

# Election Trends 2000-2014

## A Numerical Analysis of Participation and Representation



Democracy for Development  
Demokraci për zhvillim  
Demokratija za razvoj

# **Election Trends 2000-2014**

**A Numerical Analysis of Participation  
and Representation**

Prishtina, July 2015

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## Executive Summary

With 10 sets of elections in a period of 15 years, there is now sufficient information for evaluating Kosovo's understanding and practice of democracy. Given the absence of upcoming elections, the next two years present a great opportunity to reflect upon and improve the electoral experience. This paper looks at a wide range of trends, draws inferences, and presents analysis in a neutral fashion to inform policy-makers who may be deliberating about electoral design in the near future.

A longer perspective is necessary to make sense of evolutionary shifts and to evaluate the slow rate of democratization. For any reforms to be successful, there should be a baseline upon which past electoral history can be judged. This study aims to evaluate that history. Although still in its infancy, Kosovo's democracy has already begun to show some signs of consolidation. This is indicated by the reduction in the number of parties contesting elections, by recent mandates starting to last longer, and by the completion of three peaceful half-transitions.

In the first half of the paper, we compared official figures released by the CEC (pertaining to the voters list, turnout, party performance, and individual votes) to determine long-term trends and what can be inferred as a result. The paper begins with an analysis of the reasons behind a surge of invalid and spoilt ballots, which would not have happened if Kosovo had electoral districts. We cautioned against organizing several sets of elections on the same day, especially if the ballot is not simplified. It is also baffling to note that although all voters were given three ballots, around a sixth of the votes were not cast for municipal councils, which is a strong indicator of potential fraud.

The voters list has improved recently, which is an encouragement that more can be done. Making the voters list

more accurate could be in the interest of popular politicians who would be elected with a higher proportion turnout. Of every three registered voters, two vote, hardly the crisis that official figures yield. The lack of figures and the inconsistent manner in which they are published, makes analyses with official figures difficult and costly.

The second half of the paper looks at the results of three public opinion polls. Trends (such as how Kosovars perceive their leadership, institutions in charge of elections, and party membership) are compared over time and then cross-tabulated by a range of demographic factors. Voters are increasingly changing their favorite party. From 2007 to 2010, about half of respondents changed their party choice. Middle-aged respondents, those with higher education, and women form the greatest share of swing voters and should be targeted by political campaigns for this reason.

One of the growing trends is that the higher a person's income is, the more likely they are to have met a public official. Employed respondents, those who are educated, and those between the ages of 35 and 44 are more likely to be party members. The percentage of those who feel very close to their party has dropped from 25% to 15%, while the rate of Kosovars who do not feel close to politics has increased.

## Introduction

Electoral trends only come to light given a longer set of elections, for they usually evolve too slowly to spot with the naked eye. This year is a suitable moment to reflect on electoral trends as Kosovo marks 15 years since its first set of democratic elections. With five sets of municipal elections and five sets of national elections, there is sufficient distance to take stock of Kosovo's democratic evolution.

Kosovo came out bruised after the 2009 and 2010 elections but was somewhat encouraged by the improvements in the 2013 and 2014 elections. Now is a great moment for reflection as there are two non-election years ahead. These years can be used to embark on the changes required to improve the electoral framework. Electoral reforms have been discussed very much during the past decade, but since the introduction of open lists and directly elected mayors in 2007, there is little else to show. All stakeholders – non-governmental organizations, political parties, and the international community – have ample ideas about what should change in Kosovo's electoral architecture. In order to embark toward serious reforms, it is useful to have a baseline upon which past electoral history can be judged.

A study that tracks key indicators pertaining to elections serves as a useful reference to assist inclusive deliberation about Kosovo's electoral system. Even the best-trained eye and most experienced election observer can hardly see what only numbers can show. Using numbers, we previously<sup>1</sup> discovered that the rate of spoiled ballots in two municipalities was higher than in the rest of Kosovo, an unmistakable indicator of fraud. We also analyzed election trends covering the first three seats of elections, published in 2011.<sup>2</sup> This publication builds upon that analysis, but this time we included more indicators that cover elections from 2000 to 2014. Because the original data provided by the



election authority was presented in a different format for each set of elections, entering the data required extensive manual labour.

The first half of the paper reviews official CEC results and analyzes them. The paper begins by looking at the length of mandates and parties in government to check whether Kosovo has followed the four-year rule and whether it has undergone two peaceful transitions – a key indicator of democratic consolidation. The paper then describes various features of Kosovo's electoral system throughout this period and changes over time. This section looks at the introduction of major changes in 2007, the lessons learned, and what other changes can be made ahead of the next elections. The third section compares the increase of the voters list with data from the population registration and puts turnout into more accurate perspective. The following section looks at the gender quota, open lists, and the preferential vote, followed by an analysis of the votes that the leader of each party won as a share of the votes of their own party.

In addition to our analysis of official data published by the Central Election Commission, D4D has commissioned three consecutive surveys with around 18 months distance in-between: in 2012, 2014 and 2015. Although the results of the first survey have been published previously, the second half of this paper analyzes the longer trend for questions that were posed identically as before. The 2012 survey was conducted by IndexKosova, and much of this data has already been published. The 2014 and 2015 surveys were conducted by Ubo Consulting, and in all three rounds the sample was over 1,000 respondents using random probability sampling. The choice of respondents was made using a random walking technique, choosing every third house on the left. Only questions that were posed identically and which had identical response sets were compared across the years. D4D additionally acknowledges the contribution of Ngadhnjim

Halilaj who tirelessly organized the data entry and the generation of graphs to meet the expectation of this demanding report. Due to limited space, some graphs contain abbreviations such as DK (do not know), NV (did not vote/do not intend to vote), NA (No Answer), UD (Undecided), or Ref (refused to respond).

## Elections From 2000 to 2014

It has been 15 years since Kosovo held its first democratic elections – municipal assembly elections in 2000 which were held under the United Nations Missions in Kosovo (UNMIK). Since then, Kosovo has undergone four additional sets of municipal elections and five sets of national elections.

| Municipal Assembly and Mayoral Elections Since 2000 |                             |         |                        |
|---|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| Date  | Assembly                    | Mayoral | Length (years)         |
| 28-Oct-00   | Mandate I<br>(2000-2002)    |         | 2 (not full)           |
| 26-Oct-02   | Mandate II<br>(2002-2007)   |         | 5 (extended)           |
| 17-Nov-07   | Mandate III<br>(2007-2009)  | x       | 2 (not full)           |
| 15-Nov-09   | Mandate IV<br>(2009-2013)   | x       | 4 (first full mandate) |
| 3-Nov-13  | Mandate V<br>(2013-current) | x       |                        |

With one exception, Kosovo has not completed full electoral mandates, which indicates a lack of democratic consolidation and maturity. Fortunately, after a decade of trying, the fourth mandate of municipal elections lasted the full four years. The fourth mandate of the national elections was terminated six months early with extraordinary elections, although it almost lasted a full mandate. This is a sign of gradual maturity, but much remains to be done.

In addition to the length of mandates, another milestone to observe is whether Kosovo has undergone two peaceful transitions. Robert Putnam considers this to be a key litmus test of democratic consolidation.

| National Elections Since 2001 |                             |                |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Date                          | Mandate                     | Length (years) | Transition            |
| 17-Nov-01                     | Mandate I<br>(2001-2004)    | 3 (not full)   | LDK-PDK-AAK & others  |
| 23-Oct-04                     | Mandate II<br>(2004-2007)   | 3 (not full)   | LDK-AAK               |
| 17-Nov-07                     | Mandate III<br>(2007-2010)  | 3 (not full)   | PDK-LDK               |
| 12-Dec-10                     | Mandate IV<br>(2010-2014)   | 4 (not full)   | PDK & Others<br>(1st) |
| 8-Jun-14                      | Mandate V<br>(2014-current) |                | PDK-LDK               |

Although Kosovo has seen change of power, it remains disputable as to whether this has amounted to a full transition. Between 2001 and 2004, LDK governed several parties, and in 2004 it struck a coalition with AAK. This may have marked the first half-transition as PDK went in opposition. In 2007, PDK won the elections and chose LDK as its junior coalition partner, which was perhaps the second half-transition. In 2010, PDK continued to govern (this time with others) while LDK went into opposition. After a deadlock of six months in 2014, LDK was back in power, but with the party that had been in power for the past seven years, PDK. At best, this can amount to three peaceful half-transitions. The change of power has generally seen one coalition partner change while the other continues to govern with other partners.










### *Electoral System Experience*

The main features of the electoral system in Kosovo have been relatively consistent. Proportionality was chosen first by the UNMIK as the most suitable system considering Kosovo's post-war legacy and societal divisions. In countries with conflict potential, no parties should receive fewer seats than the percentage of the electoral score they have obtained. A

proportional system, which strictly translates percentages to seats was therefore a smart choice to instill a sense of fairness and to prevent conflict.

The table on the next page illustrates the type of elections and the features used throughout the years. In 2003, a major civil society campaign lead to the introduction of open lists and directly elected mayors, which were first used in 2007. The advocacy for districts failed against high political resistance. As a setback, the same bout of changes also introduced a high threshold aiming to forge stable governing coalitions.

The introduction of open lists without districts has made it difficult to vote. To prevent the ballot from acquiring the size of a book (110 names for each party), names were published in a separate booklet to be found in each voting booth for reference. Another side effect of having a single district given open lists was the risk of top party names commanding most votes. To prevent such dominance of top-party names, the OSCE successfully lobbied to introduce a preferential vote. Each voter had to first find his/her favourite party, and then identify up to ten names from a list of 110 and mark equivalent numbers in the ballot (see below the top heading of the ballot in use in 2014 – [link to full ballot](#)).<sup>3</sup>

|  Republika e Kosovës<br>Republika Kosovo • Republic of Kosovo<br>Komiteti Qendror i Zgjedhjeve<br>Central Election Commission  |    | <b>ZGJEDHJET E PARAKONSHME PËR KUVENDIN E REPUBLIKËS SË KOSOVËS 2014</b><br><b>PREVREMENI IZBORI ZA SKUPŠTINU REPUBLIKE KOSOVO 2014</b>  |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| <b>1</b> Shënjoni <b>VETËM NJË</b> subjekt politik<br>Označite <b>SAMO JEDAN</b> politički subjekat   |    | <b>2</b> Shënjoni <b>MË SË SHUMTI PESË</b> kandidat<br>Označite <b>NAJVIŠE PET</b> kandidata   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31.  PLE - PARTIA LIBERALE EGJIPTIANE<br><input type="checkbox"/> 32.  PDAK - PARTIA DEMOKRATIKE E ASHKANLIVE TË KOSOVËS<br><input type="checkbox"/> 33.  PDS - PROGRESIVNA DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA<br><input type="checkbox"/> 34.  PREBK - PARTIA ROME E BASHKUAR E KOSOVËS<br><input type="checkbox"/> 35.  Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE!<br><input type="checkbox"/> 36.  VAKAT - KOALICIJA VAKAT<br><input type="checkbox"/> 37.  PF - PARTIA E FORTE<br><input type="checkbox"/> 38. SRPSKA LISTA<br><input type="checkbox"/> 39.  PDP - POKRET ZA DEMOKRATSKI PROSPERITET |    | <table border="1"> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td>32</td></tr> <tr><td>33</td><td>34</td><td>35</td><td>36</td></tr> </table> |    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 |
| 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 5   | 6  | 7  | 8  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 9   | 10 | 11   | 12 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 13  | 14 | 15   | 16 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 17  | 18 | 19   | 20 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 21  | 22 | 23   | 24 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 25  | 26 | 27   | 28 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 29  | 30 | 31   | 32 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 33  | 34 | 35   | 36 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Along with introducing several new features in half-hearted manner, Kosovo held three sets of elections in one day. Voters were expected to make up to 23 marks at a time (party + 10 choices for national, party + 10 choices for municipal elections and one mark for the mayor). Those who voted in the run-off were lucky enough to make the 24<sup>th</sup> mark four weeks later.

### Electoral Features (by Election Year)

|                   | 2000  | 2001                            | 2002     | 2004     | 2007  | 2009                | 2010      | 2012                | 2013                | 2014     |
|-------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------|----------|---|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|----------|
| Date              | 28-Oct  | 17-Nov                          | 26-Oct   | 23-Oct   | 17-Nov  | 15-Nov              | 12-Dec    | by-elections        | 3-Nov               | 8-Jun    |
| Type of Elections | Assembly  | National                        | Assembly | National | National Assembly<br>Mayoral                          | Assembly<br>Mayoral | National  | Ferizaj/<br>Kacanik | Assembly<br>Mayoral | National |
| Lists             | Open Lists  | Closed lists (1/3 gender quota) |          |          | Open Lists (1/3 gender quota)                         |                     |           |                     |                     |          |
| Choices           | Single Choice   |                                 |          |          | 1+10 choices  | 1+1 choices         | 5 choices |                     |                     |          |
| Threshold         | None  |                                 |          |          | 5% for national; No threshold for municipal elections |                     |           |                     |                     |          |
| Mayor             | Chairperson elected by the Assembly   |                                 |          |          | Directly Elected Municipal Mayor                      |                     |           |                     |                     |          |
| System            | Proportional (strict translation of votes into seats using the Saint-Lague formula)       |                                 |          |          |   |                     |           |                     |                     |          |
| Districts         | No districts - Kosovo is a single district for national elections, as are municipalities. |                                 |          |          |   |                     |           |                     |                     |          |

There are still tendencies to close the lists, occasionally evoked by influential leaders and usually away from media attention. Parts of the international community also informally advocate to close the lists, ostensibly due to the alleged conflict between open lists and the gender quota. The real reason may be to increase the party discipline and reduce opposition to dialogue and other unpopular measures. While dialogue is important and Kosovo should fulfill international obligations it has undertaken, Kosovo's democracy must not be sacrificed along the way.

To make open lists meaningful, Kosovo must embark on a new bout of reforms. D4D and much of civil society has consistently advocated for (a) seven districts, (b) doing away with tendencies to have the first on the list automatically elected, (c) retaining the open lists and the gender quota, (d) lowering the threshold, and (e) introducing a compensatory mechanism to avoid the wasted votes associated with the majoritarian effect (which would violate the constitutional provision of proportionality).

For 2015 and 2016, Kosovo should aim to improve (a) the electoral process through the inclusion of much of the secondary legislation in a larger law on elections, (b) the quality of participation and representation by revising the electoral system (districts and one-tick ballots), and (c) the regulation of party finances (including private donations).



## Electorate and Turnout

One of the most important aspects of the election process is the accuracy and inclusion of the voters list, the turnout, by-mail and conditional ballots, and the rate of invalid ballots.

### *Voters List*

| Electorate & annual change |           |       |   |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------|---|
| 2000                       | 913,179   | 36.9% | Registration of Kosovo Serbs and Diaspora |
| 2001                       | 1,249,987 | 5.6%  |   |
| 2002                       | 1,320,481 | 3.5%  |   |
| 2004                       | 1,412,680 | 3.7%  |   |
| 2007                       | 1,567,690 | -0.1% |   |
| 2009                       | 1,563,741 | 4.4%  | 1st clean-up                              |
| 2010                       | 1,632,276 | 3.3%  | Much higher than birth rate               |
| 2013                       | 1,792,913 | 0.3%  |   |
| 2014                       | 1,799,023 |       | 2nd clean-up                              |
| 13 year average            |           | 3.4%  | excluding 2000                            |

In the first elections after the war, Kosovo had under one million voters, significantly less than its pre-war population. Much of Kosovo's inhabitants had not returned after the war, while Kosovo Serbs refused to register on political grounds. The whopping growth of the voter list (VL) (by 37% and 5.6% in the next two years respectively) can only explained by the rapid registration of Kosovo's diaspora, return of the displaced, and an improved climate among Kosovo Serbs.

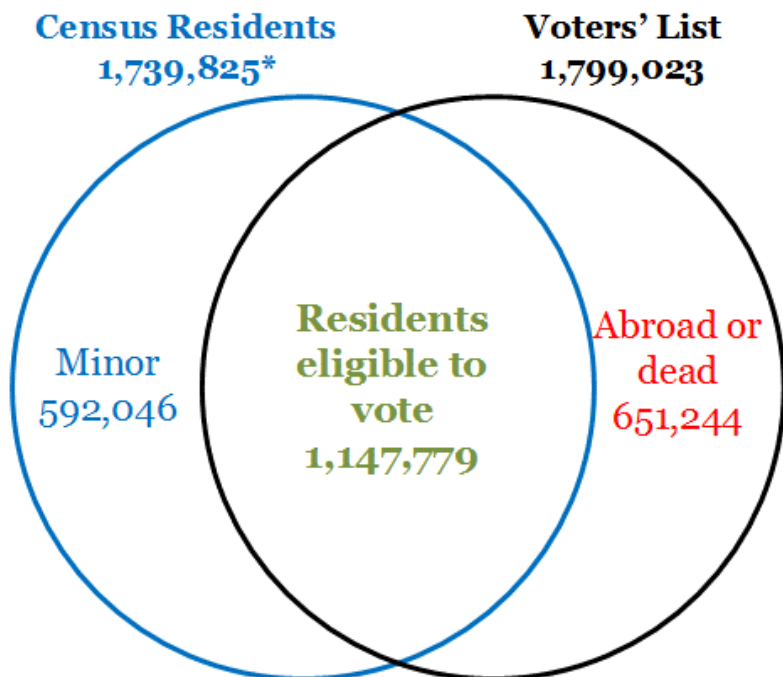
Except for two odd years, the annual increase of the VL ranges from 3.3% to 4.4%, significantly higher than can be explained by demographic trends. A rough estimate suggests that each year about 30,000 Kosovars turn 18 and 10,000 pass away. The net 20,000 can only explain an average growth of 1,3% per year. Overall, between 2001 and 2014 (the period we ascribe to natural growth and not due to registration of diaspora or displaced Serbs), the list has grown by 3.4% a year, about three times faster than explained by natural growth. To translate percentages into numbers, the list has grown by about 550,000 names, whereas it should have grown by only 216,000 names.

