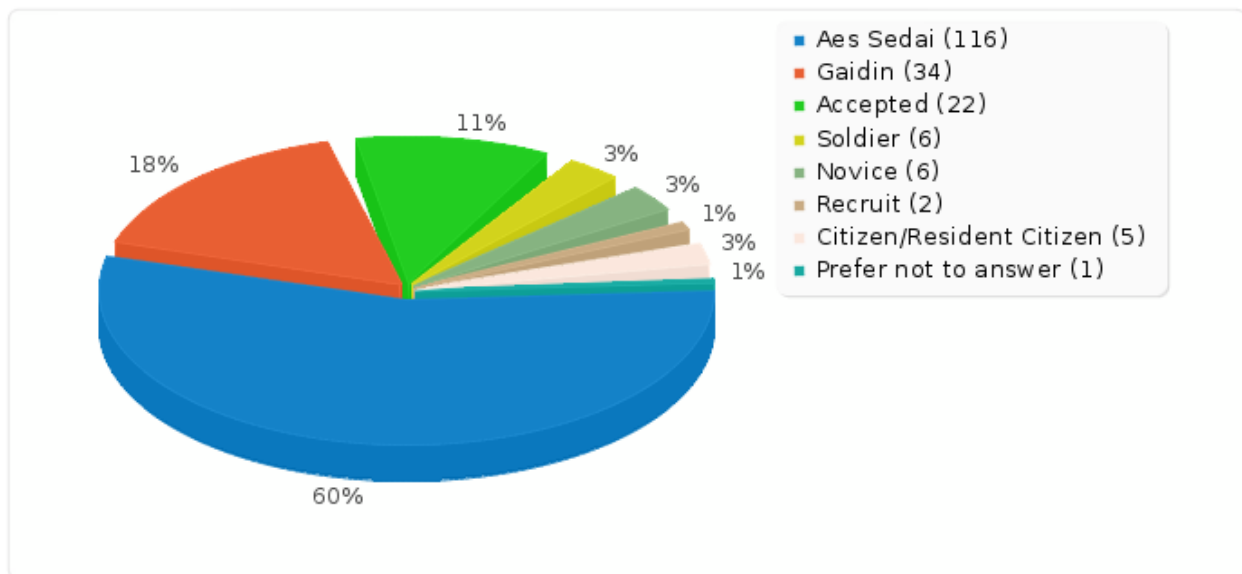


Introduction

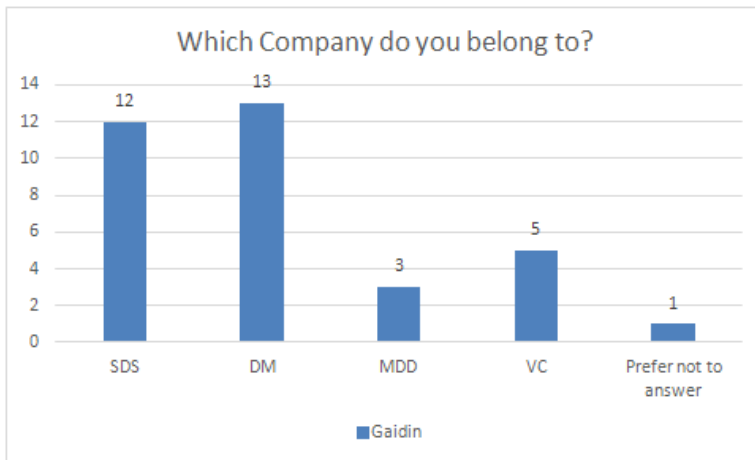
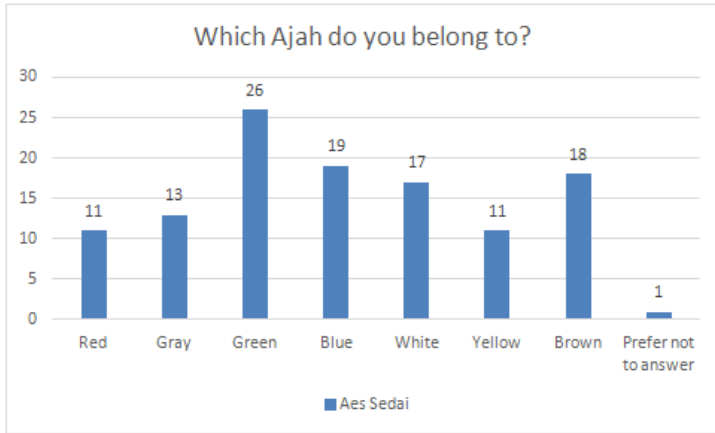
This survey was conducted October 31 - November 9 2013. The purpose of the survey was to determine the attitudes and opinions of the membership regarding integrating males into the Ajahs and females into the Companies. Integration on TarValon.Net would mean Male Aes Sedai and Female Gaidin. Several related questions, as brainstormed by the Hive Mind, were asked. Hive Mind members met September 22 - October 11 2013 with the sole purpose of creating questions to be used for this survey. Many thanks go out to the Hive Mind members: Dravid ter'Mand, Elorenya d'Rahien, Deleios Cherchenuit, Erin al'Denael, Marivea al'Corriyi, Morrighan Daghderra, Anirfyan Dayen, Charis Delphi, Kelgan al'Moranwin, Raam Sho'am, Azi al'Thone , and Gedhan Audax.

Part 1 - Demographics

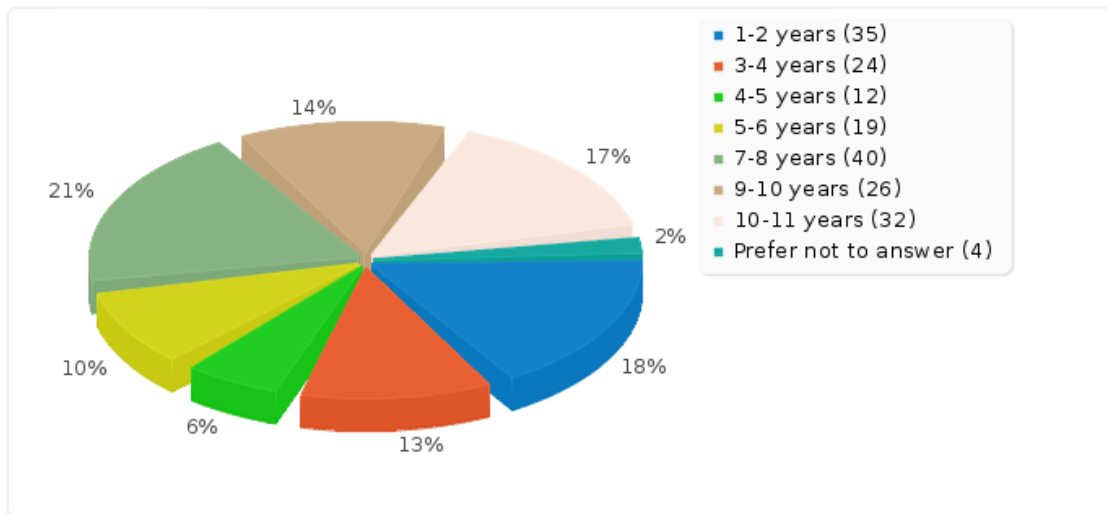
As the chart below reflects, the largest membership group to participate in the survey were Aes Sedai followed by Gaidin.



The Green Ajah was the most represented with Red being the smallest and the others rounding out the middle. This is to be expected due to the size of the Ajahs. For the Companies, DM and SDS were almost evenly matched in representation with MDD and VC showing less participation.

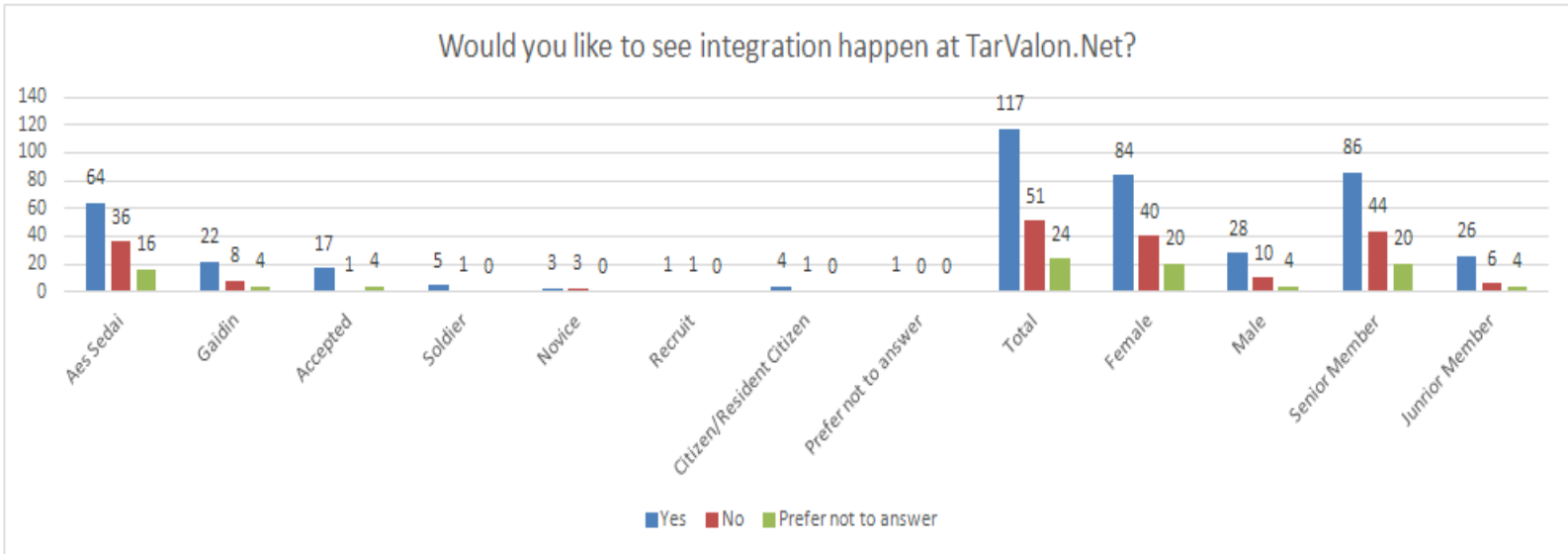


There is very little differentiation between how long participants have been a member at TarValon.Net. The below chart reflects how long participants have been a member according to their membership group.

