

Globic Opinion Poll # 2: Albanian Public Opinion

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Abstract

The Globic Opinion Poll was administered to a random sample of residents in Tirana, Albania in June of 2006. The survey fieldwork took place during June 5–11. The survey was administered via face-to-face household interviews with a representative sample of 1200 individuals over 18 years old in 40 primary sample units in Tirana. Interviews lasted for 25 minutes, on average. At a confidence level of 95 percent, the survey results have a margin of error of ± 2.2 percent. In what follows, we summarize the results of the survey, focusing on various public opinion distributions in the Albanian mass public. Special attention is given to the Albanian mass public's beliefs about current conditions, people's evaluations of political figures and parties, and their opinions that are relevant to the upcoming Albanian elections.

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1 Introduction

The Globic Polls organization conducted face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of 1,200 residents of Tirana, Albania, from June 5–11, 2006. What follows is a summary of the data acquired through these interviews. In the first section we provide a lay of the land by outlining important sample characteristics. Following this, we describe the nature of the mass public’s evaluations of government institutions and current conditions. Then we examine citizens’ evaluations of key political figures and parties and assess how these evaluations are related to their likes and dislikes of the parties and candidates. Finally we consider opinions related to the upcoming Albanian elections.

2 Sample Characteristics

Let us begin with a consideration of the age distribution, which is reported in Table 1. Respondents are distributed relatively evenly across the five age groups, which is not only reasonable but also in line with the known age distribution in Tirana.

Table 1: Age Group Distribution in the Sample

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
18–29	252	21.3%
30–39	210	17.8
40–49	228	19.3
50–59	237	20.1
60 & Above	255	21.6
TOTAL	1182	100.0%

The distribution of education in the Albanian sample is presented in Table 2. 47 percent of the sample’s respondents report having a High School degree, while more than 30 percent of respondents report having a college or post-graduate degree. This is a well-educated sample of the Albanian mass public, but take note: the sample is restricted to

residents of Tirana.

Table 2: Education by Group: Highest Level Attained by Respondent

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
None	8	0.7%
Primary	53	4.4
Secondary	182	15.2
High School	557	46.6
University Degree	361	30.2
Post-graduate Degree	34	2.9
TOTAL	1195	100.0%

With regard to gender, we compare the sample distribution with that of the population distribution as it was reported in the 2001 Albanian census.¹ The figure shows that the Globic Polls’ sample is skewed toward females, which is to say, in our sample females are over-represented relative to the population distribution. To correct for the skewness we weight the sample data according to the distribution reported in the 2001 census report.²

Table 3 reports religious identification frequencies. A majority of those interviewed reported belonging to the Muslim religion ($\approx 62\%$) but did not specify a particular denomination. This substantial majority is followed by Eastern Orthodox (14%), Bektashi Muslim (9%), and Catholic identifiers (6.7%) respectively. All told, these four groups of religious identifiers comprise over 92-percent of the sample population. Thus where religion is relevant in the analyses to follow, our focus will be on these four religious groups.

The survey asked respondents to report their level of regular religious activity (aside from special occasions like weddings and funerals). The exact question reads: “Apart from special occasions, such as weddings and funerals, how often do you go to church, mosque, or teque?” The reported frequencies appear in Table 4. Table 4 makes clear that the modal

¹Source: INSTAT. 2005. Albania in Figures. Tirane: Instituti i Statistikes.

²We do not have any strong belief that gender is systematically related to other opinions in our sample, but we do find several significant relationships. After weighting the data by gender the effects on sample statistics are minimal. Indeed, differences between raw scores and weighted scores are usually observed in the second or third decimal column.

Table 3: Religious Group Identification

Religious Group	Frequency	Percent
Muslim, nd ^a	737	62.0%
Muslim, Sunni	18	1.5
Muslim, Bektashi	110	9.3
Eastern Orthodox	166	14.0
Catholic	79	6.7
Others	20	1.7
No Religion	58	4.9
TOTAL	1188	100.0%

^and: No denomination given

response category is “no religious activity”. But one-fifth of the sample attends religious services several times per year and another 12 percent attends religious services at least once per year.

