POLITICAL BEHAVIOURS OF ALBANIAN AND TURKISH ELECTORATES

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Abstract

Political behaviours of electorates are important indicator of any democratic political system. This study sheds light on political behaviours of Albanian and Turkish electorates since the year 2000 during the general elections of these countries.

It is a comparative case study which relies on quantitative empirical data, some of which have been collected for this study and the other is available from the national statistics institutes of the countries.

The study finds out that there were similar political behaviour between these countries and these similarities come from historical and cultural perception on politics. It is clear that democracy is relatively new in these countries, but their political perception has been rooted from 14th Century.

This study establishes a link with the electorate turnout and democratic cultures of these countries that low turnout or high turnout is seen a sign of political alienation rather than political culture. The findings of this study deny that even the low turnout would be accepted as the higher awareness of the democratic culture.

Finally, this study concludes that political behaviours have closer link with the leaders, political ideologies of political parties and available information on political parties and their work.

Key Words: Behaviour, Turkey, Albania, Democratic Culture, Political Participation.

INTRODUCTION

Political behaviours of electorates are important at any election, because their behaviour would decide who would govern the country in next few years. For this reason, politicians and political parties try to convince electorates to vote for their political parties rather than the others. This study will shed light on political behaviours of Albanian electorates since 2000 onwards. During this time, Albania has four parliamentary elections. Each election of Albania, there is different rate of electorates casting their votes.

Political participation includes various activities and it is not only process of electoral voting but also it is freedom of speech, right to associate and assemble. Participation in politics, public life at every level is very vital for people. People expectation is usually their concerns are taken into consideration.

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In the following pages, a literature review and methods of study will be noticed. Then the analyses of available data will be placed in order to find out; initially, this study tries to find why there are differences in term of casting the vote in those general (parliamentary elections)? Then, in the discussion part of the study will establish a link between political participation and casting the vote in parliamentary elections in order to compare these two countries' political behaviour of people. Secondly, the study evaluates that if there is any link between political participation and political culture of these countries. Although, it is not always right to measure up the political culture with the political participation and turn out of the voters in any elections. There could be many reasons that explain why people did not go to poll station and there could be not link with political culture and turn out of the voters. In order to evaluate this part, the study will use first hand empirical data that have been collected for this study in Albania, before and after the 2013 parliamentary election which took place on 23 June 2013. Finally a conclusion will be drawn from the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is clear that there is not great amount of research has been conducted on this subject. However, there are a few studies; some of them are reviewed in order find which areas of study left for this study. It seems that there is no research conducted on political behaviour of Albanian electorates and there is data available what may have influence their political behaviours where this study fills in this gap.

It seems that as a country in-between democratization and long-rooted habits, Albania faces many difficulties in transforming itself into a truly democratic country. Albanian democracy has on many occasions been proven fragile and unprotected. Even though Albania, just like the rest of former communist countries in Eastern Europe, successfully integrated itself into the NATO alliance, which is an organization whose members are obliged to have a democratic regime and rule of law, its journey towards the EU will likely to be incomparably harder than those of former communist countries in Eastern Europe. Yeziri (2005) asserts that Albania still lacks necessary pillars to support a properly functioning democracy and there is no way to establish such pillar because of the system in Albania is designed in a way to maintain the existence of the communists who benefit from legacy of the former communist regime. However, it is considered that Albania is among the former communist countries that experienced non-bloody transition to democracy. Bogdani and Loughlin (2007) identified three main stages took place in almost all former communist Eastern European countries including Albania. The first stage is called 'euphoria' during which people in Albania was yearning for a change. The second stage is the 'disillusionment' in which repercussions of a radical transformation from communism to democracy was deeply felt. It was in this period Albania turned out to be a zone of turmoil and civil unrest. The third stage is the 'nostalgia syndrome' where people began to get suspicious about whether democracy was really recipe for problems they faced. In this period, people were forced to praise the old-communist regime because of anarchic social, political and economic atmosphere presented by the newly founded democratic regime.

There is a doubt on the parliamentary elections and especially how these elections were conducted and how the votes were casted. Nevertheless, Bogdani and Loughlin (2007) argued that from the collapse of communism in 1990s until 2005, almost all elections were partly democratic in Albania despite the elections turnout have usually been low in Albania except for first two elections in post-communist era (Bogdani and Loughlin 2007). Hence, this is not peculiar to Albania alone and can be seen in other European countries as well. Therefore, this can be seen a threat to Albanian democracy since it is yet in process of crawling.

Gërxhani and Schram (2009) stressed on the importance of clientelism in Albania that has grown unavoidable after country's transition to democracy. They argued that two major parties the Democrat Party of Albania and the Socialist Party of Albania have always favoured their own clients once they came to power. Among widespread ways to rewards their clients have been various appointments to key positions and priorities given to their respective constituencies when confronted investment and privatization opportunities. Supporting this argument, Klosi (1997) made a further point that the split between Albanian society as northerners who support the Democratic Party of Albania and southerners who support the Socialist Party of Albania has grown wider as a result of polarizing efforts of these two major parties. But this polarization, as Gërxhani and Schram (2009) pointed out that divides the country into two regions as Ghegs in north and Tosks in south has existed throughout the Albanian history.

