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gap | report

Citizens and their vote

Expectations and factors that influence citizens' vote in the local elections





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Executive Summary

Only a few days have left from the sixth local elections that will be held in post war Kosovo. The campaign for these elections started only a few months after the parliamentary elections of 11 June. During September, GAP Institute, through opinion poll professional companies conducted a survey aiming to measure the citizens' expectations from these local elections. Moreover, this survey also aimed to understand the voters' main motivations, or what determines their vote in the elections of the 22nd of October 2017.

The survey results show that over 70% of the citizens are inclined to believe that the local elections of the 22nd of October will bring positive changes to their families and their communities. But, only 7% of the respondents are completely convinced that positive changes will take place after the local elections. About 56% of the respondents stated that they will not change their vote from the parliamentary elections of 11 June, whereas, 14% stated that on the 22nd of October they will change their vote. About 7% of the respondents stated that they will not vote in these elections.

Asked about what they take into consideration when deciding which Mayor candidate they will vote for, most of the respondents answered that they are based on the candidates' program and promises, but they also take into consideration their experience and education. The survey results show that the voters favor the younger candidates more. Additionally, a major part of the respondents said that they also take into consideration the candidates' family or social ties.

Over 52% of the respondents declared that they would not vote a municipal candidate of another ethnicity. Male voters are more resistant than females when it comes to voting a candidate of different ethnic background. Additionally, based on regions, the most resistance is found in Peja and Ferizaj regions and the least resistance in Prizren and Mitrovica regions.

Methodology

After GAP Institute compiled the questionnaire, UBO Consulting professional opinion poll company was contracted. This opinion poll was conducted in 38 municipalities in Kosovo, through the application of the quantification research method. The "stratified sample with random selections" technique was used to define the sample in this research, thus the general population was divided into smaller groups known as strata - based on the joint characteristics of the members of these strata.

The first stratum was determined based on their ethnic background, in which case three different sub-groups were created. The second stratum was determined based on their place of residence. For each municipality, research has been divided for urban and rural areas based on the official

statistics provided by Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS). The third stratum was determined based on the number of polls conducted in each settlement (starting point). The starting points for this research are determined randomly. The field research was conducted from 14 to 25 September 2017. This research has a 95% level of reliability with an error margin of +/-3%.

As part of this research, 1,065 Kosovo citizens, aged over 18, were interviewed: 818 were Albanian, 150 were Serbs and 97 belonged to other communities. The sample was then weighed to reflect the ethnic structure of Kosovo. Before administering it on the field, the questionnaire was initially tested to identify the logical and substantial problems and surveyors were also trained. The selection of the respondents was done through the following three stages:

In the first stage, the surveyor selected every third house from the starting point on the left side of the road. In cases when the selected house was not inhabited or the surveyor was rejected, the residence was passed and the same systematic approach was continued. In the second stage, the purpose was to identify and contact with the suitable contact to interview. In this stage, UBO Consulting selected the member that was above 18 years old and whose birthday was first in line. In the third stage, during the survey preparation, the surveyor explained the importance of providing the responses based on the respondent's personal beliefs. The survey was conducted face to face with the respondent without the presence of other family members. The quality control of the survey was ensured by verifying (phone calls and visits) 30% of the completed surveys. The gathered data were processed in SPSS program.

Citizens' expectations in the elections of the 22nd of October

This part presents the citizens' expectations in the local elections on the 22nd of October and the structure of the citizens' general preferences in relation to the election of Mayors and municipal councilors.

The survey results show that about 70% of the citizens are inclined to believe that the local elections of the 22nd of October will bring positive changes to their families and their communities. But, only 7% of the respondents are completely convinced that positive changes will take place in this aspect. Whereas, around one fourth of the respondents declared that positive changes can occur only to a certain degree. The rest, about 30% have no expectations that municipal elections will bring any positive changes for them.

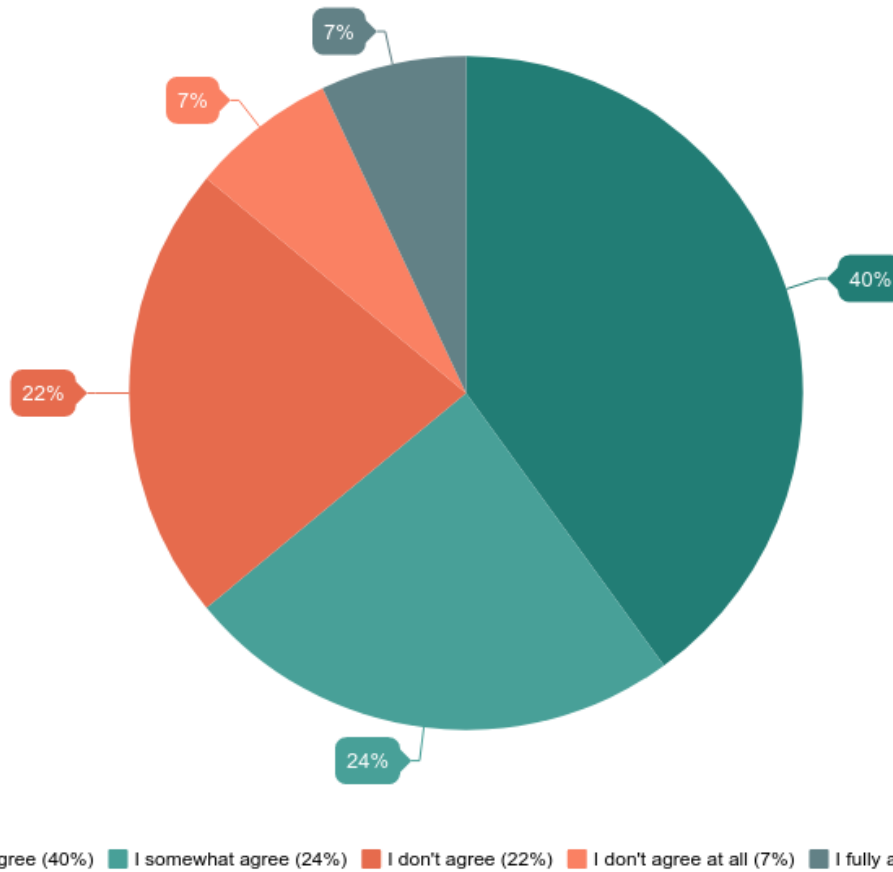


FIGURE 1. THE LOCAL ELECTIONS OF OCTOBER 22 WILL BRING POSITIVE CHANGES FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?

