of the organic process of change, ability to not take anything personally,	Volunteers doing the best they can, given the tools they have at hand and their current life-experience.

9 8		<p>Certitude that this is a divinely guided process and that I must enter into it prayerfully and with detachment. Many of the answers above reflect more trust in the station and nature of the elected institutions of the Baha'i Faith than confidence in individuals. I truly believe that God will comprise the Assemblies of those who should serve at that given time. I can only vote for those I know and believe will embody the qualities outlined by the Central Figures of the Faith and ask God's help as I serve to manifest those qualities in me. The electoral process is miraculous in its adherence to no campaigning, nominations, or discussion of those to be elected and that inherent in the process is the fact that any individual who would advance himself or herself would de facto automatically eliminate himself from consideration by those casting ballots. The process stands as a polar opposite to the political process in the United States in its current practices. It is dignified, absolutely democratic, and totally</p>	<p>Selflessness, holding the view that service is the highest aspiration and station to which one can attain, honesty, compassion, obedience, the ability to relinquish one's own interests in favor of a group decision, commitment to unity, love, fair-mindedness, freedom from prejudice (or at least the commitment to actively strive to be), awareness of one's own shortcomings, humility, sacrifice, respect, courtesy, spiritual intelligence (which may or may not mean having attained higher education).</p>	<p>Tested and blessed! Those who are elected must sacrifice their own needs to the work of the institution. Their loyalties must be to principle and to the spiritual guidance that informs decisions. They must be detached from representing special interests in favor of seeking the best decision that reflects justice and promotes unity, based upon moral principles applicable to the problem at hand. It is very hard work and also exhilarating to see that leadership and decision-making using this model works wonderfully.</p>
9 9		<p>I feel like I am making good choices, but after the results are announced, I often wonder what everyone else was thinking.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>clear thinking detached humility devoted to truth unswayed by emotive appeals.</p>	<p>Unfortunately largely unscientific, attached to old world models, easily lead astray by people who appear to have "rank" in professional or business aspects of life. They are elected because the electorate is unable to see past outward forms. The system is still better than anything else around, and eventually will work better.</p>

1 0 0		Privileged to be in the election, and closer tie to my local community	Humble, humour, openness, listening skills, having a big picture however attentive to the needs of individual. Reflective	Humble, humour, openness, listening skills, having a big picture however attentive to the needs of individual. Reflective, and strong belief in the faith with scientific approach, assertiveness
1 0 1		Grateful if I'm not elected. It's a lot of work to be just.	Knowledge that each individual is unique, wisdom, understanding.	Examples that current and future generations will look to with awe and wonder.
1 0 2		Privileged to be part of the process	Justice, compassion, humility	?
1 0 3		As part of the only truly democratic election process in the world today	Love of Baha, Knowledge of the Faith, Sound mind, Decision maker,	A reflection of the community
1 0 4		Connected with Baha'u'llah.	Detachment, patience, listening, fact gathering	Servants of Baha'u'llah. Custodians of the community.
1 0 5	#4.FAIRNESS IS NOT A GOAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS = JUSTICE IS #31. BUT NOT ALWAYS EASY TO DO IN NON-BAHA'I SETTING #34.Depends upon level of maturity and unity	I seek that 'rarified atmosphere' for divine guidance.	Humility; knowledge & understanding; vision or willingness to see and support other's visions; dedication; mature experience in serving the Faith	Not always the best but God is the Divine Trainer and if they have humility, they will become deserving of their position of service. What is required is a pure heart!
1 0 6		The election is extremely fair. There is vying for my vote and there is no way that I can influence the person I am voting for therefore, there is not the politicking that is so prevalent in normal democratic elections.	The ability to listen and the ability to "consult" on matters important to the community	Usually qualified to hold that office and they can be counted on to be honest in their dealings with the community.
1 0 7		that I am participating in building the Baha'i world	genuineness, skill + knowledge, actively involved in service, understanding, charisma, humour	drawn to Baha'u'llah, interested in service, social
1 0 8		Privileged to be part of this spiritual and ethical process.	Well-trained mind, recognized ability, mature experience, selfless devotion and unquestioned loyalty to the Baha'i Cause, trustworthiness, love for the whole of humanity, truth-telling, a strong sense of fairness or justice, capabilities in Baha'i consultation, ability to	According to their own capabilities, devoted to collectively serving the spiritual, ethical and material needs of the human race with love, truth telling and justice so the whole of humanity can grow, develop and flourish and realize a condition of solidarity, cohesion or

		articulate & live the vision of the Faith, integrity: match between words and deeds.	unity.
1 0 9	I sense that I have participated in a very important event no matter how modest it appears. I feel that there is nothing more important for the well-being of humanity than to participate in the Baha’I administration.	The ability to look at issues unbiased and with the good of the Faith and the community at heart. Not to be attached to ones own ideas but sincerely consider all points of view. Approach all things with an attitude of learning and rely on the assistance of God and look to be inspired by His guidance. Not to be fussed when people complain about things or you. Do what you believe is right.	Respected and dignified but are at the same time very approachable. They see themselves as servants and not above others.
1 1 0	I feel that I belong part of a community and I am being heard.	Truthfulness, kindness, humility, enthusiasm, and hard working. You need to keep in mind that you were once part of the community and that know you should listen to the other voices in the community and take their opinions on board. Try and be fair in your judgements and try to do your best.	People who have the qualities and strength to make a difference. They are usually knowledgeable of the faith and can contribute to strengthening the institute process in some way. . !
1 1 1 1 1 2	Self of Responsibility	Love of Humanity , Live a Baha' life	We worker's of GOD
	obliged to choose those who have served before, but at the same time I am torn by the obligation to choose only those will serve the Cause selflessly.	Knowledge and practice of the Teachings, and deeply conscious of role and responsibility in the elected capacity	Trustees of the Merciful, and therefore should behave in highly principled manner
1 1 3	Useless-because Bahai’s never let you really know them. There is no honesty about struggles Experiences , need for prayer,etc	Compassion, genuine interest in other people Instead of just wanting to cram the Faith down peoples’s throats	Around the longest, members of the richer family, of Persian descent