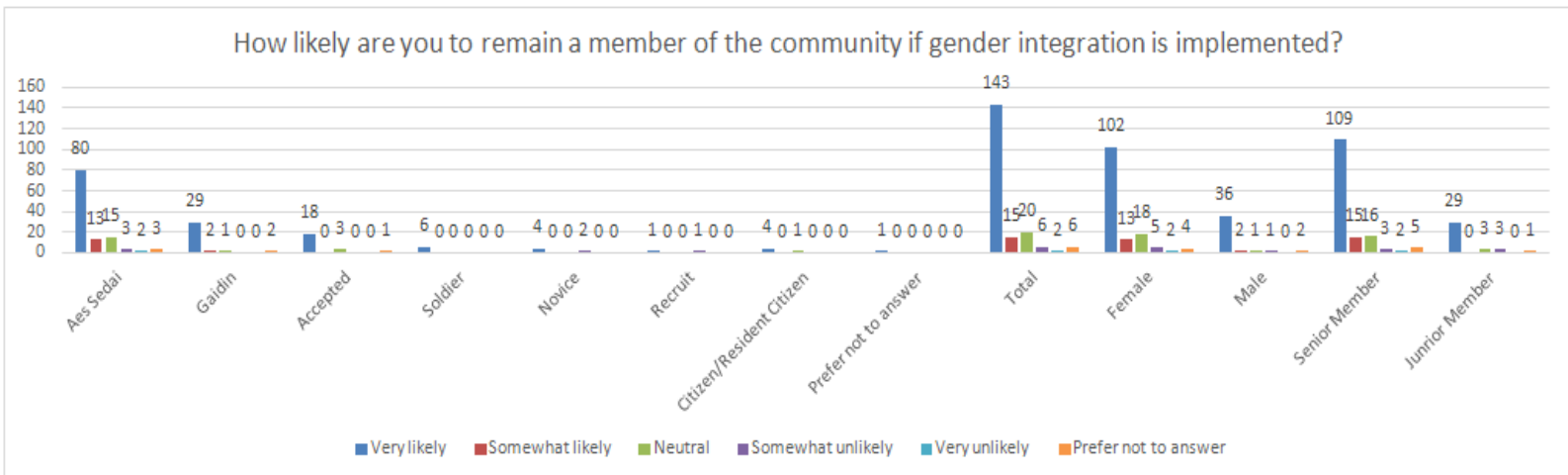


Part 2 - The Big Question

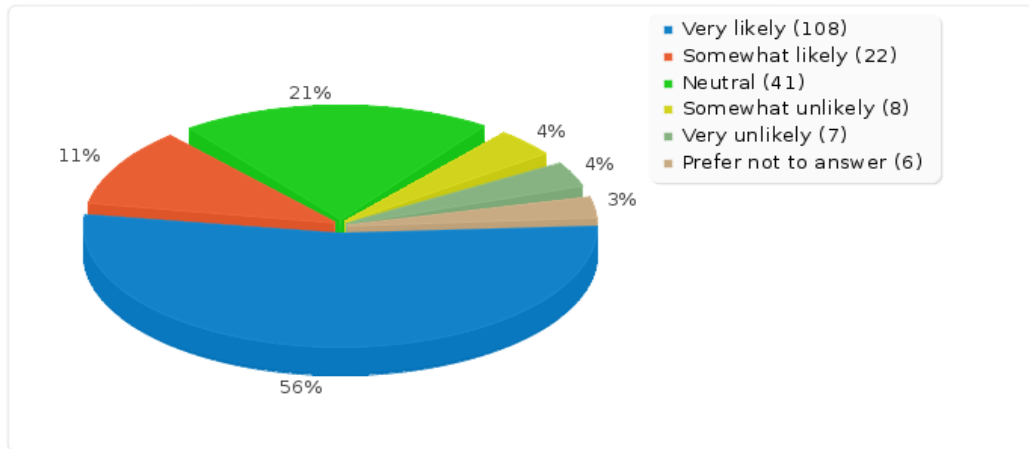
The “Big Question,” and focus of this survey, is if members would like to see integration happen at TarValon.Net. Looking at the totals across all membership groups, the answer is yes. 117 answered yes, 51 answered no, and 24 preferred not to answer. It should be noted that many indicated that their selection of “prefer not to answer” signifies that they hold no preference rather than not wanting to give an answer.



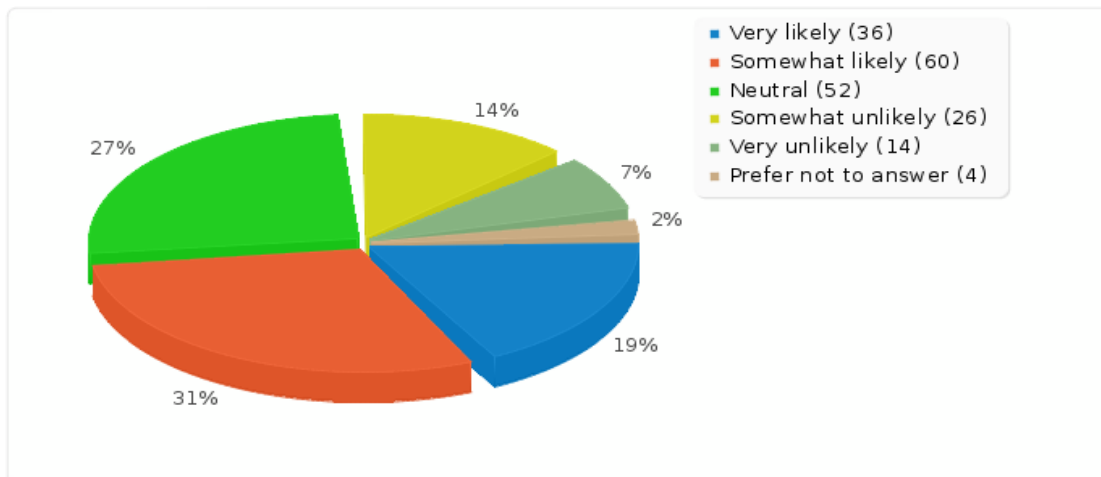
Hand-in-hand with the big question is how likely members will remain with the community if gender integration is implemented. The majority of participants indicated that they will, in fact, stay. This is consistent across all membership groups.



Likewise, the majority of participants are very likely to recommend the community to others if gender integration is implemented. 108 are very likely and 22 are somewhat likely. 41 are neutral while only 8 are somewhat unlikely and 7 are very unlikely.



Results are more divided as to whether participants think gender integration is likely to attract new members or previous members who have left the community. 36 think it is very likely and 60 think it is somewhat likely. 52 are neutral on the question while 26 find it somewhat unlikely and 14 think it to be very unlikely.

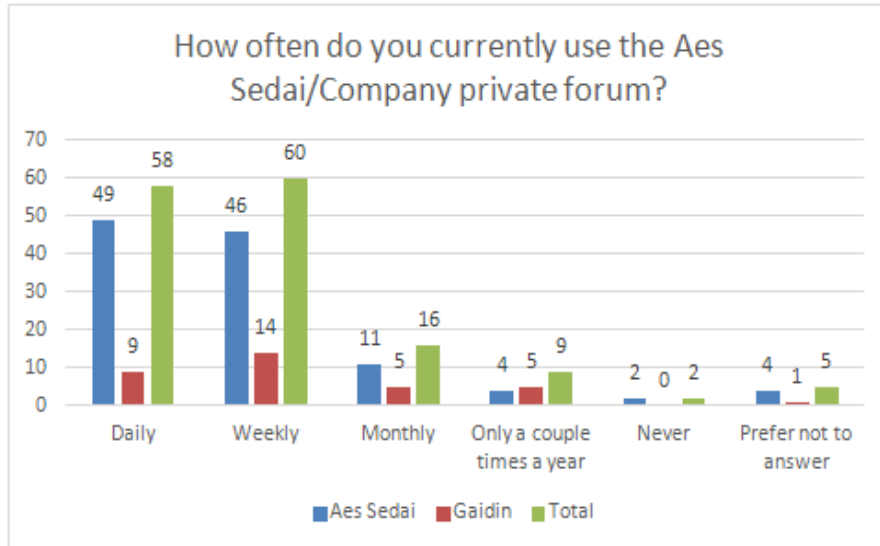


Part 3 - Current Use of Private Forums

Before we can explore how frequently members think they would use private gender integrated forums, we must look at the current usage of private forums as they exist now.

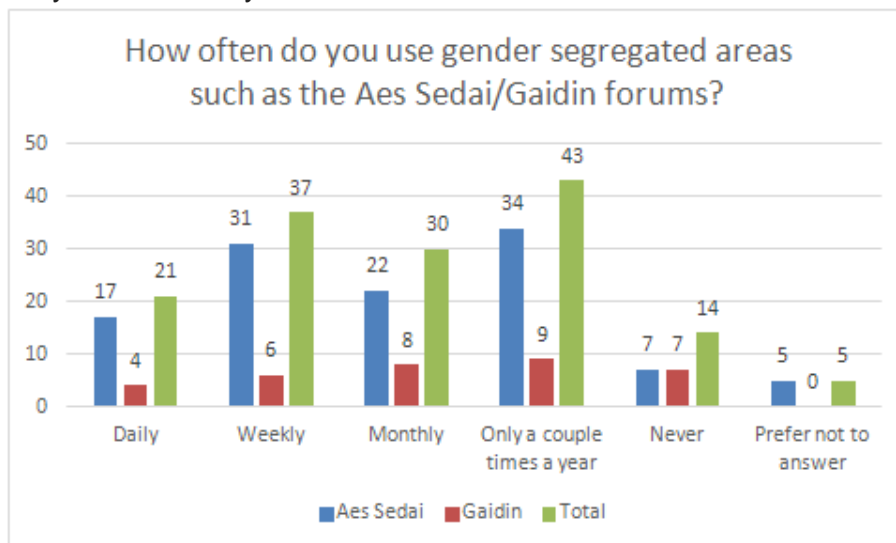
42% of Aes Sedai use their Ajah's private forums daily, and 40% use them weekly. 9% check in monthly and only 3% check in only a couple times a year. 2% say they never use them.