The survey results show that 45% of the respondents expect that their community will benefit from municipal investments during the new governing mandate. But, only 7% are completely convinced that positive changes will affect their community. About 30% of the respondents don't have any high expectations that positive changes will take place in their communities. Whereas, 27% have declared that they don't expect their community to benefit in any way from the municipality during the next term.

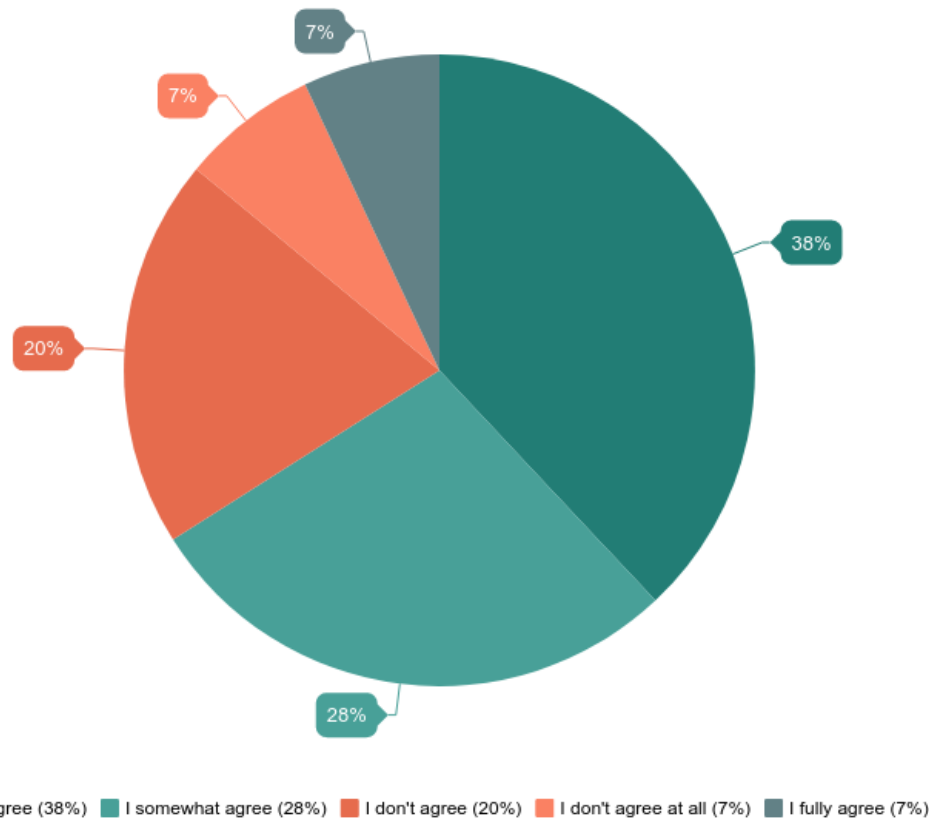


FIGURE 2. THE LOCAL ELECTIONS ON OCTOBER 22 WILL BRING POSITIVE CHANGES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Asked whether the local elections of the 22nd of October would bring better governance in their municipality, about 45% of the respondents were optimistic that this would be the case, although, only 10% are fully convinced that their municipality would be better governed. On the other hand, 28% of the respondents declared that the next local governance could be better to a certain degree and 27% were pessimistic of better governance.