1 1 4		Humbled, guided by God.	Consideration, Humility, leading by example	Answerable to God, responsible for the welfare of the community, expected to dedicate a large amount of their time
1 1 5		Connected – empowered	Humility – Focus – Passion for Justice- some administrative ability	A mixed bag – some are very good and embody the qualities and mindset required., but others are mediocre. However very few have the bad traits common in many elected officials in other institutions, and organisations
1 1 6		Privileged and tentative to be participating in the early stages of a new world, because what we do now as Baha'is, positive or negative, will effect the world for a millennium. There is so much to consider in our activities at all levels of participation if we are to make correct decisions so that everything in existence is considered, it is the future of everything that is at stake.	Balance, honesty, trustworthiness, fair and open-mindedness, humility, sensitivity, a good heart, straightforwardness, understanding of self imperfections as well as the imperfections of others, compassionate and considerate towards others and self, future and globally minded, flexible, loving, just and merciful, self developing the attributes of God to the best of their ability while understanding their own flaws, exhibiting moderation in all things, determining of the motives of others and self, peacemaker, multi-faceted, consistent, able to work as an individual as well as within a group. Balanced, or trying very hard to be.	Imperfect people trying to make the best decisions possible, under evolving circumstances, with many factors to consider if this planet and all it's inhabitants are to progress in a healthy manner.
1 1 7		empowered and excited. I feel that I am participating in a divine process that will lead to the betterment of the world.	selflessness, justice, the ability to listen and reflect, the ability to guide and unify disparate people.	humble, caring, sincere, doing their best for others.
1 1 8		that I'm carrying out my duty as a member of the community.	consultation skills, humility, loyalty	capable, devoted individuals who try their best to meet the needs of the community they serve.
1 1 9		Part of a world wide enterprise –exciting and important	Humility,eagerness to learn ,willingness to serve selflessly	Servants of the servants
1 2 0		I feel i had tried to fullfill my obligation.	Mentally okay, faithful, sincre, patient	21 years and above, mentally sound and leadership qualities.



1 2 1	#15 Vote: Never (I'm 17) Author: respondent answered questions 16-20 as if she would vote if she was 21 years old. #21 "Couldn't tell you"	I am still too young to participate in the election process but the Bahá'í elections are, without a doubt, the most concentrated and spiritually charged Bahá'í meetings I have ever witnessed on a local level.	Initiative, Interest in the people of the community, Tact.	Elected because it is the will of God.
1 2 2		Empowerment, that I count towards the direction of the Faith	Awareness of the skills and capacities of all the members of the community. To help them be of service.	Responsible to help others be of service and protection of community.
1 2 3		Inspired and confident	Maturity, understanding of the Writings, relative experience, detachment from own opinions and desire for position	Mature, experienced, of diverse backgrounds, willing to serve,
1 2 4		. that I am fulfilling a Bahai' responsibility and obligation . that I must make the best decision for our community – even if it means voting for myself or other individuals who are tired of serving on the Assembly for so many years	. Sincerity . detachment to my own opinion	No comments recorded
1 2 5		Honoured, part of a process that is sacred and full of hope for future society	Humility, vision, clarity of mind, purity of motive, openness, flexibility, compassion and human understanding and tolerance, willingness to try new approaches, sense of humour	In a responsible position of trust where they must be trustworthy, selfless, thinking of the greater good. .
1 2 6	17. (virtually no opportunity in our community!)	sometimes discouraged by the tendency to re-elect most members too often	Empathy; wisdom, willingness to take an active role in the day-to-day tasks; participation in Ruhi study circles; selflessness	On the national and international levels they are excellent, as they are generally more detached from ego than in any other organization
1 2 7		I am building the kingdom of God on earth.	Devotion to God, competence, ability to love.	Dedicated to serve their fellow Baha'is and the community at large.
1 2 8		Spiritually very happy and content. I feel honored for being there to participate. I feel privileged to have been trusted by the community to vote. I feel satisfied that the institutions will shoulder community responsibilities for the furtherance of the cause.	Faithful, Trustworthy, Honest, Just & Fair, Dedicated, Committed, Efficient & Active, Punctual, Sacrificial, Truthful, Patient.	Few chosen ones, yet sometimes not well-experienced, dedicated, trustworthy, punctual, active,
1 2	4.(Justice is!)	No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded

9				
1		No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
3				
0				
1		That I am participating in an extraordinarily important event that will help to change my local community and the world into a better place.	Intelligence, compassion, a sense of justice, familiarity with Bahá'í scriptures and Bahá'í law.	Participating in an important process that is the model for future society.
3		Spiritual, like I am part of a divine process. Prayerful	Hardworking, wise, openminded, humble, service oriented, selfless, fair	Servants of the community, humble, hardworking and self-sacrificing
1		That my voice is being heard and that my vote counts.	Selflessness, devotion to the Cause, dedication, humility, service-oriented, well-trained mind. Self-discipline, social consciousness, sense of justice and fairness, knowledge of the laws and teachings of the Faith, loving kindness towards others.	Typically, those who meet the qualities listed in 45 the best in the community.
3				
3				
1		Doing my duty; contributing to the good of all Participating in a spiritual enterprise.	Finding and encouraging capacities in others, and to be of service.	Not a privilege or honor, but duty and responsibility.
3				
4				
1	"The mind does not take it complexion from the skin"-- Frederick Douglass 13. . (I think Baha'i leaders try to put the needs of the Faith first. Whether this extends to the needs of others, that would be depend on the need, I suppose. For a description of "Baha'i leadership I am using the following excerpt (see below) as my guide.* Would not a "Baha'i leader be one who has a healthy "fear of God"?) ** denotes a quote that I think pertains to leadership. 34. . (NOTE: That depends on whether the decision was made in unity among the members. As a body could mean majority voting in favor.) 35. . (My answer is modified by this point of view: that I believe local institutions try and hope to make decisions that are fair to everyone in the community.) 36.(The same proviso as give in question 35	Terrific! Connected to the supreme concourse and to my fellow believers.	Heartfelt, God directed, inspired feelings of humanity, absence of prejudice, loving regard for all the friends; listening without judging or criticizing; patience; capacity to hear and learn from those who are innovative and charismatic – rather than fear them. Willingness to “walk” with the members of grass roots communities. Respectfulness.	People who are elected to institutions and serve are ordinary Baha'is who have arisen to the call of the Beloved to be of service to the Baha'i community and to humanity.
3				
5				