Table 4: Religious Activity

Frequency of Attendance	Frequency	Percent
Never	628	55.0%
Once a Year	142	12.5
Several Times/Year	232	20.3
Once a Month	39	3.4
Two or More Times/Month	50	4.4
Every Week	50	4.4
TOTAL	1141	100.0%

The question is whether this aggregate participation pattern might vary across sub-groups. And our answer points to age as a particularly important variable. This is because different generations in Albania were socialized under markedly different religious environments. In short, older generations were socialized in an environment that might be called “anti-religious,” whereas this is less so for the younger generations (especially the 18-29 age group). Thus it is possible that different age groups engage in different levels of religious practice. To examine this possibility, Figure 1 collapses the religious participation scale into three categories: *Low* (Never/Once a Year), *Medium* (Several Times/Once a Month), and

High Attendance (Twice a Month/Every Week). In this figure, age-group proportions are plotted for each attendance category on the y-axis. Figure 1(a) plots the Low Attendance data and 1(b) plots Medium and High Attendance trends. This separation is intended to accentuate the age-group trends for each category of participation.

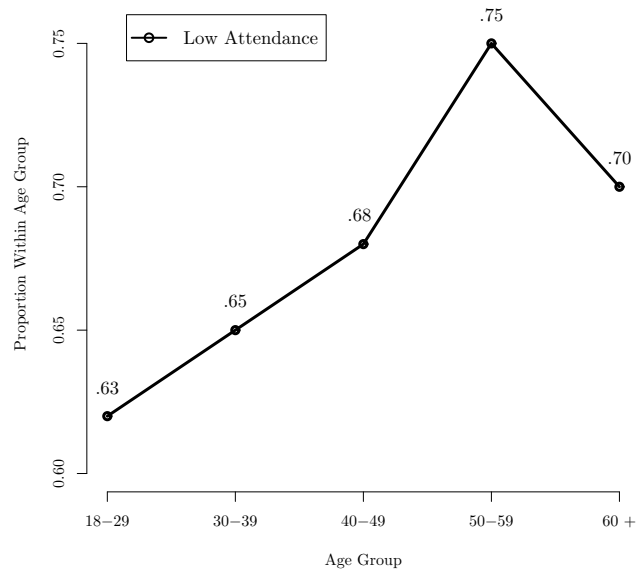
In Figure 1 we observe two interesting patterns: First, relative to younger citizens, a far greater proportion of older citizens fall into the Low Attendance category. Second, younger citizens are on average the most likely to attend religious services that go beyond weddings and funerals. In other words, those who are younger are also more actively religious. Despite visible age-group differences in participation, however, one cannot rule out the possibility that these differences are due to chance variation in the sample, as there is no statistically significant relationship between age and attendance at the generally accepted level.³ Of course, because the relationship is very close to being statistically significant, the connection between age and religious activity warrants additional investigation.

Respondents were asked about their interest in politics: “How interested would you say you are in politics—are you: (1) Not at all interested; (2) Hardly interested; (3) Quite interested; (4) Very interested?” On this question the bimodal nature of interest is clear: Approximately one-third of the sample has no interest in Albanian politics, but a near-equivalent proportion says that they are quite interested. Coupled with those who are “very interested,” then, approximately half of the sample reports having an interest in following public affairs. One important implication of this result is that many respondents should be fairly well informed about the political issues probed in this survey (see ahead).⁴

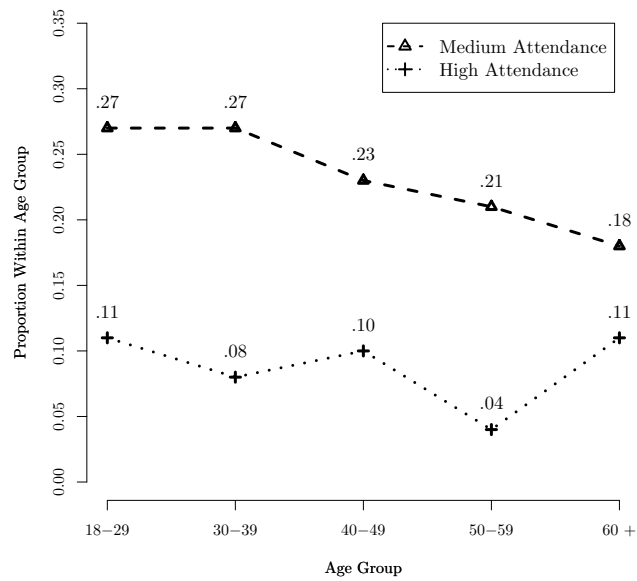
Respondents were asked whether any of the Albanian parties represented their views