Kaltsounis argued that there can be no excuse for Albanians living in a country that is classified as partly free. In this regard, he pointed out the necessity of educational and training programs for promotion of democracy in Albania. Kaltsounis gives an example of a program conducted by the University of Washington for teachers. The program that the University ran was an education program intended for democratization of Albania, funded by United States Information Agency and later the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in cooperation with Pedagogical Research Institute of Tirana. The financial support started in 1992 and lasted until 2005. The program has been carried out with the students in several cities of Albania and students were provided with knowledge about the concepts and principles of democracy and the acquisition of democratic skills. The results were disappointing that no significant development was observed in the democratic development process of the country, especially in the fields of democratic governance, judiciary and corruption. Kaltsounis pointed out that even though the Public Administration continues to stabilize, the lack of transparency and the accountability in appointments endangers the independence of the institutions that causes serious legitimacy problems in judicial system.

Throughout the history women have been subordinated by man but later this was begun to be seen as main obstacle on the way to human improvement (Mill, 1900). Today the level of women's participation in politics is regarded as an important element to show whether a democratic regime is healthy or not. *The Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (2011)* conducted a qualitative research in Albania upon a mandate of *the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation* which aimed to reveal unwelcomed participation of

women in politics by asking the question ''*what does it imply to be elected as a quota woman in Albania''*. During the research, primary data have been used to shed light on causes and effects of gender quotas in Albania. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members from the Democratic Party, Socialist Party and the Socialist Movement for Integration. The research revealed crucial points which are important to understand how healthy Albanian democracy is when it comes to women. Among these crucial points were top-down selections of candidates by party leaders, widespread reluctance to see women in the parliament, the lack of sanctions to facilitate participation by women and role of mass media in discriminating against women. The research also discovered a prevalent suspicion against women's ability as politicians. In addition to this, the research revealed a hypocritical approach by male politicians who in reality do not want to see women making political decisions, yet somehow, they do support just the opposite before the society.

A survey carried out by *Albanian Centre for Economic Research and Albanian Social Economic Think Tank* (2008) concentrated on two central issues: (1) to comprehend why and how men and women vote; (2) women's role in elections both as voters and candidates and how it is perceived by public. 1300 Albanian citizens participated who were over 18 years old. They were asked 45 questions and interviews took place on November 10-24. It was seen that turnout was higher in local elections than national elections which was 79% for local elections whereas 71% for national elections. The survey showed that 23.10% of women and 10.40% did not vote in the 2007 elections for their family avoided from voting which suggest that women are under influence of their family more than men. An overwhelming majority of respondents (73.4%) saw increasing presence of women in public life acceptable. Appointments of women to local and national level positions were supported by 84.4% of women and 61.7% of men. For a question about potential women candidates in elections, majority of man and women responded that they had nothing to do with genders of candidate when voting. Nevertheless, women were more eager to vote for a woman candidate (55%) than men (37%). 520 respondents who supported women candidates assumed that women can better deal with social and family issues, 465 respondents pointed out that women are less prone to be corrupted, 329 of them thought that women are more hardworking and 441 of them believed that women keep their words. Those who do not support any sort of women presence in political atmosphere showed aggressiveness of political world as main reason behind their non-support. They also thought that women have less experience compared to men and decision-makers would not properly obey a woman even if she is elected. As for profile of respondents, 42.9% of respondents were jobless, 88.3% of them stated to believe in a religion, family income of 77.05% of respondents were below 50,000 Albanian Lek which indicated that poverty is widespread in Albania.

Democracy is not only a form of rule by majority, but minorities are very crucial in democracies as well. Sinani (2008) considers participation of all Albanian citizens to the elections as priority who argued that if presence of minorities is in considerable number in any region, the local governments or responsible authorities of that region should engage with the minority groups through communication. To strengthen collaboration between minorities and local governments

can help solve problems faced by the minorities. In this case, implementation of rule of the law and recognition of the rights of minorities could further contribute democratization and political participation in Albania. To that end, the Central Elections Commission of Albania has tried to encourage and motivate the minority groups living in Albania to be actively involved in political processes. For the first time in 2005, Central Elections Commission organized an intensive education and information campaign that targeted the minority groups.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

It is a case study which relies on quantitative empirical data, some of which have been collected for this study in June 2013; before and after the parliamentary election; and the other is available from the national statistics institute of the country. The study conducted a survey which composed with more than 40 questions including not only political participation and political participation but also is about influences of media including social media. The questions are prepared in English and translated to Albanian language. In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, some pilot survey conducted before going to conduct the whole survey. After the pilot survey, some of questions were corrected and changed. Then the finalised survey had been conducted more than two weeks times before the election. After election, some modifications were made in the survey and some new questions were put into it. After one week of the election the second group of data has been collected during four week of times.