About one-third of the suspicious increase occurred due to the non-removal of dead persons' names from the list. It is interesting that the few names which were indeed removed by the election administrators (mostly in 2009) were removed from the VL but not from the civil registry. Because the law requires that the most recent civil registry is used ahead of each election, the names which were once removed were found in the VL again in subsequent years. Analysts often mention the example of the late President Rugova whose name could be found on the VL years after his death.

The VL has indeed been cleaned, probably as a result of a joint working group of the Central Election Commission and the Ministry of Interior. In 2014, the VL was larger than in 2013 by only 0.3%. The first clean-up of the VL took place in 2009, which resulted in a smaller list than in 2007.

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>Census Residents</b>   | <b>1739825*</b>  |
| <b>Census Minors</b>  | <b>592,046</b>   |
| <b>Residents - Minors = Real Voters</b>                                       | <b>1,147,779</b> |
| <b>Voters List (VL)</b>   | <b>1,799,023</b> |
| <b>VL - Real Voters = Abroad or Dead</b>                                      | <b>651,244</b>   |
| *Excluding municipalities: Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Zvecan and North Mitrovica |                  |

Another way to estimate the level of inaccuracy in the VL is to compare it to the data from the population registration conducted in 2011, which states that Kosovo has a resident population of 1,739,825 (of which approximately 600,000 are minors).<sup>4</sup> The illustration below calculates voter groupings based on age and residence (the census gives a snapshot of residents of all ages in Kosovo, compared to the VL which omits minors but includes Kosovars abroad). Subtracting the minors from the total number of residents leaves around 1.15 million adults with the right to vote, significantly less than the 1.8 million Kosovars with the right to vote in the VL.



\*Excluding the municipalities: Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Zvecan and North Mitrovica

Kosovars abroad have the legal right to vote and D4D does not advocate taking away this right. Kosovo has a massive diaspora and it is a priority to keep it closely attached (although the low turnout of diaspora does not speak in its favor). While their right to vote is not problematic, the appearance of their names in the same roster as all the other voters is an issue. Given an inadequate voting process, about one-third of the VL can potentially be abused by others who may vote on behalf of those abroad. The illustration below visually depicts our calculation of how many Kosovars are minors, how many live abroad, and what proportion are residents with the legal right to vote.

The voter list mismatch has previously been studied by D4D through a door-to-door audit which compared the VL in Kacanik with the actual residents. The study<sup>5</sup> found that only about 60% of the names in the VL were found in the same precincts as reported, while the rest were either abroad (19%), deceased (3%), living in another location in Kosovo (11%), or there was no information about them (7%).

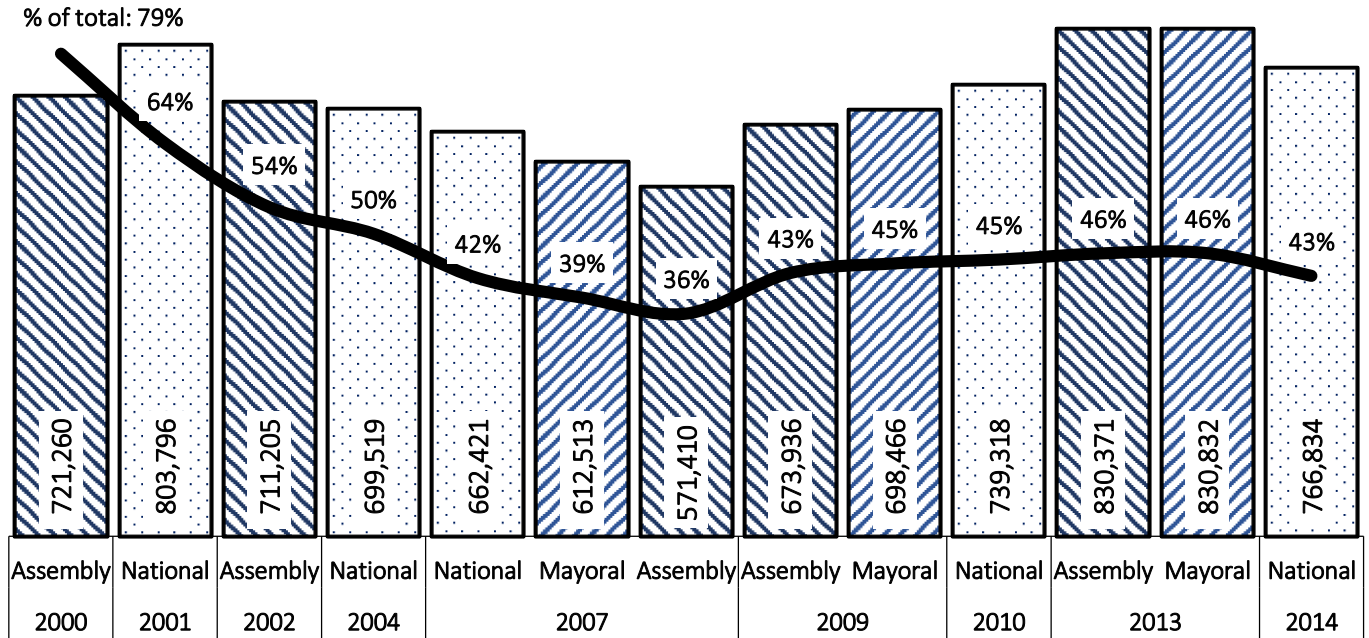
### *Real Turnout*

In 2000, a whopping 80% of Kosovars turned out to vote, which decreased to 36% in 2007 (for municipal assembly elections) but increased to 46% in 2013 (also municipal elections). The graph on the next page depicts the turnout in numbers of voters (bars) and percentage of the VL (line).

It is important to note that the amount of people who actually voted and their presentation as a share of the electorate do not necessarily follow the same trend. Percentages should be read with caution and can only be interpreted in light of inaccuracies in the VL. In 2000, the diaspora, Serbs, and much of the displaced Kosovars had not registered. As the list grew, these categories started to swell the ranks of seeming non-voters.

Using the calculations from the previous section, we can calculate the share of people who voted, but this time as a percentage of Kosovars actually residing in Kosovo. The only way to do this is to use data from the population registration in 2011. The data from the 2010 election was selected because it was the closest to 2011. Dividing the voter turnout with the proportion of adults that the census indicated lived in Kosovo yielded a real turnout of 64.4%, hardly the crisis in participation that the official figures portray.

## Turnout 2000 - 2014



The numbers in the graph above also enable identification of a potential source of major fraud. The fact that there were two and three sets of elections on the same day (in 2009 and 2007 respectively) makes it possible to compare turnout by type of elections. It is hard to comprehend that 662,421 votes were cast for the national elections in 2007 and 90,000 fewer were cast for the municipal assembly elections – although every voter was given three ballots at once. If the data is to be believed, every seventh voter cast only one or two ballots—but not the third—and there was no evidence of ballots which were spoilt or thrown away otherwise. These cases were extremely rare, leading to the conclusion that major fraud was behind this mismatch.

The order of importance of the different types of elections also bolsters this assumption. National elections are clearly the most important and the incentives to “boosting” the turnout is higher (as indicated). The second most important elections are mayoral ones, followed by the municipal assembly elections which are seen as least important, hence the lowest (and probably the real) ‘turn-out’.

### *By-Mail and Conditional*

One of the interesting and arguably redundant features of Kosovo’s elections has been the conditional ballots (the ability to vote in a location other than one’s precinct using a double envelope to ensure secrecy). The inaccuracies in the VL and the high level of displacement has forced the use of conditional ballots to prevent disenfranchisement of Kosovars whose names could not be found on the list. As can be seen in the table below, about 3-5% of Kosovars have made use of conditional ballots while another 0.5% to 3.5% have voted using by-mail.

This data is a perfect illustration of how the CEC intentionally merged results for conditional and by-mail voting. These figures are collected separately and it requires a deliberate

decision to merge them. Moreover, results are broken down by municipality only for some years and not for others. This is hardly accidental for the CEC must have had separate figures before they decided to publish them jointly.

The rate of rejection is also important to track, for it indicates either (a) attempts to vote by voters who were not eligible or (b) that the ballots of real voters from abroad were rejected, because someone else had already voted in-person on their behalf (see the graph on the next page).

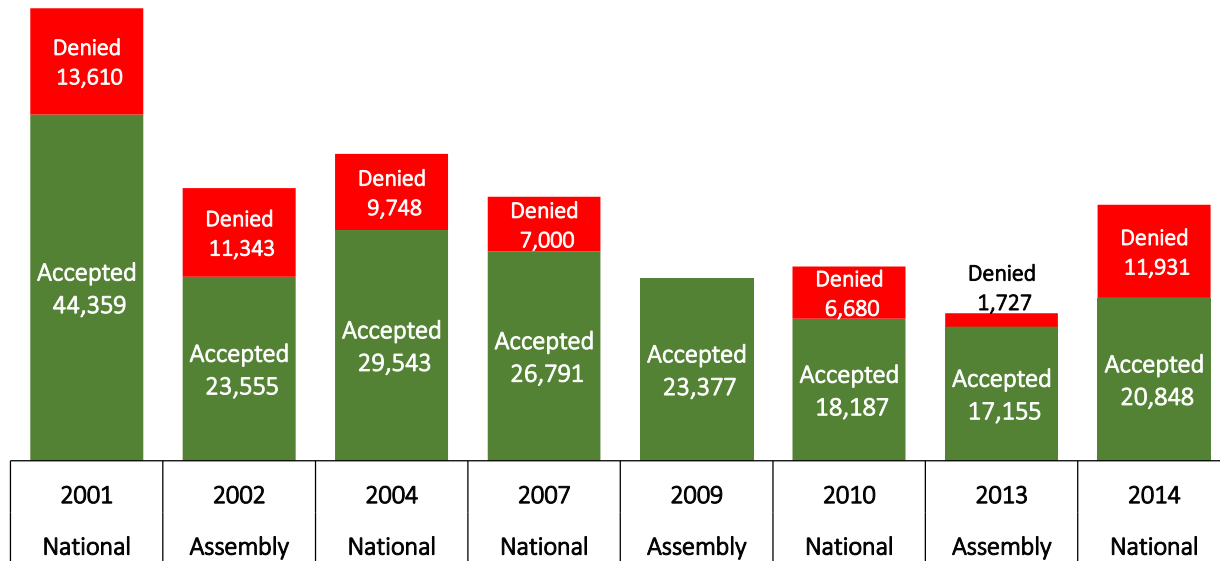
It is interesting to look at the type of municipalities that tend to have a high number of conditional and by-mail ballots. Prishtina has topped the list throughout the years, except for the municipal elections in 2013 when it was overtaken by Prizren (see the table below). Serb-majority municipalities have consistently scored the lowest.



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### Rate of Acceptance of Conditional and By-Mail Ballots

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|          |      | Number      |         | Percentage  |         |
|----------|------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
|          |      | Conditional | By-Mail | Conditional | By-Mail |
| National | 2001 | 57,969      | 27,601  | 7.21%       | 3.43%   |
| Assembly | 2002 | 34,898      | 6,957   | 4.91%       | 0.98%   |
| National | 2004 | 39,291      | 3,794   | 5.62%       | 0.54%   |
| National | 2007 | 33,791      | 6,233   | 5.10%       | 0.94%   |
| Assembly | 2009 | 23,377      |         | 3.47%       |         |
| National | 2010 | 24,867      |         | 3.36%       |         |
| Assembly | 2013 | 18,882      |         | 2.27%       |         |
| National | 2014 | 32,779      |         | 4.27%       |         |

It is clear that larger and urban municipalities have more serious challenges due either to size or to the rate of displacement. However, migratory trends show that individuals usually move from smaller to larger municipalities but fail to transfer their official residence. In this case, many residents of Prishtina may choose to cast their vote for another municipality, which would have shown a high rate of conditional voting in most rural municipalities. The high rate of conditional ballots for Prishtina points in the opposite direction, which is hard to explain. This could be an indication of fraud because the larger municipalities are more important to win.

### *Invalid Votes*

The rate of invalid ballots is an indicator of whether the electoral system is easy to understand by all. A high rate of invalid ballots indicates that there is either a high degree of dissatisfaction due to an active boycott or that the system is too complicated for the least literate, and there may be inadequate voter education.

In 2000, the rate of invalid (including blank) ballots was 2.6%, which decreased in subsequent years as the lists were

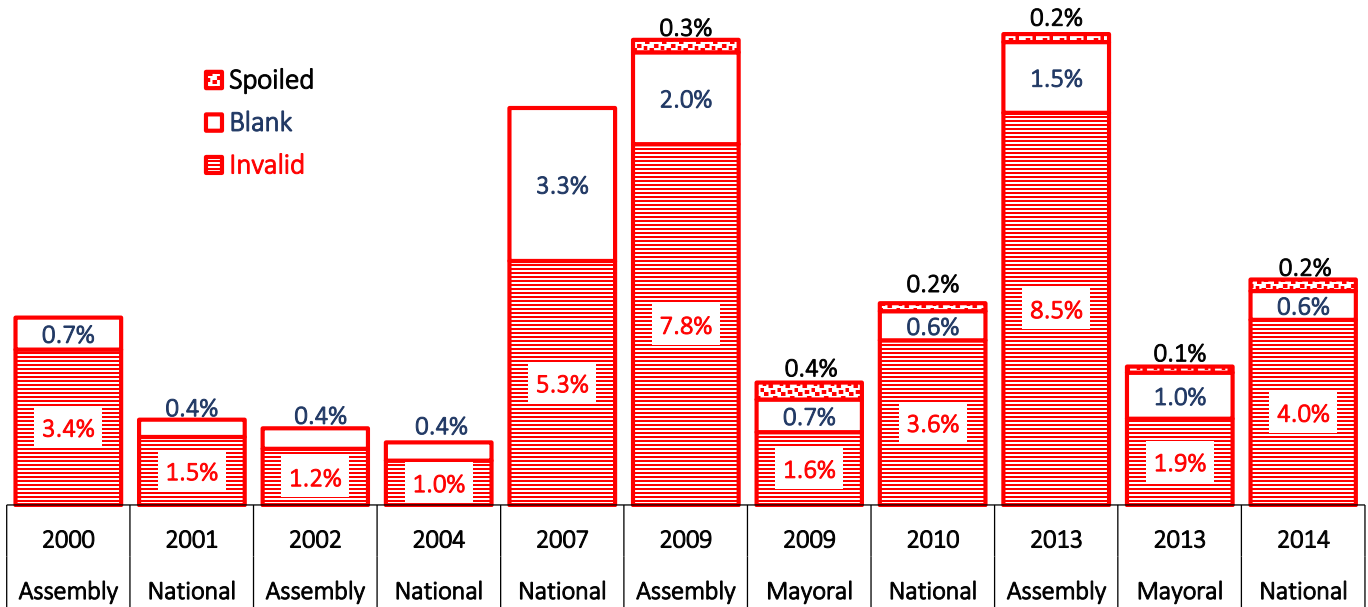
closed and voters learned how to vote, reaching the lowest level of 1.3% in 2004. The requirement for 23 marks in 2007 (three sets of elections on one day, with a separate booklet on the side) was obviously too complicated for 8.6% whose preference went to waste. The high rate of invalid ballots was blamed on open lists by opponents of intra-party competition. Proponents of internal party democracy have blamed a combination of two factors: the lack of districts and the fact that three sets of elections were held on the same day.

The municipal elections in 2009 and 2013 saw an even higher rate of invalid ballots, 10.1% and 10.2% respectively – effectively disenfranchising every tenth vote. The ballot design is partly to blame, for the mayoral elections (held concurrently) saw only 2.7% invalid ballots (from this year, the statistics

| <b>Rate of Invalid Ballots in selected parliamentary elections</b> |       |
|--|-------|
| Estonia (2015)   | 0.6%  |
| United Kingdom (2010)  | 1.0%  |
| Albania (2013)   | 1.8%  |
| Greece (2015)  | 2.3%  |
| Macedonia (FYROM) (2011)   | 2.7%  |
| Albania (2009)   | 2.9%  |
| Bulgaria (2014)  | 5.1%  |
| Belgium (2014)   | 5.7%  |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014)                                      | 8.7%  |
| Iraq (2014)  | 13.7% |
| Algeria (2007)   | 14.4% |
| * Source: International IDEA                                       |       |

were also comprised of spoilt ballots). The choice of ten preferences in 2007 was reduced to five and the learning curve should have decreased the number of invalid ballots. It is baffling why the rate has not decreased, which raises doubts of possible fraud – that invalidating ballots may have been used as a technique to shape up results during counting.

## The percentage of Invalid, Blank and Spoiled Ballots



| Invalid Ballots |       |       |                  |                      |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------------------|----------------------|
| Election years  |       | Total | Lowest           | Highest              |
| Assembly        | 2000  | 3.4%  | Istog (2.5%)     | Fushe Kosove (9.7%)  |
| National        | 2001  | 1.5%  | Decan (0.9%)     | Podujevo (9.3%)      |
| Assembly        | 2002  | 1.2%  | Decan (0.8%)     | Dragash (3.4%)       |
| National        | 2004  | 1.0%  | Decan (0.6%)     | Zvecan (35.8%)       |
| National        | 2007* | 5.3%  | Leposaviq (0.9%) | Ferizaj (7.7%)       |
| Assembly        | 2009  | 7.8%  | Leposaviq (3.5%) | Ferizaj (11.7%)      |
| Mayoral         | 2009  | 1.6%  | Klokot (0.9%)    | Zvecan (17.9%)       |
| National        | 2010  | 3.6%  | Ferizaj (1.5%)   | Ranilug (8.5%)       |
| Assembly        | 2013  | 8.5%  | Mamusha (4.7%)   | Glogovac (11.9%)     |
| Mayoral         | 2013  | 1.9%  | Junik (0.7%)     | Zvecan (5.8%)        |
| National        | 2014  | 4.0%  | Mamusha (2.6%)   | Hani i Elezit (7.6%) |

\* the CEC has not reported blank ballots for mayoral and municipal assembly elections

The table above presents the municipalities with the lowest and the highest rate of invalid ballots. In addition to invalid ballots, it is important to pay attention to blank ballots, separately reported since 2001. It is interesting to note the large difference of blank ballots across municipalities. A similar rate among municipalities would be a sign of illiteracy, but because the rates differ, it is an additional argument that the ballots were intentionally spoiled during the counting in municipalities with tight results.