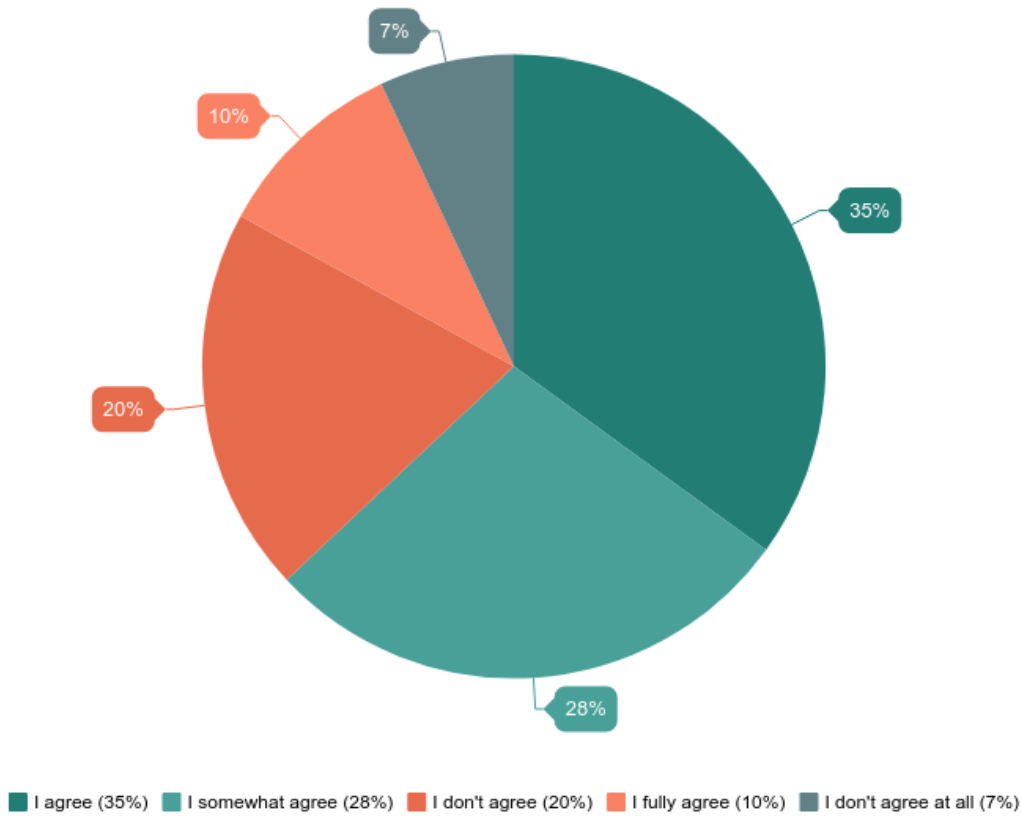


FIGURE 3. THE LOCAL ELECTIONS ON OCTOBER 22 WILL BRING BETTER LOCAL GOVERNANCE?

Most of the respondent (56%) declared that they would vote the same way they did in this year's parliamentary elections of the 11th of June. Whereas, 14% of the voters have changed their mind and will not vote the same way they voted five months ago. About 13% of the respondents are not certain who they will vote for and 7% said they will not vote at all.

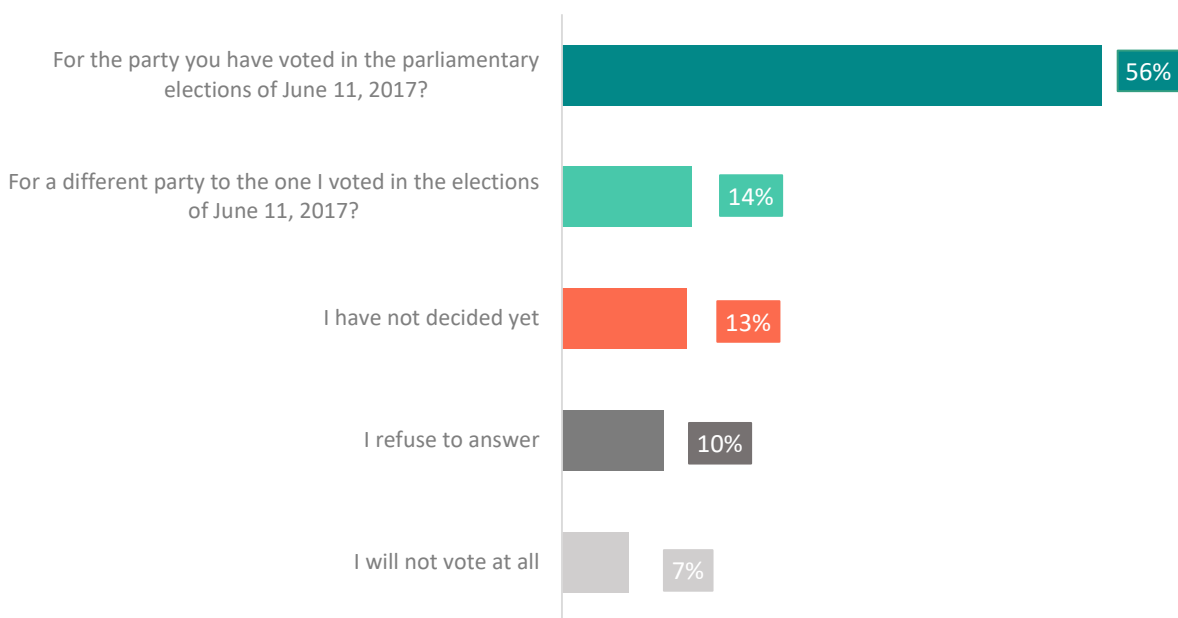


FIGURE 4. MAYOR ELECTIONS' VOTING

A further analysis of the responses of respondents who said that they would vote in the local elections the candidate of the party they voted in the national elections on the 11th of June, it is noticed that the majority of them are young and middle aged. However, the young also comprise the largest group of the undetermined voters.

TABLE 1. VOTERS' AGE STRUCTURE

Voting for:	Age					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
For the party you have voted in the parliamentary elections of June 11, 2017?	24%	26%	21%	14%	8%	7%
For a different party to the one I voted in the elections of June 11, 2017?	24%	25%	25%	13%	10%	4%
I will not vote at all	23%	16%	14%	22%	14%	11%
I have not decided yet	33%	31%	11%	15%	9%	2%
I refuse to answer	43%	27%	18%	10%	3%	0%

Factors that impact the citizens' vote for the Mayor

In order to understand how the voters create their preferences and what impacts their vote, the respondents were asked which factors they take into consideration when they decide which Mayor candidate they shall vote for. The majority of the respondents see the program and the promises, experience and political background, and the candidate's educational qualifications as the basic factors that impact their decision. The candidate's party affiliation also has a substantial impact in the citizens' vote for the Mayor. The results show that voters favor young candidates more than the older ones. A major number of the voters give their vote based on family, social and residential ties with the Mayor candidate.

