

Kosovo: Priority needs in daily life

A poll conducted in small/mid-size villages in Kosovo

Introduction

Kosovo underwent decentralization with which it shifted the concentration of power from the central level to the municipalities. This paper will not dwell upon, however, it is important to mention that decentralization did not meet the impact with which it was envisioned. As Markus Schultze-Kraft mentions the decentralization process contributed to peacebuilding, but as a trade-off gave up on accountability¹. The aim of this brief is twofold: (a) provide basic information on the role of municipalities, their impact, and how does that correspond to the citizen's needs, and (b) interpret the results from a survey conducted in three small / mid-sized villages in Kosovo, namely in: Gjilan, Vushtrri, and Prizren.

Once Kosovo declared independence, and approved its constitution, the decentralization process was one of the most vital and accelerated processes that were to occur. The Law on Local Self Government defined the new responsibilities of municipalities². Emerging new competences for municipalities were meant to be reflected also in accountability towards their citizens. In the latest country report, in 2018, the European Commission report stated that "Local governance has been strengthened"³. The EU Commission, in the same report, still identifies that advancing the "reforms of self-government and increasing administrative capacity to facilitate decentralization are key priorities"⁴.

UNDP's Public Pulse and Mosaic survey analysis

In this sub-section of the introduction, the report will introduce two of the most inclusive reports that measure Kosovars perception on key issues: The Public Pulse, and Mosaic survey. In addition, there will be a section that will focus more on the municipalities which D4D's survey was conducted, namely: Prizren, Gjilan, and Vushtrri.

UNDP Public Pulse

Kosovo's perception of the social and political developments is vital in order to draft evidence-based policies. UNDP conducts the public pulse survey annually in Kosovo dating from 2011. The public pulse measures Kosovars perception regarding social and political developments, with the most recent pulse being conducted during September and early October 2017. The sample included 1,305 Kosovars (895 Kosovo Albanians, 210 Kosovo Serbs, and 200 Kosovo

¹ Markus Schultze-Kraft. Institute of Development Studies. 2013. Retrieved from: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/DecentralisationandPeacebuildinginKosovoMSchultzeKraft2013.pdf>

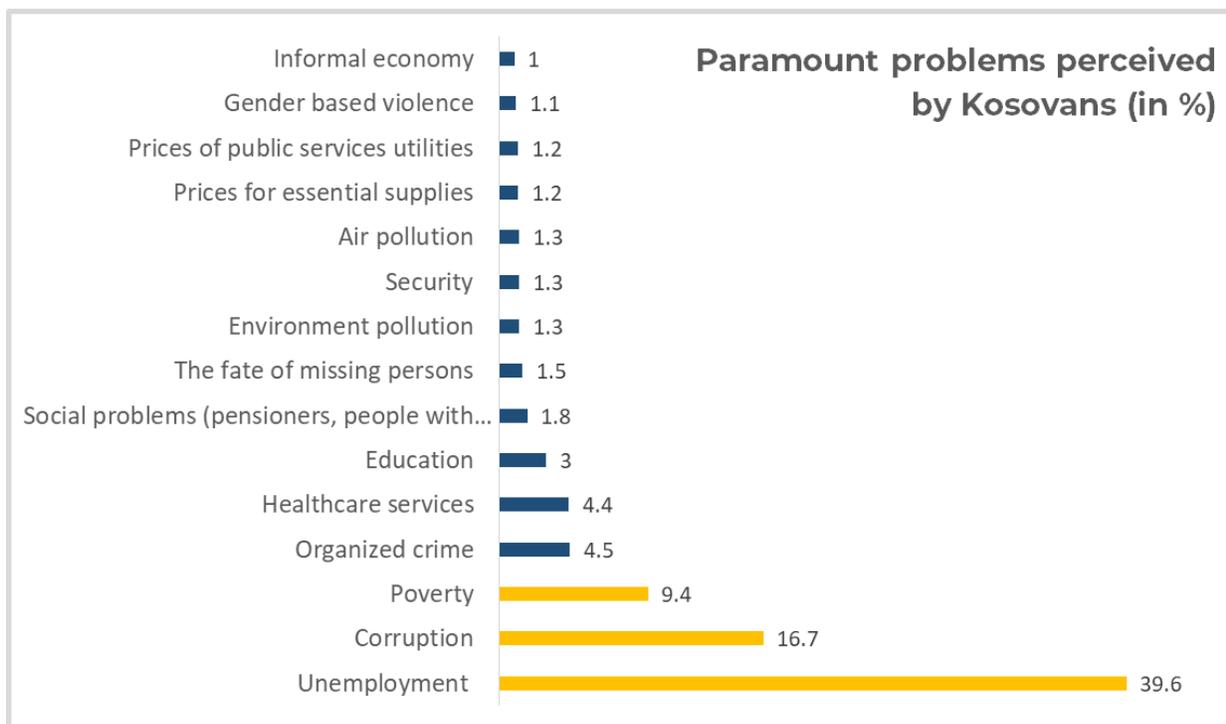
² Kosovo Assembly. Law on Local Self-Government. 2009. Retrieved from: http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2008_03-L040_en.pdf

³ European Commission. European Commission Report 2018. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/kosovo_progress_report_en.pdf

⁴ Ibid. Page 10.