The survey is analysed in the SPSS and made available for this study. It is clear that this study is not using all available data because it is too much for this paper. The rest of the data will be used another papers.

There is some limitation which one needs to express that there is difficulties communicating with Albanian electorates by even using their mother tong languages. People are hesitant to answer the questions. It seems that people are scare of giving out information on politics and their political thought and positions. These can be seen that there is lack of political culture, but it is more than the influence of the old regime.
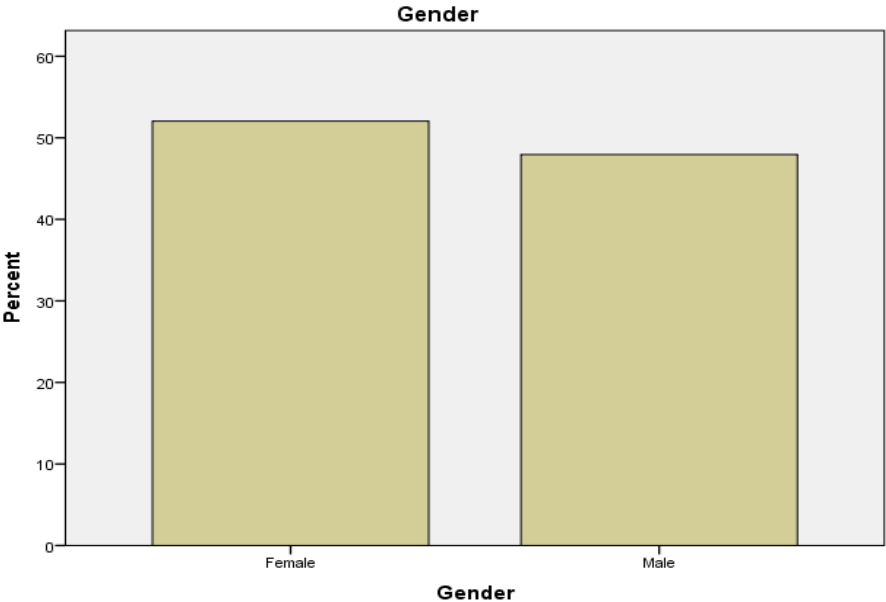
ANALYSING DATA

Under this heading, the study puts two results together, one is taken from the first group of data; the other one is taken from the second group of data. It seems that it could be easier to compare and notice the difference from the data.

**Graph 1A: Gender Distribution of the First Group**
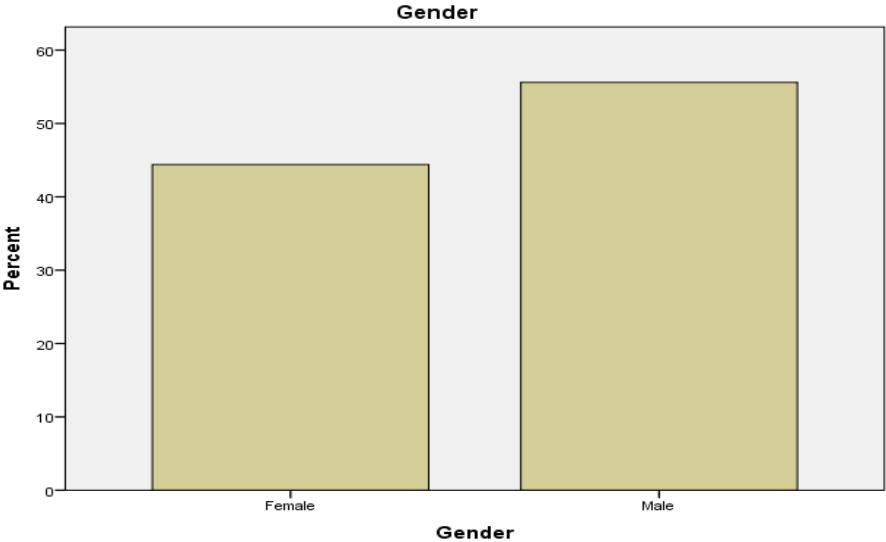
Gender

Graph 1B: Gender Distribution of the Second Group
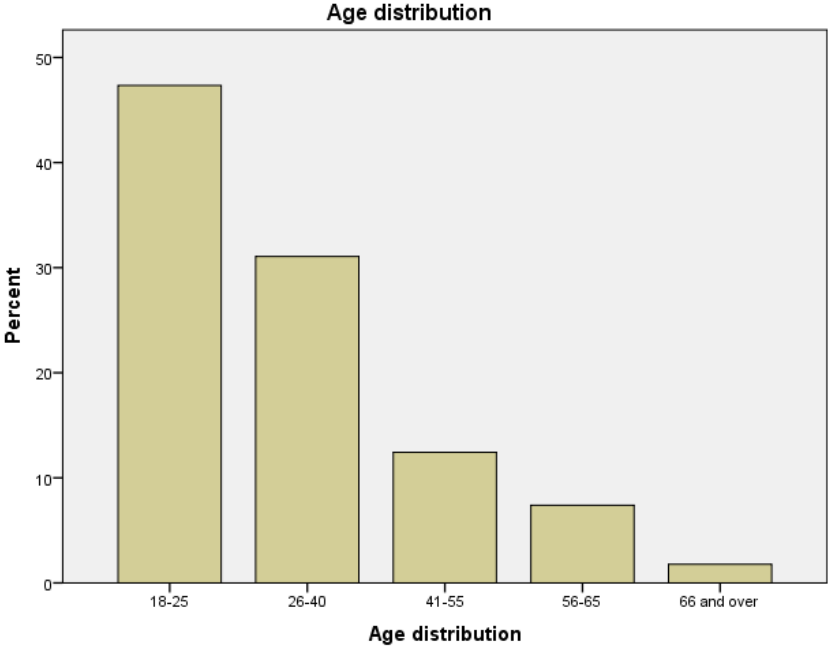