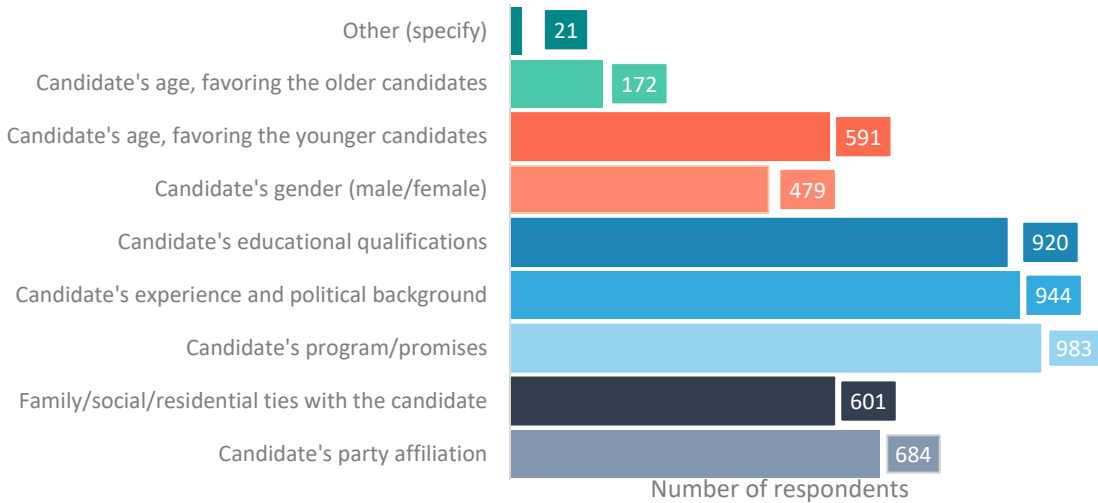


FIGURE 5. WHICH FACTORS WILL YOU CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING WHICH MAYOR CANDIDATE YOU SHALL VOTE FOR?

Over 52% of the respondents answered "No" when asked whether they would vote a Mayor candidate of different ethnicity to their own. Specifically, 56% of male and 48% female respondents had answered "No". Although differences are small, a higher percentage of women (27%) than men (22%) responded that they are inclined to vote a Mayor candidate of a different ethnicity.

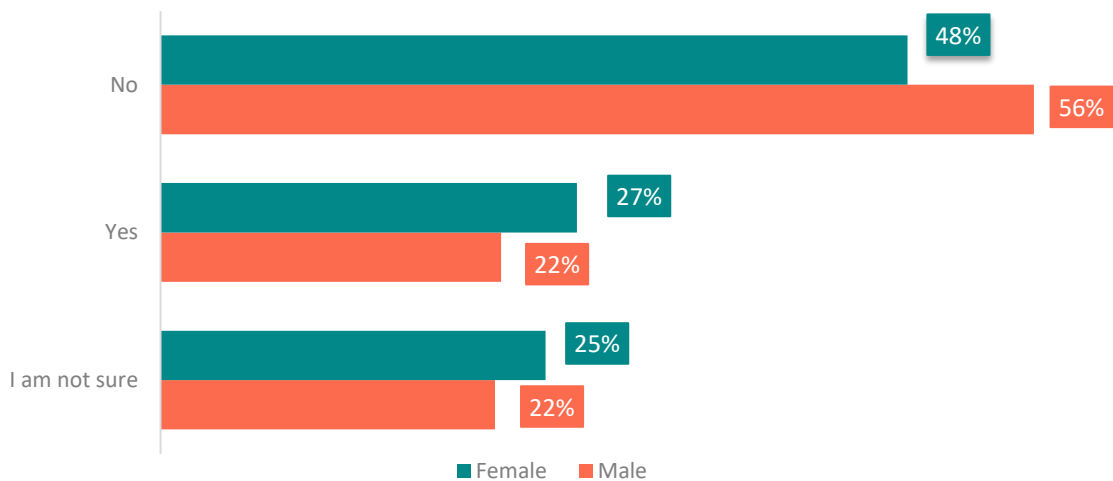


FIGURE 6. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A MAYOR CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO GENDER

Although the percentage of those unwilling to vote a Mayor candidate of different ethnicity to them is high in each group age, this attitude is more emphasized among the citizens aged 45-54 (62%) and 65+ (67%).

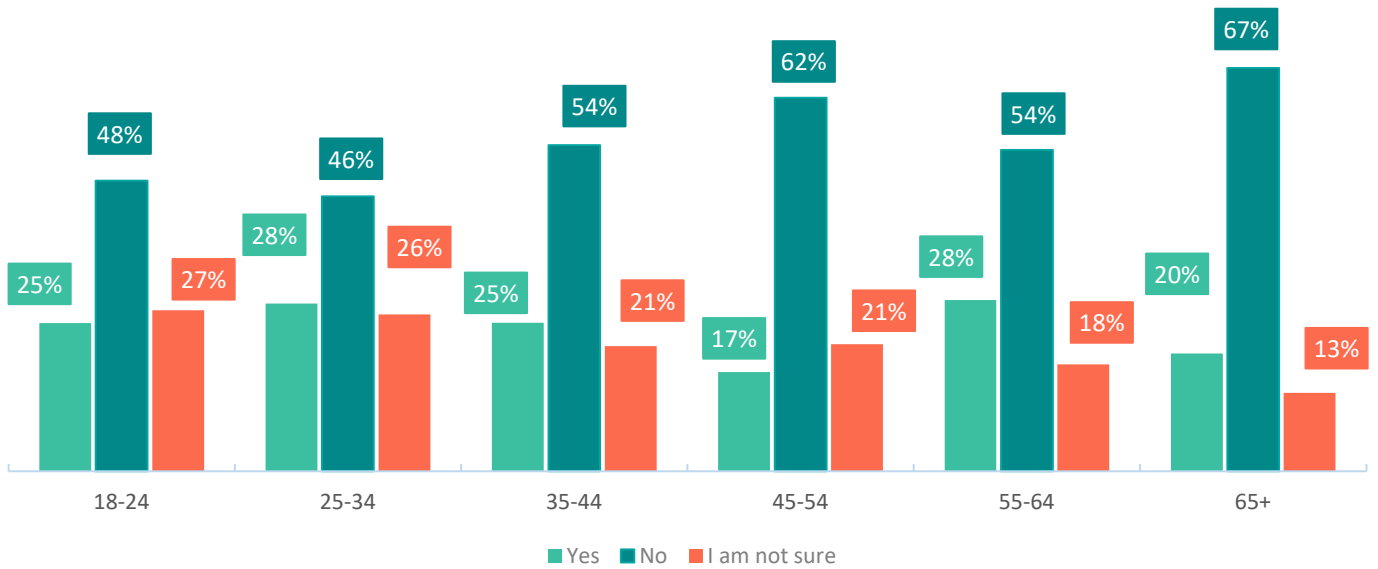


FIGURE 7. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A MAYOR CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO AGE

The attitude against voting a Mayor candidate of a different ethnicity to the voters is more emphasized among the persons that have finished only a few years of primary school (about 70%). But, a high percentage of citizens that hold a PhD or Master’s degree also maintain the same attitude (about 50%).