³We take $p < .05$ to be the generally accepted level. In this analysis, Pearson’s $\chi^2 \sim (16.75, 8)$, which yields $p = .06$.

⁴We have an additional measure of interest or “attentiveness”: how often people discuss politics with friends. The response categories are as follows ($N = 1188$, sample percentages in parentheses): (1) Frequently discuss political matters (27 percent); (2) Occasionally discuss political matters (54 percent); (3) Never discuss politics (19 percent).



(a) Religious Attendance by Age Group (Low Attendance Only)



(b) Religious Attendance by Age Group (Medium, High Attendance Only)

Figure 1: Religious Attendance Levels Across Five Age Groups

reasonably well. If respondents said “yes”, they were then asked to choose from a list of 11 parties: Socialist Party, Democratic Party, Socialist Movement for Integration, Republican Party, Social Democratic Party, Christian Democratic Party, New Democratic Party, Human Rights Union Party, Movement of Leka Zogu I, Democratic Alliance Party, Agrarian Party, Other. Approximately 92-percent of the Albanian mass public says that the party that represents their views is either the Democratic Party (PD) or the Socialist Party (PS). Note that 58-percent of those interviewed say that no single party best represents their views, so this marginal percentage represents the views of a smaller sample ($N = 438$). An additional six percent report that the Socialist Movement for Integration Party (LSI) best represents their views. As all the other parties combined account for only two percent of the sample’s party identification, in what follows, we focus our attention on opinions pertaining to the PD, PS, and LSI.

Although the overall identification pattern is clear, the aggregated results mask interesting differences in party identification across education and age groups. Consider education: Within-group support for the Socialist Party increases slightly with increasing education (from 28 percent identification for the less-than-High-School (LTHS) subgroup to 32 percent for those with at least a college degree). In addition, relative to their lesser-educated counterparts, respondents with higher education are more likely to say that the LSI best represents their views (10 percent of those with a post-graduate degree). Finally, respondents’ propensity to identify with the Democratic Party decreases with increasing education (from 69 percent among the LTHS subgroup to 52 percent among at least college educated respondents). Taken together these marginal percentages suggest a general pattern in the Albanian mass public: higher-education people tend to identify with the political left while lower-education people tend to identify with the political right.

What about differences in party identification across age groups? In looking at the level of support for the three major parties—that is, the Socialist Party, the Democratic

Party, and the Socialist Movement for Integration Party (LSI)—by age group, we find that younger Albanians are slightly less likely to support the Socialist Party. Because this same age demographic is also most likely to support the LSI, it appears that younger individuals choose the LSI over the PS as the party that best represents their views.