Gender

These two graphs show the participants gender distributions. The numbers of women participants in the second survey were more than the first survey. This does not pose any threat to the finding because, difference were not great.

**Graph 2A: Age Distribution of the Participants**
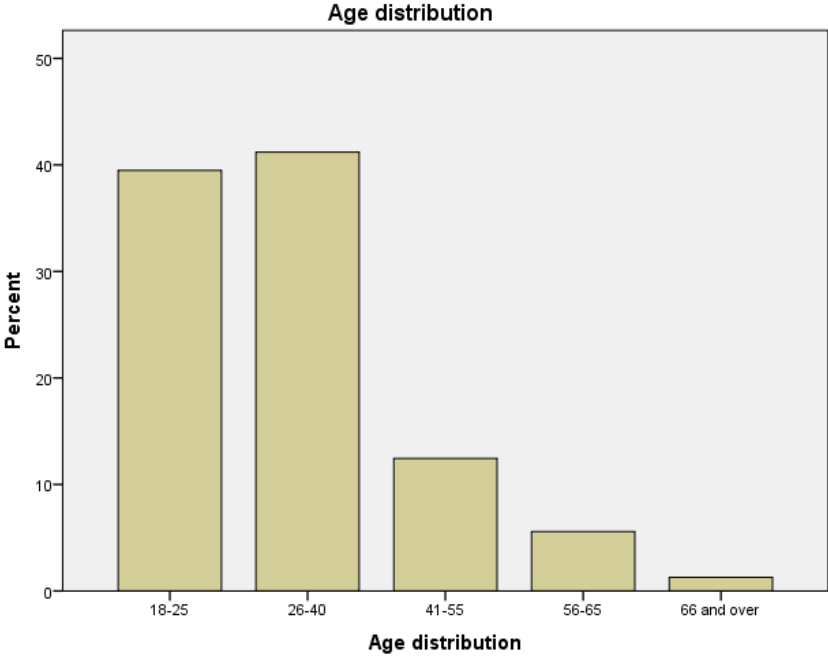

Graph 2A: Age Distribution of the Participants

Concerning the age distribution of the participant, there seems that same similarities in term of percentage of age group of participants. This indicates that there is not risk in term of the validity of the two data if one compares with them. Further, if one looks at the age of the population, around 37% of the whole population is between 15-45 years old and when 0-14 year included

this number would be nearly 57%. Therefore, these participants whom the most of them between ages 25-40 years old give an important information understanding of the political participation.

**Graph 3A: Level of Educations**
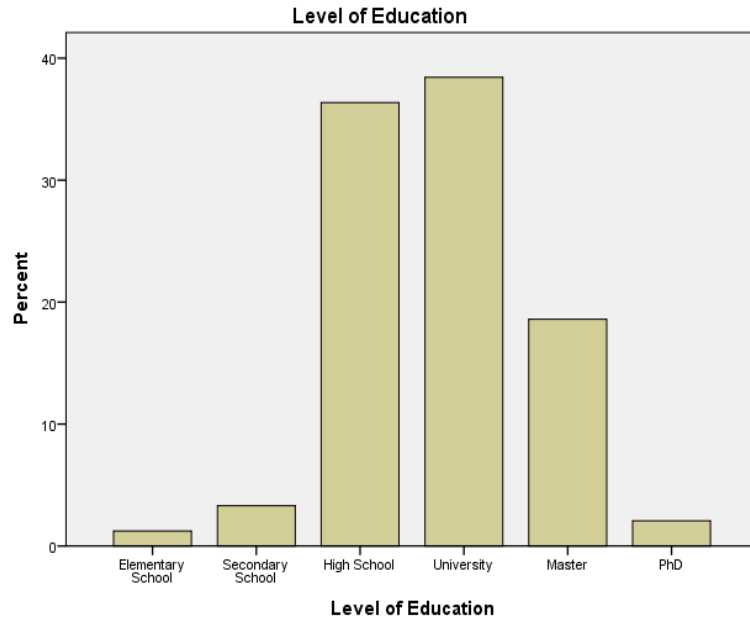
**Graph 3B: Level of Educations**
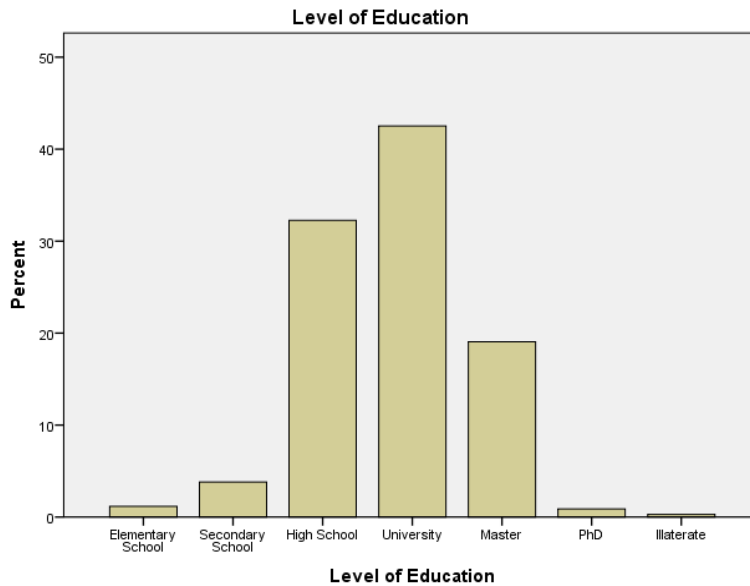
The data show that there were similarities and the participants of the both surveys were belonging to same level of education. This is important for internal validity of the research as well as to understand the link between level of education and level of political participation.