The graph on the previous page presents the rate of blank ballots as a proportion of all invalid ballots for each set of elections. The table below presents the municipalities with the highest and the lowest rates of blank ballots. The large proportion of blank ballots in Serb municipalities was probably a result of a rejectionist political stance towards Kosovo institutions. The very low levels in other areas may be a sign that blank ballots provided an easy opportunity for commissioners to fill them out during the counting (a trend that was also observed).

| Blank Ballots  |       |        |                      |                   |
|----------------|-------|--------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Election years |       | Total  | Lowest               | Highest           |
| Assembly       | 2000  | 9,757  | Decan (0.9%)         | Gjakova (2.0%)    |
| National       | 2001  | 3,471  | Prishtine (0.3%)     | Leposaviq (0.9%)  |
| Assembly       | 2002  | 3,186  | Prishtine (0.2%)     | Podujevo (2.0%)   |
| National       | 2004  | 2,726  | Suva Reka (0.1%)     | Obilic (7.1%)     |
| National       | 2007* | 21,980 | Obilic (1.0%)        | Shterpce (30.7%)  |
| Assembly       | 2009  | 13,324 | Ranilug (0.2%)       | Novo Brdo (5.1%)  |
| Mayoral        | 2009  | 4,923  | Skenderaj (0.2%)     | Leposaviq (55.2%) |
| National       | 2010  | 4,668  | Ranilug (0.1%)       | Leposaviq (5.7%)  |
| Assembly       | 2013  | 12,667 | Junik (0.1%)         | Ranilug (2.9%)    |
| Mayoral        | 2013  | 8,234  | Junik (0.1%)         | Zvecan (7.7%)     |
| National       | 2014  | 4,782  | Hani i Elezit (0.2%) | Ranilug (3.4%)    |

\* the CEC has not reported blank ballots for mayoral and municipal assembly elections

The rate of spoiled ballots also varies across municipalities. For example, a whopping 34% (in Ferizaj in 2009) of votes for the mayoral contest in 2009 were declared spoiled, clearly a result of an organized effort. It is clear spoiled ballots are a result of an organized effort for they largely occurred in municipalities with the tightt results.

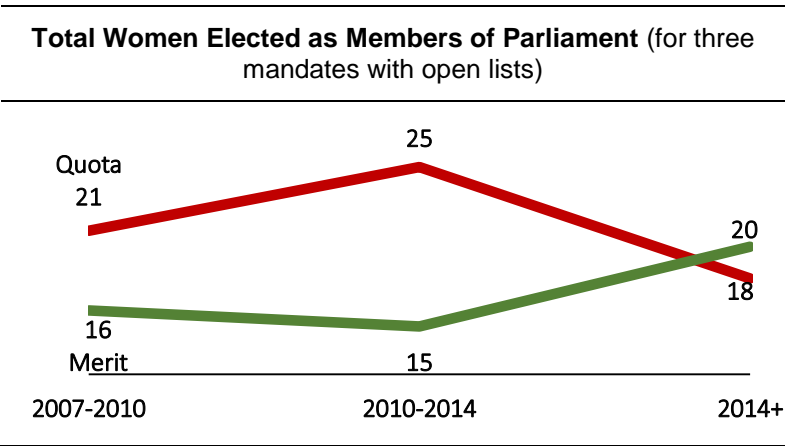
| Spoiled Ballots |      |       |                   |                   |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Election years  |      | Total | Lowest            | Highest           |
| Assembly        | 2009 | 1,854 | Shterpce (0.1%)   | Prizren (9.9%)    |
| Mayoral         | 2009 | 2,560 | Mamusha (0.04%)   | Ferizaj (33.7%)   |
| National        | 2010 | 1,236 | Leposaviq (0.08%) | Prishtine (15.3%) |
| Assembly        | 2013 | 1,452 | Partesh (0.07%)   | Prishtine (14.2%) |
| Mayoral         | 2013 | 1,080 | Klokot (0.09%)    | Prishtine (9%)    |
| National        | 2014 | 1,899 | Shterpce (0.05%)  | Ferizaj (25.2%)   |

# Impact on Voting Behaviour

The choice of an electoral system delivers multiple goals. For example, the gender quota aims to improve the representation of women, while the open lists aim to improve direct accountability of elected officials. Below, the paper analyzes the trend of several elections on the quota, how many MPs are getting re-elected, how many MPs were elected thanks to the open lists, and how voters use the preferential vote.

## The Gender Quota

Following the introduction of a 30% female representation requirement in the Kosovo Assembly, there have been many debates as to whether the representation is symbolic or substantial. D4D has examined these patterns based on the election results and the individual votes gained by candidates. The graph below presents patterns of gender representation in the last three parliamentary mandates. The 2007 elections show that over 40% (16 out of 37) of female MPs won their mandates without the help of the quota, which has increased over 50% (20 out of 38) in 2014.



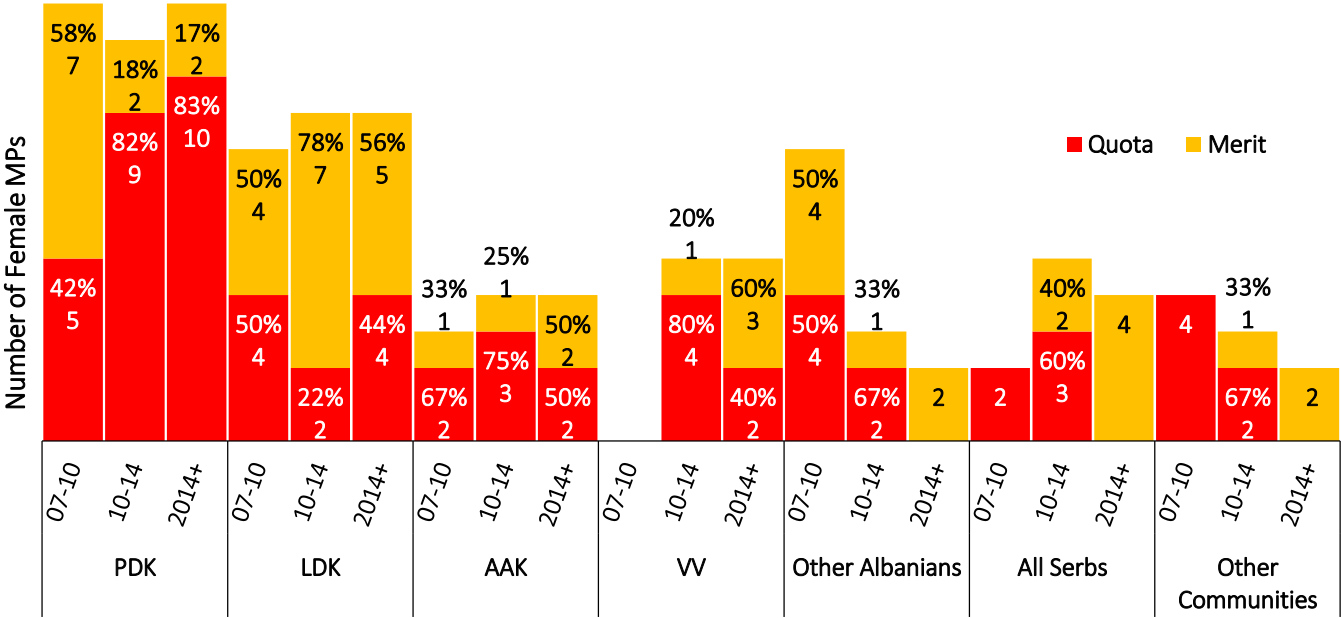
The quota has enabled better gender representation in the Parliament, but it is the open lists that have enabled a significant number of powerful men and women to represent their constituencies. In the long run, only competition within and across the party lines will create the type of dynamic which reinvents accountability and representation over time.

The graph below compares the rate of meritocracy in the election of female MPs, cross-tabulated by party affiliation. In 2007, PDK had 7 (out of 12) female MPs who were elected by their own votes, which has since fallen to 2 (again out of 12). LDK has had more powerful women, ranging from 4 (out of 8) in 2007 to 5 (out of 9) in 2014 (consistently above 50%). Vetëvendosje has five female MPs, three of whom were elected thanks to their own voters (and the others thanks to the quota). Smaller parties have consistently performed better where virtually all women gathered sufficient votes to get elected. All four Serb MPs did not make use of the quota, as did two of the other community MPs.

In 2007, for every three men, only two women voted. In recent years, this gap has narrowed, but parties should still have a high interest to capture the attention of female voters, stand up for issues that preoccupy them, and field stronger candidates, are likely to improve their overall performance in future elections.



Which Parties Had More Successful Women? (for three mandates with open lists)



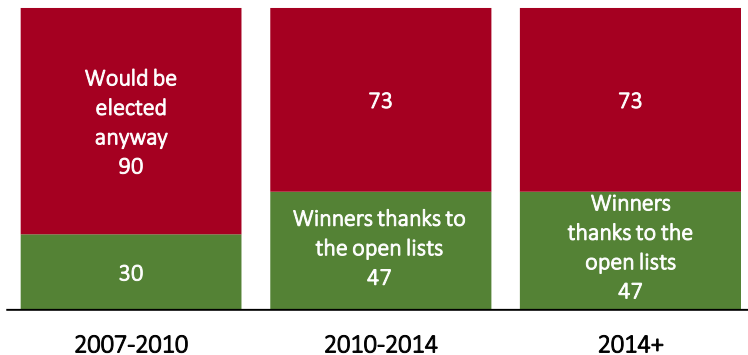
## Open Lists

Opening the electoral system to vote for individual candidates (and not merely for parties) promotes accountability and direct constituency relations. It is therefore important to measure how many MPs are overcoming their inferior position on the list as assigned to them by the party and getting elected where a closed list system would leave them behind. The figure below indicates that a growing number of MPs jump the ranks and get elected only thanks to the open list. Around 60% of MPs would have gotten elected also with closed lists.

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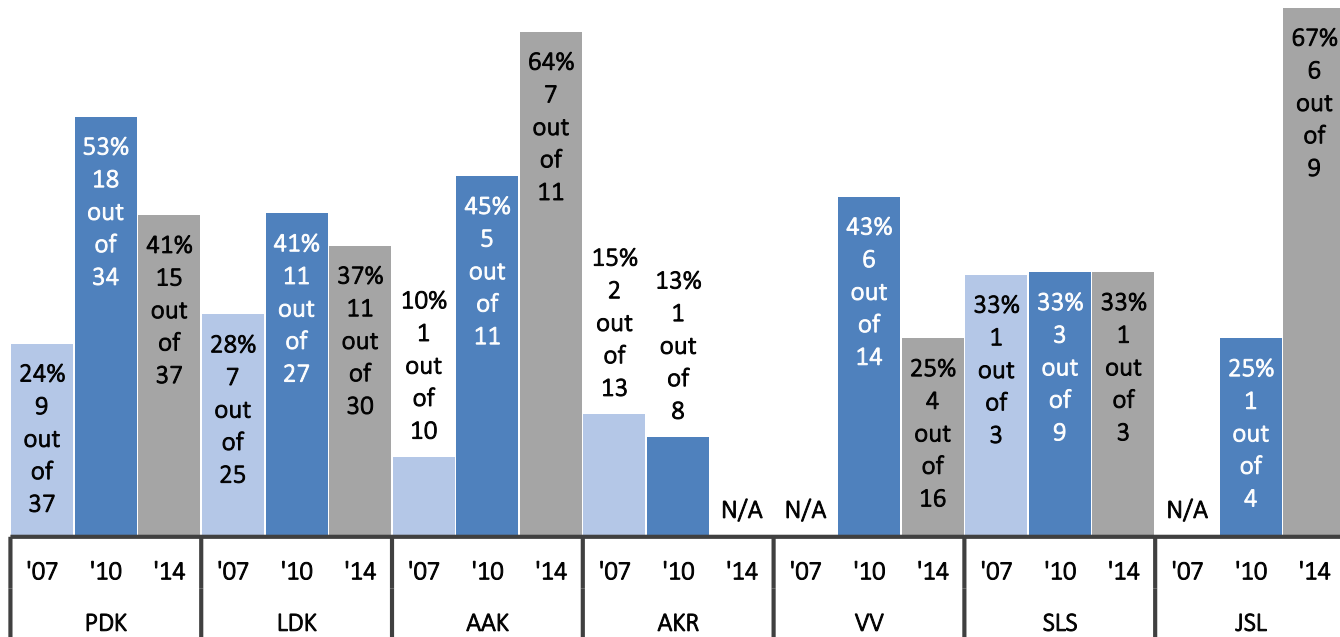
### Did MPs get elected thanks to **Their Vote** or thanks to the **Spot on the List**?

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As with the gender competition, a breakdown by party enables a ranking of parties by the rate of meritocratic MPs who get elected against the odds. In PDK, 24% (9 out of 37) of MPs overtook their better listed colleagues, which peaked at 53% in 2013. LDK also saw an increase from 28% to 37%, to be topped only by AAK (the highest jump from 10% in 2007 to 64% in 2014) and JSL (67%). An internal process seemed to have spared VV, where only 25% of MPs won enough votes to get elected despite the odds.

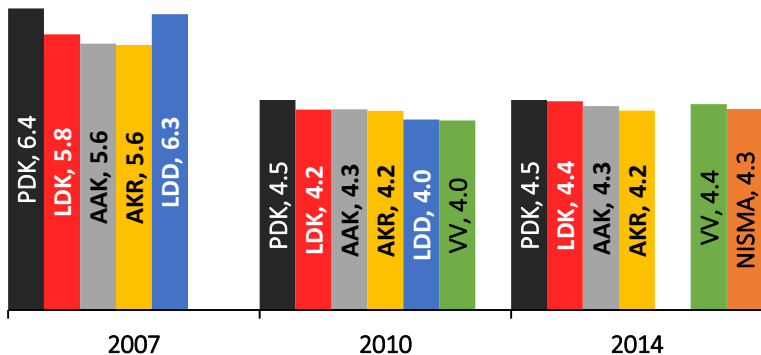
## More winners from Open Lists?



## The Preferential Vote

One of the features of Kosovo's electoral system has been the preferential vote, i.e. the ability to mark 5 (in 2010 and 2014) or 10 candidates (in 2007) of the same party. Comparing the number of marks an average voter has made helps spot suspicious differences. In 2007, given the choice of marking 10 candidates, PDK voters marked an average of 6.4 names, followed by LDD with 6.3. The mobilization seemed to have been much higher in 2010, where given the choice of five names, PDK voters marked 4.5 names, followed by LDK with 4.2 while VV was at the bottom with 4 choices. This ranking largely coincides with the number of commissioners that each party fielded – PDK and LDK had the highest number, while VV had no commissioners, given it was a new party. In 2014, this rate has increased among all other parties, although it is impossible to tell if this depended on a mobilization of their voters or of their commissioners.

**Average Marks made in Ballot**



## *How the Choice is Made?*

Given the novelty of the open list and the preferential choice, it is important to measure how Kosovars decide which names to mark. We posed this question in two rounds of our survey, compared in the table below.

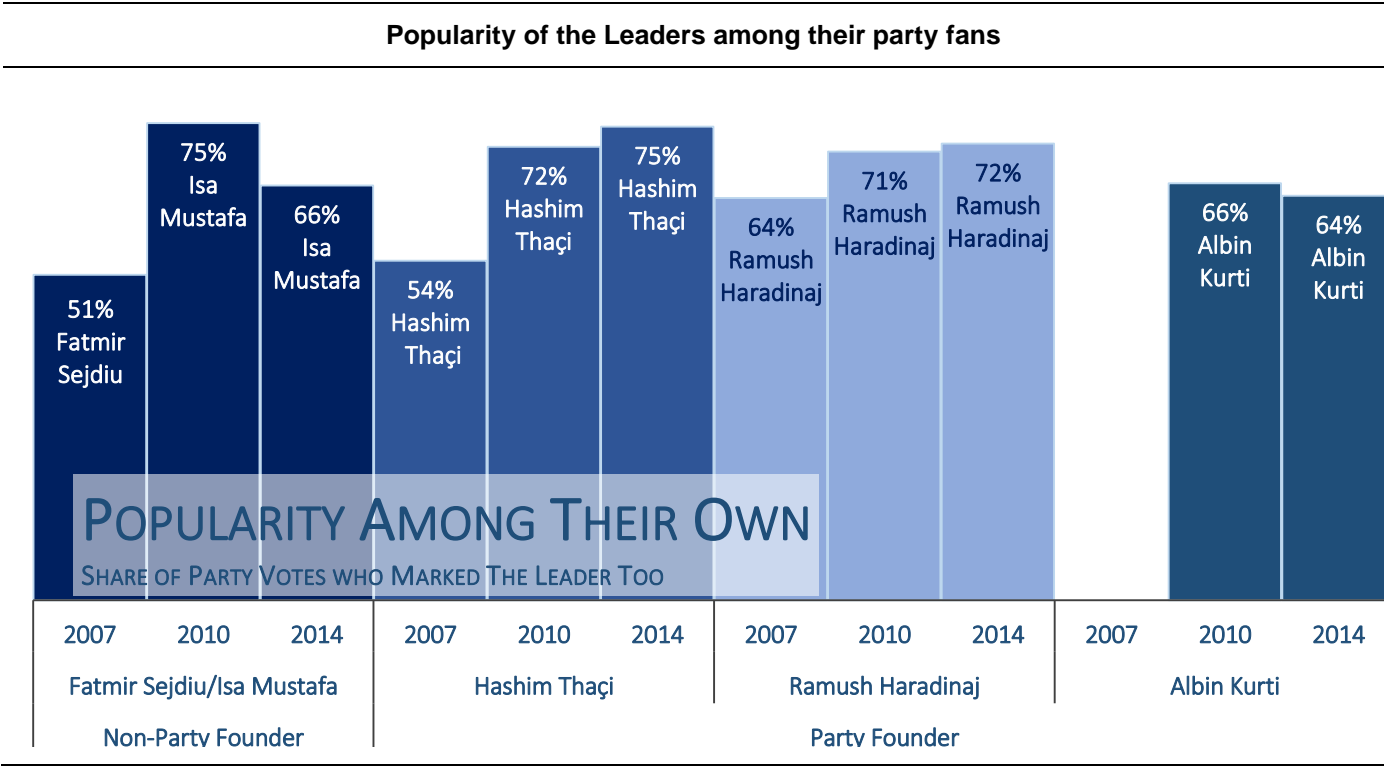
| When you voted for the party, which candidates did you vote for? |                             |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Survey   | Oct-12                      | Jun-14                      |
| <b>Decreased</b>   | <b>Local Elections 2009</b> | <b>Local Elections 2013</b> |
| First 5 choices  | 23%                         | 11%                         |
| close to the leader  | 12%                         | 6%                          |
| professionally proven  | 36%                         | 31%                         |
| proven during the war  | 6%                          | 3%                          |
| <b>Inceased</b>  | <b>Local Elections 2009</b> | <b>Local Elections 2013</b> |
| from my city   | 11%                         | 22%                         |
| of my gender   | 0%                          | 2%                          |
| I know personally  | 7%                          | 13%                         |
| Don't Know/Refuse  | 4%                          | 5%                          |
| Did not vote   | 1%                          | 7%                          |

Respondents of both surveys have opted mostly for “professionally proven” candidates. There may also be psychological reasons why most respondents would pick this option. It is positive that the share of voters who “fast marked 5 names” has decreased. Voters have begun to vote more for people they know personally (13%) or who are from their town (22%), ditching their support for candidates close to the party leader (4%).