	above.) 37.. (In my view, the House of Justice (the only elected international institution) cannot be classified as are local and national Spiritual Assemblies. Besides the matter of infallibility that has been conferred on th			
1 3 6		No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
1 3 7		Honored, privileged, prayerful, serious	Humility, unquestioned devotion, a well-trained mind, rectitude of conduct, purity of motive.	Servants of God and of humanity
1 3 8		Honored and awed and respectful	Humility and compassionate	Capable and humble
1 3 9		I feel especially hopeful as I am involved in a process that will affect the entire community. It makes me proud to belong to a Faith that allows me such a powerful voice. I also am continually amazed at how different Baha'i elections are from the secular world. It is good to be involved with a process where I have to pray for a decision as opposed to being bombarded by propaganda and media.	Service, selflessness, ability to listen, commitment.	Usually the most qualified in the community. They are some of the most dedicated people in the community and tend to do a lot of the work, albeit behind the scenes in some cases. They work tirelessly and are an inspiration to me!
1 4 0		I m a performing my duty as a bahai and it is my responsibility to elect one mature and deepened with wisdom to carry a task of servicing community.	Profound love for community, sincere and pure hearted person.	Steadfastness to the faith, faithful and always to serve humanity.
1 4 1		Moved by the concept that there is a spiritually influenced electoral process tha is free of electioneering and nomination	Compassion, love, understanding, fairness, faith,and courage.	Just normal people asked to perform an super nomal task in a difficult time in history

1 4 2		Pressure and responsibility	Dedication, wisdom, perseverance, openness, capacity to learn, capacity to encourage, servitude	Honored to serve
1 4 3		It is a privilege and a duty	Integrity, trustworthiness, intelligence, humility, humour, self-sacrifice	In for a tough time!
1 4 4		Very grateful for the Faith and the system of community government which has come to us to use in the world. Very willing to discharge my responsibility as an elector.	Constant striving to better comprehend and then learn to practice the Baha'i teachings in every aspect of life. Learning to listen with an open mind and heart to all people and to "absent" people as well - those who are not present or not participating -- in order to more faithfully discharge the duties that an elected person has in serving the community.	They are people - ordinary Baha'is (whatever that means) - who are learning and growing just like everyone else. They are often a little more experienced OR a little more aware of how others feel and think than their fellow believers. But in most communities which are still very small they are often the nine most active or most visible or most "liked" of the Baha'is.
1 4 5		that I am carrying out my sacred responsibility.	servitude and humility	Responsible before God for serving on these institutions and ensuring that they are vigilant in consulting in a way that establishes and maintains unity of that institution for the betterment of the community..
1 4 6		reverant	Knowledge, openness of mind, humility, listening, creativity, audacity	A mix of many different types of people. Old, young, experienced, alternative, conservative
1 4 7		I feel that when I vote I reflect my knowledge of the character of each Baha'i that I have come to know in the community wherever I may live. I currently live in a trilingual community (Qatar) and I am not able to speak 2 of the languages (Arabic and Farsi) but attitudes of integrity and "whole hearted" capacity to serve transcend the language barriers.	In addition to integrity and "whole hearted" capacity to serve, we are exhorted to vote for the Baha'i with an organized mind.	Striving. We have a writing: "Strive that your actions day by day may be beautiful prayers." Abdul Baha
1 4 8		I feel I am participating in something sacred and that I am doing my part toward social Transformation.	To serve the community for the love of Baha'u'llah To put the interest of the Faith first Humility To be just and fairminded	Still struggling with the old world order mentality and have not fully understood the Baha'i concept of consultation and decision making. We have a very long, long way

			to go.
1 4 9	No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
1 5 0	I am partaking in a sacred process ordained by Baha'u'llah and contributing to my own attachment to His covenant.	Humility and justice. Not to cover up for colleagues or mistakes by Spiritual Assemblies.	No comments recorded
1 5 1	privileged	Love compassion patience, trust in God	Is the will of God
1 5 2	I believe I am contributing to the building of an order that can facilitate the unification of the diverse peoples of the world.	Unquestioned loyalty, selfless devotion, a well-trained mind, recognized ability and mature experience.	Those who best exemplify the qualities listed above.
1 5 3	Privileged and honored to be able to do so.	Humility,	Transformed.
1 5 4	35. There is no such thing as a wrong decision by an elected body, only wrong motivation	Egotistically high if I get any votes, and sad but relieved when I don't! Like most other people, I am pressed for time in addition to working in a remote area effectively making me a ghost and this means I cannot always attend, and if I do not know everyone in the community I am excluded from making a fair postal vote. Do I care? Well no, I am who I am, and the Baha'i Faith is the Baha'i Faith. We are separate entities and it would be patently insane for us to agree on everything or pretend to think or feel the same way about everything. I strongly believe that the Baha'i Faith must choose its own path regardless of my opinion, just as I must choose to adapt and respond with integrity to the circumstances and environment I am faced with. I also feel that ability is entirely irrelevant next to an understanding and	Humility, Consultation, Leading from the front, Initiative, willingness to put own resources into things they consider important, ability to think outside hierarchical planning so as to implement individual initiatives without worrying about the fact that these are not specifically mentioned in the various plans save as an emphasis on encouraging individual initiative within those plans, the understanding that the deeds of the Faith within the community as a spiritual as opposed to economic or ritualistic entity, are vastly more important than teaching efforts that are doomed to fall on predominantly deaf ears as long as such words are not backed up with deeds by the Faith as a community within the community so exposed to the Faith.
			Polite to a fault (IE they may not say no when it is important to say no), many lack sense of identity and fail to recognize the importance of living life beyond the cloistered walls of the Baha'i Faith, failure to recognize the importance of the spiritual life beyond the rituals formal laws & specific prayers of the Baha'i Faith, blinkered by the concept of serving the Faith as opposed to expanding their vision to give priority to the more vital role of service by the Faith to the broader community – role that will get more declaration cards signed than any number of travel teachers.