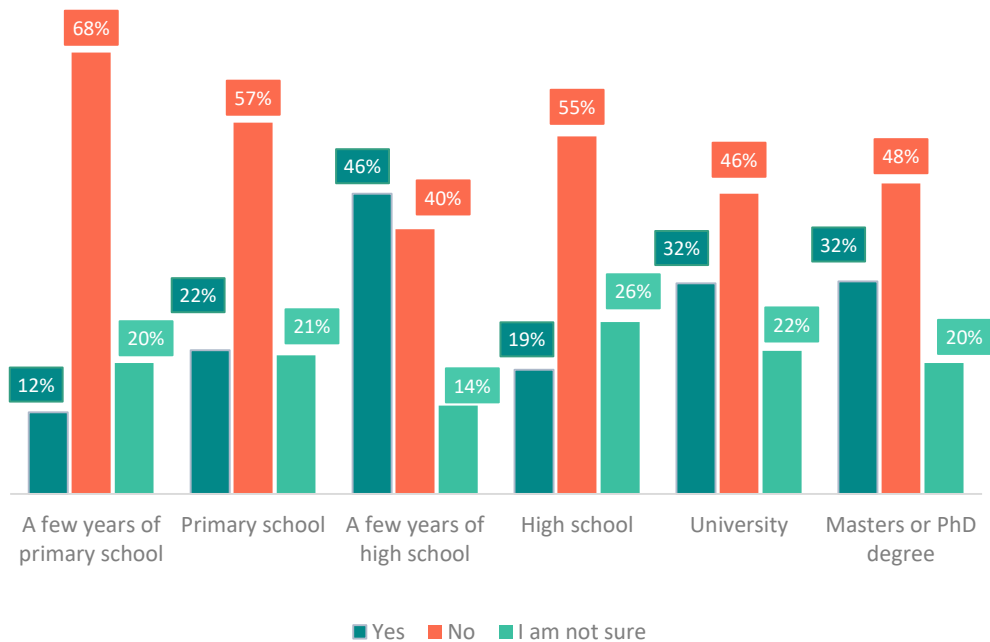


FIGURE 8. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A MAYOR CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO EDUCATION

In relation to the rejection of Mayor candidates from other ethnicities, the respondents in Peja (77%), Ferizaj (75%), Gjilan (68%) and Prishtina (61%)

regions have been more categorical than those in Prizren (30%), Gjakova (33%) and Mitrovica (35%) regions.

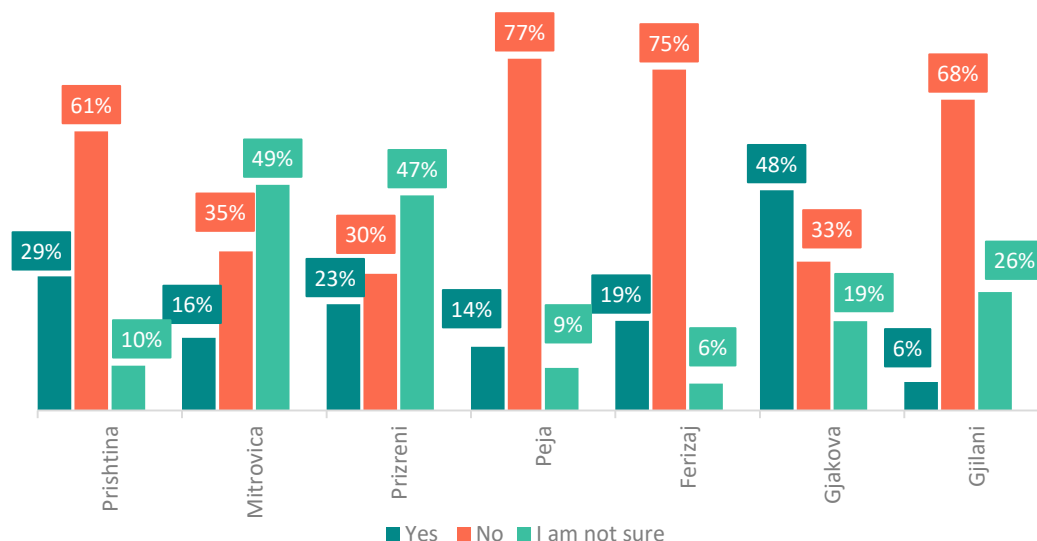


FIGURE 9. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A MAYOR CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO THE REGION

If we analyze the distribution of the respondents according to their ethnicity in relation to their attitude against a Mayor candidate of a different ethnicity, the data show that the Bosnian (83%), Albanian (53%) and Serbian (43%) respondents are more rejecting. The most opened in this aspect are the Egyptian (86%), Roma (75%) and Gorani (75%) respondents.