Graph 4A: Income Satisfaction
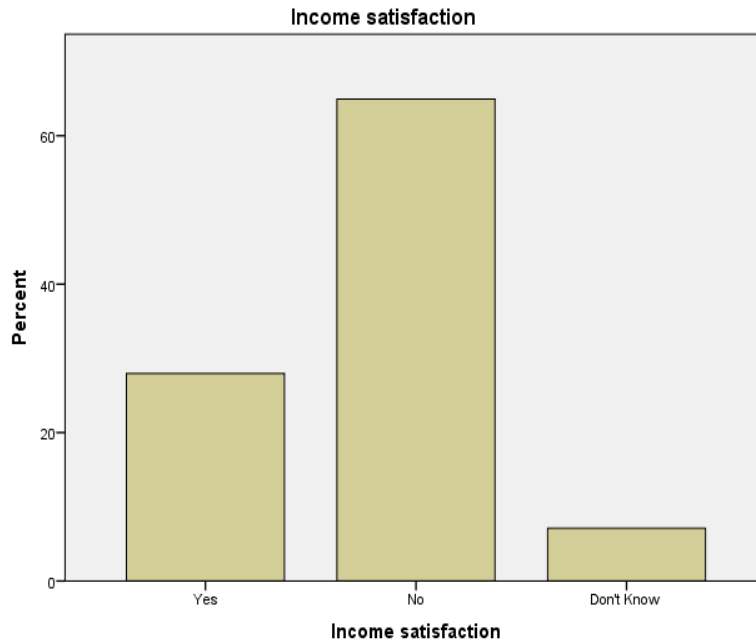

Graph 4B: Income Satisfaction
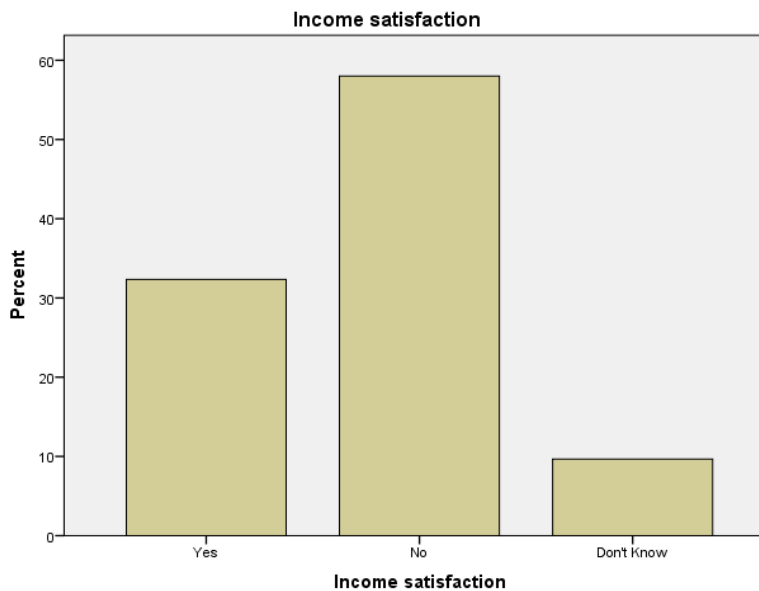
When one compares the income satisfaction which many see that there is a closer link with political participation, the both surveys have similar results. This results show that in Tirana, the most of the participants who work for private companies or privately do not satisfy their income. It is clear that the wealth of country, to some extent has close link with political decision of politicians and their policies on economy. Therefore, people satisfaction on their income has great impact on their political decision and their political behaviours.