		implementation of core purpose of Baha'i Faith as context and guide for all dealings with the foundation being identical to that of all virtues.		
1 5 5		Part of a universal system which is serving God.	Tolerance, understanding, knowledge, a sense of justice.	Usually dedicated, caring people.
1 5 6		privileged to be a part of this process .	Selfless adherence & constant reference to the sacred texts and authoritative guidance . Self discipline and the willingness to put love and unity first in all endeavors .	given a great deal of responsibility and constantly trying to learn how to do it more effectively – completely inadequate to live up to the Bahá'í standards, and yet promised divine assistance that everything will work for good in the end and simply arising to serve is what's most important .
1 5 7		The importance of this Day and the need to pray for assistance to guide my vote.	Humility and fear of God for one pillar and strict adherence to His Laws for the other. The roof should be bolted firmly with faith, confidence and an attitude of learning.	Servants to mankind and to God.
1 5 8		Happy and humble as well as satisfied with the names placed on the ballot because. they were considered and meditated upon after prayer and for many days .	Humility, concern for others, understanding of the Writings and guidance .	People who are like any other people in the community, and people who work AS A . GROUP – IN CONSULTATION AND THEREFORE RECEIVING DIVINE GUIDANCE
1 5 9		I am doing my duty as a Baha'i .	A sense of service, a sense of history, humility, in addition to the ones stated by the Guardian for Baha'i elections.	Ordinary people asked to do extraordinary things.

1 6 0		Excited. I feel I'm participating in one of the most important events happening in my city, and that I am connected to millions of people around the world that are doing the same thing, shaping the future of humanity.	The most effective Baha'i leadership quality is being able to put your whole trust in God. After that most things will take care of themselves. Clearly being able to consult is a key aspect, a big part of which is listening to the needs of the community and the other members of your institution.	Some of the hardest working and most devoted people that I know.
1 6 1	"In every face, he seeketh the beauty of the Friend" -- Bahá'u'lláh	honored; a sense a responsibility; a sense of history in the making; spiritual	a sense of service to others; a grounding in the guidance of the Baha'i Holy Texts and the letters from the UHJ; a sense of justice; a sense of universal love	humble; eager to serve; mindful of others' needs; hard pressed for time; hard working; devoted
1 6 2		Honored and priveleged and feel a great sense of responsibility	Humility, trustworthiness, obedience to the Covenant, loyalty to the institutions, Courtesy, respect for others and their opinions, attitude of service, modeling behaviours.	Unquestioned loyalty, knowledgable, have a prepared mind and knowledge of the Faith.
1 6 3	11. national and international 13.downgraded response due to lumping local with others	That I am participating in a spiritual process	Knowledge of the Baha'i Teachings, assessment of needs, extreme fairness and open-mindedness, vision, thinking about how the Writings relate to the needs.	At the local level, very often wanting in commitment and capacity. At higher levels, generally of high caliber. The problems with the Baha'i community developing are not at the top; they are with the rank and file.
1 6 4		Unworthy and amazed that I should have such an opportunity	Dedication to the Blessed beauty and submission to His Will and obedience to what ever He has said	blessed
1 6 5		Priviledged and very responsible	Clarity of thought, awareness of the spiritual currents of the time, willingness to accept where others are on the spiritual path and able to demonstrate acceptance of that with love and warmth.	A Reflection of the levels of participation, involvement, and spiritual maturity of all the members of the local community..
1 6 6		A responsibility to choose those best qualified	Detachment from self, an understanding of Baha'i administration, reliance upon God, prayerful attitude, patience, devotion to the Cause	Servants of the Cause

1 6 7		I am part of a world wide model of community participation in which the participants are developing and perfecting	Honesty, openness, humility, willingness to listen to the community and validate their feelings and opinions even if different to one's own or the institution A preparedness to provide a vision for the direction of the community and ability & strength of character to make the right decision no matter how difficult.	Are ordinary individuals who without asking for it are in a position of service to the community and also with a responsibility to provide a vision to take the community to beyond where it currently is.
1 6 8		That I am part of a historic process in it's infancy and there is honor involved	Fewness of words with great listening skills based on a true insight into, and love For the people being served, and humility.	a good mix of the crosscut of today's Bahá'í society in today's insane world interspersed with some knowledge of the importance of their sacred duty and a decent consciousness of a good part of the Writings.
1 6 9		HONORED, HUMBLED, EXCITED	CLEAR DIRECTION, RESPECT, PATIENCE, LOVE, EMPATHY	WELL KNOWN, KNOW PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE, ARE FAITHFUL SERVANTS.
1 7 0		I am participating in a truly democratic process	Listening, patience, fair-mindedness	By and large sincere.
1 7 1		No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
1 7 2		Honoured and privileged to be a part of the process	Honesty, truthfulness, humility, compassion and understanding	Serving in the best way they can according to their capacity
1 7 3		LIKE I AM A PART OF HISTORY IN THE MAKING; A PART OF THE FUTURE EXISTENCE OF THE EARTH; A PART OF A NEW ERA BEING BORN; A PART OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE OF PEACE ON EARTH.	BEING ABLE TO LISTEN WITH THE HEART; BEING ABLE TO THINK WITH THE BRAIN; BEING ABLE TO PLAN THROUGH CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS; BEING ABLE TO ACCEPT THE DIFFERENCES IN EACH HUMAN AND AT THE SAME TIME ACKNOWLEDGE THE SIMILARITIES	PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE DEDICATING THEIR LIVES TO MAKING THIS WORLD A BETTER WORLD FOR ALL OF US.
1 7 4		that I am witnessing the creation of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.	Humility, trustworthiness, extensive knowledge of the Writings of Baha'u'llah	Dedicated, well-wishers of mankind.
1 7 5		I have done my sacred duty and participated in the ever advancing civilization	Humility, knowledge, frankness	Dedicated to serve