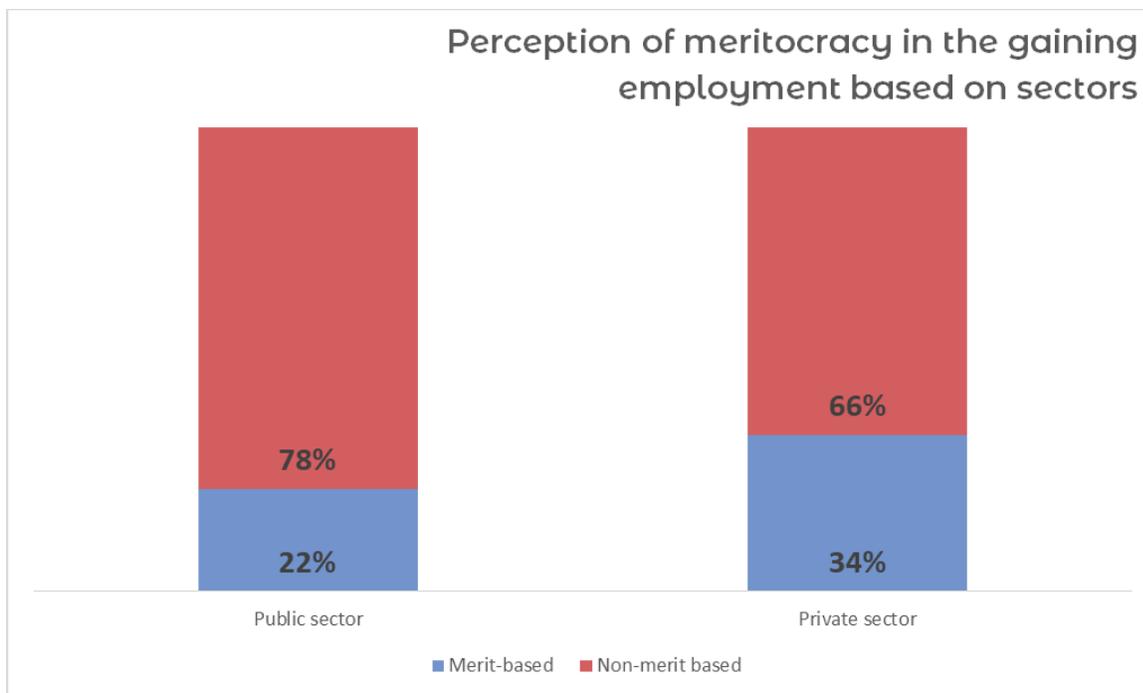
non-Serb minority). The relevance of the public pulse to this report is the fact that the pulse measured also citizen’s perception of paramount problems that Kosovo faces.

The 2017 UNDP public pulse report, as portrayed in the figure below, highlighted that **unemployment** (39.6%), **corruption** (16.7%), and **poverty** (9.4%) are the paramount problems that Kosovo’s citizens faces.



Given that unemployment was perceived as the biggest problem, the public pulse report dwells on the perception of merit-based employment. Only one in five Kosovars believe that merit-based factors decide employment in the public sector, and again around one in five (22%) believe that education and vocational training help to effectively gain employment⁵. Though more people perceive the private sector as merit-based, yet the percentage remains very low as only 33.71% perceive the private sector as a merit-based employer.

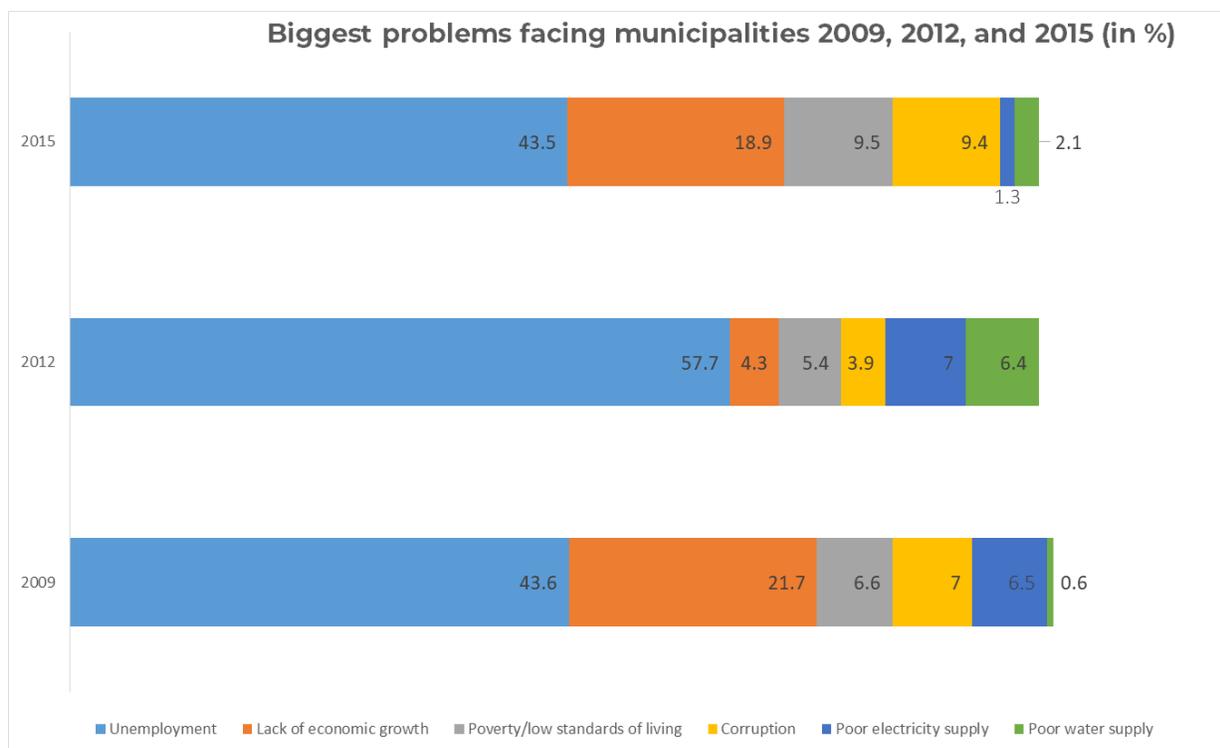
⁵ UNDP. UNDP Public Pulse XIII. Page 12. 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/PublicPulse/Public%20Pulse%20XIII.pdf>