The breakdown for Gaidin private forum usage shows a different result. 26% use them daily and 41% use them weekly. 15% check in monthly with the same amount using them only a couple times a year.



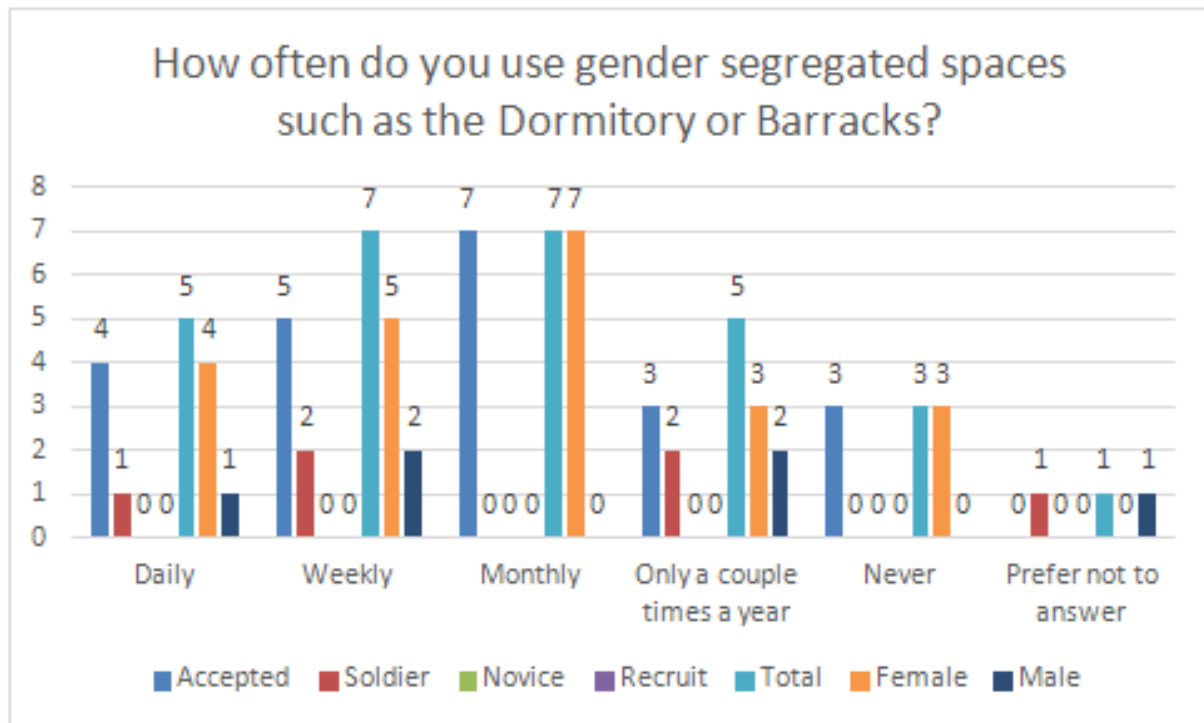
The two membership groups combined create 39% daily usage, 40% weekly, 11% monthly, and 6% a couple of times a year. Only 1% said “never.”

When it comes to gender segregated areas such as the Aes Sedai/Gaidin forums, only 15% of Aes Sedai check them daily, and 27% check weekly. 19% visit monthly with 29% only a couple times a year. For the Gaidin, 12% check daily, 18% weekly, and 24% check monthly. 26% only visit a couple times a year. Overall, these two membership groups visit these particular forums mostly a couple times a year (29%) with weekly (25%) and monthly (20%) following behind. Only 14% visit daily while 9% never visit.



The survey also asked Accepted & Novices, and Soldiers & Recruits about their usage of the Dormitory and Barracks. Most Accepted & Novices visit the Dormitories monthly (25%) with weekly trailing behind at 18%. 14% check daily, and 11% check only a couple times a year. 11% say they never check.

Soldiers & Recruits either visit the Barracks weekly, or only a couple times a year (25% for each).



These results tell us that the Ajah and Company private forums get used more often than the gender segregated forums. For the Junior Members, they use their gender segregated areas on a more weekly and monthly basis.

Part 4 - Comfortability and Use of Integrated Private Forums

The survey also explored how comfortable the members would be with the opposite sex in private forums such as the private Ajah and Company forums. This question was asked to every membership group including Citizens/Resident Citizens.

34% of the Aes Sedai participants said they would be very comfortable with integrated private forums. 24% are somewhat comfortable. While 58% are comfortable, 15% would be somewhat uncomfortable and 21% would be very uncomfortable (totaling 36%). 3% preferred not to answer and 3% were neutral.

A large portion of the Gaidin reported as very comfortable (79%), and 9% said they were somewhat comfortable. Only 9% said they were somewhat uncomfortable and 3% reported neutral. No Gaidin said that they would be very uncomfortable.

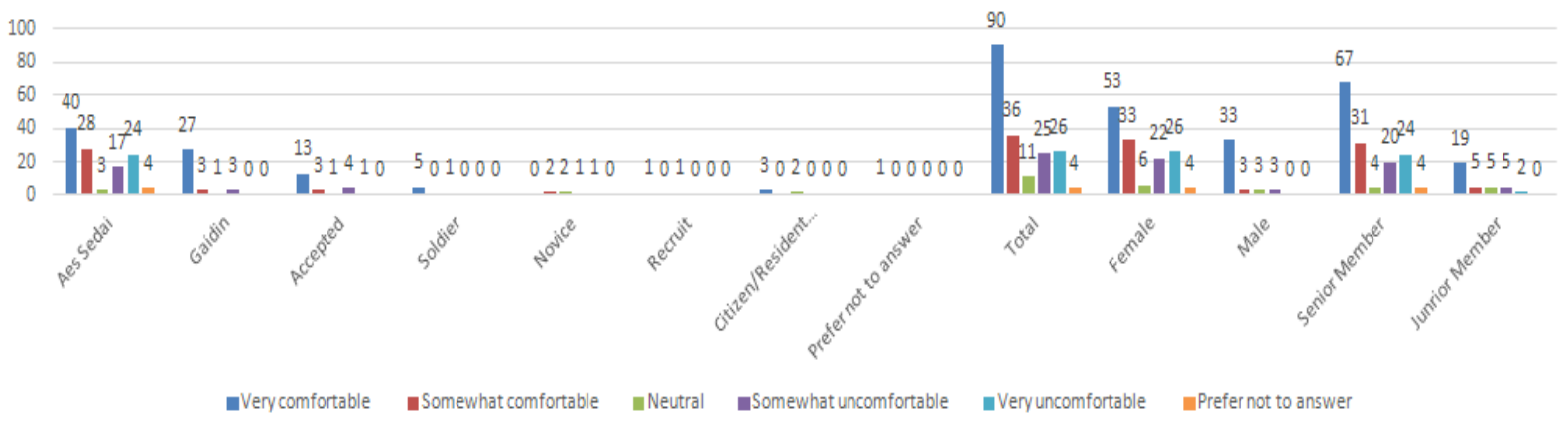
The majority of Junior Members reported that they would be very comfortable with integrated private forums. 59% of Accepted, 83% of Soldiers, 0% of Novices and 50% of Recruits.

Accepted, in particular, reported that 14% would be somewhat comfortable while 18% would be somewhat uncomfortable. Novices indicated 17% somewhat comfortable, 33% neutral, and 17% for both somewhat uncomfortable and very uncomfortable.

Citizens and Resident citizens are 60% very comfortable and 40% are neutral.

The chart below shows the breakdown of answers from all membership groups as well as by gender.

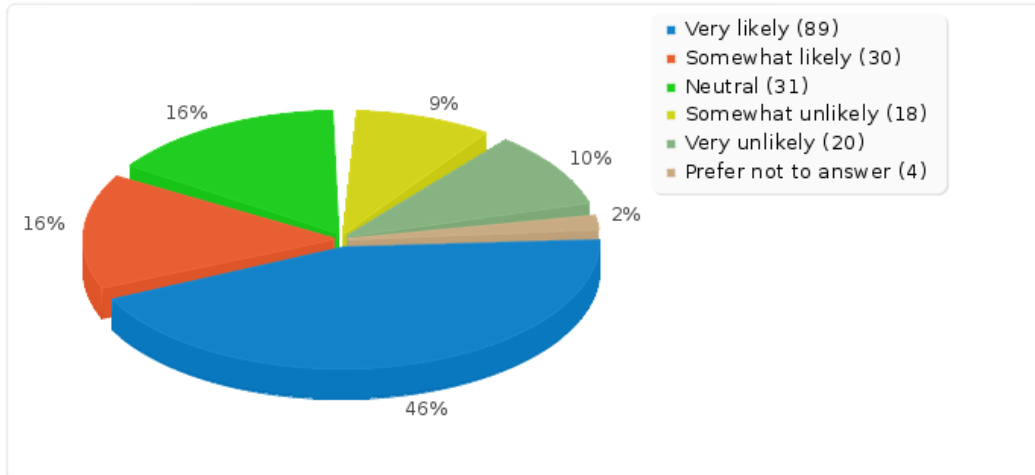
How comfortable would you be with the opposite sex in private forums (such as the private Ajah/Company forum)?