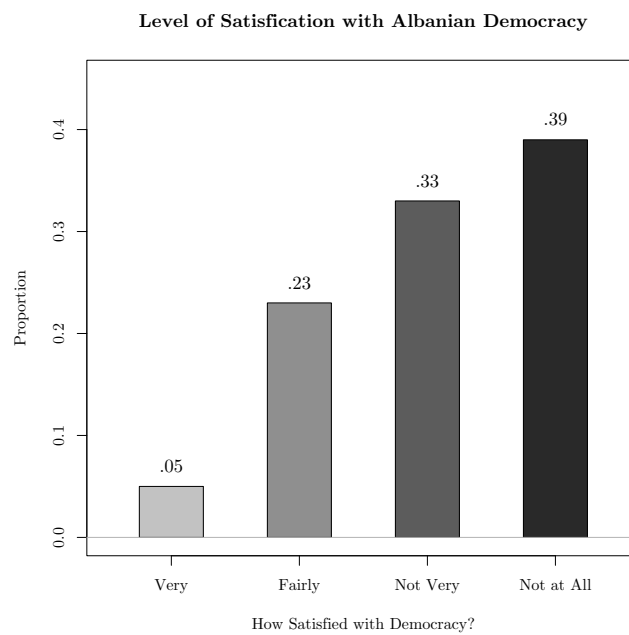
3 Evaluating Institutions

3.1 General Performance

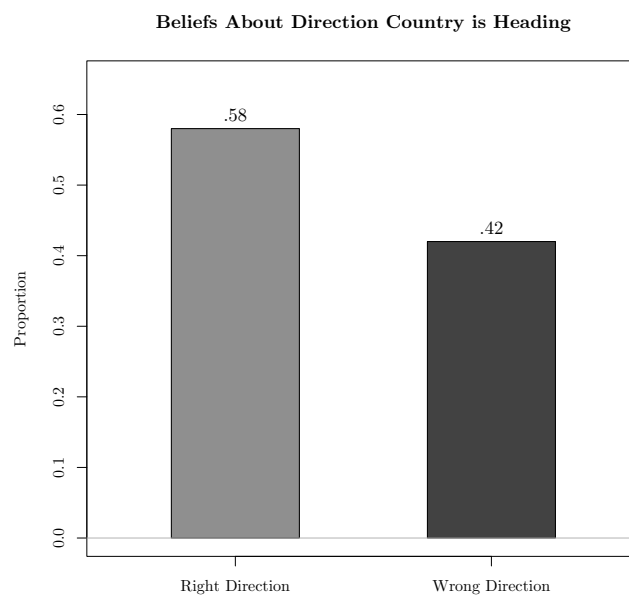
In this section we detail the Albanian mass public’s evaluations of political-economic institutions. To set the stage, consider two abstract evaluative questions asked in the survey: (1) “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Albania?”; and (2) “Generally speaking, would you say that things in Albania are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?” The sample distributions for these questions appear in Figure 2. Figure 2(a) shows that a large majority of the sample ($N = 1177$) is dissatisfied with democracy’s functioning in Albania. In fact, approximately 72 percent are not very satisfied or worse. But even so, Figure 2(b) shows that more than half of all citizens ($N = 1025$) believe that the country is heading in the right direction nevertheless. So, although there is clear dissatisfaction with democratic government in the abstract—which is perhaps to be expected in a relatively young system—we find a considerable amount of public optimism about where Albania is heading as a country.

3.2 Economic Performance

Further evidence of the mass public’s general optimism can be seen in Albanians’ evaluations of the national economy. The data presented in Figure 3 show that Albanian citizens largely



(a) Satisfaction with Albanian Democracy



(b) Direction Albania is Headed

Figure 2: The Albanian Mass Public's Evaluations of Democracy and Direction

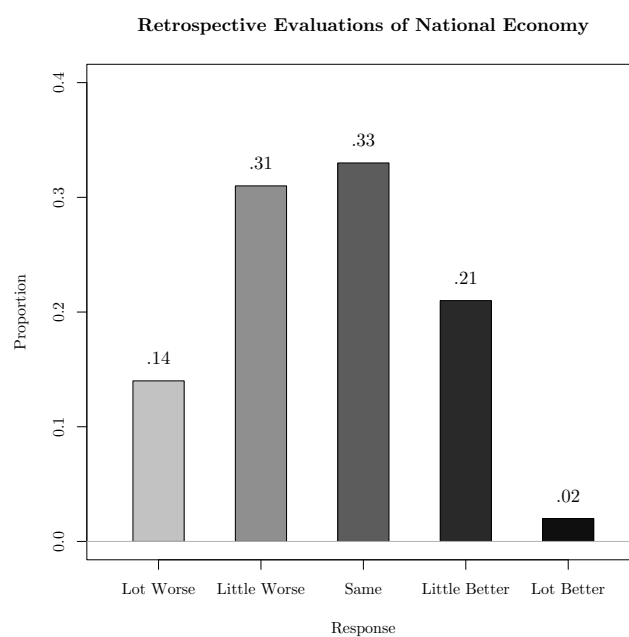
believe that economic conditions are worse at present than they were 12 months prior (see 3(a)). But yet, these same citizens are optimistic about the country’s economic trajectory: over 50 percent of people say that they expect economic conditions to improve in the next year and over 70 percent are convinced that these conditions will be the same or better in 12 months (see 3(b)).