1 7 6		I have not participated in any Bahá'í elections, as yet. The two years when I lived in a community that had an LSA and I was over 21 years old, I was not sure who to vote for and so did not vote	Humility!! Compassion Good Listening Skills Good Consultative Skills Detachment Self-confidence Encourager Reliance on Prayer Knowledgeable	Trying their best. While I have no problem with the way the institution itself is set up, I think sometimes the egos or lack of knowledge of the people serving on the institutions can result in either bad decisions or disunity among the members of the institution and/or the community. This varies in large part with how immature or mature the Bahá'í community in that locale is. This is to be expected, though, given how young the Bahá'í Faith is. Whatever stage of development, though, I think most people that are elected to Bahá'í institutions are doing the best job they know how to, even if it is flawed.
1 7 7		honored in fulfilling my sacred responsibility taking part in the erection of the framework of Baha'u'llah's World Order which at present is in its embrionic form.	Purity of motive, devotion, detachment, humility, moderation, courtesy, love, patience, Care and servitude before the members of the community.	Adult Baha'is, 21 years of age and over coming from different backgrounds with varying degree of education, capacity and ability endeavouring to work together in a spirit of harmony and unity thus becoming an instrument for the flow of the spirit.
1 7 8		That I am following the teaching of our faith; that we are taking the first steps in creating the new world order that must be built for our children and their children.	Knowledge of the faith and a kind and gentle heart with a fair and just brain.	Chosen by their communities to serve the community and the Faith for a year.
1 7 9		A great sense of duty ... I try so hard to choose the people with the best capabilities ... and have a playful mindset as I am electing ... since these elected individuals have so much responsibility and will be serving (I don't like the term leaders) others.	Humble, renders wholehearted service, doesn't care about titles or status, loving, kind, wise, devoted, altruistic, good listener.	Are trying to the best of their capabilities to be part of a new system based on service rather than power leadership without any kind of personal gain.
1 8 0		I feel very Good as I am doing my job . I feel happiness in my heart to be part of it.	No comments recorded	No comments recorded

1 8 1		It is a God given privilege and obligation to set up the New World Order.	Well organized and systematic, good listeners, deepened, service oriented, devoted and committed, trustworthy, transparent, kind, fair, of capacity, and have the love of the Faith	_ A mixture of every thing. Some have the qualities as stated above in #45 and others are new Baha'is with no experience of some of the qualities above in # 45. We are all in the state of learning. Some are elected because they are well know but not necessarily quailified for the postiton. We are all in the process.
1 8 2		responsible and answerable to myself, the Administrative and spiritual constructs and admonitons and as though I am contributing to the vision of a world I choose to fit in.	humility, learnedness, detachment, adherence, bravery, outspokenness, clear vision	usually possess the kinds of qualities i've mentioned above
1 8 3		A sense of spirituality that cannot be adequately described. Peaceful, calm, guided, humbled, honoured.	A real love for Bahauallah, which is evident to all a sincere sense of spirituality, some one who lives their lives as a Bahai rather than talking about it publicly.	Vary, we all have different abilities, strengths and weaknesses. To be honest it does depend on how many Bahais are in an area.
1 8 4		Honored to be a part of an election process that is based on spiritual laws and principles. I feel as if my vote is important and that the election process is just.	Detachment from one's own ideas with the understanding that the writings are the source of knowledge and that service for others is paramount	I have found that the people elected to institutations are serving a higher power and that this keeps the process pure and simple.
1 8 5		Privileged and responsible for doing a good job.	To follow the example of the Master and the counsels of the Guardian. .	Given a great honor and opportunity to serve. They should do the best they can to be faithful to the spirit of the teachings.
1 8 6		I feel blessed to be electing in an environment where prayers and Sacred Writings are being shared. There is a sacredness to the election process that makes the outcome much more dependable than in elections outside the Faith. The people voting have a purity of motive. They are voting to do the best for the common good. That is not always true in most elections outside the Faith.	Humility, consultative, purity of motive, attitude of learning, detachment, colaborative	Sincerely try to do their best for the community they serve. On a local level you have to work with the human resources that are available. Sometimes, on a local level, the members of the assembly are just ordinary people. However, with study of the Writings, personal and collaborative transformation, and the attitude of learning, ordinary members become very powerful and capable institutions. On the national and the international levels, the leadership is extremely well trained and capable.

			Part of the reason for this is that the training for that leadership starts with the local spiritual assemblies, where the introductory and every day lessons of stewardship take place.	
1 8 7	13. (I agree that they put the needs of the Faith first. I am not sure that the put the needs of others first.) 17.(when I was in Africa this was true. In Holland it is not true.)	responsible to God for making the wisest choice I can make	humility, love, willingness to listen to others, a strong knowledge of oneself and one's own capacities, and a belief in the possibility for the development and change of others. Unconditional love of the other.	unusual people who are prepared to serve Baha'u'llah's vision and who are not afraid to attempt service to others. .
1 8 8		That I am being obedient to the laws of Baha'u'llah	Education, commitment, selflessness	Serving the Faith, doing their best, learning as they grow
1 8 9		At last, we have found the perfect solution to justice for all. We don't always get what we want but we know the best for all is what we strived for.	There is no campaigning and no money involved.	Love, Justice, Equality, Willing to step out of its comfort zone to put others in front and bring them closer.
1 9 0		Like I am doing my part as a Baha'i	There is no campaigning and no money involved. We vote for people who care, love people and are ready to serve humanity. It is not about who did what school and what family he/her come from. It is about what that person hold inside their heart, a person who has a vision for all people of the earth. A person who passes others before him/herself.	There to serve with all the talents and gifts
1 9 1		Privileged, sense of obedience	Listening, empathy, , trustworthy, patience , involved in community activities	Patient, have good consultation skills,