The likelihood of using gender integrated Ajah and Company forums (as opposed to gender segregated) shows a similar breakdown of Aes Sedai to Gaidin. 59% of Aes Sedai are either very likely or somewhat likely to use this type of forum and the same percentage of Gaidin reported the same. 25% of Aes Sedai are either somewhat unlikely or very unlikely to not use these forums. 18% of Gaidin reported the same.

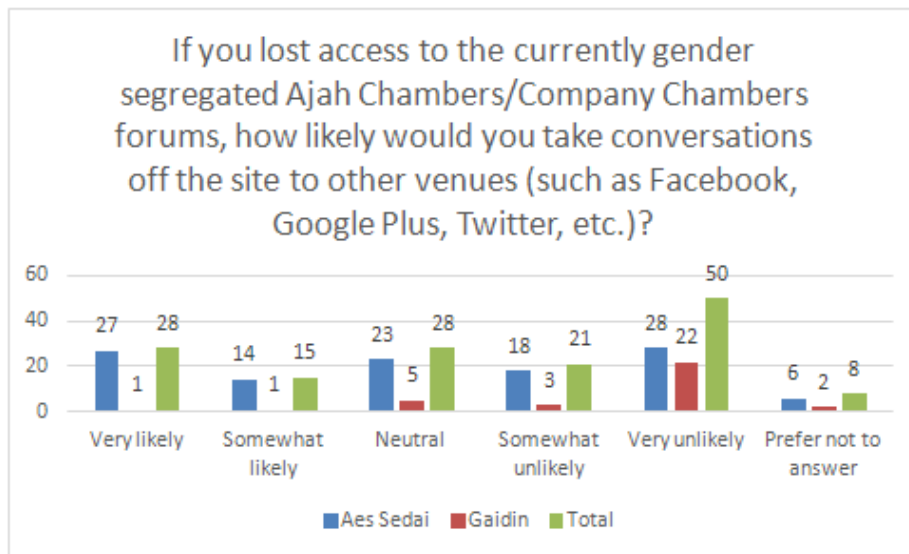
Likelihood of use increases among the Junior Members. 68% of Accepted and 83% of Soldiers are very likely while 33% of Novices reported the same. 60% of Citizens also reported they are very likely to use these forums. It is interesting to note that 100% of Recruits selected neutral.

This chart reflects the total breakdown of the likelihood of using gender integrated forums.

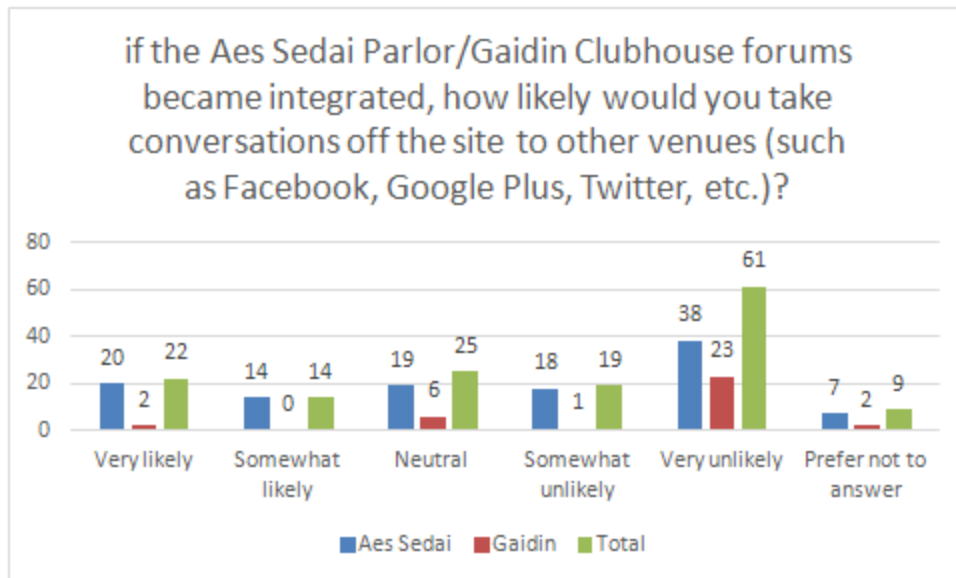


The survey continued to explore how and where Senior Members would hold conversations with other members. We asked how likely they would take conversations off the site to other venues (such as Facebook, Google Plus, Twitter, etc.) if they lost access to the currently gender segregated Ajah Chambers/Company Chambers forums.

The majority of Gaidin are very unlikely to take conversations off of the site (65%) while the Aes Sedai are more divided. 35% of Aes Sedai are either very likely or somewhat likely to take conversations off of the site versus the 40% who are very unlikely or somewhat unlikely.



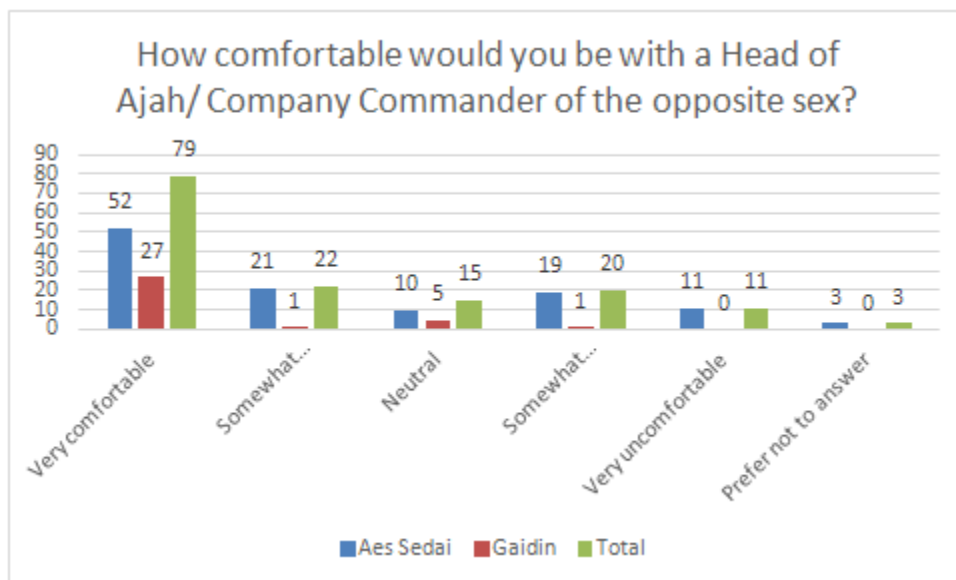
A similar question was asked of the Senior Members regarding the Aes Sedai parlor and Gaidin Clubhouse forums.



Most reported that it would be very unlikely that they would take their conversations off the site if these areas became gender integrated.

These charts indicate that use of private forums would not decline significantly if they became integrated, nor would the majority of people take their conversations away from the forums.

Senior Members were also asked about how comfortable they would be with a Head of Ajah or Company Commander that is of the opposite sex.

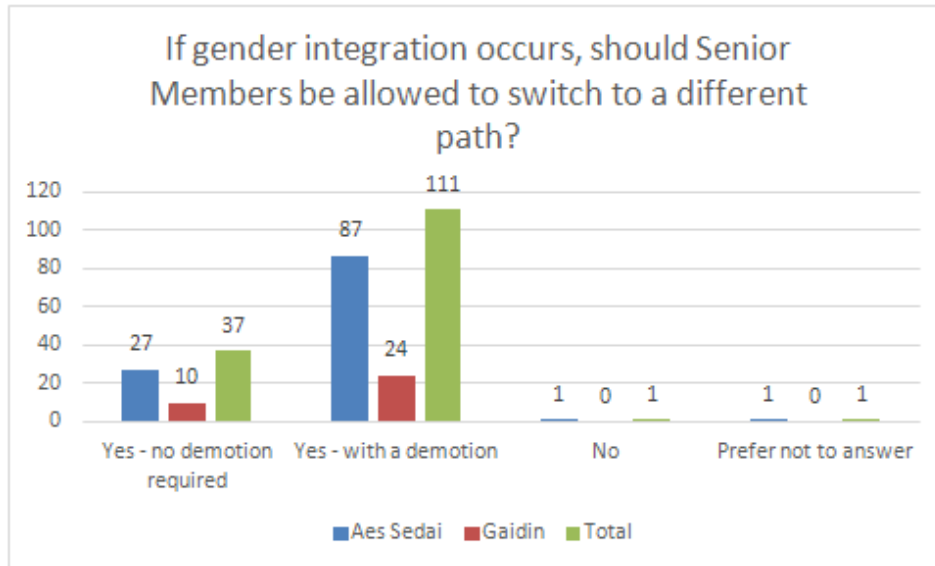


This chart reflects that the majority are very comfortable.

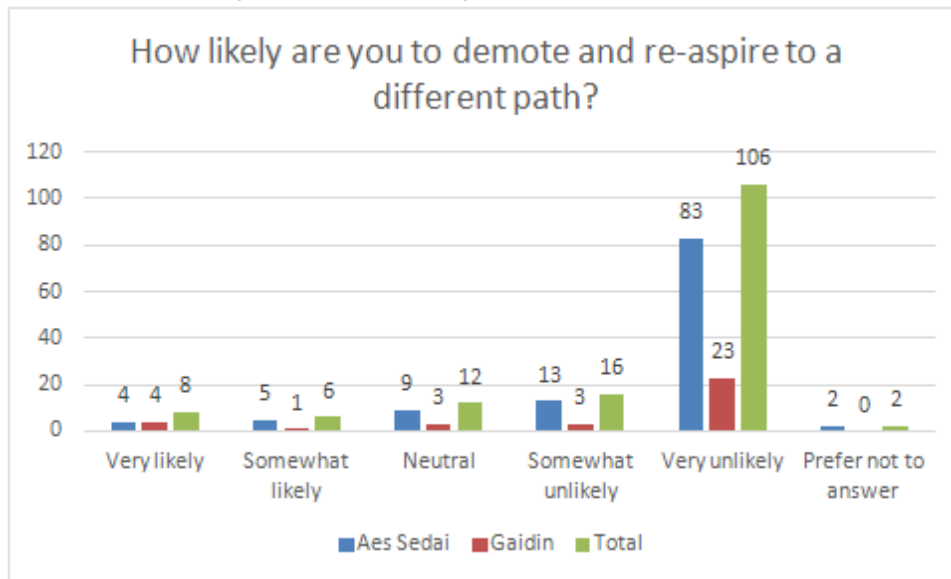
Part 5 - Senior Membership

The survey asked a series of questions specific to Senior Membership.