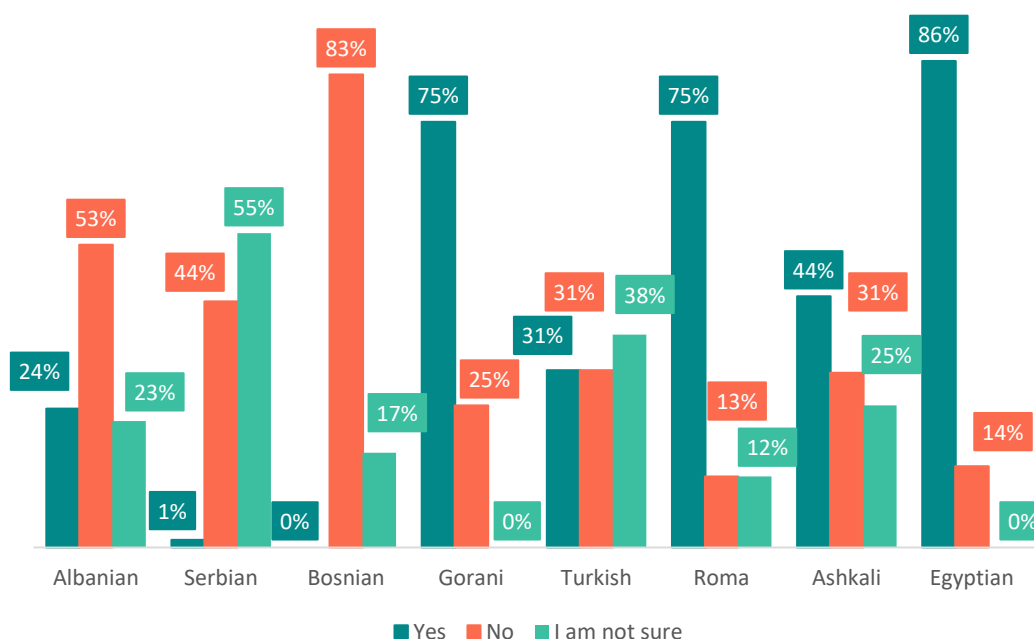


FIGURE 10. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A MAYOR CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO ETHNICITY

Factors that impact the citizens' vote for the Municipal Councilors

When asked about the determining factors when they decide to vote for the municipal councilors, the respondents gave similar responses as when they were asked for the Mayor candidates. Namely, the program, educational qualification, political experience and party affiliation were the most impacting factors in the voters' decision on who to vote for the municipal council.

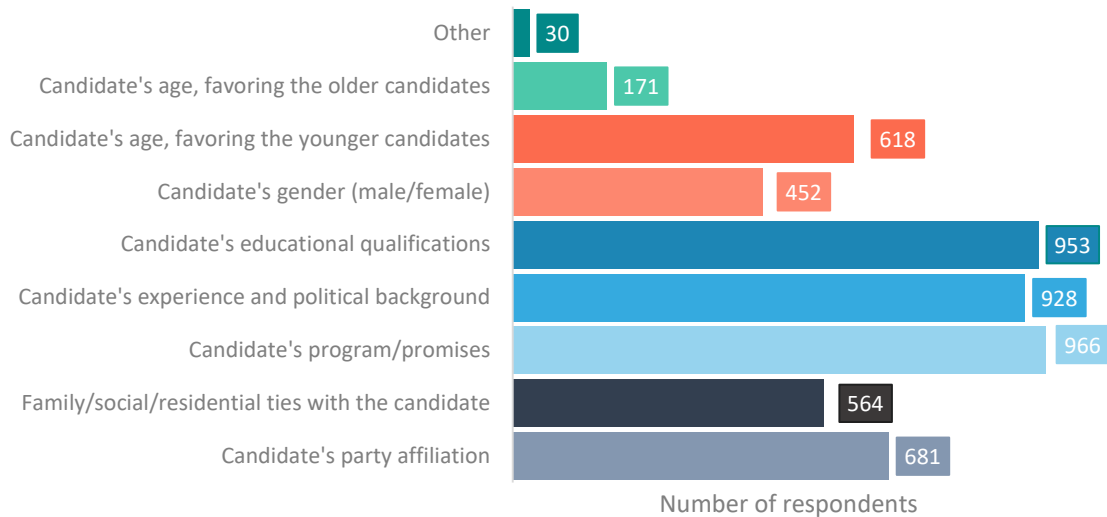


FIGURE 11. WHICH FACTORS WILL YOU CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING WHICH CANDIDATE FOR THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL YOU SHALL VOTE FOR?

Just as for the Mayor candidates, most of the respondents (53%) were against giving an opportunity to a candidate running for the municipal council that belongs to a different ethnicity from them.

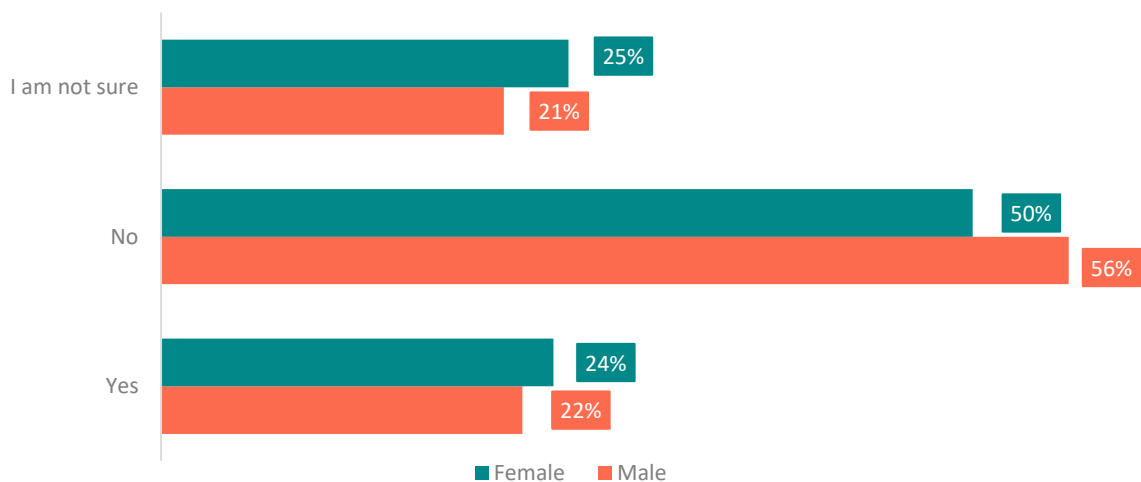


FIGURE 12. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO GENDER

The respondents aged 45-54 (60%) and 65+ (68%) were the most against the idea of giving an opportunity to a municipal council candidate that belongs to a different ethnicity.