3.3 Handling Corruption

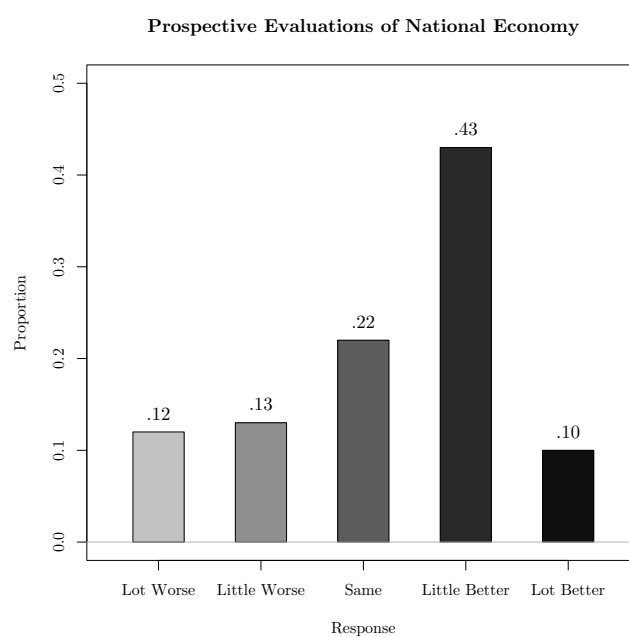
Another aspect of evaluating institutions in Albania involves people’s beliefs about how well the government handles corruption. Our survey indicates that much of the Albanian mass public is attuned to this issue. In response to the question: “How much have you heard or read about the anti-corruption policies and measures adopted by the Government of Prime Minister Berisha in recent months—a lot, some, not much, or nothing at all?”—48 percent of the sample says that they have heard or read “a lot” and 32 percent have heard some. Only 12 percent have not heard much and a mere 8 percent have heard nothing at all (N = 1188).

How does the mass public feel about Berisha’s anti-corruption policies? 84 percent of respondents say that the anti-corruption policies are necessary to fight corruption and only 16 percent argue that these policies violate the civil rights of citizens. In short, the public sees these policies as highly important and very necessary. But do ordinary Albanians think that the policies are working? Figure 4 plots the distribution of responses to the question: “Do you think that today paying bribes to civil servants in order to get things done is greater, the same, or less than it was 12 months ago?” Clearly, about one fifth of the sample sees corruption on the rise. 46 percent believe that things are about the same as they were 12 months ago and, more important, 40 percent believe that paying bribes occurs less frequently today than it did twelve months ago.⁵

⁵A similar question was asked about the practice of state capture, whereby officials enact policies and



(a) Retrospective Evaluations (12-months ago to today)



(b) Prospective Evaluations (Expectations over the next year)