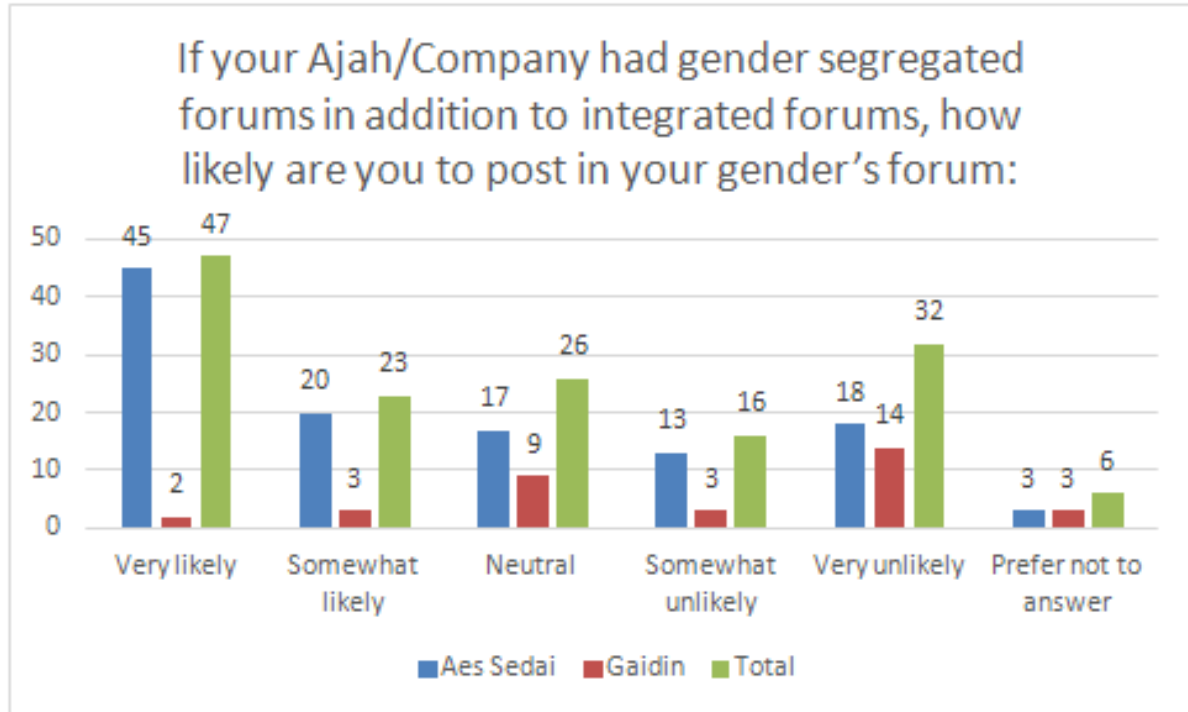
If gender integration occurs, should Senior Members be allowed to switch to a different path? Responses indicate that switching should be allowed with a demotion first.



If gender integration were to occur, the survey asked how likely the participant would be to demote and re-aspire to a different path. 55% are very unlikely and 9% are somewhat unlikely. This is important to note. The previous section indicated that majority are comfortable with gender integrated private forums, however 83% of Aes Sedai and 77% of Gaidin are unlikely to demote and re-aspire to a different path.



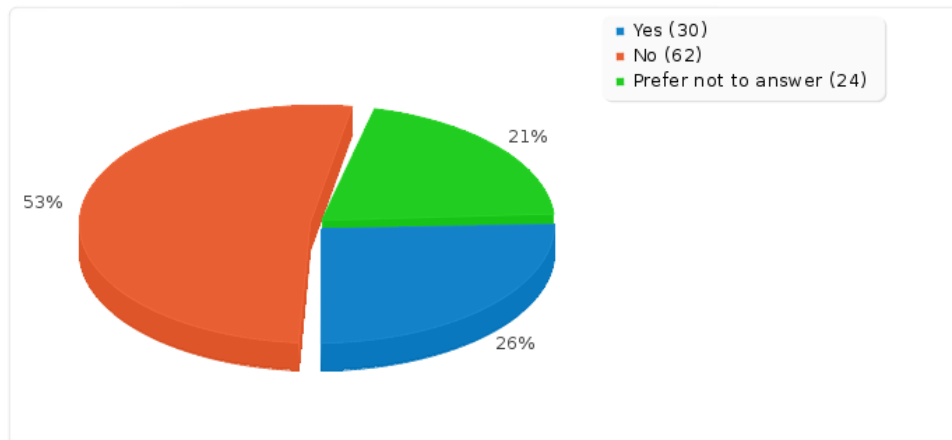
The survey also asked if the Ajahs and Companies had gender segregated forums in addition to integrated forums, what is the likelihood that participants would post in their gender's forum. Most reported that they are very likely to do so (24% very likely, 12% somewhat likely). 25% reported that they are either somewhat unlikely or very unlikely to post in their gender's forum.



If private Ajah and Company forums existed for men, women, and/or both together, the survey asked if participants would feel excluded from the other gender's forum. This resulted in an interesting split. Where 54% of Aes Sedai said no, 53% of Gaidin said yes.

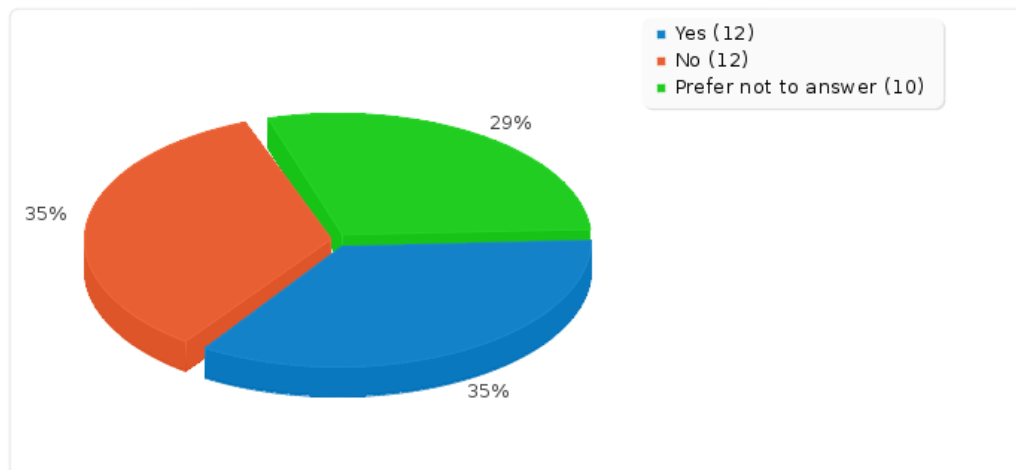
This was followed up with a question on if the Ajahs/Companies had gender segregated forums, would the Senior Members prefer limitations to ensure participation in the integrated forums? Again, this resulted in an interesting split.

Aes Sedai:



Most Aes Sedai reported that they would not like limitations. However, only 35% of Gaidin responded no. 29% of Gaidin preferred not to answer (which may indicate a neutral stance) while the latter 35% do prefer limitations.

Gaidin:



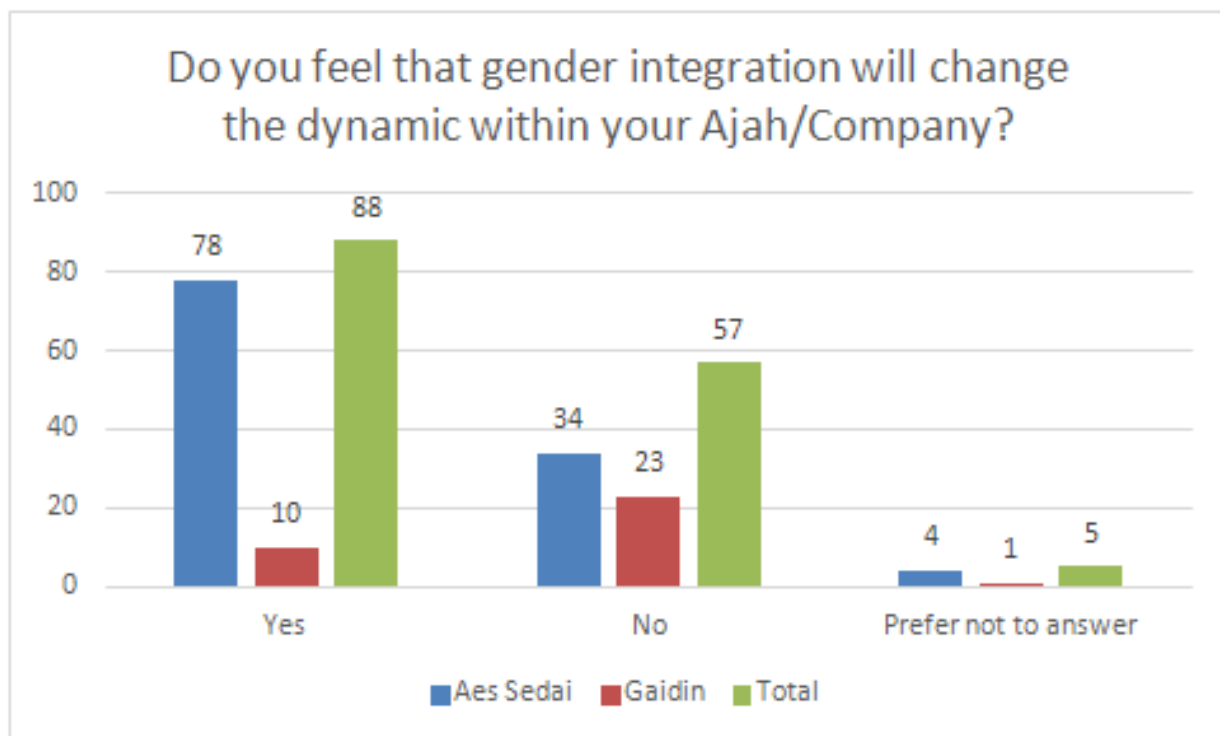
The survey left room for participants to give suggestions on what limitations they would like to see put in place. Many left comments reiterating that they did not want separate forums for women and men within the Ajah. A couple left suggestions on what type of limitations would be appropriate:

- “Heavy moderation & moving threads to the integrated forums that could be easily reviewed by both genders.”
- “As a guy, I understand that many women have certain subjects they'd rather not talk about in front of me. That list is comparatively small, and that's all a gender-segregated Chambers should be used for post-integration.”
- “I wouldn't enforce strict limitations, but rather suggestions that everything that can be put in the gender integrated forum would be put there.”
- “I understand that sometimes men and women are uncomfortable discussing certain topics with mixed company. If segregated forums are needed they should be limited to

an as needed basis. Personally, if it is that uncomfortable it could easily be done in a group pm, but if a segregated forum is what the community wants I see no reason for my opinion to overrule theirs. If they want a segregated forum, cool, but make it limited to "gender sensitive" topics."

- "Only HoA or Heart can create threads."
- "Topics must be limited to very specific gender issues, i.e. I have a problem with my period, can anyone help me?"
- "No rules, but a general encouragement to post in the integrated forums as much as possible."
- "I honestly don't think there is any way to do it. Doesn't matter, you've already interfered in our ajah so hard it's on its last legs. This stupidity would kill it dead."
- "No talking about Ajah-related matters."
- "Gender based forums will allow significant exclusion of minority members."
- "I don't want gender segregated private forums at all so I would like the strictest prohibitions on posting in them. I think they're fairly ridiculous."
- "I would not like to see any segregation in my company. We are all the same in our company. I do not think we should make sub-groups in our company. Complete integration is what I would want."

Gender integration would be a significant change in the community. Senior Members were asked if they felt that integration would change the dynamic within their Ajah/Company. This resulted in yet another interesting split. 67% of Aes Sedai answered yes while 68% of Gaidin answered no.

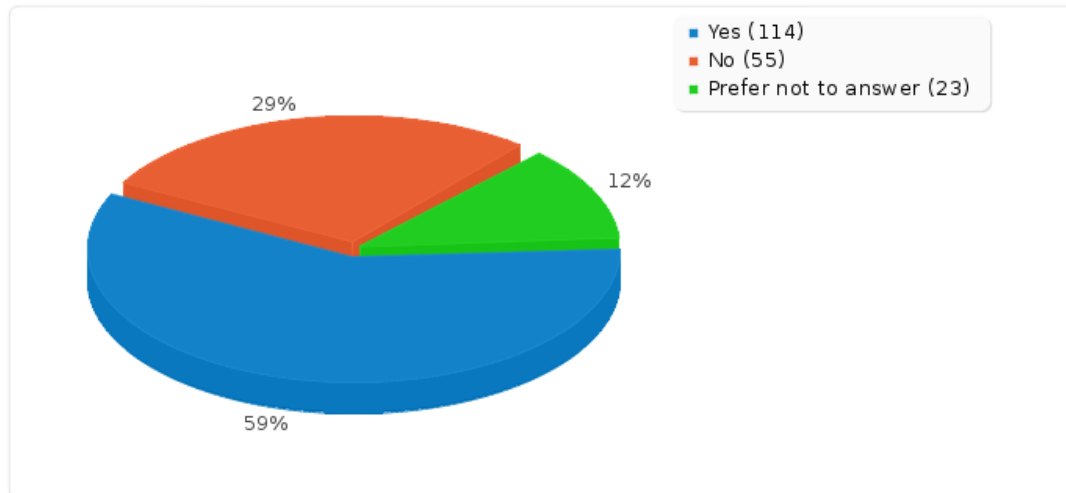


This was followed by the follow-up question “will this be a positive or negative change?” Out of the participants who chose to fill in this question: 44 said positive, 33 said negative, 31 and either didn’t know/were unsure/no change. It was an open ended question that allowed participants to provide feedback. Below is a list of more common comments as well as a mix of other opinions.

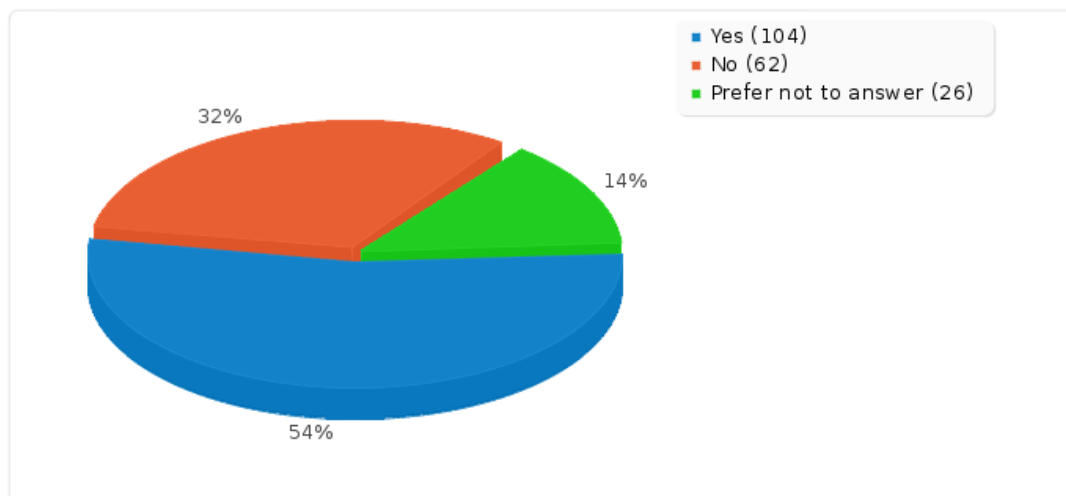
- “Positive. Every new person in the ajah changes the dynamic. Having a member of the opposite gender will change the dynamic...just like having a new aspirant.”
- “There are some who will complain about any change, but we are a resilient group and things will get worked out as they do. I'm not a fan of the idea, but if it happens I'm not going to flounce away and leave; I'll just get used to it.”
- “Overall, I think this will be negative, because I do think people will leave the site over this, and I don't see more people joining because of it.”
- “Neither good nor bad, just different.”
- “I would hope positive but I don't think it will be nice. I am pretty sure we may lose some people.”
- “I don't think it will change the dynamic much because the Warders are already quite active in the Sitting Room. I see a continuation of the acceptance carrying over to the Chambers for male Aes Sedai.”
- “This will almost certainly be negative, particularly if there are integrated forums within the ajah/company. You essentially create one group that will be "more equal" than the other. This isn't equality or cohesive groups. This is worse segregation than we already have now.”
- “Definitely negative. [My Ajah] is a group of women, and while we love our Gaidin, we discuss things in private because that is a safe space. If this integration ultimately goes ahead, then new Ajahs/Companies need to be created for the opposite gender groups.”
- “I am generally positive that anybody who would want to be part of my Ajah would fit in despite the gender.”
- “In my Ajah, it will be negative to begin, but will grow to make us a better Ajah.”
- “Ajah's and companies change with the addition of each new member regardless of gender. I see that as a positive.”

Part 6 - Junior Membership

Should the junior membership should be integrated as well? 59% said yes with 29% saying no and 12% who preferred not to answer.



Participants were asked if the mentorship program should be altered as well. 54% said yes and 32% said no.

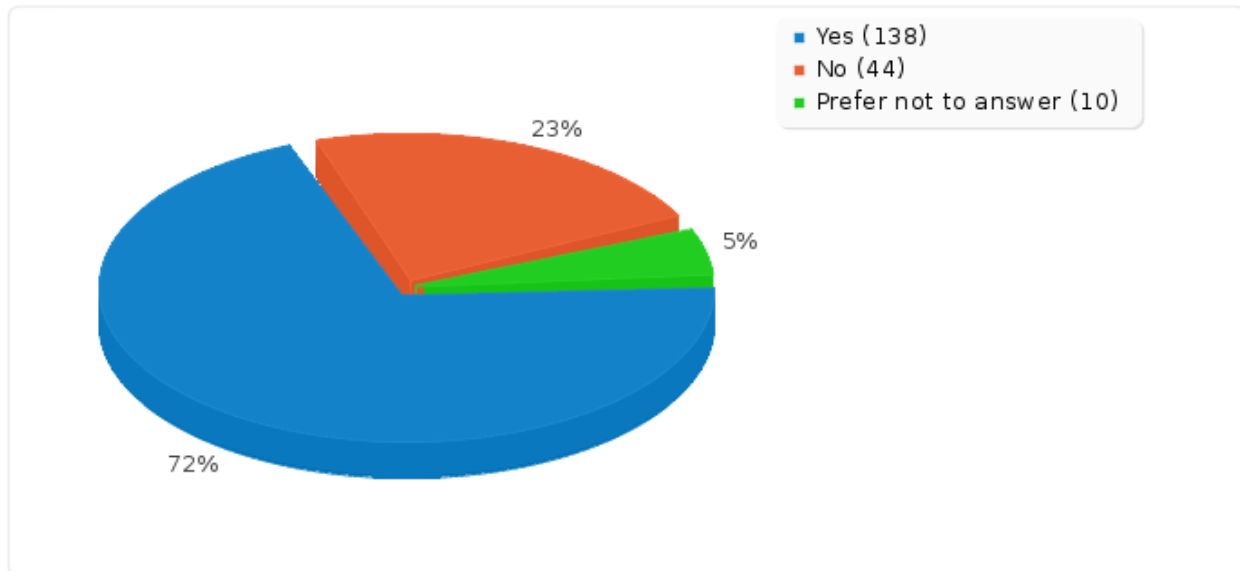


This was followed up with a question asking what the mentorship program should be altered to: mentorship from both a Male Aes Sedai/Gaidin or Female Aes Sedai/Gaidin or mentorship from the same gender as the mentee. 24% said both a male and female while only 4% said the same gender as the mentee. 24% indicated another option. Many of these other suggestions were for an Aes Sedai and a Gaidin mentor regardless of gender. Other suggestions included:

- "Mentee's choice of gender regardless of whether integration is established."
- "I think it depends on the comfort of the mentee."
- "Default to both, but ask the junior member what they would prefer."