Mosaic Survey

UNDP from 2003, every three years, conducts also the Mosaic Survey, which is important to reference here due to it measuring the perception of the quality of public services, and the biggest problems faced by municipalities. The most recent Mosaic report was published in 2015, with a sample of around 6,700 respondents. Sampling was based on municipalities, and thus given that 24% from all municipalities are Serb-majority municipalities, the number of Kosovo Serbs surveyed from the sample is at 18%. The figure below shows a comparison of the biggest issues perceived by citizens that their municipalities face, for the last three Mosaic reports, namely for the years 2009, 2012, and 2015. Notably, corruption ranks as the biggest problem in all the reports, reaching an all-time high in 2012 where more than half of the citizens (57.7%) perceived corruption as the biggest problem facing municipalities. Poor electricity supply was among the main problems in 2009, and 2012, where 6.5% and 7% respectively reported it as the main problem. However, in 2015 poor electricity supply was perceived as the main issue only by 1.3%. Poor water supply, in 2009 perceived by 0.6% as the main issue, whilst in 2012 6.4% reported it as the main problem, only to go down to 2.1% in 2015. Other issues which are not listed here can be found at *Annex 1: Biggest problems perceived by citizens, by municipalities in 2015*, as that explains in detail which problems are perceived as more important by municipalities. ⁶

⁶ UNDP. Mosaic Survey. 2015. Retrieved from: http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/Mozaik/Kosovo%20Mosaic%202015_english.pdf



Cross-analysis of Gjilan, Vushtrri, and Prizren

In this section, the report will present data from the Mosaic Survey, published in 2015, with a special focus on data for Gjilan, Vushtrri, and Prizren. The table below shows the data in percentage for citizen's perception in 2015, in the aforementioned municipalities. There are notable differences in some key issues that are identified. As an example, corruption in Prizren is perceived by 19.5% of its citizens as the main problem, yet in Gjilan and Vushtrri only 4% and 3.5% respectively identify corruption as the main problem. On the other hand, lack of economic growth is perceived by 18.5% of Gjilan's residents as the main problem, whilst this issue is perceived as the main one by only 3.1% in Prizren, and 6% in Vushtrri. Lastly, poor water supply is identified by 7% and 6%, in Prizren, and Vushtrri respectively, as the main issue, whilst only 0.5% of Gjilan's residents perceive poor water supply as the biggest issue.

Issue (in %)	Municipalities		
	Gjilan	Prizren	Vushtrri
<i>Unemployment</i>	57.0	48.8	69.5
<i>Lack of economic growth</i>	18.5	3.1	6.0
<i>Poverty/low standards of living</i>	9.0	8.2	4.5
<i>Corruption</i>	4.0	19.5	3.5
<i>Crime</i>	1.0	2.0	0.5
<i>Road infrastructure</i>	0.5	1.2	1.0
<i>Environmental pollution</i>	0.0	0.4	2.5
<i>Poor water supply</i>	0.5	7.0	6.0

<i>Poor healthcare services</i>	0.5	0.4	1.5
<i>Poor electric services</i>	2.0	1.2	2.0
<i>Inter-ethnic relations</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Lack of personal or general security</i>	2.0	0.4	0.0
<i>Limited freedom of movement</i>	0.5	0.0	0.0
<i>Illegal construction</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Informal economy</i>	0.5	0.4	0.0
<i>Other</i>	2.0	3.9	0.0
<i>Lack of post services</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Gender-based violence</i>	0.0	0.4	0.0
<i>Poor transport services</i>	0.0	0.8	0.0
<i>Poor heating supply</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Poor pre-school, primary, and secondary education</i>	1.0	0.8	1.0
<i>Dysfunctional administration</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Tax administration system</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Territorial re-configuration</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Poorly functioning waste management</i>	0.0	0.0	2.0

Executive Summary and main results

Municipalities play an important role to address the citizen's needs on a daily basis. The role and competences of municipalities allow for addressing issues that concern the citizen's lives in a more timely way compared to the central level. A platform developed by Democracy for Development highlights the roles and competences of municipalities⁷. Municipalities can have a variety of tools that can be used to address citizen's needs. Tools include, but not limited to, local economic development, urban and rural planning, and municipal services (e.g. water supply, sewage treatment, local transport, public healthcare, road maintenance, and other related services). Local economic development, as one of the main competences, allows municipalities to intervene through facilitation for businesses, tax exemptions, strengthening financial and economic management capacities of local municipal officials, and support for businesses. Urban and rural planning allows municipalities for municipalities to use its land for development processes, however, keeping in mind that decisions relating to municipal property are the responsibility of the municipal assembly. It is important for municipalities to use their aforementioned tools to address the issues portrayed by citizens. There has been little to no civic education and awareness raising on the role of municipalities by the municipalities themselves.