Figure 3: The Albanian Mass Public's Evaluations of the Albanian Economy

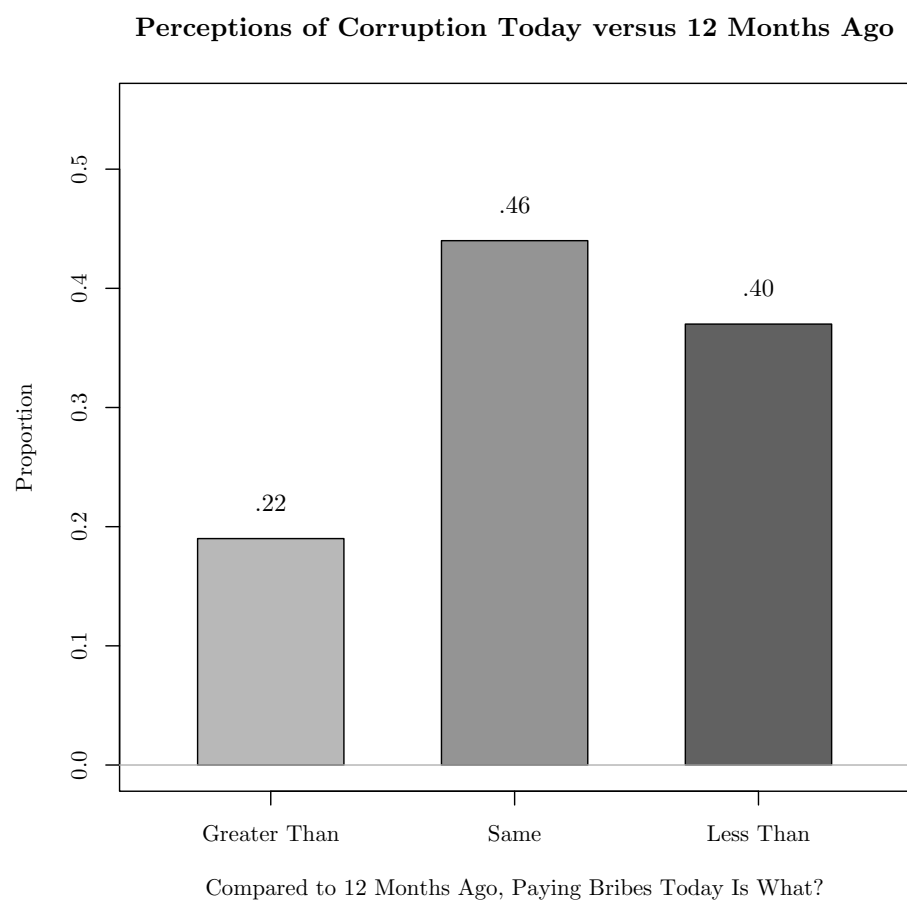


Figure 4: The Albanian Mass Public's Perceptions of Corruption Today Relative to 12 Months Ago

However, despite saying that paying bribes is not as common among the civil service as it was one year ago, many Albanians still believe that corruption is pervasive. In response to the question “How widespread do you think corruption such as bribe taking is amongst politicians in Albania today?”, Figure 5 shows that a scant few 6 percent of respondents believe that bribery “hardly happens” or is “not very” widespread. On the flip side, 21 percent say that it is “quite widespread” and a stunning 74 percent say that bribery is “very widespread” in politics.

3.4 Trust in Political Institutions

Table 5 examines the level of political trust for particular political institutions in Albania. Here the data are culled from people’s response to the question: “How much do you trust the following institutions today—a lot, somewhat, only a little, or not at all?” The June 2006 percentages are reported (note that these are row percentages) along with the levels of trust reported in the December 2005 Globic Poll, which asked the identical question to a different sample of Albanian citizens. Our focus here is on sample means, however, which means that this across-sample comparison is still valid. We examine the direction and magnitude of percentage change (Δ Trust) in trust since the December 2005 survey, which is reported in every third row in Table 5.

Table 5 demonstrates a striking change in Albanians’ trust of the presidency. This reading has risen markedly since the December 2005 reading with a 4.6 percent increase in the number of people who have “a lot” of trust in the presidency and a 4.7 percent increase in those who report a fair level of trust. The public’s trust in the national government has also increased in the “somewhat” category by +5.1, although fewer citizens now say

rules that favor private firms that are close to them. Here the response distribution was very similar to that that appears in Figure 4: 18 percent believe that state capture has increased in the last 12 months, 44 percent say that it has stayed the same, and 37 percent believe that state capture has decreased over the previous year ($N = 1010$).