<p>1 9 2</p>	<p>36. Note: On numerous occasions, however, I have seen decisions of the National Spiritual Assembly misrepresented and undermined by members of the National Spiritual Assembly.</p>	<p>Empowered; a strong sense of fulfillment for having participated in a divine process</p>	<p>A strong sense of justice; fair-mindedness; ability to disregard one's personal position in favor of what is best for the Faith; in consultation, ability to subordinate one's personal opinion in favor of the views of the majority; ability to acquaint oneself with the view of the members of the community; ability to listen.</p>	<p>At the moment, they vary greatly. Some are outstanding in their desire to develop the qualities which should exemplify Baha'is in general and members of elected institutions in particular. At the opposite extreme, a few are consummate politicians – consummate in the sense that they are able to successfully hide their political maneuverings from the body of believers (who, I believe, would not vote for them if they really knew what they were up to). As a Counsellor in South Africa once said in a keynote talk at a National Convention, "Do not elect a thug to the National Spiritual Assembly. Why? Because he will do his duty. She will do her duty. Which is what? Thuggery!" In my experience members of this latter group tend to be concentrated at the national level rather than at the local or international level. However, the situation has improved since the start of the Four Year Plan, in 1996, primarily because the new focus has given such people less room to maneuver.</p> <p>In my view, as the Faith continues to advance the process of entry by troops, the situation will continue to improve markedly. The Guardian wrote that the 'maturation of the Institutions' would come as a consequence of the growth of the Faith. The course for us at the moment, therefore, in my view, is not to focus on our collective shortcomings or to be excessively concerned about injustices in the Faith, but to whole-</p>
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			heartedly participate in the core activities and in promoting the twin processes of the movement of individuals through the sequence of courses and the movement of clusters from one level to another.
1 9 3	Amazed at the simplicity, purity and effectiveness of the process. After an election I feel God's Will has been served.	The willingness to show up, be guided by prayer, be willing and determined to grow. . To be obedient to the Guidance provided by the Figures of the Faith and the Institutions.	Humbled. Blessed with the honor to serve. Are often overworked and overburdened by The community. Do the work anyway.
1 9 4	obligated to choose people who have time and I hope have the vision to make a difference, not just repeat everything they have seen or done the previous years. I feel anxious hoping that the members will change from year to year.	The ability to see a wider world view, to know the questions that need to be asked; courage to take risks; inspired; divergent; articulate, practical, energetic, magnanimous	nice, operate within a safety zone, profess diversity while encouraging conformity, use language to placate, get caught up in habits, mean well but often stifle creativity, avoid conflict at any cost
1 9 5	Like I am having an impact in who is going to direct our communities efforts. I can get women into a position of power.	Being unbiased, open to suggestions, able to listen...-in a nutshell: embody (Bahai) virtues.	Highly capable, inspiring.
1 9 6	No comments recorded	No comments recorded	No comments recorded
1 9 7	Empowered.	First, love for and loyalty and obedience to Bahá'u'lláh and His Sacred Covenant. Second, knowledge of the Faith - its Scriptures, history, and practices. Third, intelligence, wisdom, and zeal in carrying out all of one's responsibilities. Fourth, acceptance of God's Will and continually striving to become an ever-purer channel for it.	...fortunate because they are given such a special opportunity to show their love for God and to benefit from His grace in allowing them to serve Him and His servants.
1 9 8	Enlightened	Living the life	Mostly hard working, considerate and caring.

1 9 9		happy .	Service to mankind	Humble, steadfast, can serve well, can bring joy to other, always positive in their action and thought, excellent in life, good behavior
2 0 0	Not quite sure of what you mean by healing 7. I've never tried to contact them 18. In small communities like we have, every body knows every body else 23. None of the above 24. None of the above	Honoured to be part of such a fair process.	Justice, compassion, empathy, wisdom	Privileged, and try their best to do their duties to the best of their abilities.
2 0 1		honored and empowered.	listening with open mind, patience!	the most capable available.
2 0 2		That it is both a privilege and an obligation.	Devotion, loyalty, cooperation, listening skills, understanding, frank and honest consultation	Servants who are responsible to God for their decisions and actions rather than to the community.
2 0 3	38. (there is NO local Baha'I institution, although there are some 100mi away))	A sense of awe at how amazingly well and harmoniously the process works. I also wish the US elections could be conducted the same way, with no campaigns, no speeches, No ugliness.	A listening ear and a caring heart, as well as a willingness to sacrifice personal Time for the community.	Human beings given a difficult job, but guided in all things by Baha'ullah.
2 0 4	3. Don't really know what is meant.	Grateful to be part of this emerging system.	The ability to be detached from one's own opinion; humility; patience and forbearance; reliance on God and the guidance from the World Center; love; faith; and a desire to serve the Cause and humanity. It's a great bonus if they also possess "well-trained" minds.	At the current stage of the development of the Faith and growth of the community, varying in their degrees of capacity, but, overall, sincere and desiring to promote their Faith as they best can. .
2 0 5		Empowered and spiritually guided	Truthfulness and humility	Servants of the community
2 0 6		the presence of the Holy Spirit.	joyous and tireless submission to the Will of God .	appointed by God .
2 0 7		I am performing a duty that is my responsibility	Compassion, discretion, wisdom .	Given a great responsibility and should strive to honour it .
2 0 8		I feel blessed with being able to participate in this very important process, as it is our duty to vote. I feel a sense of reverence, as this is a spiritual election.	Humility, compassion, knowledge of the faith, servitude, ability to fulfill tasks, detachment,	Have qualities of being service oriented, knowledgeable, humble, compassionate, loving

2 0 9		Connected with God and Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i International Community for His vision of 'THE EARTH IS BUT ONE COUNTRY AND MANKIND ITS CITIZENS' .	Listening, empathy and being responsible to the work of God and Baha'ullah and the community I serve.	matured ability, experience and service oriented to God, Baah'u'llah and the community and the generality of humankind.
2 1 0		44. ) I'm helping in building the Kingdom of God on earth, and quicken the arrival of the Most Great Peace.	45. Good ears to hear with patiently, and, some firmness sometimes or whenever necessary.	46. choice, are needed therein, are in need to develop themselves specially in the patience field, are angels sometimes, are self-sacrificing all the time and that includes their beloved family, are loved or appreciated by their community and many other things. May God bless them.
2 1 1	16.Please Note: I have participated in the Baha'I Elections for the first time starting from this year, hence have left the following few questions on voting blank-Martha	I am being a responsible member of the community and fulfilling a spiritual obligation	Steadfastness in the cause, Faith, obedience, dedication, joy, selflessness, purity of motive, sincerity .	Instruments of the Cause—who when come together help carry forward God's plan, at international, national, regional and local levels. They exemplify moral leadership.
2 1 2		I feel I am participating in a process that is sacred and important.	A deep knowledge and understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for this day and of the process and purpose of consultation; the qualities appearing in the first several items of this questionnaire: listening, empathy, healing, fairness; as well as the "necessary qualities" listed by the Guardian: those "of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience."	...fortunate to have been placed in a position to serve the administrative needs of the Faith and to learn to develop and exercise the qualities already mentioned
2 1 3		As though I am working for the betterment of mankind	selflessness	Servants of the Faith
2 1 4		That I am participating in the building of the Bahá'í Administrative Order which is the foundation of God's Kingdom on Earth – the vision of Bahá'u'lláh.	Aside from the 5 characteristics referenced by the Guardian, I also feel that a willingness to learn from the Writings and from others is critical as well as self-monitoring of spiritual growth.	Servants of the Cause and of their community.

