

LOCAL ELECTIONS AND CITIZENS: TURKEY FENERBAHÇE SAMPLE

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Abstract

Cities have cultural and historical qualities. The services provided by the local authorities are important to shape the cities visually and socially. The aim of local elections is to select the local authorities. The aim of this research paper is to analyse the criteria on which people make decisions in local elections and the indicators which show the success of the local authorities. The target group is people who live in İstanbul Kadıkoy-Fenerbahçe neighbourhood. To gather data a survey was given to 295 participants. In the survey, together with the questions on their sex, age, education, income level and how long they have lived in the neighbourhood, they were also asked about their political opinions, how much they know about the duties and responsibilities of the local authorities, the criteria about electing the local authorities, their opinions about the indicators showing the success of the mayors and their opinions on their own contributions on the city. While analysing the results, it has been seen that in Kadıkoy neighbourhood the income; that the education level is comparatively very high and people's awareness on urban politics is definitely high; that they have participation spirit; that they consider the qualities of the local authorities in the elections but not their political interests.

Key Words: Local Government, Urban Policy, Participation, Governance

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1.1. Introduction

The city is a product of the common living. The city is the main issue for all social groups and habitats. Basic needs are met in the city and ve this concerns all social groups. (Castells,1997) Local governments develop active citizenship, provide local representation and participation, contribute to the development and formation of local identity, develop a sense of belonging and solidarity, unity, integrity. (Yıldırım,1994)

The general policy is unavoidable impact on local politics. However, the local power structure is important in making decisions at the local level. (Çukurçayır,2008) Economic or political relations between the powerful groups in local politics is important. In this context, it is important who directed the local politics.(Varol, 2000) Therefore, given an extremely value to the local elections in Turkey.

Local governments are represented and participating institutions, bringing democracy with an effective and functional interaction. Spatial and social distance between rulersand ruled goes down to a minimum at the local level. Therefore, various urban groups can be represented in local decision-making bodies and local actors can participate in the system easily.(Çiççi,1996)

1.2. Objectives and Methodology

The aim of this research paper is to analyse the criteria on which people make decisions in local elections and the indicators which show the success of the local authorities. The target group is people who live in İstanbul Kadıkoy-Fenerbahçe neighbourhood. To gather data a survey was given to 295 participants. Fenerbahçe neighbourhood population is 25.170. According to information received from reeve; the number of voters in local elections (March-2014) is 17.000 persons. There are 59 streets in the neighbourhood. The sample group was formed of 295 people, with 5 surveys in each street. The participants have been chosen randomly. The study is descriptive type.

1.3. Findings

A survey has been given to 295 people living in the neighbourhood. 148 (50,17%) of the participants were men. 147 (49,83%) of them were women. As shown in Table 1, 114 (% 38,64) of the participants were between 35-54 years old. The lowest rate was 75 years and older group.

As for the educational backgrounds of the participants the largest group consists of 129(%43,73) university graduates. The number of secondary school and primary school graduates is low. There are 19 participants with master's and doctoral education. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's address based population registration system(ADNKS) data; master-doctoral graduates to total population rate of 0.08%; rate of university graduates by 8.7%; rate of high school graduates is 17.8%.(TUIK,2014) Therefore; it is observed that the education level of our participants on average in Turkey.

When we investigated the income of our participants; the largest group consists of 105 (%35,59) with 5001-7500TL. monthly income. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's "Income and Living Conditions Survey 2013" data; in Turkey the average annual income per household is 26.577 TL.(TUIK,2014) Based on monthly income is 2214,75 TL. According to this data; our participants considered above average income.

As shown in Table 1, the neighbourhood is a tendency for such long time sitting. When the participants were asked about how much they know on the mission, authority and responsibility of the municipalities, the answers were as follows: 182 (61,69 %) sufficient; 11(3,73 %) insufficient; 52(17,63 %) good and 49 (16,61 %) very good. 1 (0,34%) participant marked "I don't have any idea" option.

In the 7th question of the survey; interest in local politics were asked. 144 (48.81%) people said "I have been interested" This is a pleasing result. Because one of the most important indicators of urban consciousness is interest in urban policy.

Table 1. Gender Distribution, Age Distribution, Educational Background, Average Monthly Income Status, Duration of Living in Neighbourhood, Level of Knowledge about Municipal Services, Local Policy Relevance

		n	%			n	%	
1. Gender Distribution	Women	147	49,83%	5. Duration of Living in Kadıkoy-Fenerbahçe Neighbourhood	0-5 years	12	4,07%	
	Men	148	50,17%		6-14 years	38	12,88%	
2. Age Distribution	18-34	112	37,97%		15-24 years	143	48,47%	
	35-54	114	38,64%		25-34 years	83	28,14%	
	55-74	50	16,95%		35 years and over	19	6,44%	
	75 and over	19	6,44%		6. Participants' Level of Knowledge about Municipal Services	Very good	49	16,61%
	3. Educational Background	Literate	1			0,34%	Good	52
Primary School		18	6,10%			Sufficient	182	61,69%
Secondary School		14	4,75%			Insufficient	11	3,73%
High School		73	24,75%			I don't have any idea	1	0,34%
Two-Years Degree Graduate		41	13,90%	7. Local Policy Relevance	I never interested	13	4,41%	
University Graduate		129	43,73%		Little interested	46	15,59%	
M.S.- PhD		19	6,44%		I have been interested	144	48,81%	
4. Average Monthly Income Status	0-1.000 TL.	11	3,73%		Very interested	92	31,19%	
	1.001-2.500 TL.	19	6,44%					
	2.501-5.000 TL.	81	27,46%					
	5.001-7.500 TL.	105	35,59%					
	7.501-10.000 TL.	51	17,29%					
	10.001 and over	28	9,49%					

The 8th question of the survey is participants' choosing criteria for mayor. The result of this question is noteworthy politically. In local elections, urban mayor candidates are representatives of political parties. But at the survey results; political parties as selection criteria is # 5. The most important criteria are the project of the candidate and reliability. As can be seen here, people's urban mayor selection criteria are not political; service-oriented. The release of the survey results can be linked to the height of the participants' education and income.