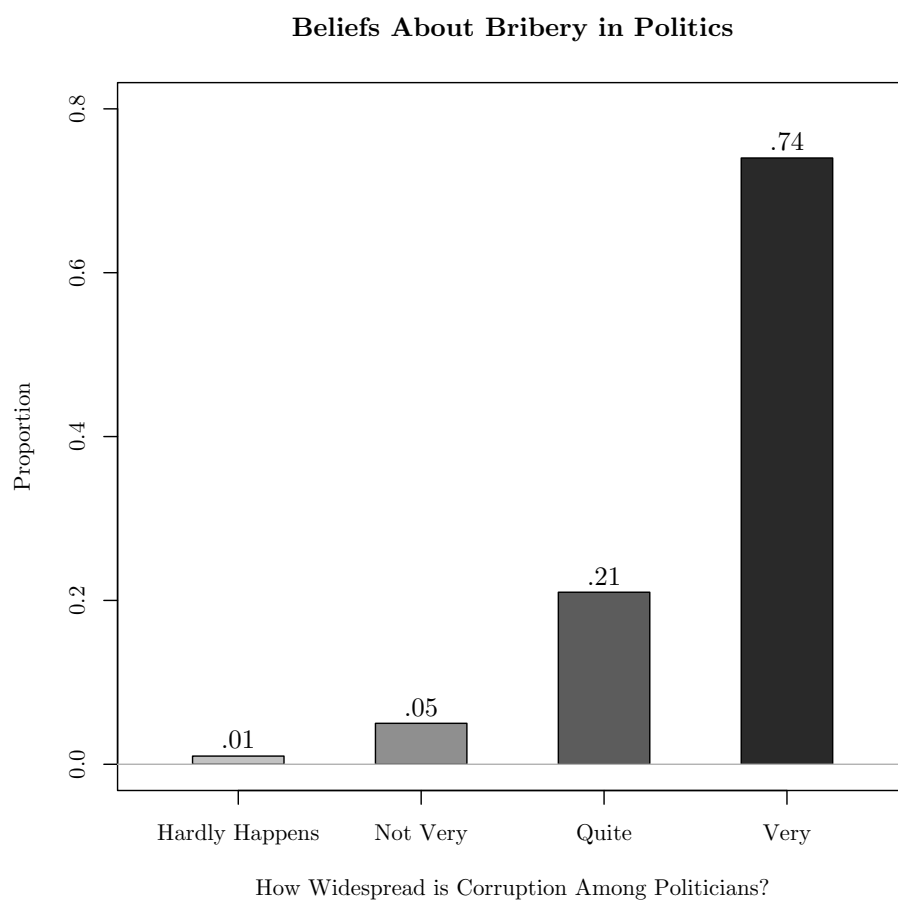


Figure 5: The Albanian Mass Public's Beliefs About the Pervasiveness of Bribery in Politics

Table 5: Δ Mean level of Trust in Political Institutions

Institution	Level of Trust			
	A lot	Somewhat	A Little	Not at All
Parliament (June 2006)	10.0%	34.1%	23.9%	32.2%
Parliament (December 2005)	12.3	32.5	26.6	30.1
Δ Parliament Trust	-2.3	+1.6	-2.7	+2.1
Presidency (June 2006)	17.1	37.2	25.1	20.7
Presidency (December 2005)	12.5	32.5	26.9	28.1
Δ Presidency Trust	+4.6	+4.7	-1.8	-7.4
Government (June 2006)	21.6	30.6	19.4	28.4
Government (December 2005)	25.3	25.5	19.0	30.2
Δ Government Trust	-3.7	+5.1	+0.4	-1.8
Court System (June 2006)	5.7	19.8	24.3	50.2
Court System (December 2005)	6.5	22.7	23.2	47.6
Δ Court System Trust	-0.8	-2.9	+1.1	+2.6
Prosecutor's Office (June 2006)	7.0	20.4	26.2	46.4
Prosecutor's Office (December 2005)	6.3	25.7	24.0	44.0
Δ Prosecutor's Office Trust	+0.7	-5.3	+2.2	+2.4
Bank of Albania (June 2006)	21.9	37.5	20.1	20.4
Bank of Albania (December 2005)	19.4	33.5	19.8	27.2
Δ Bank of Albania Trust	+2.5	+4.0	+0.3	-6.8
Local Government (June 2006)	23.0	34.6	17.1	25.4
Local Government (December 2005)	27.0	28.2	17.7	27.1
Δ Local Government Trust	-4.0	+6.4	-0.6	-1.7

Note: Percentages are row percentages

Note: 2005 Data source: Globic Poll

that they trust the government “a lot.” Trust in the Bank of Albania has also grown sharply, increasing 6.5 percent in the two highest trust categories combined. Finally, trusting the local government “somewhat” has grown since December. Where these readings have demonstrated increasing trust, trust items for the court system and the prosecutor’s office have witnessed a substantial increase in *distrust*.