2 1 5		a) that the same people will be elected on a regular basis; b) very fortunate that I do not live in Iran, where those who were elected knew they would be martyred.	Those indicated by Shoghi Effendi. I certainly can't top his words.	No doubt doing their very best, and would be very relieved to have someone else elected in their stead.
2 1 6		That I am contributing to the building of the new world order and the kingdom of God on earth.	Reliance on the power of divine assistance, patience, humility (total lack of ego), courtesy, stamina (long meetings!), good health, detachment, trustworthiness	Hard working and often unthanked but much appreciated!
N i c o l		Is a privellige.	Truthfulness, trustworthiness, assertiveness, patience, and servitude	A work in progress, who are in the process of change for the better.
2 1 8		like I am fulfilling a sacred duty.	Wisdom, patience, humor	performing a great service, given great responsibility, and will receive many blessings
2 1 9		Like magic is taking place and an indication of the future world	Ability to see and effectively use the hidden talents of the community members. The willingness to put oneself aside for the greater good. Willingness to be concerned with the whole instead of a few. Being inclusive	At great spiritual risk, as the ego can rise and you can find yourself in a small way or in a larger way confronting the covenant that should protect you.
2 2 0		I try to make the choices that will please God and that I have a voice in who will be on the governing institutions of the Baha'i Faith.	Selflessness, humility before God, firmness in the Baha'i Covenant, respect for obedience to the Baha'i Institutions, ability and volition to create unity among the Baha'is	People who are elected to Baha'i institutions are not Baha'i leaders. The Institution to which they are elected leads the Baha'i community. These individuals have no authority as individuals. Only the institution has any authority.
2 2 1		I feel it's a responsibility and a privilege	Love, respect, courtesy, humility, a clear mind and good listening skills	Must be prepared to exercise patience for the weaknesses of others and also be willing to serve under any conditions
2 4 0		Taking part in building the New World Order of Baha'u'llah.	Patience, Humbliness, Love towards the Teaching of the Manifestations, Obeying the same, Love towards people, Kindness, listening	The Members are selected by God to serve for that particular period of time
2 2 3		No comments recorded	I almost feel like I'm making a small contribution to the advancement of civilization, i e building a new world. Performing a sacred duty, must be	Competent, dedicated to the Faith, with purity of motives and character.



		detached from all save God.	
2 2 4	Like I'm doing something spiritual. This is something that even Baha'is sometimes don't understand, that voting in our faith is a holy act.	The love of God; understanding of Baha'u'llah's teachings, especially about administration; incorruptibility; intelligence; initiative; motivation; the spirit of service.	People who have a good knowledge of the Baha'i Faith, but who are not necessarily scholars of the holy writings. They are people who've distinguished themselves in their careers and have proven that they can "get things done", while also showing that they have a good character.
2 2 5	Taking part in something that will change this world	HUMILITY, BEING OF SERVICE TO OTHERS, BEING SYSTEMATIC, LOVING, KIND	PEOPLE WHO SHOW THAT THEY LOVE BAHAUULLAH AND TRY TO FOLLOW HIS LAWS AND EXAMPLIFY HIS TEACHINGS IN THEIR LIFE
2 2 6	Responsibility to elect those who are closest to the Guardian's list of qualifications	Love for his/he fellow-man, ability to listen, knowledge of Bahá'í teachings etc.	Generally loving, kind and helpful
2 2 7	A part of a larger whole. Since local elections take place on April 20-21 all over the world, it is a wonderful feeling of unity of purpose that is empowering and energizing	Detachment from own opinion, ability to look for the principle involved and research the Writings for the true answer to the dilemma... not be personally involved when it is a case of a personal problem or question of rights being denied. The idea that the responsibility for the decision should be what is best for the community and not really what the community or individuals want, but what the assembly feels is best is hard sometimes, but that is what is right.	From different backgrounds and ages and levels of experience, but the sum of them makes an interesting way to consult and arrive at a decision. Also others sometimes have amazing ideas to offer to the consultation that if everyone is the same, you wouldn't get that variety of consultation.
2 2 8	A sense that I am fulfilling my responsibility as a Bahá'í, and assisting in the growth and development of the Faith.	The desire to help others grow their capabilities and become better people.	Extremely varied.
2 2 9	a connection with the planet--all humanity; I am performing a sacred duty; I am carrying forward an ever-advancing civilization;	understanding community members; listening to community members; translating current directives into plans of action befitting the capacities of community members and needs of the	loved; kind; sympathetic; principled; astute; disciplined; generous; joyful; humble; very well-developed intellectually and spiritually; loving; loyal; appreciative

		community;	
2 3 0	It to be my duty and responsibility as a member of my community	Honesty, truthfulness, humility, knowledge, wisdom	The active participants of the Baha'i community.
2 3 1	Sometimes I'm frustrated because the same leadership is elected over and over again. There are many who are qualified who don't get the chance to serve and I think that it may stifle the growth of the Faith.	Spiritual, disciplined, reliable, enthusiastic, deepened, loving .	Generally those who are dedicated to advancing the cause and have demonstrated this through their actions and deeds.
2 3 2	I am on a spiritual journey.	Turning to God, detachment, determination to reach out, help create unity, openness, approachability,, listening , able to think fast, fair-mindedness, checking for facts and documented guidance in the Baha'i Writings, always remembering you're nobody, being prayerful, abiding by decisions made , confidentiality., constant assessment, never getting comfortable where you are.	Nothing special./ bear grave responsibilities, have to face up to all of them.
2 3 3	I feel uplifted and done my duty.	Justice and compassion.	Sincere, dedicated, and have some leadership quality
2 3 4	Very satisfied and spiritually uplifted.	Fair, patient, loving, openminded, knowledgeable, just, considerate,	Fair, patient, loving, openminded, knowledgeable, just, considerate,
2 3 5	Fortunate to be a Bahá'í. Fortunate to be able to participate in building a New World Order!	The ability to consult effectively.	Given a unique opportunity to help build a New World Order Building something so special and lasting does not come easily. But the rewards are great!
2 3 6	It is my right and privilege to have an opportunity to participate And make a difference in the community.	Ability to inspire, encourage, and help each member of the community to feel valued and validated and a true servant of the Cause.	Shepherds, servants, encouragers and active participants in their communities.
2 3 7	I am fulfilling my obligation.	Devotion, trained mind, unconditional love for God and for their fellowman.	Given the responsibility and honor to serve humanity in a specific capacity.