⁷ Democracy for Development. Good governance. 2018. Retrieved from: <http://goodgovernance.info/eng/Article/own-competencies>

Civil society, mainly NGOs, have used different methods, one of which is the Good Governance platform aforementioned, to educate citizens more on understanding municipal responsibilities, and advocate for accountability. However, municipalities have yet to introduce any training program that allows for not only citizens, but especially first-time assembly members to understand their role and competences, but also promote good governance principles. Therefore, there is ambiguity as to what municipalities are allowed to do and when is it the competence of the government to intervene. An example of this can be the famous case of buying buses for the municipality of Prishtina, where the mayor argued that the minister of finance had to give his signature on a credit loan from the municipality, whilst the ministry of finance argued that it was not in their competence to do so, and it even led to the minister of finance declaring that it was the president's duty to give his signature⁸.

This short brief tries to examine what citizens think that the paramount issues are that municipalities should focus on resolving in the next six (6) months. The survey was conducted in three small and mid-sized villages in Prizren, Vushtrri, and Gjilan, and assesses 367 people's perceptions on this issue. The questionnaire entailed a given list of issues, with the option of adding others. **Citizens were asked to select three issues and rank them** based on the need for a swift decision, thus, the paper will provide information on all three rankings.

The issue that was ranked as the most important by the citizens of all three municipalities is fighting corruption. Around 42.2% of the people surveyed listed fighting corruption as the main issue which should be addressed, followed by creating new jobs with 22.1%, and quality of health care with 10.1%. The second issue that should be addressed was producing more jobs with 24.3% claiming it should be swiftly addressed, followed by quality of health care with 19.1%, and fighting corruption with 11.2%. On the third issue, quality of healthcare was ranked number one as with 18% of the citizens seeing it as an immediate issue that needs resolving, followed by fighting corruption with 12.3%, and social assistance, pensions and other schemes by 9.5%.

These results follow the same trends as the UNDP's public pulse, where corruption and unemployment were the top 2 problems. Although the survey has only targeted a sample of citizens that is not representative for the whole country, various other reports, as UNDP's public pulse and Mosaic Survey, but also from other NGOs such as Levizja FOL suggest that these problems are also persistent nation-wide⁹.

⁸ Gazeta Express. Hoti e hedh topin te Thaçi për autobusët e Prishtinës. "Hoti throws the ball to Thaci for Prishtina busses". 16 June 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/hoti-e-hedh-topin-te-thaci-per-autobuset-e-prishti-214061/?archive=1>

⁹ Levizja FOL. Corruption Scan. 2016. Retrieved from: <http://levizjafol.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/SKENIMI-I-KORRUPSIONIT-20161.pdf>

Survey methodology

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: (a) demographics, and (b) citizen's prioritization. Demographics part includes sex, age, employment status, income, education, and ethnicity. The second part asked respondents to rank three main issues which they think their respective municipality should focus on. Firstly, the respondents identified three main issues and then ranked them from one (1) to three (3).

Sampling

Three small/mid-size villages were chosen in three municipalities, namely in Gjilan, Vushtrri, and Prizren. Given that the survey only directs a small number of villages, we have chosen different municipalities, under the assumption that villages within the same municipality have no significant differences in needs. The municipalities chosen vary in their main business activity, population size, and geographical context.

In each of the municipalities from the list of villages, one was selected for each. Given that there was to be only one village per municipality, one was chosen as a small size village (Shtitaricë), whilst two others (Velekincë and Piranë) as mid-sized ones. The survey had a random selection method where every second house was surveyed. Method for administering the survey: The survey was paper-based and was conducted by physically attending the homes of the respondents.

Municipality	Village	People surveyed in the municipality	Total population in the municipality based on 2011 census ¹⁰
<i>Gjilan</i>	Velekincë	134	1602
<i>Vushtrri</i>	Shitaricë	47	788
<i>Prizren</i>	Piranë	181	2417

Training

Enumerators were be trained by D4D staff on conducting the questionnaire. Enumerators are part of D4D's staff and have completed at least a high school education.

Conducting the Survey

Once the sampling frame was defined, the project manager delegated responsibility for each village to enumerators. Each enumerator had a daily quota that they have to achieve.

Data cleaning

Data cleaning was done after the results have been entered into the system. Data cleaning helped us identify outliers, missing data, and/or entry errors. Each error that was identified was traced back to the questionnaire. The cleaning process was complete when the data file had been edited to correct the errors or the corrections have been made in the analysis program.

¹⁰ Agency of Statistics in Kosovo. 2011. Retrieved from: <http://askdata.rks-gov.net/PXWeb/pxweb/sq/askdata/>

Issues encountered during the survey

The survey was initially prepared based on the number of the population registered as by the national census. However, upon initial field analysis, it was noted that there were fewer homes as initially predicted. This was evident especially in Gjilan and Vushtrri, as most of the people that were residing there had either left the country or were not residents there anymore.