## *Leadership Gravity*

Leaders of the main political parties in Kosovo have immense influence on lower party ranks and are largely seen as the main reason for the degree of support among the electorate – hence the assessment that the parties are leader-driven.

It is possible to measure the support of a political leader among the voters of his party by comparing the number of individual votes with the votes obtained by the party. During the past three elections, the leaders of the four major parties (PDK, LDK, VV, and AAK) got more than half of the votes that went to the party, as seen from our calculations based upon the official data received from Central Election Commission (CEC).



In 2007, every second voter who voted for LDK marked Fatmir Sejdiu among five candidates of the party. This increased to 75% in 2010 when Ista Mustafa took the helm. Mustafa was the only leader who had not founded the party, and yet he performed better than all other leaders in that election. However, Mustafa did not pull the same feat in 2014. He received only 66% of LDK votes, which means that every third voter of LDK did not mark Isa Mustafa as one of their five favorite candidates from LDK.

The position of Hashim Thaçi as the head of PDK since the establishment of the party did not weaken his authority among the party electorate. On the contrary, from the position of 54% in 2007 (only 3% better than Fatmir Sejdiu), he consolidated the support of PDK voters and he got 75% in the last elections, higher than any other party.

Ramush Haradinaj also increased his influence among AAK voters from 64% in 2007 to 72% in 2014. Albin Kurti's leadership in Vetëvendosje is high but with a mild downward trend, which may be consistent with the movement's stance that they are driven by an idea and not by an eternal leader.

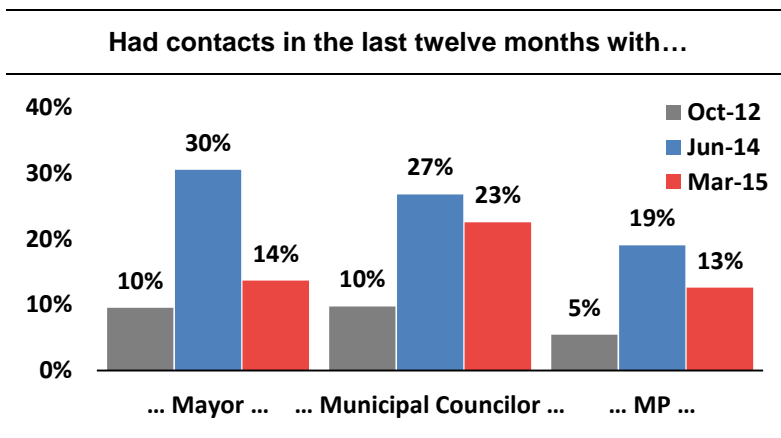
## Relationship to Politics

The remainder of the paper compares the results of three surveys that D4D commissioned between 2012 and 2015. The key challenges to consolidate democracy are the degree that citizens take part in public affairs and how they seek ways to influence policy. Voting is the main form of democratic participation, and we have inquired about how the voting experience and relationship to politics evolves over time. In this section, we report the findings of the surveys with regard to contacts with representatives, party membership/affiliation, proximity to a party, and how voters decide on their choice.



## Contact with Representatives

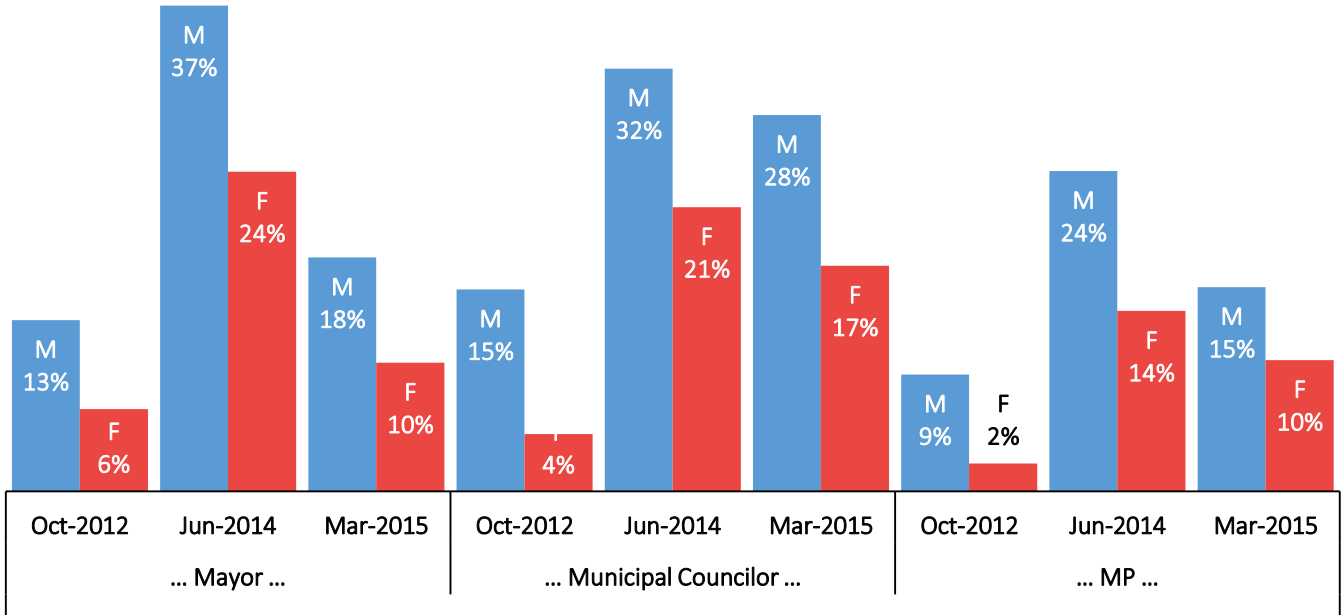
One of the key criteria that measures relationship to politics is the frequency of contacts with elected officials in the last twelve months.



In 2012, only one in 10 voters had contacts with the mayor, and half of that with a Member of Parliament. The belief that the 2014 elections were very important is proven by the fact that elected officials tripled their outreach to the voters. Unfortunately, once the elections were over, the outreach was down in 2015 but still significantly higher than in 2012.

Women have had fewer, but growing, opportunities to have contacts with elected officials. In 2012, 13% of men had met a mayor, a privilege offered to only 6% of women. The trend is even lower for councilors and Members of Parliament, paradoxically for there were no female mayors in 2012, while 30% of members of each legislative body is composed of women. The improvements in 2014 and 2015 have significantly decreased this gap. Whereas only 2% of women had the opportunity to meet an MP in 2012 (about five times less than men), the percentage increased to 10% in 2015, two-thirds of that of men (15%).

**Met a ... during the last 12 months (by gender)**



The proportion of women who have met a public official in the last twelve months has increased but not among housewives. A more detailed review is presented in the graph above. Growth was also marked among students, the young, and well-educated respondents. Respondents who work tend to meet public officials more often, and those who have a job in public institutions are twice as likely to have met a public official (around one-third) compared to those employed in the private sector.

In 2012, LDK voters were least likely to have met either an MP, councillor, or mayor. In 2015, LDK respondents had improved their contacts with mayors but were below average in contacts with MPs and councilors. PDK is the mirror image of LDK – in 2012 they were most likely to have met all three categories, and in 2015, their contacts with mayors deteriorated but it improved for the other two categories.

In 2012, AAK voters were less likely to have met an MP and more likely to have met a councilor or Mayor. This deteriorated for all the categories in 2014, and in 2015, its councilors seemed to have made an additional effort, as noted by the survey. VV fans had exposure to MPs but less exposure to mayors and councilors, which has evened out in the next two years.

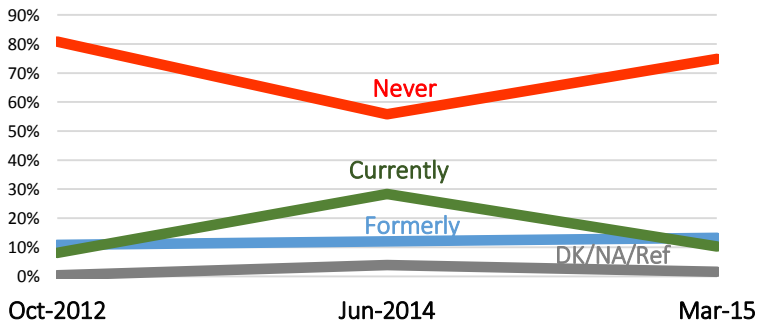
### *Party Membership and Proximity*

A key diagnosis of the health of democracy is party membership. The proportion of Kosovars who adhere to political parties has grown between 2012 and 2014, only to fall to dramatically low rates in 2015. The graph below portrays the rate of Kosovars who declare to be members of a political party, were never members, or used to be members.

Party membership is affected by a range of factors such as education, among others. Individuals with higher education are twice as likely to have party membership than those with

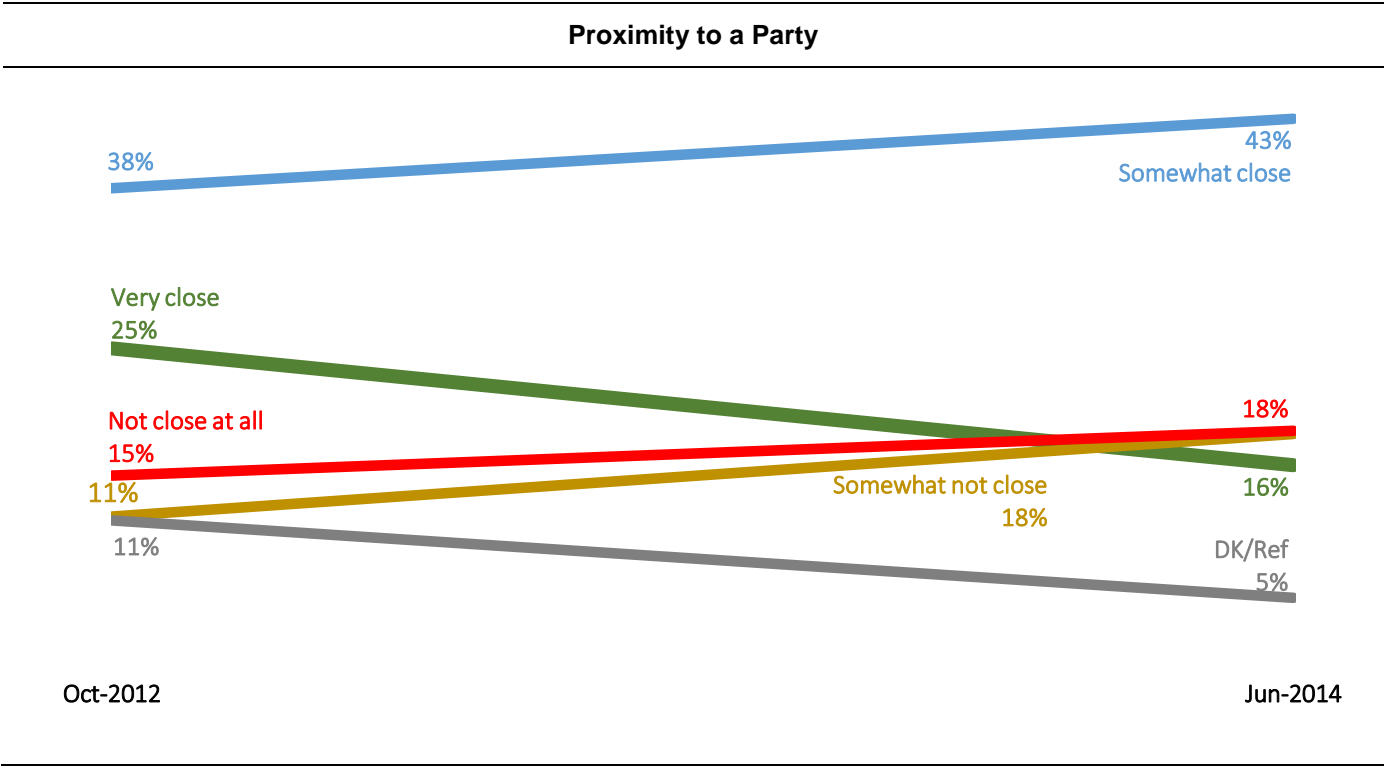
secondary education, and respondents with less than primary education are least likely to be members of a party.

### Are you a member of a political party?

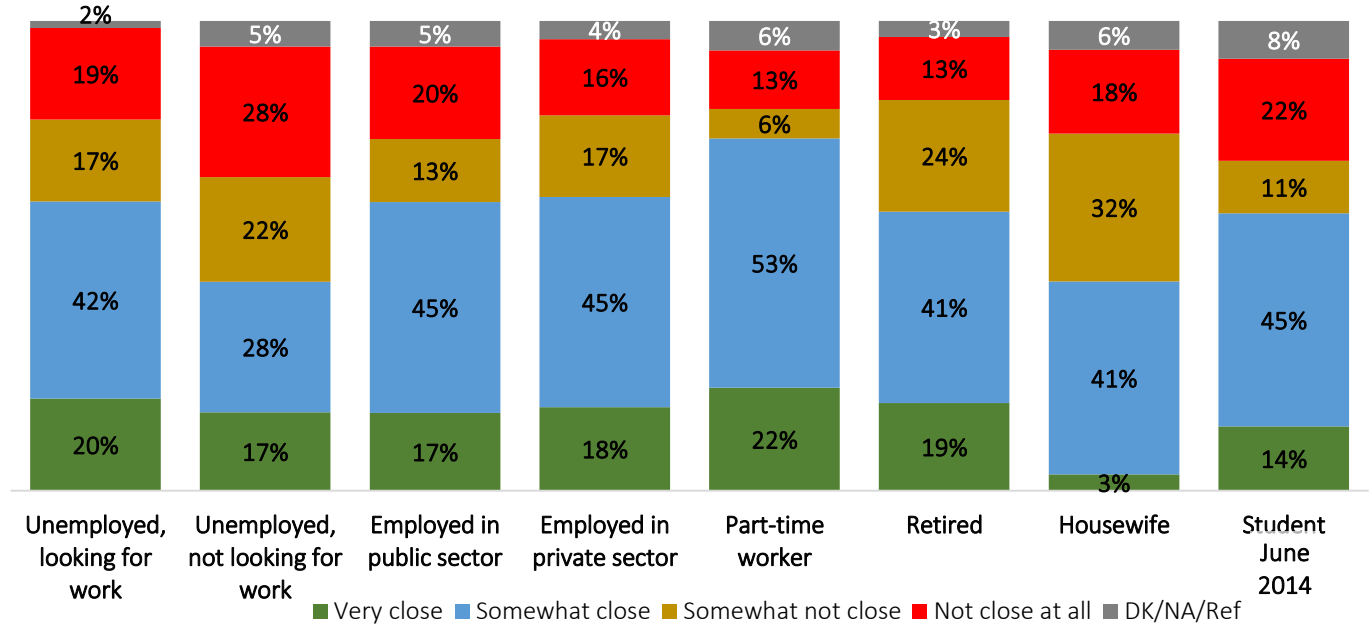


Those least likely to be members of a political party are 18- to 24-year-olds, followed by those above 44. Most avid party fans are 35- to 44-year-olds followed by 25- to 34-year-olds. In 2012, 90% of women had never been a member of the party, which fell to 80% in 2015; meanwhile female membership has increased from 2% to 8%. Income is a strong determinant of party membership. About half of respondents who earn more than 750 Eur have party membership, with a downward trend to just above 20% for those who earn less than 150 Eur.

LDK's fans used to have the highest degree of membership in 2012. In 2014, when there was a surge of party membership across the spectrum, PDK overtook LDK. To this day, PDK fans are more likely to have formal membership. In 2015, around 15% of PDK voters were members of the party, and the figure stands at 10% for LDK and 9% for VV. In turn, LDK garners the votes of those who never had party membership. Around 80% of respondents who would vote LDK are not party members. About a fifth of VV's fans were formerly members of another party.



### Proximity to a Party (by employment)



Employed respondents (primarily in the public but also in the private sector) are more likely to be party members, followed by unemployed; whereas students, retirees, and housewives are least likely to be party members. One who is unemployed but looking for work is three times more likely to belong to a party than one who is unemployed and not looking for work. Similarly to party membership, the question of how close one feels to a specific party yields similar results. Three quarters of part-time workers feel very close (22%) or somewhat close (53%) to a party.

Like membership, closeness to political parties has also decreased (see the graph above.) The rate of Kosovars who felt very close to a party has dropped from 25% to 15%, which is a sign that the rate of militant supporters has fallen. The increase in the share of those who say that they feel “somewhat close” to a party is a sign that pragmatic proximity has increased, but these are also respondents who tend to change affiliation. The rate of Kosovars who do not feel close to politics has also increased, a sign of growing disillusionment with the political class as a whole. It is interesting to note that the share who respond with ‘don’t know’ has decreased.