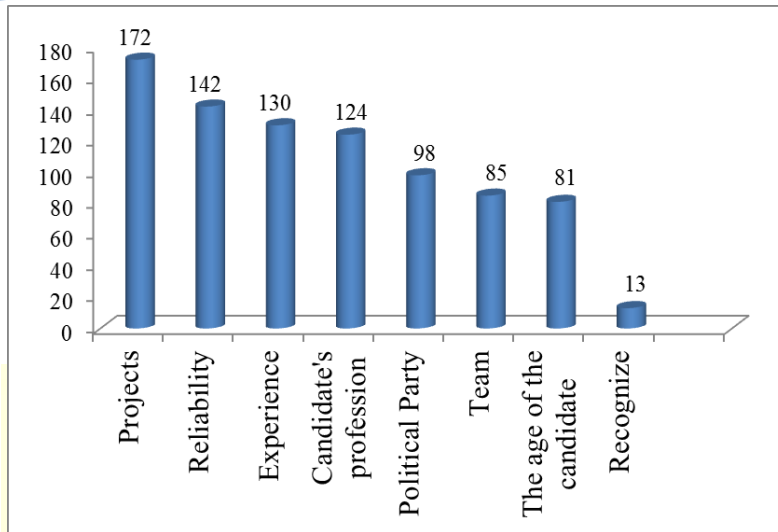


Figure 1. The choosing criteria for mayor

The most common answer to the question: “What do you think the mayor indicator of success?” was “justice in zoning decisions”. The number of people who think that the success indicators of green space arrangement are 266.

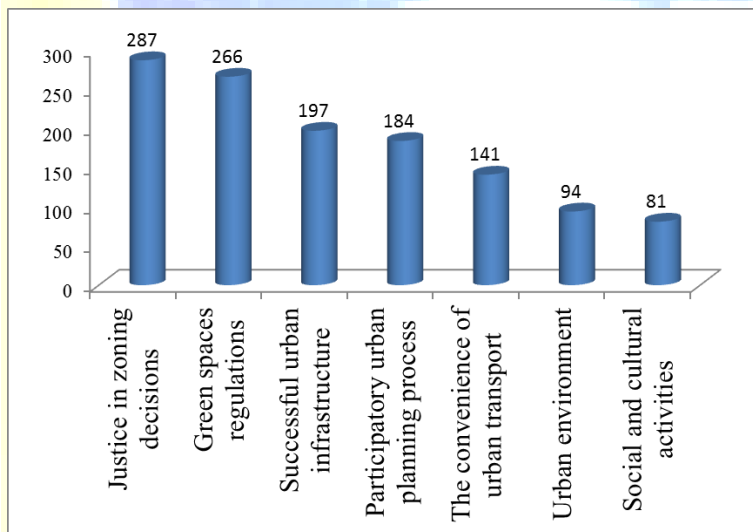


Figure 2. Success indicators of urban mayor

When the participants were asked “How people can contribute in order to beautify the city?” the answers were as follows: 143 persons attending city council meetings to present ideas; 116 participants report ideas and complaints to the municipal authorities. Vote is the third most frequent answer. In other words; according to the participants, active local participation methods

is more important. Participatory urban management process is open to the general public. Local elections are a part of participation mechanism.

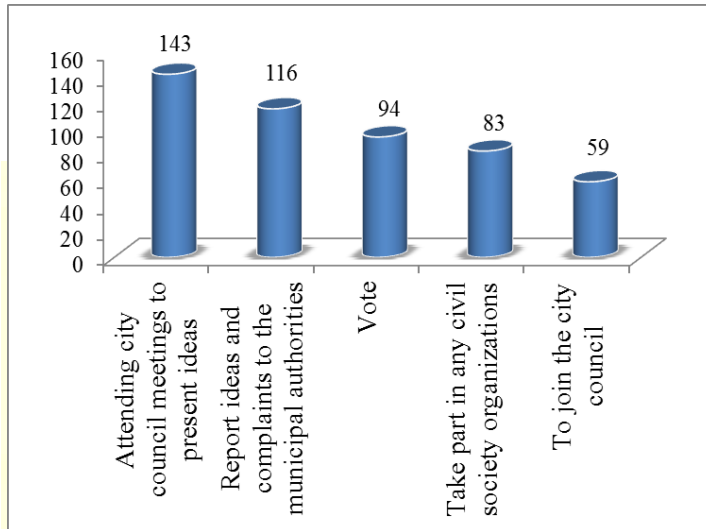


Figure 3. The contribution of urban individuals

1.4. Discussion and Conclusion

Urban society is a heterogeneous structure. Different interest groups and voter expectations are forcing local administrators to improve themselves. If the correct understanding of the structure of local voters, electoral success is affected. Successful local politicians, gives importance to the contribution of the community in the distribution of urban services.(Bardhan ve Mookherjee, 2000) The selection of local administrator not only the cities; It also affects a broad range of countries. Vote, is not sufficient to fulfill the duty to the city. (Cochrane, 2007)

According to the results of our survey; the majority of our participants are sufficient information in terms of urban politics. They carry the spirit of participation; respect the interests of the city in elections. Participants have the information about joining the council. Urban consciousness of Kadikoy Fenerbahçe neighbourhood seems high.

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