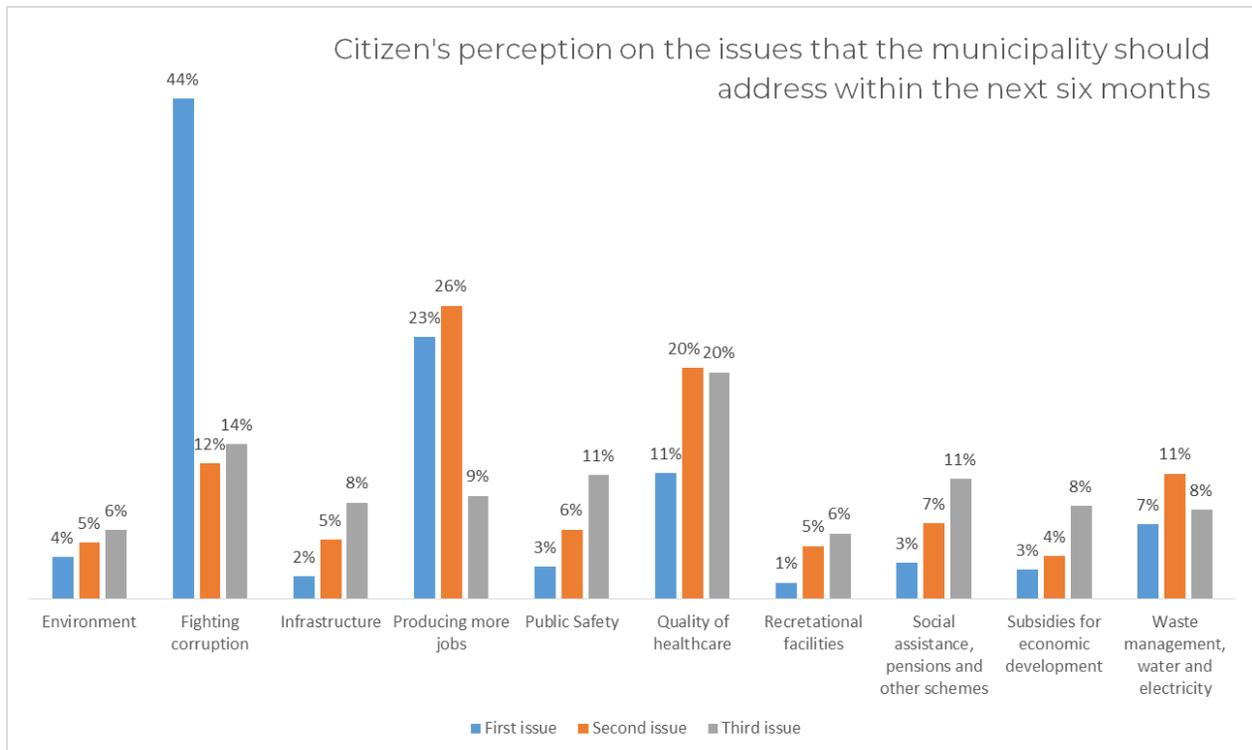
Survey results

In total there were 367 people that were surveyed in three villages. The demographics results of the survey are shown below. Not all demographics have been included as only those that are most important have been presented.

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	173	51.5
	Woman	189	47.1
Age	18-24	57	15.5
	25-34	81	22.1
	35-44	79	21.5
	45-54	62	16.9
	55-64	44	12.0
	65+	36	9.8
Marital status	Divorced	4	1.1
	Married	255	69.5
	Single	83	22.6
	Widow	11	3.0
Education level	Bachelor	28	7.6
	Elementary school	99	26.7
	High school	125	34.0
	Master	5	1.4
	No formal education	27	7.4
	Professional school	10	2.7
	Several years of elementary school	32	8.7
	Several years of high school	35	9.5
The main source of income	Agriculture	59	16.1
	Daily Wages	19	5.2
	Remittances	21	5.7
	Salaries and wages from the private sector	177	48.2
	Salaries and wages from the public sector	33	9.0

Citizen's perception on problems

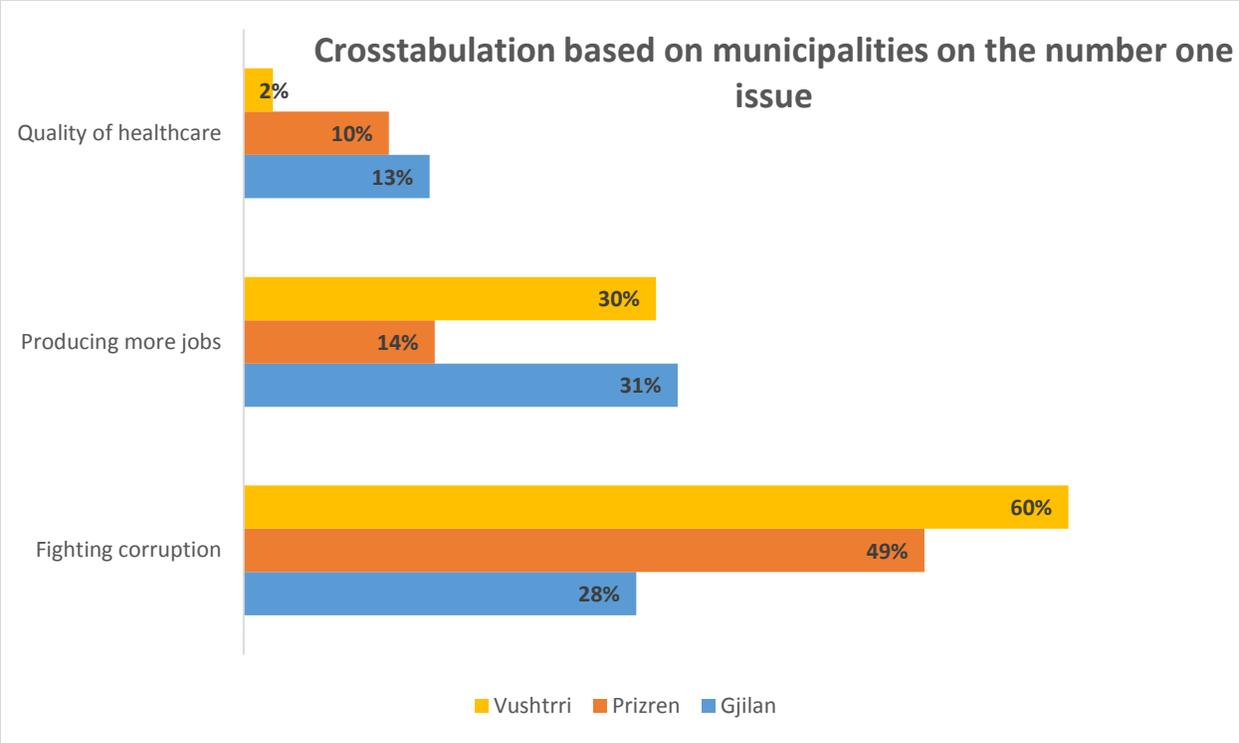
As stated in the beginning of the paper, the results from this survey do not differ that much compared to conclusions drawn hitherto from other surveys. The report goes on to reaffirm the UNDP's public pulse, and UNDP's Mosaic survey, that corruption and unemployment are the main issues that citizens perceive. In our survey the citizens were asked to provide input on the issues they deemed most important for the municipality to address in the next six (6) months, and rank them from 1-3, 1 being the most important and 3 the least. The table shows that fighting corruption is deemed as the most important issue to be addressed, followed by producing more jobs, and quality of healthcare.