- “Any combination that the specific JM wants”
- “Gaidin mentor recruits, AS mentor novices, regardless of gender.”
- “One mentor, either sex.”

In addition to mentorship, guesing was also queried. 72% said that yes, Accepted and Soldiers should be allowed to guest with both paths before selecting. 23% said no with 5% preferring not to answer.



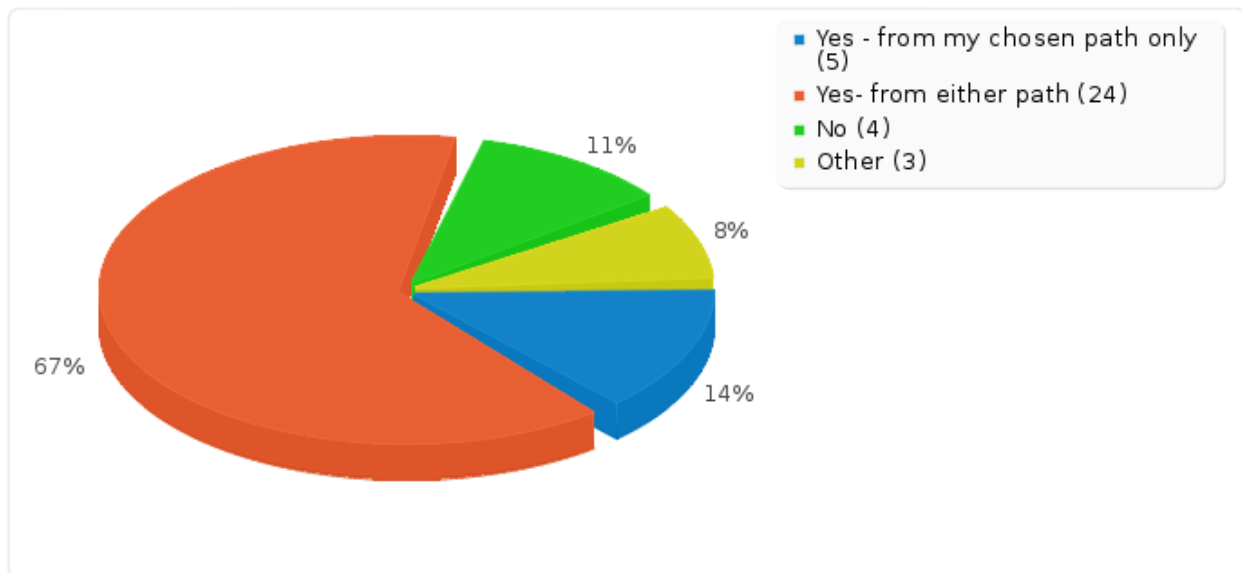
43% felt that a Junior Member should declare their path selection before aspiring. Trailing behind this was the option to declare before being raised to second level JM (25%). 8% felt that after a certain amount of time as a JM was appropriate. 9% gave an alternative answer.

- “I don't know. Whatever is decided here, it'd be nice if it was flexible to see what ends up working out best.”
- “Before being raised to 2nd level JM, and I just want to make sure that they can change their mind if they find that the path they're on isn't the right one for them.”
- “I like the idea of allowing them to guest with both, so perhaps before aspiring. However I also like the idea of having them declare a path before becoming 'accepted/soldier' because it shows/symbolizes a dedication to that particular path. So I'm okay with both.”
- “A transitive JM state between Novice and Accepted/Soldier can be implemented so that they can guest on both paths, before declaring a path.”
- “Before aspiring, and they should be allowed to change path (like people can change aspiration)”
- “Keep it the same as it is. The Guesting Accepted/Soldier method works fine now.”
- “When they feel it's right time. Some may aspire to Aes Sedai and realise it's not for them, and vice-versa.”

Junior Members were specifically asked if they were willing to have a mentor of the opposite gender and/or of the opposite path. 67% overwhelmingly answered yes- from either path. 14%

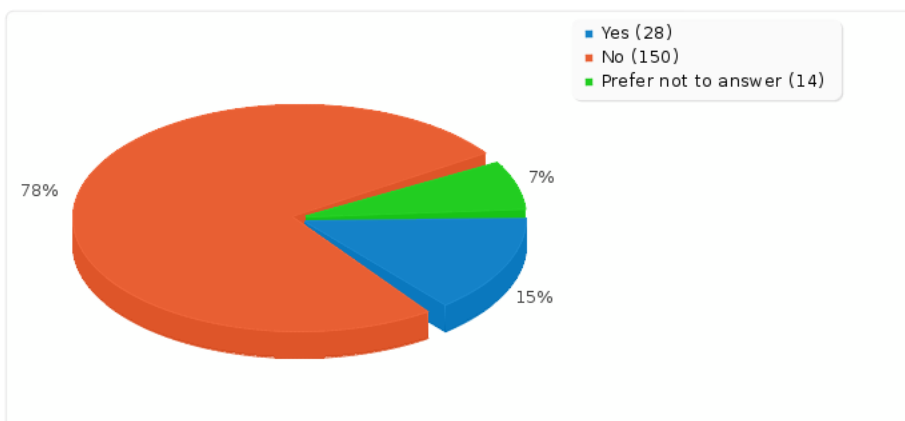
said yes, but from their chosen path only. 11% said no. 8% indicated another option.

- “I prefer a same-gender mentor, but others might need a different choice.”
- “I don't really interact with my mentor, nor do I find assigned mentored programs effective. It has been my experience that those seeking mentors will naturally find one and those who don't want one, will still naturally find that mentor figure. But I can understand why there is an 'official' mentoring program in place.”
- “One of each.”