Graph 5A: Membership of the Political Parities

Are you member of any political party?
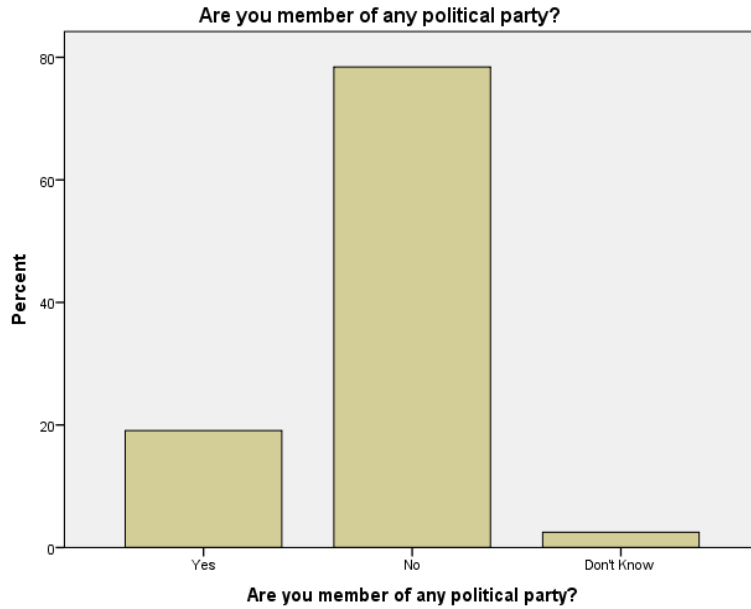
Graph 5B: Membership of the Political Parities

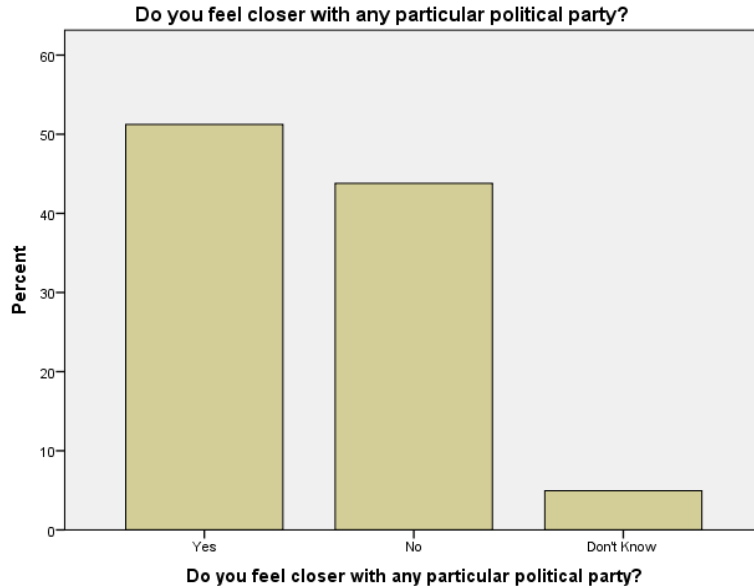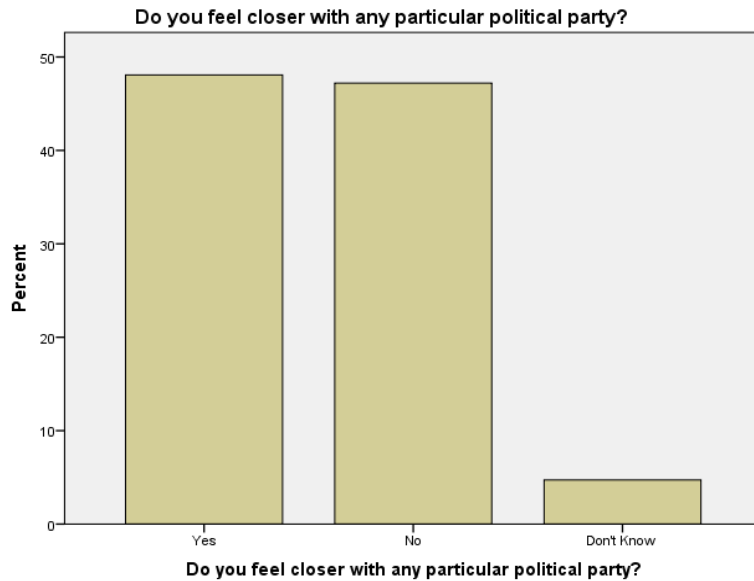Are you member of any political party?
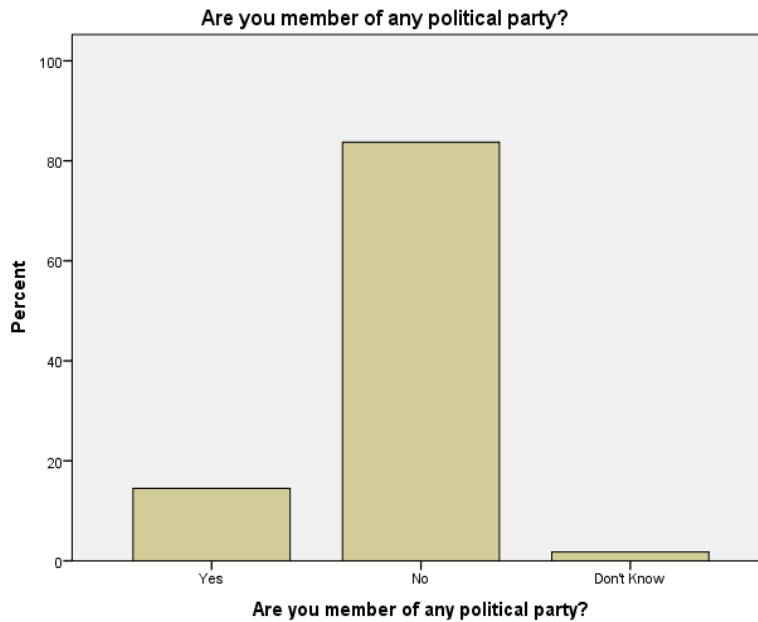
This question was responded by nearly same amount of participants. But the result is not desirable and people do not want to be a member of any political party. However, the next graphs show that they interest to support a political party which they thought that they representing their ideal and ideological as well were their world views.
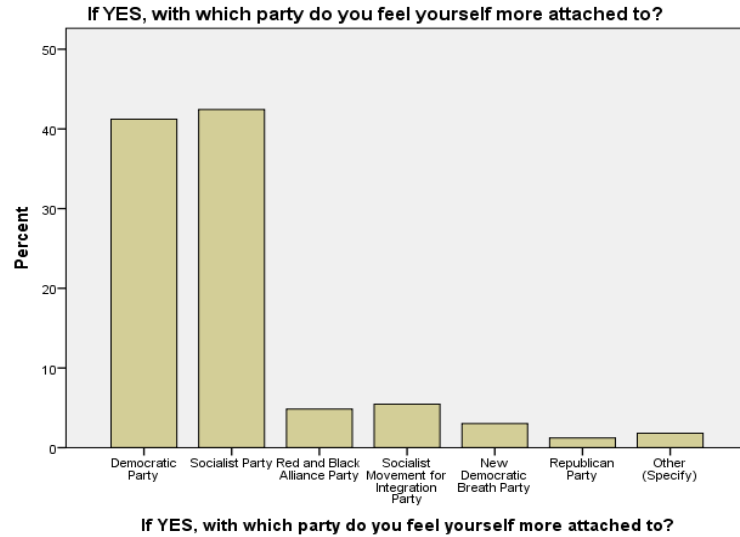
Graph 6A: Feeling Closer Political Party