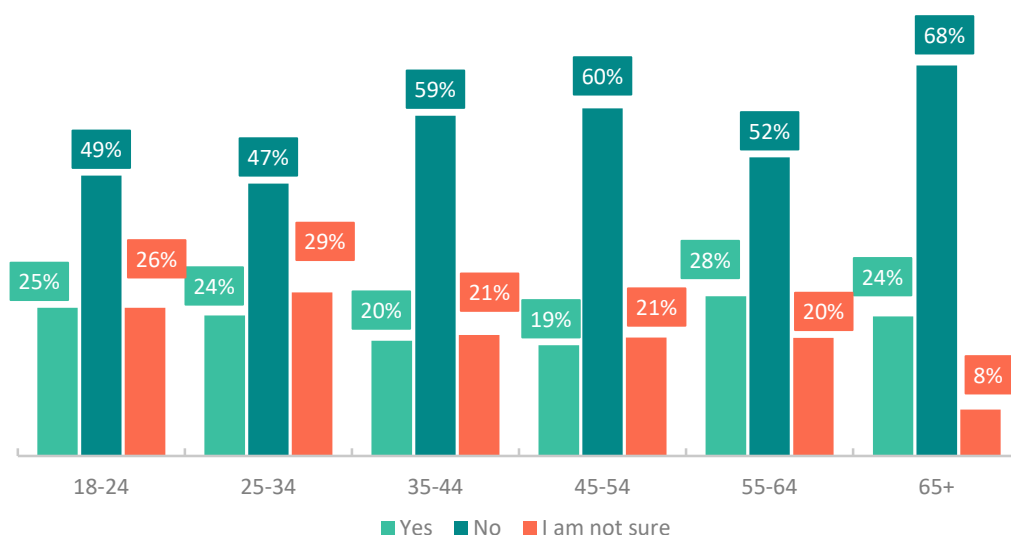


FIGURE 13. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A POTENTIAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO AGE

If we analyze rate of rejections to vote the candidates for municipal councils of different ethnicities, we notice that the most rejecting category are the citizens with the least years of education (65%). However, a high degree of rejection is noticed among all educational levels.

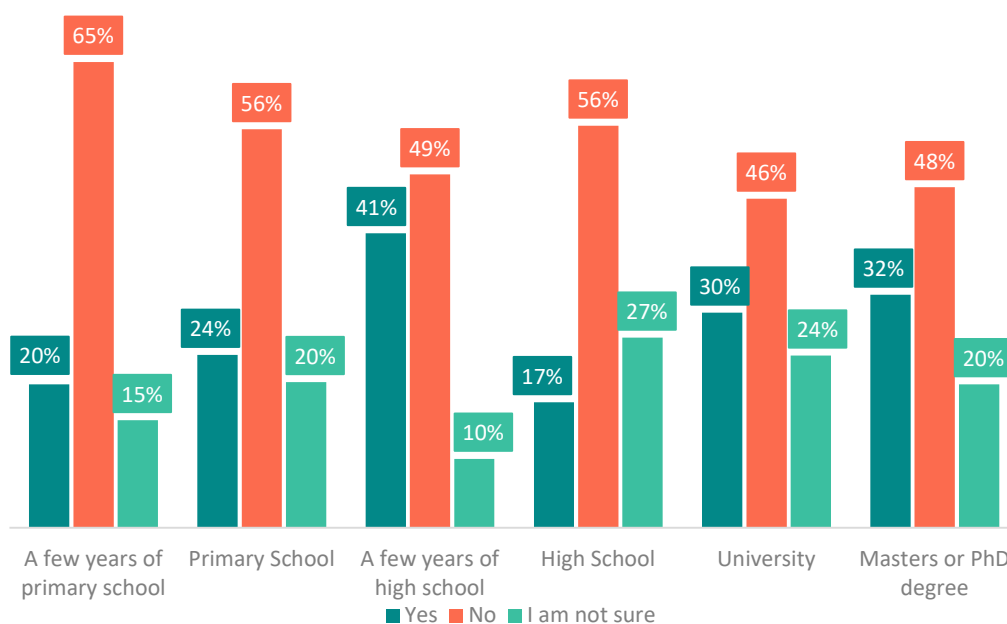


FIGURE 14. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A POTENTIAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO EDUCATION

The respondents in Peja, Ferizaj, Gjilan and Prishtina regions were more categorical to not vote a municipal council candidate of another ethnicity, whereas the respondents in Mitrovica, Prizren, Gjilan and Gjakova regions

were even more rejecting towards the municipal council candidates than the Mayor candidates.