Citizen's perception of problems based on the municipality

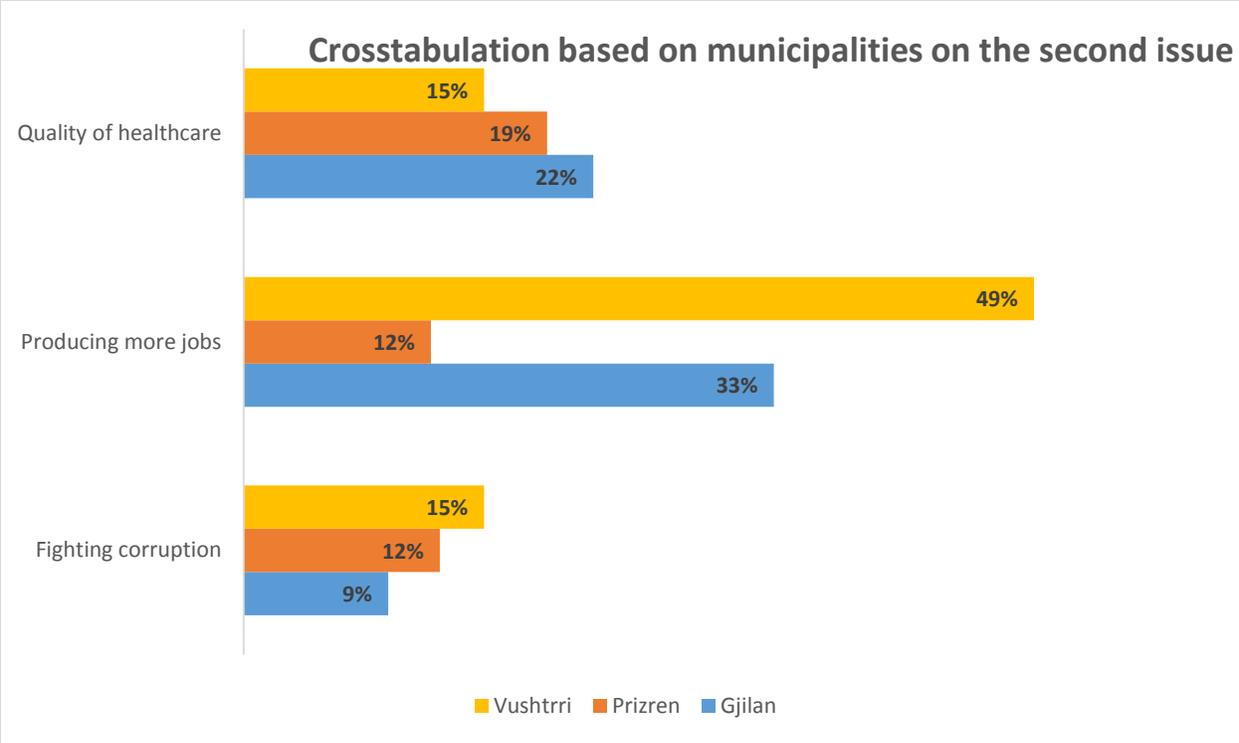
This section provides an analysis of the data based on municipalities. The results differ based on municipalities in the ranking of problems, however, the issues identified are the same. Graph one portrays, in percentage, the three top problems that respondents perceived as the number one issue that should be resolved, based on the municipality. Notably, whilst Prizren and Vushtrri were adamant that fighting corruption was the number one issue to be addressed, in Gjilan we see a different trend as producing more jobs is seen as more important.