Do you feel closer with any particular political party?

Do you feel closer with any particular political party?

Do you feel closer with any particular political party?

Do you feel closer with any particular political party?

The data indicates that the participants, at least more than half of them feel that they were closer to a political party. This closeness either does not convince them to be member of a political party nor prevent them to support them. This is quite interesting result and needs to be address by other studies. The next questions try to understand which political party their feel closer than the other. The participants' opinion was divers before the election. After the election, the most of them feel closer to the socialist party that is in government. This also explains why people do not want to be a member of any political party.

Graph 7A: Attachment to the Political Parties

If YES, with which party do you feel yourself more attached to?

If YES, with which party do you feel yourself more attached to?
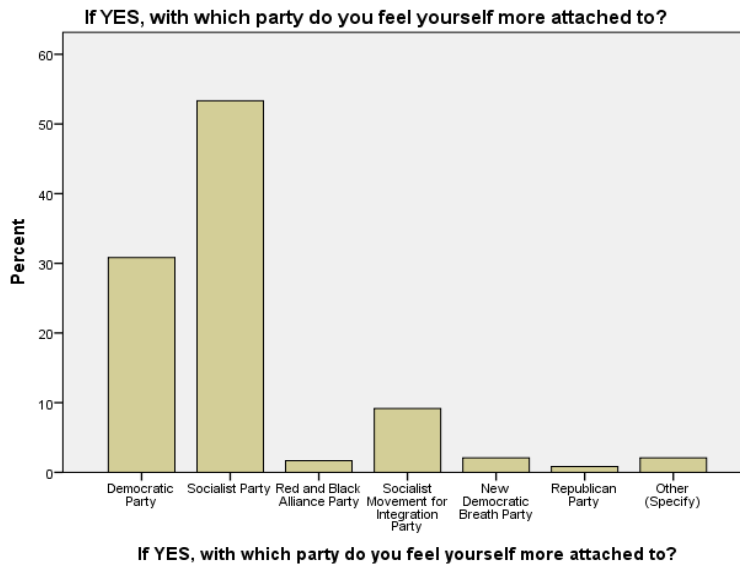
The participants' opinion on the political parties shows that they want to be closer to political parties which are in government. The survey asked other questions on their feeling, closeness and commitment to the political parties. The first survey shows that the Socialist Party and the Red and Black Alliance Party have stronger and adamant supporters if once compare with the Democratic Party and the Socialist Movement for Integration Party. The second survey's results were not same. The Socialist Party and the Red and Black Alliance supporters move from 'very much' to 'moderate' the Democratic Party and the Socialist Movement for Integration Party's supporters move from 'moderate' to 'very much' support level. These may be understood that

the expectation of the supporters in term of their support to their political parties. In other words, the Socialist Party and the Red and Black Alliance's supporters wanted to get their party elected the Democratic Party's supporter were sure that they were going to win the election. The Socialist Movement for Integration Party's supporters were quite weak in term of supporting their political party.