A third of PDK voters felt very close to the party in 2012 (higher than all others), but that fell to a fifth in 2014 (even with LDK). This has largely been replaced with more PDK fans who feel “somewhat close” to the party (from 42% to 53%), but also by voters who feel somewhat “not close” (from 9% to 18%). Less than 30% of LDK voters felt very close to the party in 2012, which decreased to 21% in 2014. The degree of disaffection has also increased, from 21% who do not feel close to 32% in 2014. Vetëvendosje's trend is similar yet milder. Only 16% of those who would vote VV declared themselves to be avid fans, which remained the same in 2014. Those who said they are somewhat close to the party has increased from 37% to 46%. The rate of disaffection has

increased mildly from 26% to 34%. Other parties, in the aggregate, have seen similar trends.

The rate of men who responded as "very close" has fallen from 30% to 19%, and among women the decrease was even sharper, from 21% to 11%. The rate of increase among "somewhat close" was the same for men and women. The percentage of women and men who said they are "not close" is the same (18%), but there are more women who responded with "somewhat not close".

Proximity to politics has fallen for all levels of education, but most sharply for the least educated segments of the population. The youngest and the elderly have also grown more distant from political parties. Students and housewives are at the bottom of the pack, where only 14% and 3% respectively feel close to politics.



## Voting Trends

This section looks at the number of parties that have contested elections throughout the years and performance by those parties, combined with the results of public opinion polls which are cross-tabulated by a range of demographic traits. These are followed by an analysis of the degree that ordinary Kosovars have changed their party preference over time, which party would be their second-choice, and the degree to which they endorse leaders across the party line.

The number of parties that contest elections is important and is a signifier of the degree of consolidation of the party scene. During the early stages of transition, there are usually a high number of parties contesting elections, which decreases over time. For example, there were 17 parties representing Kosovo Albanians running in the elections of 2001, but only seven in 2014. The number of Serb parties culminated in eight between 2007 and 2008 and has fallen to four.

|                      | 2001 | 2004 | 2007 | 2010 | 2014 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| National             |      |      |      |      |      |
| Political Parties    | 23   | 27   | 24   | 28   | 26   |
| Albanian             | 17   | 16   | 10   | 7    | 7    |
| Serb                 | 1    | 2    | 8    | 8    | 4    |
| Turkish              | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 2    |
| RAE                  | 2    | 3    | 2    | 4    | 6    |
| Bosniak              | 2    | 4    | 2    | 5    | 6    |
| Gorani               | 0    | 1    | 1    | 2    | 1    |
| Citizen Initiatives  | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 3    |
| Independent<br>Cand. | 3    | 5    | 1    | 0    | 1    |

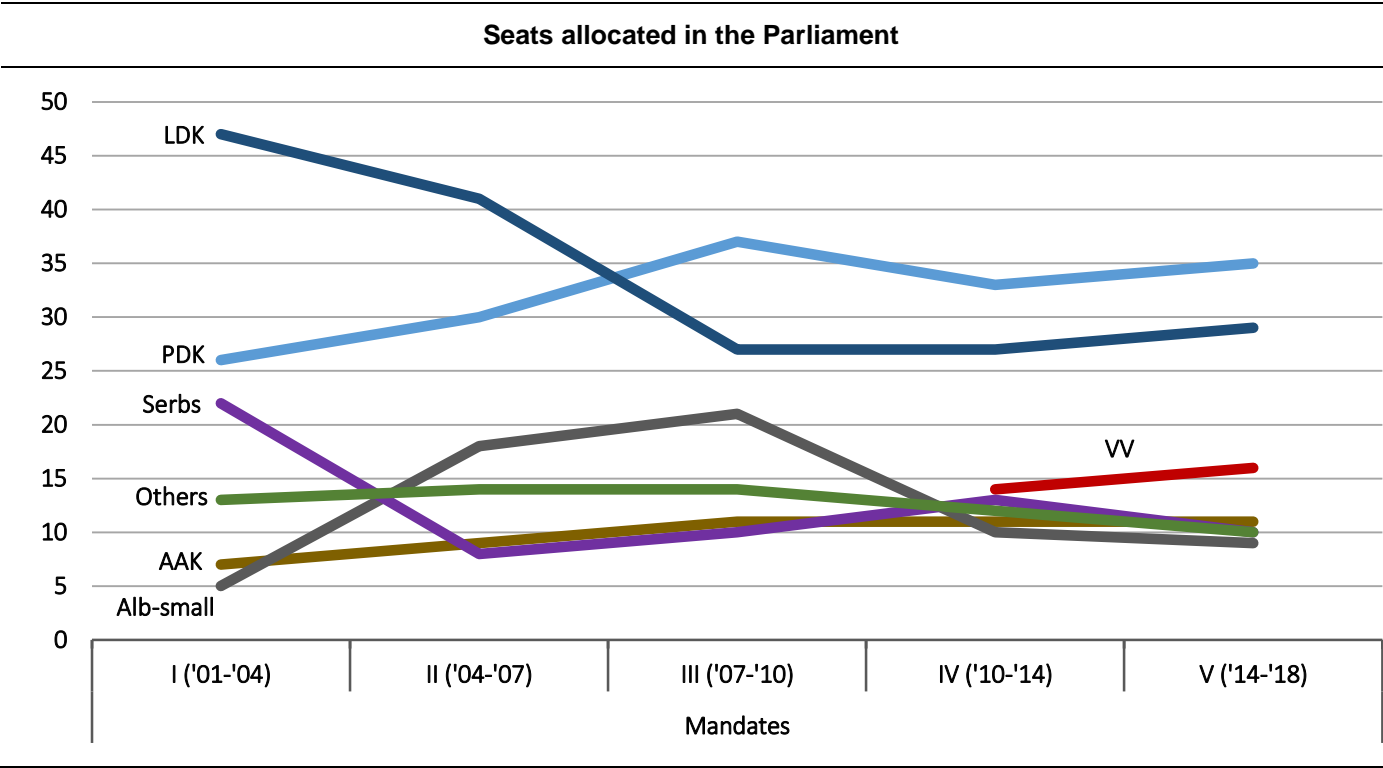
It is also important to look at the voting trends. The table below presents results of the votes that each party has garnered in each electoral cycle.

|      | LDK     | PDK     | VV     | AAK     | SmallAlb | Serbs  | Others |
|------|---------|---------|--------|---------|----------|--------|--------|
| 2000 | 398,872 | 187,046 | -      | 53,037  | 28,135   | -      | 11,544 |
| 2001 | 359,851 | 196,823 | -      | 59,625  | 41,277   | 31,362 | 23,733 |
| 2002 | 320,918 | 207,013 | -      | 61,824  | 45,273   | 38,252 | 22,686 |
| 2004 | 313,437 | 198,603 | -      | 57,724  | 87,836   | 1,232  | 22,364 |
| 2007 | 129,410 | 195,059 | -      | 54,209  | 44,578   | 1,564  | 17,013 |
| 2007 | 128,901 | 189,013 | -      | 56,676  | 37,363   | 221    | 9,340  |
| 2007 | 146,211 | 194,818 | -      | 60,450  | 38,793   | 2,908  | 19,162 |
| 2009 | 175,563 | 235,316 | -      | 121,023 | 49,084   | 8,642  | 20,556 |
| 2009 | 151,771 | 200,149 | -      | 95,066  | 29,050   | 7,184  | 10,684 |
| 2010 | 172,552 | 224,225 | 88,566 | 77,103  | 19,313   | 18,576 | 24,793 |
| 2013 | 191,362 | 202,499 | 60,995 | 104,877 | 46,283   | 47,775 | 24,371 |
| 2013 | 236,741 | 234,292 | 70,578 | 120,806 | 27,293   | 36,026 | 7,247  |
| 2014 | 184,323 | 221,809 | 98,514 | 69,686  | 37,508   | 38,034 | 33,056 |

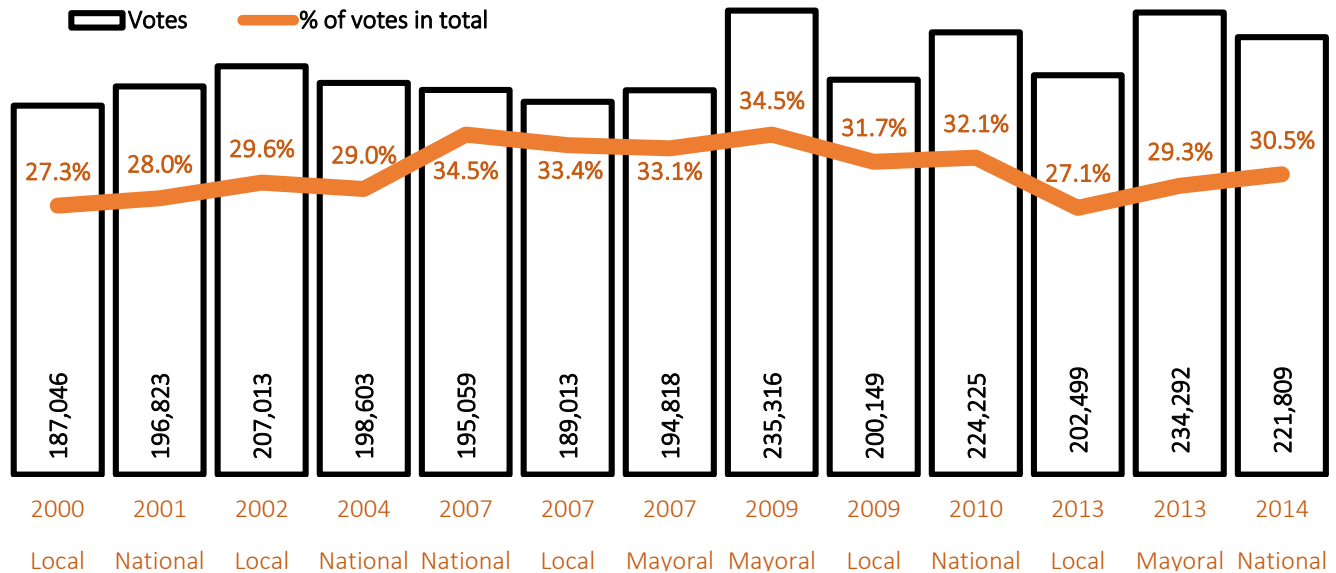
This table and the graph below (which depicts the number of seats in the Parliament) illustrates the voting strength over time. LDK has seen a sharp decline and a modest revival. PDK has marked gradual growth of about 10% in 14 years. Vetëvendosje has seen a growth of 10% in four years has reached 16. AAK has increased the number of MPs but has never surpassed 15 MPs.

PDK and LDK have dominated the Kosovo Parliament in the past 15 years, although in 2014 they jointly controlled a smaller share than they did previously. For about half of the period, LDK and PDK posed as opposition to each other, and for the other half they have joined each other in coalition, forging large coalition governments.

In a recent paper<sup>6</sup>, D4D has argued that Kosovo's party should not consolidate along the lines of the three main parties but needs to undergo significant transformation. The parties should adopt clear stances on most issues of public importance, and over time acquire a degree of consistency in their positions. Below, the paper reviews the trends of each party individually.



### PDK and its stable voter base



PDK has shown steady consistency over years – it won elections since 2007 when PDK won the position of the Prime Minister. It is interesting to note that PDK won the position of the prime minister with less than 200,000 votes due to overall low turnout and LDK's splintering. In local and mayoral elections in 2013, PDK maintained a stable electorate, although it did not do well in the mayoral run-off when it lost most large municipalities to LDK.

PDK's victories of 2007 and 2010 have been widely contested. It was only in 2013 when the electoral conduct saw an improvement, and PDK's first uncontested victory came in 2014. In these elections, PDK largely preserved its voter base from the all-time high of national elections in 2010. Although it came out as the first party, in the coalition talks it lost the top spot to LDK, which had a better bargaining position to form a government.

LDK holds the record of 45 Members of Parliament which it won in 2001. Still under Rugova's charismatic leadership, LDK would lose some of its appeal but would still win elections in 2004. Since the loss of its long-time leader, LDK has suffered from the lack of leadership, internal dissatisfaction, and jostling for power – which has reduced LDK to a shadow of its past. LDK fell down from 313,437 votes in 2004 to 129,410 in 2007, just over one-third of its own size, scoring the worst result in the history of the party. This moment served as the main change of power where PDK took the poll position with more than 35 MPs. With small variations, the same trend continues to this day.

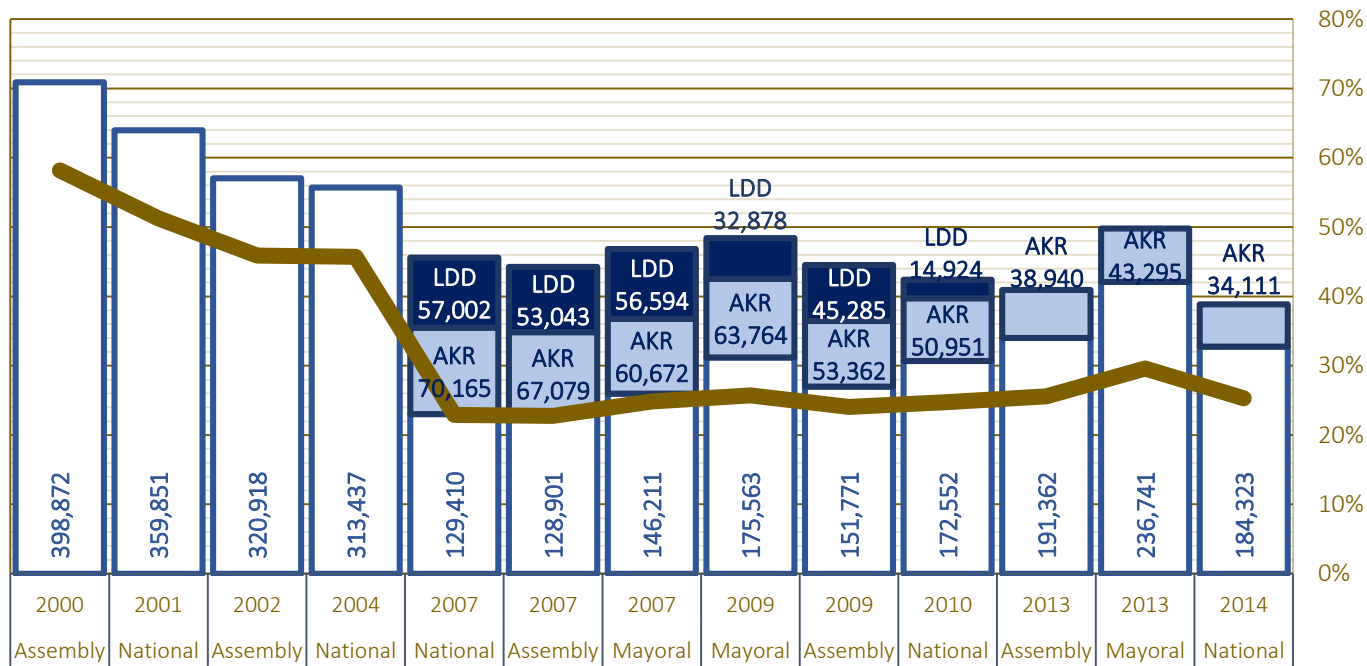
One of the factions that split from LDK (and later merged with AAK) was LDD (League of Democratic Dardania) of Nexhat Daci, the former second-in-command official in LDK. AKR (New Kosova Alliance), a party founded by a successful businessman Behgjet Pacolli, was largely considered to take votes from LDK electorate. Even adding up the three scores do not amount to LDK's 2004 results, an indicator that the

splintering resulted with less than the sum of its parts – and that in general the power battle resulted in major dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction can also be observed in the overall low turnout in 2007 (the lowest of all years), an indication that a major chunk of LDK's voters chose not to vote at all.

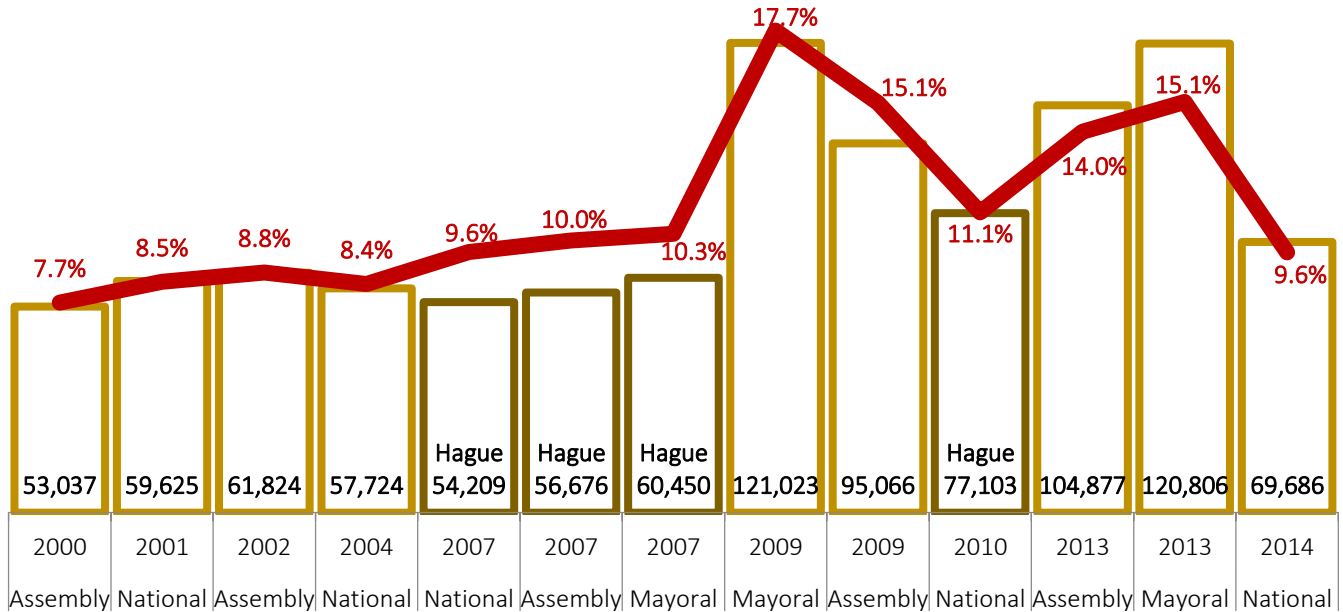
LDK sort of staged a come-back in 2013 when it managed to win several major towns, but lost the capital city and two other municipalities that it had under control. The fact that LDK kept only one municipality where it was in power is an indication that it was not a pro-LDK wind of change but an anti-PDK vote. This irrational exuberance cost them the national elections in 2014 which they approached with excessive confidence.