Graph 1: Municipality analysis based on the number one issue



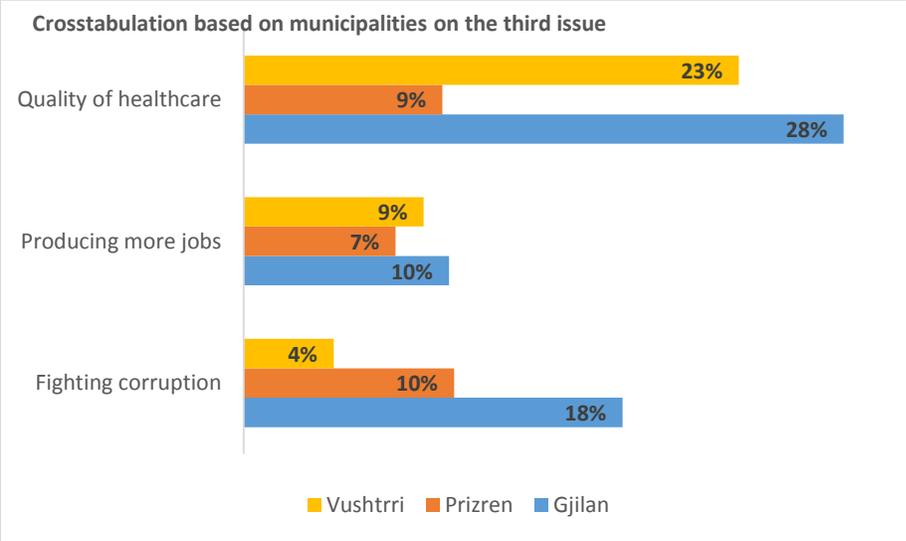
When asked to rank the second issue that they feel should be resolved within 6 months, Graph 2 shows the differences between the municipalities based on the second issue. Respondents in Vushtrri and Gjilan identified creating new jobs as the key second issue which the municipality should react to within 6 months, like 49%, and 33% respectively agree that this is the second most important issue. Respondents in Prizren interestingly point out that quality of health care, with 19% agreeing, is the 2nd most important issue after fighting corruption.

Graph 2: Municipality analysis based on the second issue



Finally, the third most important issue that citizens feel that should be addressed, based on their municipality, is portrayed in Graph 3. On the third issue, Gjilan and Vushtrri respondents think that quality of health care should be addressed within 6 months, whilst respondents in Prizren feel that fighting corruption is the third issue that should be addressed.

Graph 3: Municipality analysis based on the third issue

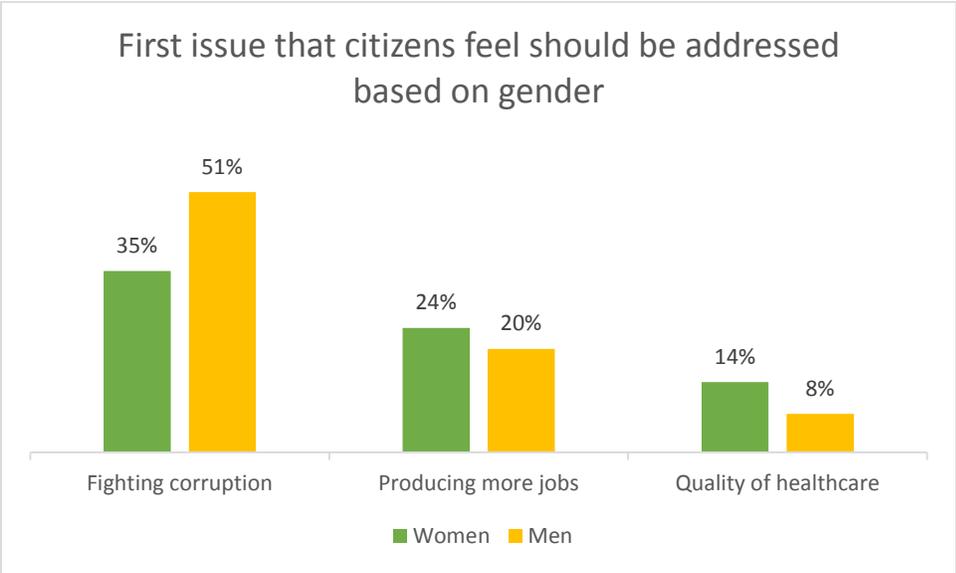


Citizen’s perception of issues based on gender

Gender as a cross-cutting reveals several issues that should be addressed. Given that our survey contained only one question, the lack of more evidence hinders us to provide a more thorough analysis of the gender differences based on the municipalities.