According to the election results of 2013, more than half of the electorates voted. If one looks at the Table: Statistical Results of 2013 Parliamentary Election of Albania, he notices that only 53.50% of the registered voters went to the pool station.

Table: Statistical Results of 2013 Parliamentary Election of Albania (Central Elections Commission, 2013)

	Total
Registered voters	3,271,885
Total number of voting centers	5,508
Number of voting centers that have sent data	5,490 / 99.67%
Number of voters that voted / Number of ballots found in the ballot box	1,744,261 /1,742,520
Number of unused ballots	1,422,483
Number of spoiled ballots	8,026
Number of invalid ballots	24,181
Number of valid ballots	1,720,162
Turnout of the voters from the voting centers that sent data	53.50%

This result support the finding of the surveys which indicated that nearly half of the participants did not support any political parties.

ANALYSING THE RESULTS

The results of the both survey show very interesting picture on Albanian electorates' behaviour. They were not active in the political parties. There might have their own reasons. However, they show their interest in politics on the one hand; on the other hands, they do not want to be visible. This can be due to the development of party system of Albania. Since the collapse of the communism, the evaluation of the political parties is extraordinary; because it is difficult to distinguish one from the other in term of their political programmes, policies and political as well as ideological stand. In other words, the developments and evaluation of political parties in

Albania has not had any similarities with Western European development which one summaries from Rokkan's cleavages as: ...centre-periphery cleavage; ...state-church cleavage; ...land-industry or urban-rural cleavage; ...the owner-worker cleavage (Hoffmann-Martinot, 2009, p. iv).

The relationship with income, wealth and poverty with democracy has been discussed by many academics who believe that 'democracies will more likely exist in richer rather than poorer countries' (Krishna, 2008, p. 1). This belief relates more the protection of democracy or survivability of democracy rather than the participation in politics. However, other present some evidences that in poor countries there is no strong link with the centre and rural which is very important part of communication of politics. It is stated that 'poor people .are primed to play a role in their own self governance but are clearly dissatisfied with the quality of rule provided by elected national leaders' (Bratton, 2008, p. 30). This conclusion could be applied to Albania. Since the turn out of the election which was around 53.50%.

Political parties are very important institutions and vechles for people to participate in politics. Further, there people would also participate in politics through civil society organisations, trade unions, none-governmental organisation, media and in today world, social medias.

From age to age the concerns and understandings are changed about politics. For example, an individual's political experience shapes the way he or she thinks about in politics. Older individuals are more experienced and that is why they can go about politics in a different way from younger people.

According to the results of this research, there is a long way to go in term of understanding the roles of the political parties in Albania. Especially it is seen that political behavior of people has changed after the election of 23 June 2013.

'The theory of participatory democracy is built round the central assertion that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another' (Pateman, 2003, p. 41). In other words, without participation, there could not be a democracy. For this reason, it is claimed that 'a society where all political systems have been democratised and socialisation through participation can take place in all areas' (Pateman, 2003, p. 41). All these depend on human being, because none forces people to take part in politics. It is required responsibility and courage to be in politics and public affair which has closer link with political education. Therefore, if people would like to influence the output such as decisions making process, they should participate in politics, which is input. This is clearly shows that there is a closer link between participation and democracy. However, the result of this research shows that it is quite difficult to categorise Albania among countries where the participatory democracy are alive and active. There is a kind of 'isolation from one another' although there is not huge difference among the political parties.

CONCLUSION
It is important to understand that this study is not about to understant the whole of Albanian electorate beheviour. However, the study conducted surveys, one was before the 23 June 2013

election the other was after the election in Tirana. The data and data analyses were representing the whole population when one compare the participants gender, education, ages and income. Further, the study shed light on the participants relations with the political parties and their feeling towards the political parties. The results have equated with the previous studies on similar topics. Therefore, this study can pass the internal and external validity of the research; and its finding can be generalised for whole society of Albania.

The beheviour of Albanian electorate is doutfull and not free from political and public pressures. This could be a reflection of the old regime or their incomes and their hope about politics. The survey has asked other questions related to people perception on politics, government and the political particies which are not analysed in this study. These questions' responses may provide required evidence why these people act in this way which having said in the above.

Finally, this study shows that there is a slowe evaluation that in the near future more Albanian electorates join with the political parties as members and would play an important role in the political parties policies and management. Therefore, there is a lot of reason to be hopeful.

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