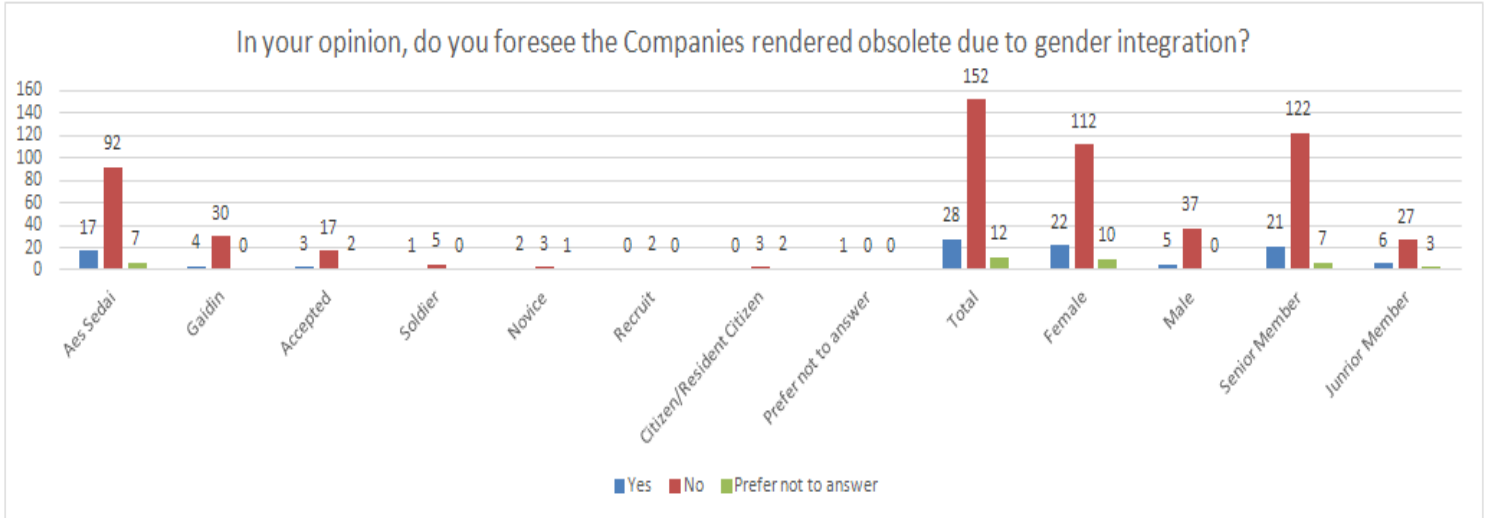


Part 7 - Looking Forward

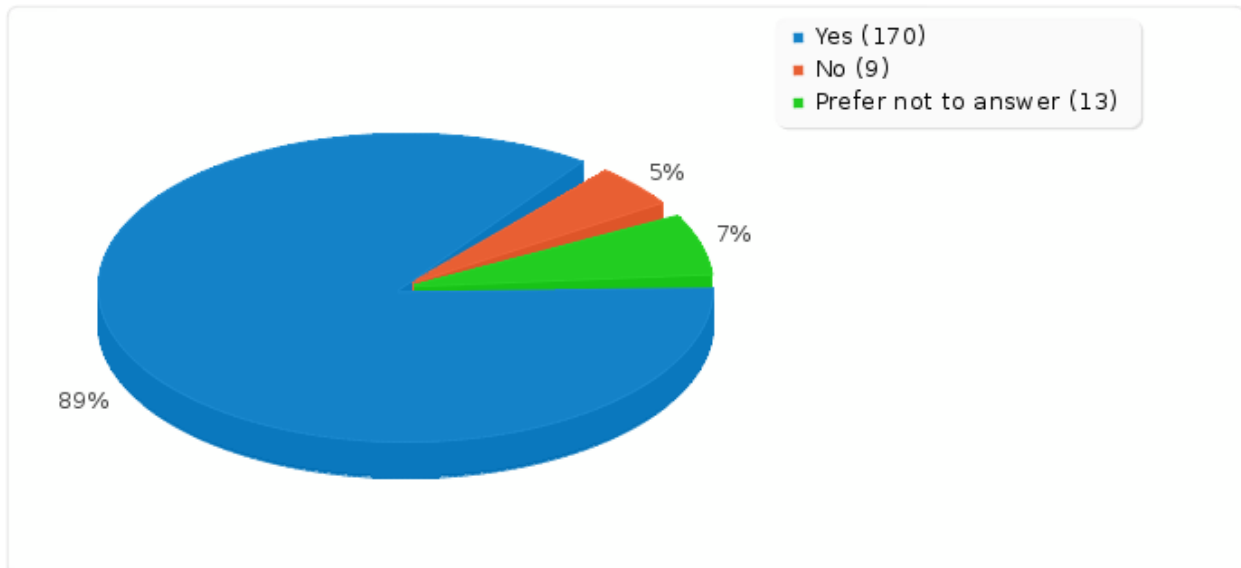
There are several issues that would need to be resolved if gender integration is implemented at TarValon.Net. The survey asked if new Ajahs and Companies should be created solely for the purpose of integration (as opposed to integrating established Ajahs and Companies). The majority (78%) said no. 15% said yes with 7% preferring not to answer.



If integration does occur, did participants foresee the companies rendered obsolete? The overwhelming response (79%) said no.



Participants also overwhelmingly indicated that members of the same gender should be allowed to bond.



Part of looking ahead included asking the Citizens and Resident Citizens if they were more likely to join the Tower and work towards Senior Membership if gender integration is implemented. Only 5 responses were give. 3 said yes while 1 said no and 1 other preferred not

to answer.

Citizens were also asked if they were offered to join either the Aes Sedai or Gaidin path how likely they would be towards working to be a Senior Member. 4 responded very likely and one indicated that they are neutral.

Part 8 - Final Comments

The results of this survey indicate that many would like gender integration and will most likely stay if it is implemented. A slight majority would be comfortable with integrated forums and even an opposite-gender HoA/CC. However, most Senior Members are not looking to switch paths and feel that this change would affect the dynamic of their Ajah/Company. More participants feel this change would be positive, but there are quite a lot who feel it would be negative or are unsure how it would affect their group.

Quite a number of participants left additional comments at the end of the survey. Below are a sampling of what people had to say:

- “I really want to see this change implemented. I see it as a way to expand the membership at TarValon.net, and to make the membership less divided. There are women who identify more with a company, and there are men who identify more with an ajah. This is a change that should have been made long ago. If we don't do it now, we have less of a chance to stay relevant and continue to grow. We cannot cling to tradition for tradition's sake.”
- “Utilize this opportunity to make the right decision sooner rather than later. We don't need months of deliberation that turn into years of deliberation - we need a plan to enact this now, while we can still remain relevant to The Wheel of Time community. In two years it won't matter whether or not we allow men in Ajahs or women in Companies, because no one's going to be searching for Wheel of Time fansites now that all of the books have been published.”
- “I feel this is unnecessary pandering to a small minority who cry 'no fair' and ignoring the valid claims of existing members who we will likely lose because they no longer feel like they have a safe place. Another example in modern day of changing things to suit a minority group in fear of being accused of being sexist/racist/agist etc etc. We all read the books, we know why the site is set up as it is. If you don't like it, find another fan site is my basic view.”
- “I think there are some groups it would work better with than others, but I don't know how that would implement on a case-by-case basis without opening up double standards. Red, for example, is canonically female-only, and they've been very proud of it and it caused a big kerfuffle when the first Red Warder came along. SDS, on the other hand, invites lots of people to their parties at RL events and embraces anyone who follows their philosophy. Other groups range in between the two extremes, and it's going to depend on the group to see who they attract - I'm just not sure about forcing groups to integrate that have never really had more than one or two people wanting to join from the other gender....and of course, I'm instantly thinking Blue and Green because of the most popular book characters.”
- “Overall, I truly believe that it is a very small niche that want integration, and that the

admins are a part of this niche. I feel this will be forced on us regardless of what we say at this point, because certain vocal people want this to happen.”

- “This is overall a fantastic idea that I feel is extremely overdue. Next up for the community: stricter rules/consequences for bond stalking? That would be fabulous.”
- “It’s not something I’m overly comfortable with, but if it had already been in place when I joined the site, I wouldn’t have thought anything of it, I just would not have been as willing to form friendships with males as with females.”
- “I think that even with full integration there should be same-gender spaces available for those who need and want it. I also think that the same should apply to junior members.”
- “I think the forums are fine the way they are now. There are no male Aes Sedai in the WoT books, even after the end of the Last Battle. That is why there is a Black Tower, for the Asha’man. I would feel absolutely uncomfortable with men in the female-only areas, as there are some subjects I do not wish to discuss with males. It would absolutely change the Ajah and the site in a way that I do not think would serve the community.”
- “I think integration is unnecessary. Our ranks don’t actually hold any meaning, so why the hell does someone care if their SMness is labeled as AS or Gaidin? Does it really make a difference? Seriously people, there is a point when it is just silliness. Give me a real reason this is necessary and I would be happy to reevaluate, but until then "but I wanna be a male AS/female Gaidin is not a valid reason to completely change something that has worked for over 12 years. “
- “I think there is something to be had in Sisterhood and Brotherhood, and it would be lost if integration occurs. That said, integrated groups have worked elsewhere (Dragonmount, dead Realm of Tar Valon).”
- “I’m excited to see that the next step toward integration is being taken. While it won’t affect my personal membership on the site, I think integration would be really good for the community. I think it’s very possible for new members to get turned off with the site when they see that it’s gender segregated, either because they don’t feel comfortable in a gender segregated area or because they wish to join the opposite side of the tower from their own gender. Either way, I think it would definitely help with future membership and be beneficial for current members as well.”
- “I am torn on the issue of gender integration. On the one hand, I do want our community to be inclusive of people who present as non-binary gender or gender-queer. I’ve always been proud that our community has never balked at making our few transgender individuals welcome, and I think we do need to provide options for senior membership that are not tied to the gender binary. I would also like to see gender integration for the ajahs and companies as long as the needs for safe spaces is considered. On the other hand, I feel like this change is being pushed solely to accommodate a very small number of people at the expense of the rest of us. I’m also concerned by the negativity being directed at those of us who do wish to retain a gender-segregated forum in our ajahs (people calling us sexist, etc.), despite the fact that many of us have very good reasons for wanting a safe space. I really would like to see a more gender-inclusive environment at TarValon.net! I’m not entirely against gender integration. But I hope that it will not be implemented in an "all or nothing" way that will cause us to lose a significant portion of our membership. I’m particularly concerned for my Ajah, as it has many

members who have very good reasons for needing a safe female space.”

- “To be totally honest, I don’t really care about the integration. It won’t affect me and won’t change my attitudes. Please take this comment as my TRUE answer. This just isn’t a problem for me. “
- “I do still feel that it’s important not to just suddenly remove the Ajah/Company specific gender segregated areas. I think it may be useful to have a trial period where there is an integrated Chambers, and a female/male only area. The emphasis from the HoA/Hearts etc should be to encourage people to only use the gender private areas for very sensitive issues where there could be real upset caused by input from a member of the opposite gender (such as very personal biological/medical issues, problems with sexual abuse/rape etc). I do believe the majority of interaction within an Ajah or Company would take place within the integrated forum, and over time we would see the need for the smaller private areas start to disappear. But just removing them in one fell swoop would probably do more harm than good - it should be a gradual thing.”
- “Honestly I don’t see the value in all the drama it will create.”
- “Personally when I first found the site all I wanted to do was become Asha’man. When I found that I couldn’t achieve that I was pretty disappointed. I almost decided to just stay as a citizen and not worry about the Tower. Meeting friends, who I now consider family, changed that for me. But it may not for others.”
- “Eleyan always said this community was based on the Tower such as it is at the beginning of the series. Now we would change it to something that doesn’t even exist in the books... What will our link to the Wheel of Time serie become, then ? Do Robert Jordan’s descriptions count for nothing?”
- “Aes Sedai is a very feminine title. Men on the channeler path should be called, or choose to be called, Asha’man. Female Gaidin should be called Gaidar (as Birgitte mentioned in one of the books).”
- “I worry that gender integration at TV.net will make the community too similar to other places like Dragonmount. Most other online communities, big or small, devoted to the Wheel of Time are fully integrated already. If TV.net integrates I think that a big differentiation between TV.net and others will be lost. I wish that we could have asked how current TV.netters like the segregation and if they came or come to TV.net because of that difference.”
- “I’d prefer a Black Tower for men like in the books. Nowhere was it mentioned that male channelers would be moving back to the White Tower with the women but there are women Gaidin. I like the idea of leaving the White Tower, making a Black Tower, and integrating the Companies.”
- “I think every community is richer and more diverse and interesting if it includes both genders. Also, in the state of affairs as it is, the male members are in a worse position, since the companies all seem a bit macho and I don’t think there is much difference between them. A really bookish guy that might thrive in the Brown, for example, might not find a right place for himself on the site as it is.”