Ramush Haradinaj's dream (and insistence) to serve a full mandate as prime minister is gradually fading away. Haradinaj became prime minister of Kosovo for three months but was obliged to resign due to the charges by the International Criminal Tribunal for war crimes at the Hague (ICTY). Charges on war crimes had huge impact on AAK's political organisation. The party never acquired the possibility to grow beyond the ceiling of around 70,000 votes. Haradinaj was temporary released in 2009, when his political party achieved around 100,000 votes in mayoral and local elections. In 2010 Haradinaj was resent back to Hague and AAK reverted back to its previous performance. After he was released off charges and present in Kosovo, this helped AAK repeat the success of 2009 in the elections of 2013. However, this time they performed better with municipal assemblies and worse on the mayoral race. Haradinaj's intention to justify the loss of municipalities with mayoral candidates' performance was not supported in 2014 national elections. In 2014 the traditional results of 70.000 voters was back again.

## LDK - Destruction & Partial Come-Back

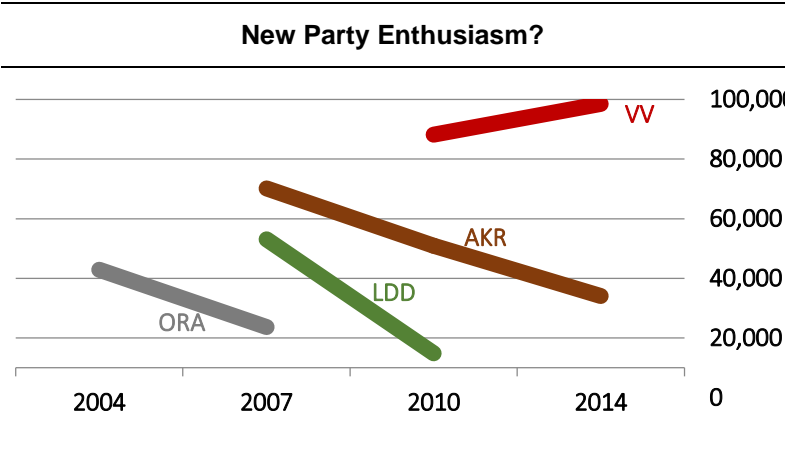


## AAK



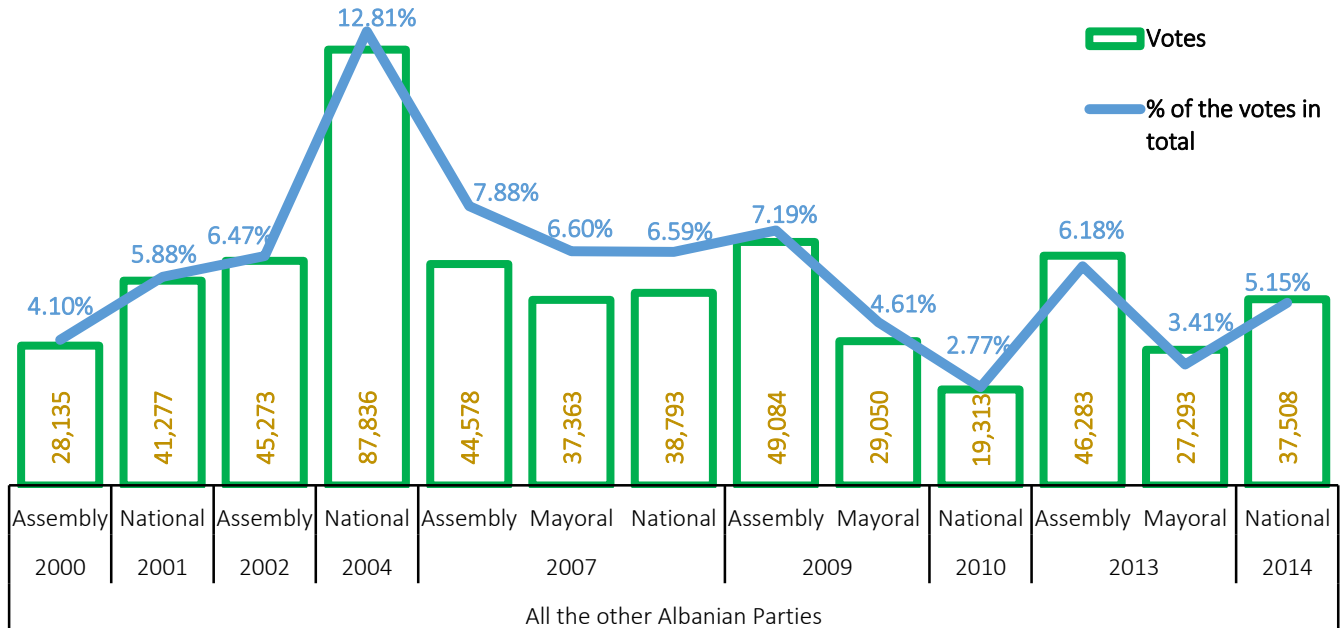


The Self-determination Movement became the political entity with the most positive trend of results, which were also bolstered with recent poll results. Reportedly, its image as a movement (which is paradoxical because it entered the political competition) and its consistent program and ideology has distinguished them from other political entities. Unlike all other newly established entities which declined in the second elections, LVV managed to grow by about 10,000 votes.



None of the other new parties were lucky enough to remain relevant in the scene for too long. The graph above proves there was ample enthusiasm for new political options, but it lost steam over time. The political party ‘Ora’ is the first entity that shook the stage by getting 50,000 votes in 2004, thus getting into the Parliament. In 2004, the vote was dispersed more than ever before. Three years later, in 2007, ORA did not manage to pass the threshold to enter the Parliament. Two other leaders of newly established entities were somewhat luckier than Surroi. Behxhet Pacolli (AKR) and Nexhat Daci (LDD) established new entities and won 50,000 and 70,000 votes respectively, sufficient to enter the Parliament.

## The Negligible Small Albanian Parties



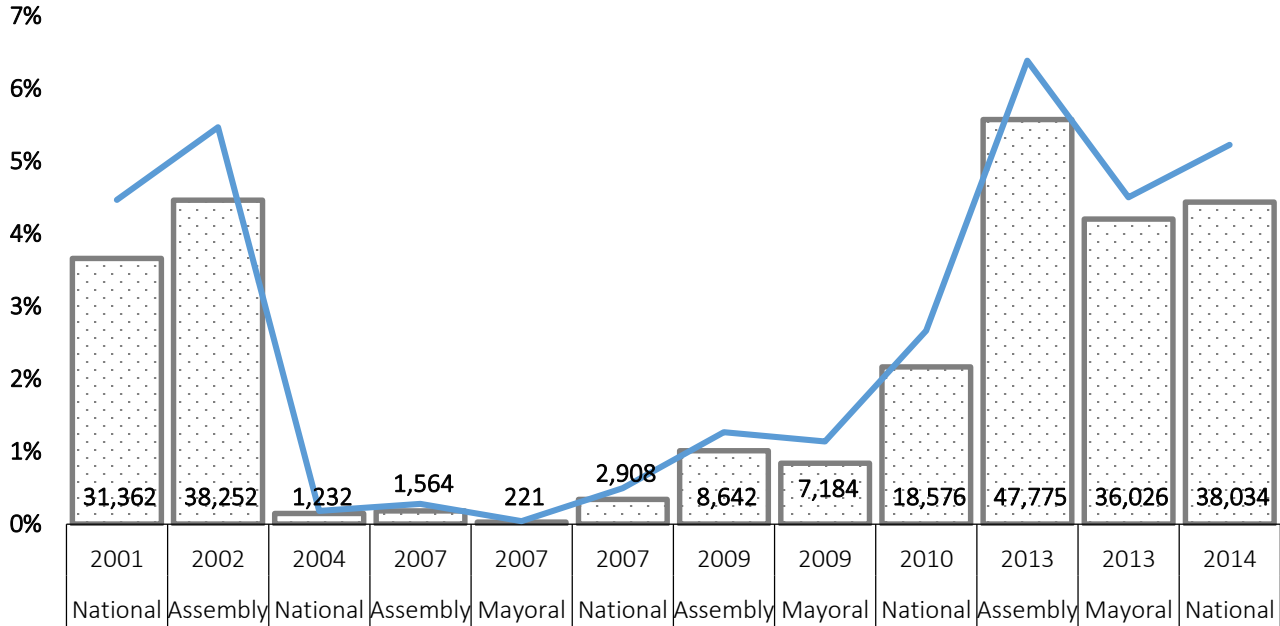
LDD suffered the same fate as ORA, remaining out of the Parliament in the second elections in 2010. AKR suffered a similar downward trend, but it remains politically active to this day, primarily because it won the mayoral races in two major towns.

The graph below presents the results won by smaller Albanian parties, whose numbers have dwindled due to the discouragingly high threshold required. Election results are a clear reflection of Serb participation in Kosovo's institutional life (see graph below on the next page). Serbs voted in a satisfactory level in 2001-2002 during the first national elections, as well as local elections organized by the UN's Interim Administration (UNMIK). Belgrade agreed on such participation, and its approval remains key to their participation.

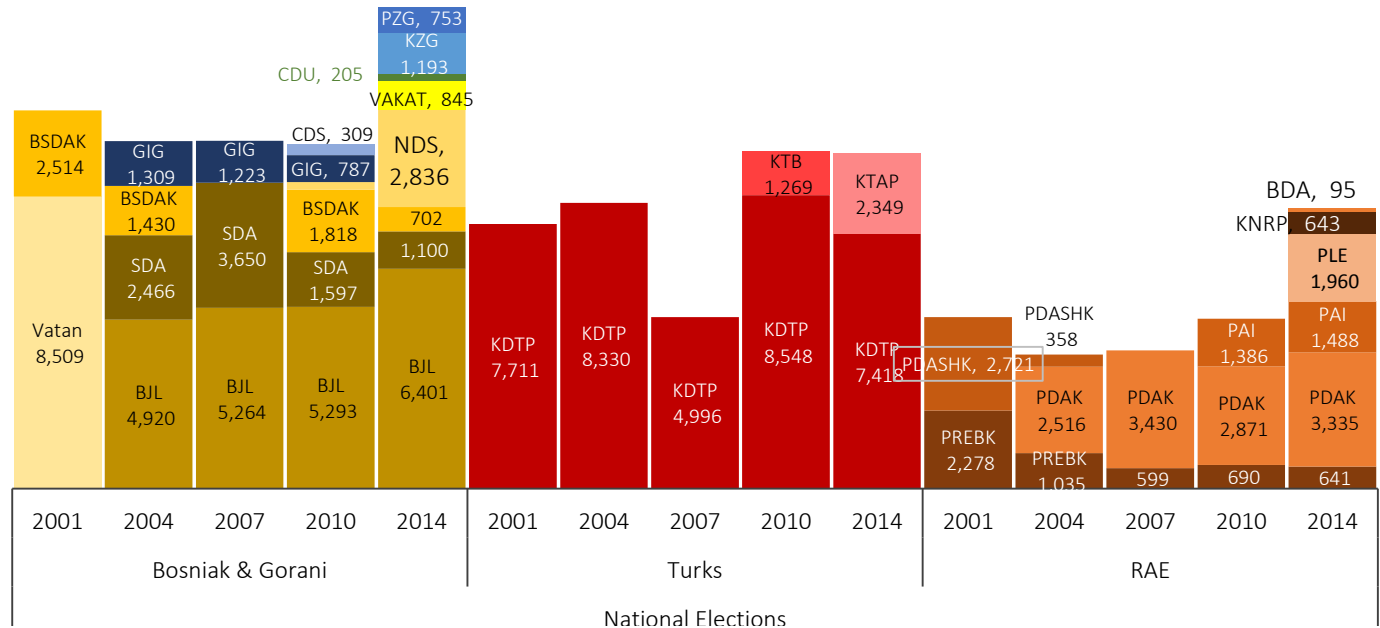
Serbs boycotted between 2002 and 2010, where several local groups participated, marking the lowest turnout in 2007 on the eve of Kosovo's declaration of independence. Participation increased to 18,000 in 2010 when Belgrade's influence on Serb parties in Kosovo was low. Record Serb turnout occurred in the municipal elections of 2013. As a result of the Brussel's dialogue, Belgrade called on Serbs to participate. For the first time since Kosovo's independence, northern Serbs turned out to vote. Over 47,000 Serbs voted for municipal assembly elections.

Unlike the Serb community, other communities have turned out to vote in each election, and the number of parties representing them has increased as well. The Bosniak and the RAE (Roma-Ashkali-Egyptian) communities have managed to increase the overall number of the votes to over 10,000 and 7,000 respectively. The Turkish community has also maintained a steady base, consistently controlled by one party that has also enjoyed the the support of the ruling party in Turkey.

## Kosovo Serb Votes



Votes of Other Communities (Bosniak/Gorani, Turkish, RAE)



The results presented above compare official results, below follows an analysis of responses from respondents about whom they would vote for if elections were held this Sunday.

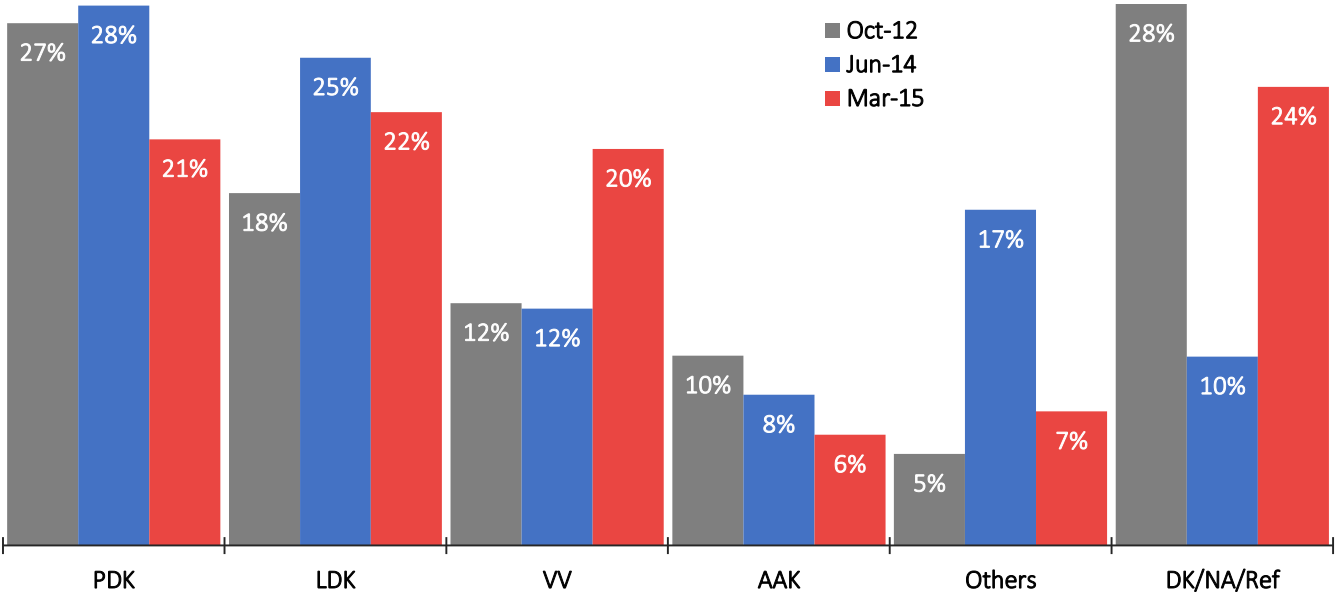
### *Future Trend*

The most recent polls in Spring 2015 showed that the difference among the three main parties has narrowed. At the same time, the smaller parties are falling further behind (see graph on the next page). PDK still leads, followed by LDK and VV, but the difference among them is only 2% which is negligible given that it is within the margin of error. Compared with surveys in previous years, PDK's support has decreased sharply and LDK's support has also fallen significantly, while VV's support has shot up. AAK's support has also fallen, as has that of other small parties.

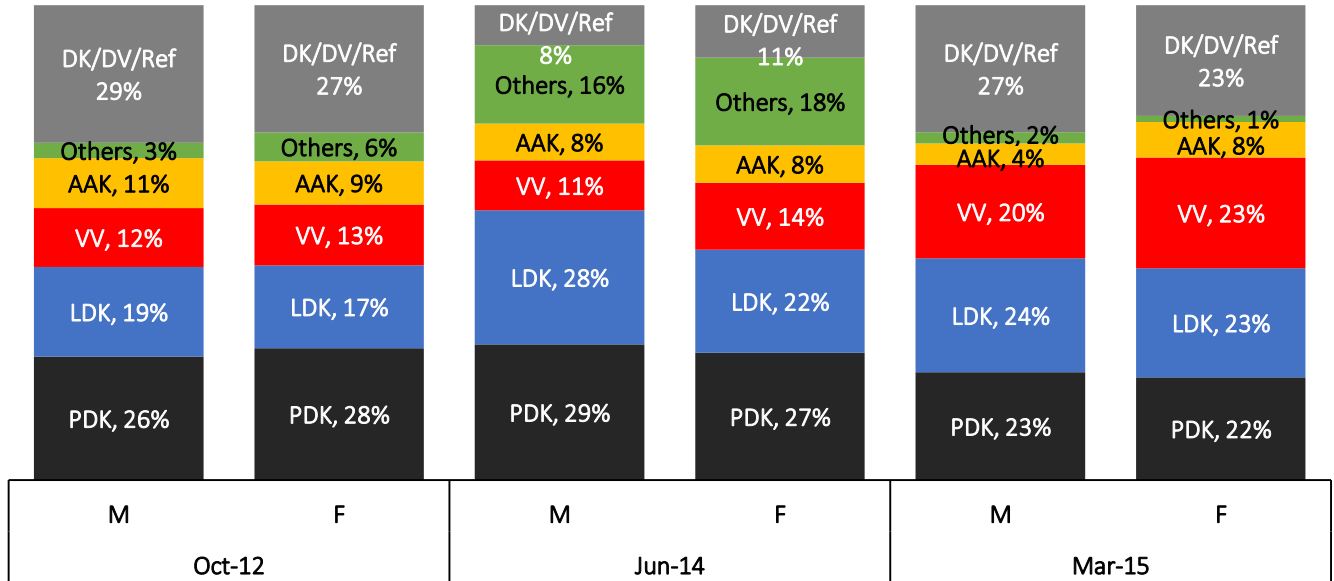
Since no elections are scheduled in the near future and these results are not to have an immediate impact, we posed the question with the aim to cross-tabulate party affiliation with various demographic factors which may be driving the current trend. A cross-tabulation by profession reveals that public sector workers support PDK (above one third compared to PDK's overall poll of 28%). In turn, almost half of pensioners vote LDK (compared to LDK's overall poll of 25%). PDK & LDK have lost their appeal among the less-educated and improved among the well-educated.