<p>2 3 8</p>	<p>To Whom It May Concern, Hope this survey is of great help. I opened it late but I'm the time difference between the US &amp; Malaysia will make up for it. I'm from Malaysia &amp; my family and I are of Indian origin and we're Baha'is. I'm blessed with a wonderful, selfless wife (quoting from my friend), and two daughters (as quoted from their school teachers.) However, we fostered two cute Chinese boys ( 3 &amp; 5-year -olds), and still taking of 2 other Chinese boys and 2 "Chindians"(Chinese-Indian parentage). Not sure when will my wife and I stop looking after other kids. But we derive our 'consolation' from a verse taken from the Kitab-i-Aqdas: 'He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My glory, My loving-kindness, My mercy, that have compassed the world. He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My glory, My loving-kindness, My mercy, that have compassed the world'. In a way my family and all these other children of 'ours' have taught me about Baha'i leadership as well as parenting.</p>	<p>I have a role to play in the destiny of mankind. However, I also feel that the collective maturity of the community plays a vital role.</p>	<p>Selflessness, Consultative attitude, Listening to others, No vested interested, Non-egoistical</p>	<p>Known as the 'trustees of the merciful', must have loving consultation in any matters &amp; Serve the community .</p>
<p>2 3 9</p>	<p>"Armed with the power of Thy name nothing can ever hurt me, and with Thy love in my heart all the world's afflictions can in no wise alarm me."</p>	<p>like am making a valuable contribution that will be manifested, and produce results that will make a positive impact.</p>	<p>ability to listen, sincerity and wholeheartedness, commitment, team player, and ability to rely on divine assistnce, perseverance and vision.</p>	<p>&gt; persons from the community whom the people feel possess the qualities that were specified in the writings to lead the community as a united body with vision</p>
<p>2 4 0</p>		<p>Honored to be able to exercise true choice, contrary to how I experience local, regional and national elections in established governments.</p>	<p>Enthusiasm, appreciation of others' efforts, selflessness, familiarity with the available guidance from the House of Justice, practicality,</p>	<p>Fortunate to be permitted to learn how to be world citizens in a situation contrary to anything their non-Baha'i life has prepared them for. It will transform their character and cause them to acquire significant and noble habits of mind and action.</p>

## Appendix III Survey Data

### Bahá'í Survey Results

	SAMPLE#	UNREADABLE	Corrupted or omitted questions	1. Listening	2. Empathy	3. Healing	4. Fairness	5. Heard by Local	6. Heard by Nat'l
	240	4	21	905	851	717	892	723	670
MEDIAN				4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00
MEAN				3.851	3.606	3.064	3.796	3.103	2.913
COUNT				235	236	234	235	233	230
MAX				4	4	4	4	4	4
MIN				0	0	0	0	0	0
STDEV				0.70343	0.83118	1.08845	0.68624	1.04537	1.07016

	7. Heard by Int'l	8. Capable Local	9. Capable Nat'l	10. Capable Int'l	11. Openness	12. Vision	13. Needs of others	14. Stewardship	15. Vote
SUM	710	716	801	881	722	759	811	765	1285
MEDIAN	3.00	3.00	4.00	4	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	6.00
MEAN	3.114	3.073	3.438	3.765	3.085	3.244	3.481	3.297	5.491
COUNT	228	233	233	234	234	234	233	232	234
MAX	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	6
MIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
STDEV	1.05995	0.85541	0.82354	0.6935	0.94549	0.87678	0.77171	0.82828	0.93222

	16. Vote Counts	17. Different Race	18. I Knew Not Others	19. Others knew, not me	20. Not Know Personally	21. Difficulty Knowing	22. How long Bahá'í	23. Where Live	24. Ethnicity	25. English
SUM	850	780	536	254	308	246	863			177
MEDIAN	4.00	4.00	2.00	1	1.00	1.00	4.00			1.00
MEAN	3.664	3.406	2.351	1.124	1.357	1.065	3.704			0.763
COUNT	232	229	228	226	227	231	233	229	230	232
MAX	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	11	9	1
MIN	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
STDEV	0.90160	0.77014	1.13403	1.0382	1.07690	0.86985	0.89407			0.42620

### Bahá'í Survey Results, Continued

	26. Gender	27a. Elected LSA	27b. National Convention	27c. Regional Council	27d. NSA	27e. UHJ	28. Years Served	29.+Leadership Skill	30.+Listening Skill	31. Useful Skill
SUM	137	208	102	21	38	0	808	696	710	756
MEDIAN	1.00	1.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
MEAN	0.588	0.878	0.432	0.089	0.161	0.000	3.438	3.330	3.397	3.617
COUNT	233	237	236	236	236	236	235	209	209	209
MAX	1	1	1	1	1	0	5	4	5	5
MIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
STDEV	0.49326	0.32840	0.49644	0.28532	0.36833	0.00000	1.66648	0.94620	0.77223	0.71850

	32. Trusted Decision	33. Opinions Heard	34. Decisions by Body	35. LSA Decisions Fair	36. NSA Decisions Fair	37. UHJ Decisions Fair	38. Relationship w LSA	39. Relationship w NSA	40. Relationship w UHJ	41a. Appoint. Assist.
SUM	711	737	831	749	778	859	794	728	775	126
MEDIAN	4.00	4.00	4.00	3	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	1.00
MEAN	3.402	3.526	3.629	3.242	3.368	3.719	3.513	3.165	3.355	0.534
COUNT	209	209	229	231	231	231	226	230	231	236
MAX	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1
MIN	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
STDEV	0.80932	0.81484	0.78765	0.92413	0.83334	0.70621	0.94859	1.05259	0.94844	0.49991

	41b. Appoint. Aux. Board	41c. Cont. Counselor	42. # Years Appointed	43. Age
SUM	27	4	383	1078
MEDIAN	0.00	0.00	2.00	5
MEAN	0.114	0.017	1.637	4.687
COUNT	236	236	234	230
MAX	1	1	5	6
MIN	0	0	0	1
STDEV	0.31898	0.12936	1.53377	1.24238