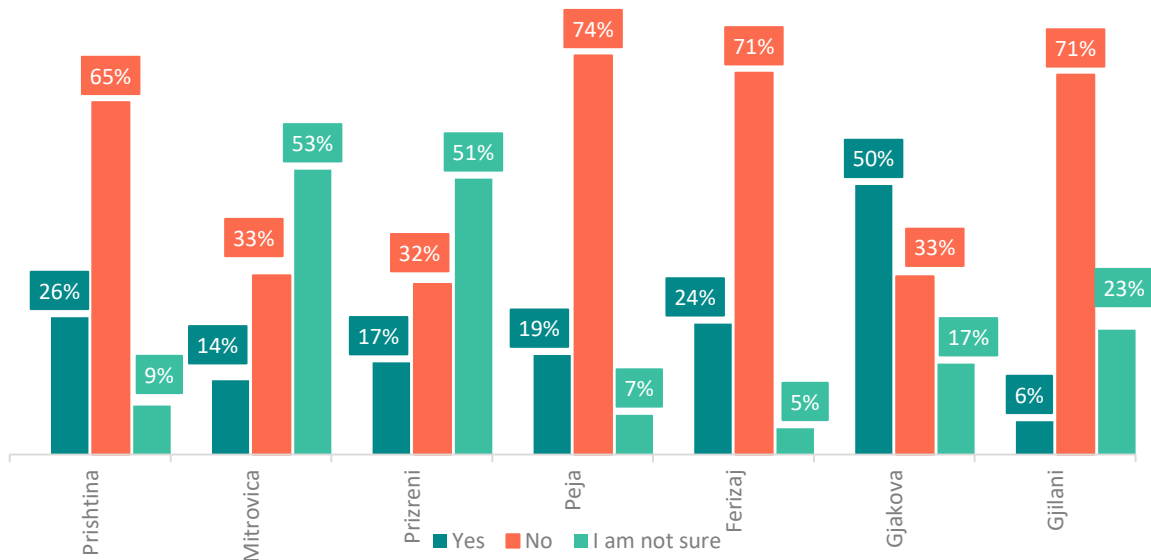


FIGURE 15. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A POTENTIAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO THE REGION

Almost similar as for the Mayors, the Bosnian (67%), Serbian (54%) and Albanian (49%) respondents were the most numerous groups that rejected the idea of voting a municipal council candidate coming from a different ethnicity. However, the rejection level for the municipal council candidates is lower than for the Mayor candidates. However, Gorani respondents turned out to be much more rejecting towards the municipal council candidates of other ethnicities (63%) than the Mayor candidates (25%). Egyptians (86%) and Roma (75%) remain the most open groups towards the potential municipal council candidates as well.

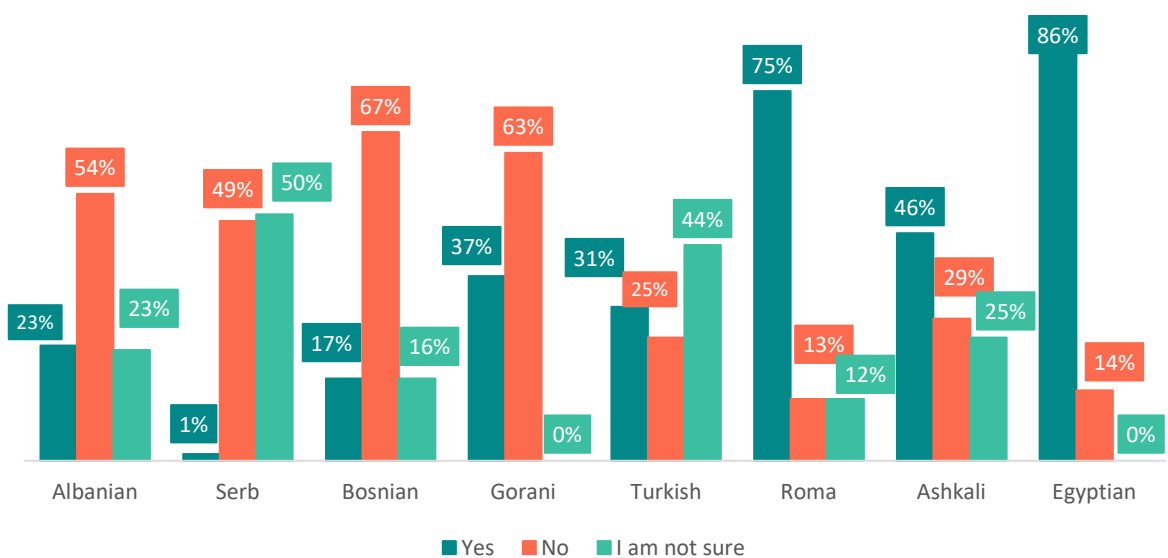


FIGURE 16. CHANCES THAT CITIZENS WILL VOTE A POTENTIAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CANDIDATE OF A DIFFERENT ETHNICITY TO THEM, ACCORDING TO ETHNICITY

Conclusion

The aim of this report is to identify the citizens' expectations for the local elections of October 22, 2017, and to also identify the factors that impact the citizens' vote. This survey did not aim to identify what are the political parties the citizens prefer to vote for.

The survey results show that most of citizens do not fully believe that elections will bring positive changes neither in the personal level nor the general governance of the municipality. The respondents' attitudes that they will vote just as they did on the 11th of June, may bring party changes at the local governance. Although the period between parliamentary and local elections is very short, it is encouraging that only a small percentage of citizens (7%) have declared that they will not vote at all.

The candidates' programs and promises are more important to citizens than anything else. But, at the same time, the citizens prefer to vote for someone with a higher level of education. Moreover, the voters prefer to vote the younger candidates.

The most interesting findings are the ones related to the citizens' attitudes pertaining to the voting of candidates from other ethnicities. In general, the voters don't prefer to vote someone from other ethnicities, regardless of their qualifications. The respondents, who have more contacts with members of other communities, such as Prizren and Mitrovica are more open to vote candidates of other ethnicities. Moreover, the respondents from Bosnian, Serbian and Albanian communities are more rejecting towards candidates from other ethnicities than the Egyptian, Roma and Gorani respondents.

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The GAP Institute is a Think-Tank established in October 2007 in Kosovo. The main goal of GAP is to attract professionals in order to create an environment of professional development and research, which is encountered in similar institutions in western countries. This also provides the opportunity for the people of Kosovo to research, develop and implement projects with the aim of advancing the Kosovar society. The priority of this Institute is to mobilize professionals in addressing the economic, political and social challenges of the country. The main goals of GAP are to fill the gaps between the Government and the citizens, and also fill the gaps between problems and solutions.

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