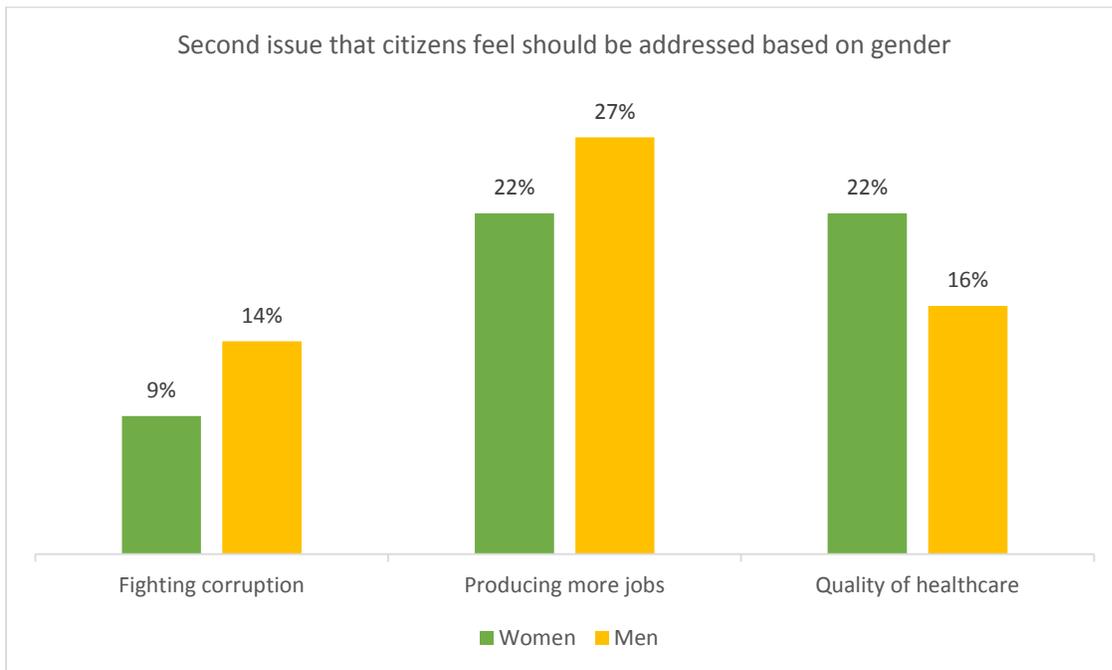
In our survey, although both genders ranked corruption as the main issue, there are key differences in the percentage that perceived it as such. Around 35% of women perceive corruption as the main issue, in comparison to 51% of men that rank corruption as the main issue. On ranking the second most important issue, women surpass men as 24% of women, in comparison to 20% of men, rank creating new jobs as the second biggest issue. However, and more importantly women (14%) rank the quality of health care as a key issue, whereas only 8% of men think that is the first issue that needs addressing.

Graph 4: First issue that citizens perceive that should be addressed based on gender



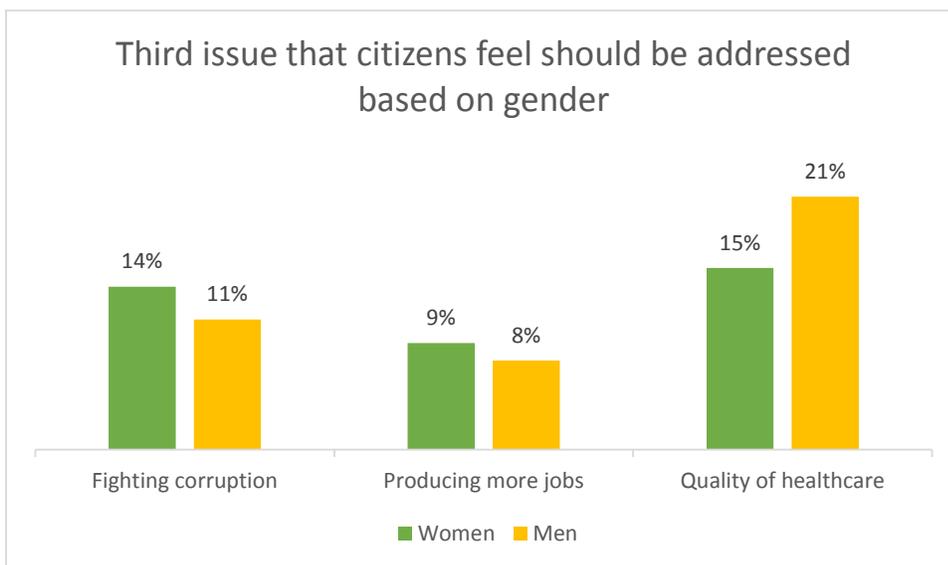
On the second issue, the gender-related differences, in particular regarding the importance of the need for quality of health care are more evident. Graph 5 shows the percentages in this regard: women (22%) feel that the quality of healthcare is the second most important issue to be resolved, in comparison to 16% men that think alike.

Graph 5: Second issue that citizens feel should be addressed



The third issue shows that women are more prone to list fighting corruption, and producing more jobs as the third issue to be tackled, rather than men who on the third issue deem that quality of healthcare is more important. Graph 6 provides the details to the analysis.

Graph 6: Third issue that citizens feel should be addressed



Conclusions and ending remarks

This brief offers some background information on the role of municipalities in addressing local issues. It provides first hints on citizens' needs and opinions regarding issues that they want to

be resolved by their municipality. Notably, our survey does not allow to draw conclusions on overall development and citizens' perception in Kosovo, given that it only assessed three small / mid-sized villages.

More thorough needs assessment ought to be conducted especially to further dwell on the issues noted in the survey, namely corruption, unemployment, and quality of healthcare. As corruption is being seen as the major issue by citizens, more in-depth questions should be developed that assess what citizens perceive as corruption, especially in rural regions. It ought to be assessed whether the perception of corruption is the cause of the perception of other issues, or a build-up from the other issues. This survey is limited and thus does not address that part.

It is important to note that there are gender differences on, especially on the issue of corruption, and quality of healthcare. Aside from just these differences, municipalities must have gender-mainstreaming embedded in the policymaking levels. Increasing citizen's participation in the policymaking process, and incorporating both men and women's needs in the policies will provide a more inclusive approach and ensure that policies are based on needs rather than ad-hoc.

Another issue which has not been mentioned above as: waste management, water, and electricity services, was perceived by 6.3% of people as the main issue. In addition, as 10.4% and 6.8% perceive it as a second or third issue, it goes to show that around 23.5% perceive it among the three top issues.

In conclusion, a thorough assessment of the needs of citizens combined with responsive policies, more awareness raising by municipalities that promote civic activism and also educate citizens and assembly members on roles and competences, and combating the issues raised in this report would enable for an enhanced role of municipalities in addressing citizen's needs.