PDK used to have better support among women in 2012, which has decreased over time. LDK enjoyed very low support among women in 2014, which seems to have partly recuperated. Vetëvendosje's support among women is around 3% higher than among men. It is also important to note that the share of undecided respondents has decreased.

If elections were to be held this Sunday, for whom would you vote?

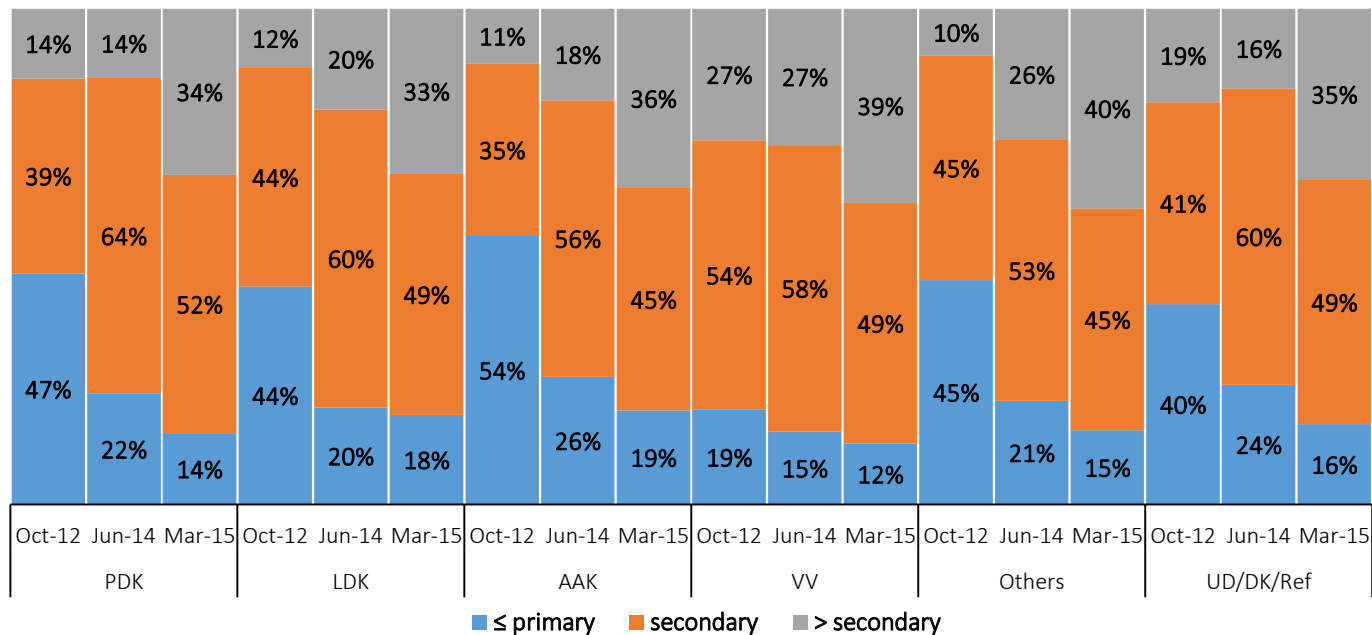


**If elections were to be held this Sunday, for whom would you vote? (by gender)**





**If elections were to be held this Sunday, for whom would you vote? (by level of education)**

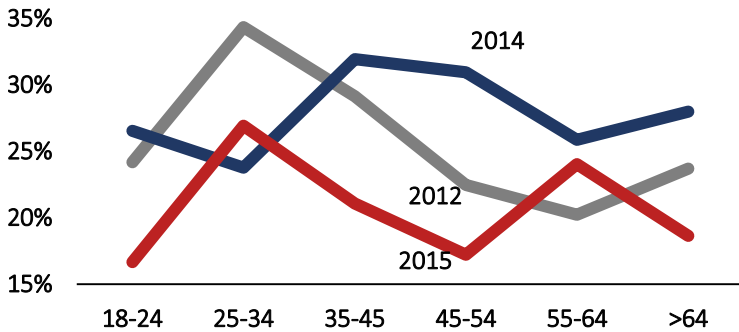


It is also interesting to cross-tabulate results by age groups. PDK's graph for 2015 is lower than that of 2014 for all age groups, except for those between ages 25 to 34.

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### PDK as their first choice

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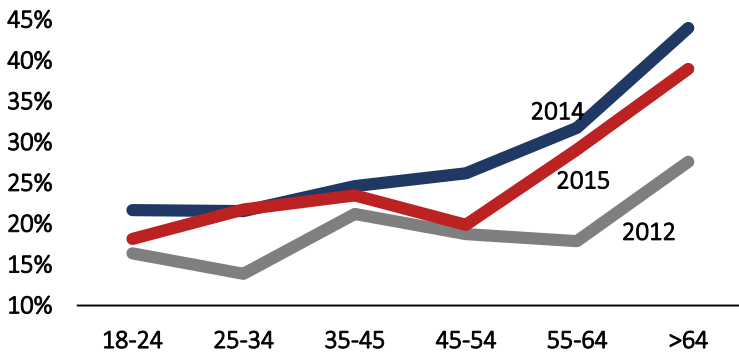


LDK's poll for 2015 lies just beneath that of 2014, and the lower rate is equal for all age groups. However, it may be fairing worse for the age group of 45 to 54. LDK seems to have stopped the decline of its popularity among youth.

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### LDK as their first choice

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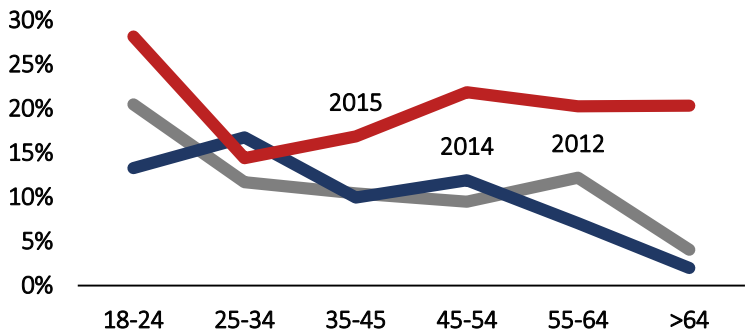


VV's 2015 poll indicates an increase for all age groups except for those 25 to 34, the inverse graph of that of PDK.

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**VV as their first choice**

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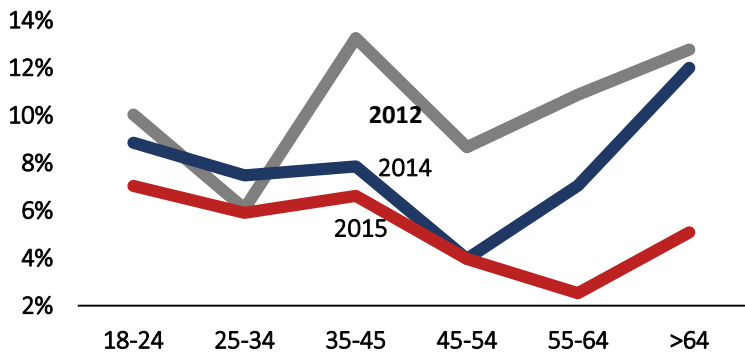


AAK's graph for 2015 is lower for all age groups and equals its share of 2014 only for the age group between 45 and 54.

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**AAK as their first choice**

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It is also important to try to discern which voters have changed their choice and how they have done so.

## Changed choice?

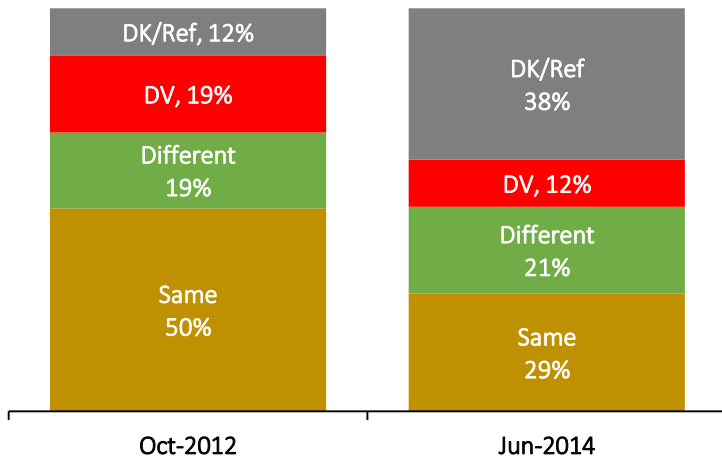
Voters are increasingly changing their favorite party, consistent with poll results on party membership. From 2007 to 2010, half of respondents changed their party choice. About one-third changed from 2010 to 2013, perhaps a sign of gradual consolidation. Also from 2012 to 2014 more respondents said that they changed their choice as compared to two years earlier, a sign that the swing vote is increasing and that there are fewer militants.

The rate of people who voted the same has stayed has decreased to less than a third. The political climate is clearly perceived as more difficult and there is disillusionment with the political class – judging by the high proportion of respondents who answered “don’t know” or who refused to respond.

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### Was your choice the same as in the previous elections?

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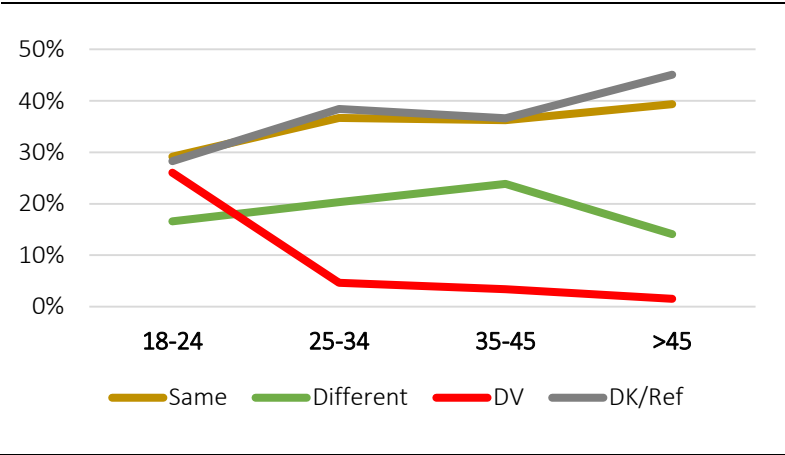


It is important to cross-tabulate the desire for change with various demographic features to find out which voters switch

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parties more often. Women tend to change parties more frequently than men and form the biggest chunk of swing voters. This makes them the most important electoral grouping for parties who wish to retain or increase their electoral base. A trend can already be observed. The beginning of this section notes that parties who improved their standing among women have improved their overall polls and vice versa.

**Changed Party Preference (by age group)**

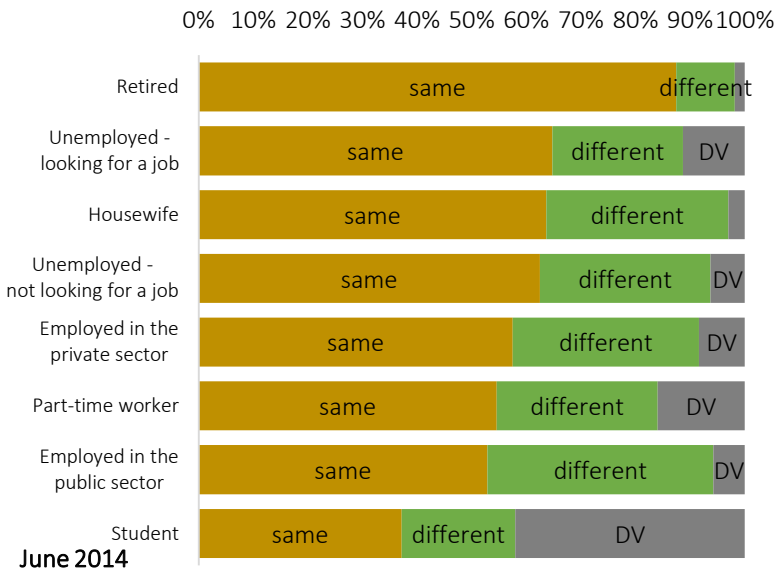


Voters' vocation is also a strong determinant of whether they change their favourite party. Retired individuals are least likely to change their party, followed by housewives. Unemployed respondents are also reluctant to change their voting choice, especially those looking for a job. Workers in the private sector and the students are least faithful and tend to change their favorite party the most.

In this context, changing parties is one of the key factors contribution to democratization. The greater the share of citizens who change the preference, the greater the pressure on parties to search for better ways to represent citizens.

The youngest tend to show the highest rate of respondents who have not voted or who respond with ‘don’t know’ (26%, whereas in other age groups only 1-5% respond with “don’t know”). The elderly tend to be most loyal to their party choice (39-40% of them), but only by a small margin more so than the middle-aged (36-37%).

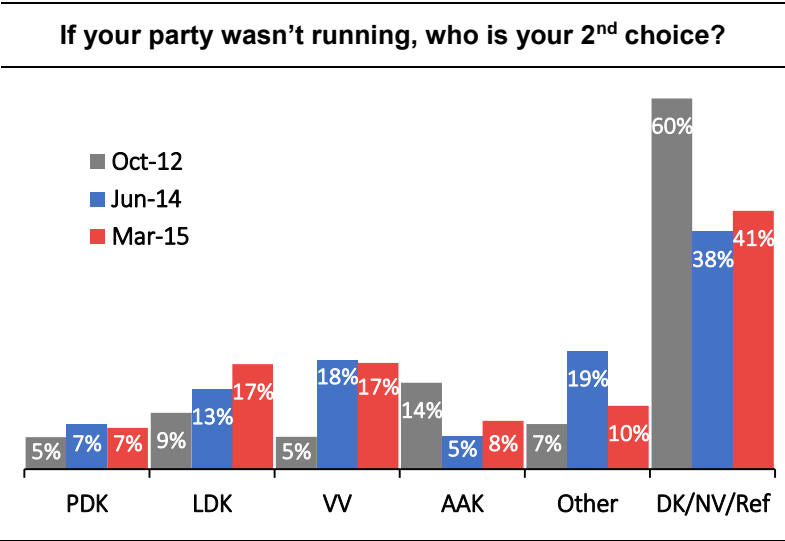
### Was your vote the same as in the previous elections?(by employment)



A breakdown by education shows that individuals with secondary education have the highest tendency to change their vote (24% of them, compared to 12-15% for less educated categories). In addition to the questions about who one would vote for and if they have changed their vote, we have also asked what party would be their second choice.

## Second choice

The second choice often matters in election races, especially in mayoral and presidential elections. The second choice is also a useful way to measure the likely direction of angry votes and acceptability for coalition calculations. The graph below portrays the most frequent second choices. LDK has improved its image among other party fans to equal VV as the most likely party to gather second-choice votes. As a sign of formed opinions, in 2012, almost two-thirds of the voters did not have a preference for whom they would vote for if their party was not running.



This rate was halved by 2015. LDK, PDK, and AKR would be voted as second-choice more by women, while AAK and VV would be voted as second-choice more by men.

The table below presents the results of the poll about who voters would pick if their favorite party was not running. The parties in the rows denote the first choice, while the columns depict the second-choice responses.

| Mar-15     |       | 2nd Choice |     |     |     |        |     |        |
|------------|-------|------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|-----|--------|
|            |       | LDK        | PDK | AAK | VV  | Others | NV  | DK/Ref |
| 1st Choice | LDK   | -          | 13% | 11% | 33% | 12%    | 27% | 4%     |
|            | PDK   | 37%        | -   | 7%  | 21% | 9%     | 25% | 1%     |
|            | AAK   | 39%        | 5%  | -   | 22% | 19%    | 5%  | 10%    |
|            | VV    | 27%        | 7%  | 12% | -   | 24%    | 26% | 4%     |
|            | Other | 13%        | 16% | 15% | 29% | -      | 11% | 16%    |

If LDK was not running, 13% of its votes would go to PDK, 11% to AAK, and 33% to VV. If PDK was not running, 37% of its votes would go to LDK, followed by 21% for VV. LDK would also gather most AAK and VV votes. There is no gender trend with regard to the second choice.

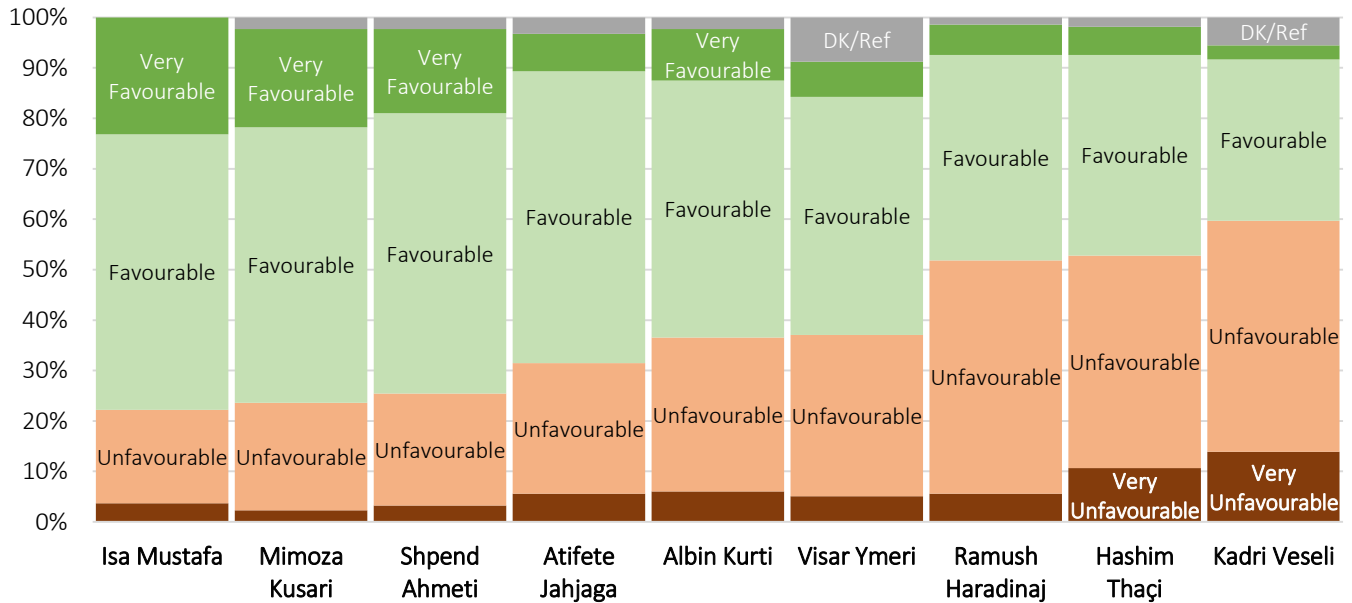
### *Popularity of the Leaders Among Fans of Other Parties*

To instigate cross-party comparison, the survey asked respondents how favourable they feel about particular names. Shpend Ahmeti and Mimoza Kusari enjoy the highest degree of approval. The attitudes towards political officials have been cross-tabulated by party affiliation (measured as whom they would vote for if elections were held this Sunday) to obtain the rate of acceptability of officials among their own fans and across the party ranks. Among LDK fans, after Isa Mustafa, the most popular official is Mimoza Kusari, followed by the Mayor of Prishtina Shpend Ahmeti, and the President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga. Among PDK fans, after Hashim Thaçi, the most popular leaders are Shpend Ahmeti, Mimoza Kusari, and Kadri Veseli. Among VV fans, the leader with the highest share of favorable views was Shpend Ahmeti. Albin Kurti ranks second with a lower rate of “very favourable” but higher rate of “favourable” responses compared to Ahmeti. The current President Ymeri trails third, followed by Kusari

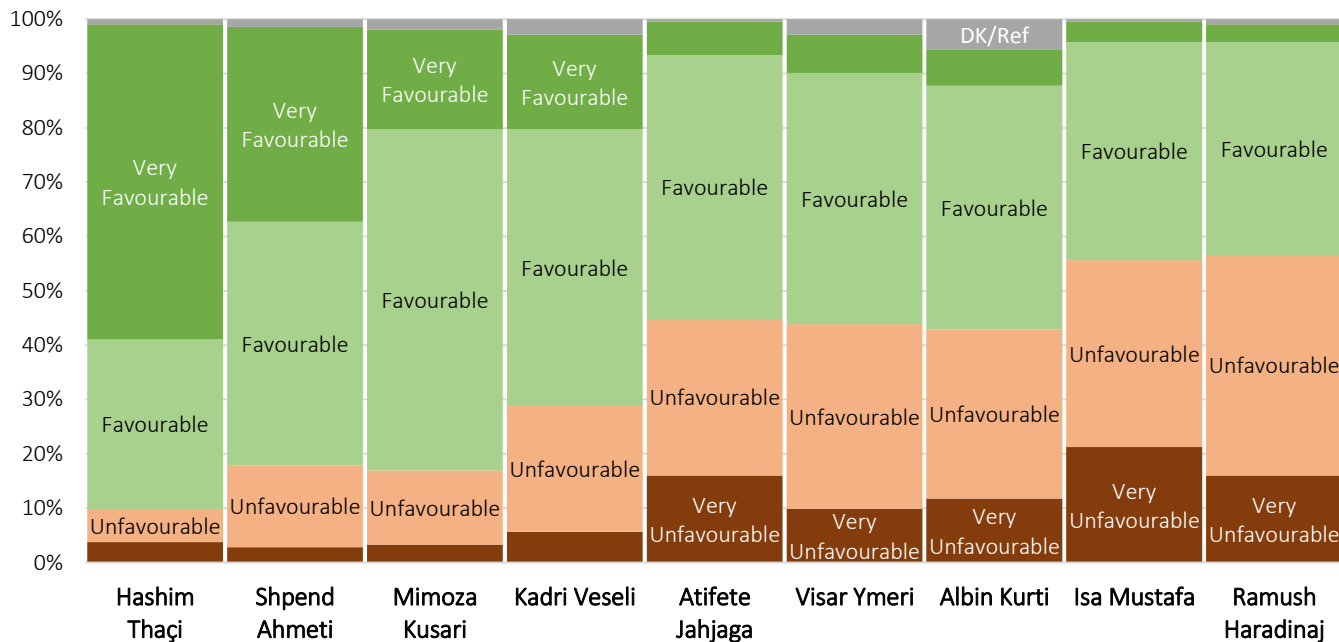


and Haradinaj. Respondents not belonging to PDK, LDK, or VV rated Kusari as most favourable, followed by Ahmeti and Haradinaj. Mustafa and Jahjaga enjoy greater popularity among women, while there is no gender trend for other leaders.

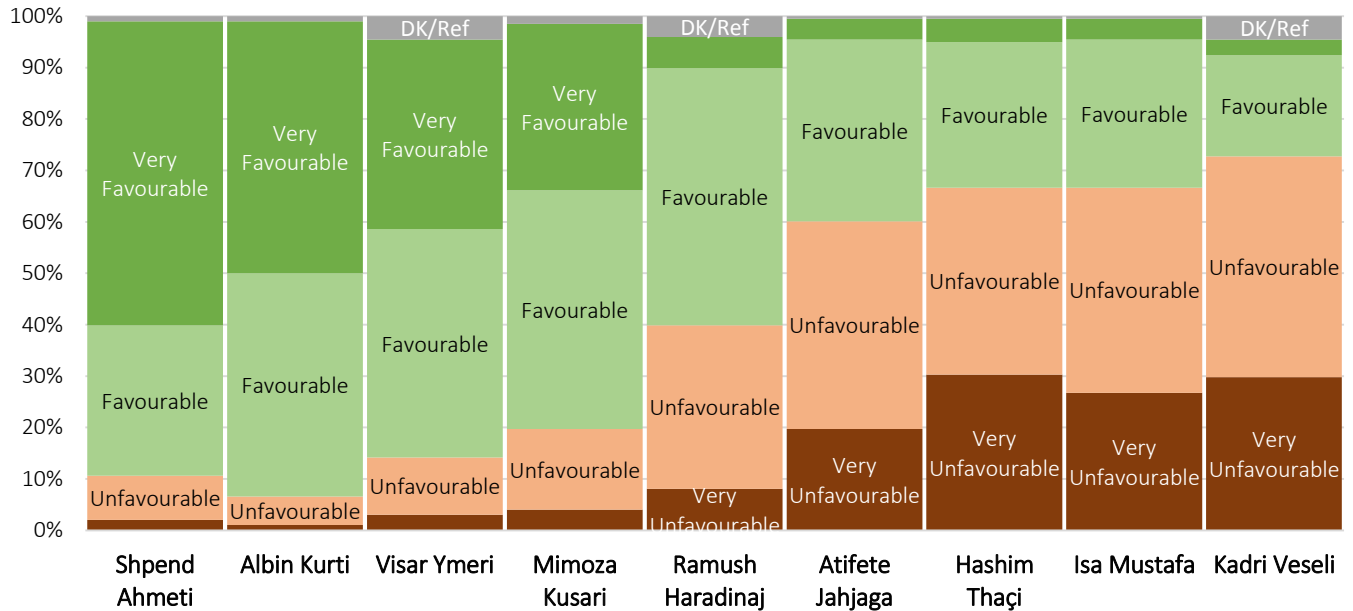
### Voter opinions about leaders (LDK fans)



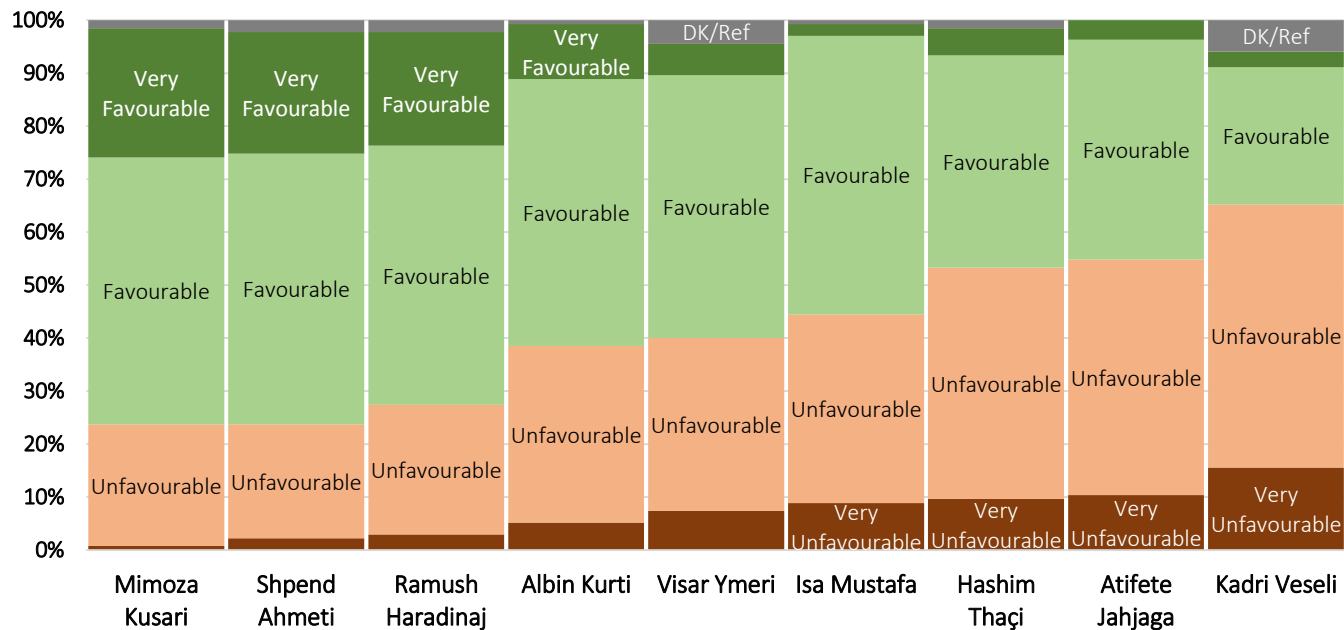
### Voters opinions about Leaders (PDK fans)



### Voters opinions about Leaders (VV fans)



### Voters opinions about Leaders (Other Parties fans)



## Conclusions

As Kosovo educates a greater portion of its workforce, youngsters will become more critical, will get more demanding, and will switch sides more often. Leaders' performance will be assessed more as politics becomes less personal and radioactive. The greatest space for new voters remains among women who vote less and whose interests are not looked after by any of the groups. After numerous tables and graphs, the paper aims to raise a general debate inside institutions for policy decisions regarding elections, e.g. single tick ballots, accuracy of the voter lists, not holding multiple elections on one day, and ditching the preferential vote and the conditional ballot. To pass these new changes, the Parliament should initiate a working group that will discuss how to improve (a) representation and participation and (b) technical arrangements regarding the election process. A comprehensive Electoral Code should be passed no later than by the end of 2016.

The paper should lead to long deliberations within each political party about their image, policies they stand for, and how they reach specific voter groups. Parties should search ways to reach out to women and the young as the two major groupings where party performance can improve most drastically. Parties should seek not only to improve their standing with avid fans but also to become the favorite second choice of a wide spectrum of voters. Party membership and proximity are strong indicators of voter change which parties should strive to understand. Parties that ask their mayors and councilors to be present throughout the community are likely to grow. Individual leaders should search for ways to become more acceptable widely without losing their core support. In addition to internal party battles, they need to worry about how they can enamor the public to fall in love with them once again.

## List of Publications

### Elections and Political Parties:

#1: D4D Institute. September 2011. Deconstructing Election Trends 2000-2010.

#2 D4D Institute. March 2012. An Impression of Reform: How to Restore Trust on Elections?

#3 Malazogu, Leon, Visar Sutaj and Drilon Gashi. November 2012. Kaçanik Voters' List Audit: A Sample for Kosovo.

#4 Malazogu, Leon and Selatin Kllokoqi. February 2013. Lessons learned for Future Elections: An Analysis of the Mayoral By-Elections in Ferizaj and Kaçanik.

#5 Malazogu, Leon and Selatin Kllokoqi. September 2013. Translation of Trust Perception of Representation and Participation.

#6 Malazogu, Leon and Selatin Kllokoqi. September 2013. Electoral Deform: Two years later, reform is back to square zero

#7 Leon Malazogu and Brenna Gautam; with contribution by Rezarta Delibashzade & Ngadhnjim Halilaj. 26 November 2014. Kosovo's Political Compass – Mapping Party Ideology

#8 Dardan Berisha with contribution by Driton Qeriqi, Mjellma Hapciu and Rina Vokshi. July 2015. Bringing Justice to Elections

### Ethnic Relations:

#1 Malazogu, Leon and Vladimir Todorić. November 2011. Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue: Transformation of Self-Interest Required. PER-K/D4D Institute and NPC-Belgrade

#2&3 Malazogu, Leon, Viktor Popović and Shpend Emini. March 2012. Boosting Prospects for Young Kosovo Serbs. Urban Life in Kosovo Serb Communities. PER-K/D4D.

#4 Malazogu, Leon and Florian Bieber. September 2012. The Future of Interaction Between Prishtina and Belgrade. PER-K/D4D Institute.

#5 Malazogu, Leon and Alex Grigorev. September 2012. From

Creative Ambiguity to a Constructive Process: How to Approach Northern Kosovo? PER-K/D4D Institute

#6 Ejdu, Filip, Leon Malazogu and Milan Nic. October 2013. Municipal Elections in Northern Kosovo: Towards a New Balance? Published jointly by CEPI, BCSP and D4D.

**Public Interest:**

#1: Sejdiu, Dardan and Kastriot Jahaj. January 2013. The Hidden Tax: Why do Kosovars Pay More?

#2: Gashi, Drilon and Shoghi Emerson. May 2013. A Class of Its Own: Patronage and its impact on Social Mobility in Kosovo.

#3: Sutaj, Visar and Leon Malazogu. January 2013. Let the Real Civil Society Please Stand Up! The Role of Membership Associations in Shaping Decision-Making to Serve the Public Interest.

#4 Miftari, Naser. September 2013. The Consolidation Challenge: Strengthening the independence of media institutions in Kosovo.

#5 Miftari, Naser. 2013. Starting from Scratch: The Role of Media Assistance in the Establishment of Independent Media Institutions in Kosovo. Working Paper 4, published by Analitika – Center for Social Research & D4D.

#6 Ardiana Gashi and Artane Rizvanolli; with contributions by Natalya Wallin, Rezarta Delibashzade and Ngadhnjim Halilaj. 25 February 2015. The Cost of Patriarchy.

**Memos:**

#1 D4D Institute. November 2012. Police Overreaction

#2 D4D Institute. December 2012. The two Germanies model

#3 D4D Institute. 12 July 2013. Set Criteria for New Municipalities

#4 D4D Institute & Qëndrim Gashi. January 2013. Reaction Memo no. 4 – University of Prishtina in a vicious circle

#5 D4D Institute & Kushtrim Palushi. January 2013. Reaction memorandum no. 5 – Electoral reform

**Recommendations:**

---



#1 D4D Institute. 29 November 2011. Structure of the CEC

#2 Compiled by D4D Institute. 17 January 2011. The Electoral System

#3 Compiled by D4D Institute. 29 November 2011. Repairing the voters list

#4 Compiled by D4D Institute. 12 December 2011. Recommendations for Electing the President of Kosovo

#5 Supported by: D4D, KIPRED, INPO, KMDL NJ, INDEP, DT, KHK, QPA, and NOMP. For Genuine Election Reform

#6 D4D Institute. 20 December 2011. Election system presentation

### **Indicators:**

#1 D4D Institute. November 2010. Before and After Indicator Based Performance: Annual Review 2010

#2 D4D Institute. State of the State: Performance Based Indicators.

#3 Malazogu, Leon. November 2013. Agreement in None, Including Its Name: Kicking the Can Will No Longer Bring the Sides Closer Around the Association/Community

#4 Malazogu, Leon. Janar 2014. Parashikime dhe skenare: Kosova dhe Bota në 2014

### **D4D in other publications:**

The series of endorsements and recommendations can also be found on our web-site ([www.d4d-ks.org](http://www.d4d-ks.org))

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Leon Malazogu and Selatin Kllokoqi. September 2013. Translation of Trust. D4D Elections Series, Paper #6, [http://d4d-ks.org/assets/D4D Elections 6 ENG WEB1.pdf](http://d4d-ks.org/assets/D4D_Elections_6_ENG_WEB1.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> D4D. September 2011. Deconstructing Election Trends 2000-2010. <http://d4d-ks.org/assets/2012/09/2011-09-22-Election-Deconstructing-Election-Trends-2000-2010.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.kqz-ks.org/Uploads/Documents/Flet%20sq%20sr\\_batsfejino.pdf](http://www.kqz-ks.org/Uploads/Documents/Flet%20sq%20sr_batsfejino.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> These results exclude the municipalities: Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Zvečan and North Mitrovica. Source: Kosovo Statistical Agency (ASK). REKOS 2011. <http://census.rks-gov.net/istarMDEE/MD/dawinciMD.jsp?a1=WC&a2=m00&n=1UR9o6ooV71&o=oD&v=1URo6oDSooV71000000&p=o&sp=null&l=o&exp=o>.

<sup>5</sup> Leon Malazogu, Visar Sutaj and Drilon Gashi. November 2012. Kaçanik Voters' List Audit. D4D Elections Series, Paper #3.

<sup>6</sup> Leon Malazogu and Brenna Gautam. November 2014. Kosovo's Political Compass. D4D Elections & Political Parties Series, Paper #8.



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