3.5 Most Important Problem

As a final examination of institution-based beliefs, we examine the distribution of responses to the question: “What do you think are the two most important issues for the government to address?” We have coded the open-ended responses to this question into the thirteen categories that appear in Table 6. The second column of Table 6 lists the percentage distribution for Albanians’ “most important problem” and the third column lists the distribution for their second most important problem. Here an overwhelming number of citizens—46 percent—view unemployment as the greatest difficulty facing Albania. This high mark is followed by citizens’ belief that the government should be fighting corruption (10 percent) and improving the supply of water and electricity (7 percent). In terms of the second most important problem we find greater variability. In addition to the “big three”—employment, corruption, and provision of resources—people voice a concern for improving Albania’s transportation infrastructure (roads) and maintaining public order. Over eight percent of the sample also believes increasing wages and pensions is the second most important problem that Albania’s leaders should address.

Interestingly, our survey asked respondents which party they believed would do a better job of handling the problem(s) that they reported as being most important (recall Table 6). On this question 57 percent of Albanians believe that the Socialist Party would do the best job handling these problems, 31 percent say that the Democratic Party would do the best job, and finally, 12 percent said that the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) would do

Table 6: Percent of Respondents who Say that Issue is Important Problem

Issue	Most Important	Second Most Important
Unemployment	46.0%	24.3%
Fighting Corruption	10.0	9.8
Electricity & Water Supply	7.0	12.0
Wages & Pensions Increase	6.8	8.5
Roads	5.6	12.1
Public Order	4.7	12.2
Legalization of Houses	4.5	4.4
Private Property Restitution	4.5	2.2
Poverty Reduction	3.3	3.4
Social Problems	2.7	4.0
Education	2.2	4.0
EU Integration	2.0	3.0
Maintaining Political Stability	0.8	1.8
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Column Two Sample Size = 1154, Column Three Sample Size = 1110

the best job.⁶

4 Evaluating Leaders & Parties

4.1 Political Leaders

Next, we examine the mass public’s evaluations of political leaders and political parties. To begin we focus on people’s evaluations of Sali Berisha, Edi Rama, and Ilir Meta. Respondents were asked to say how well the following five phrases applied to each of these political figures: (1) He is honest; (2) He really cares about people like you; (3) He provides strong leadership; (4) He is knowledgeable; and (5) He is able to get things done. Respondents were given four response options—that the above phrases describe the leader in question “Extremely Well,” “Quite Well,” “Not too Well,” or “Not Well at All.”

⁶Here we report the percentages only for those people who offered a party response (N = 717), which is to say that these percentages do not incorporate respondents who said another party would be best equipped or respondents who said that they did not have an answer.

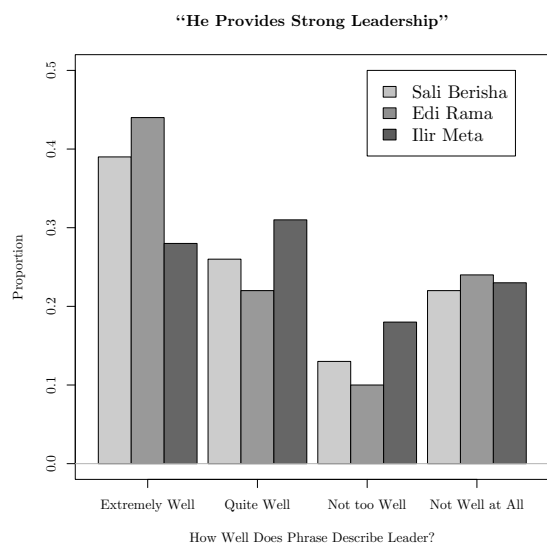
Figure 6 and Figure 7 plot the relative distribution of responses for Berisha (light gray), Rama (medium gray), and Meta (dark gray). The evaluations are separated such that Figure 6 summarizes people’s beliefs about each leaders’ *governing capability* and Figure 7 presents evaluations of each leaders’ *personal character*.

4.1.1 Governing Capability

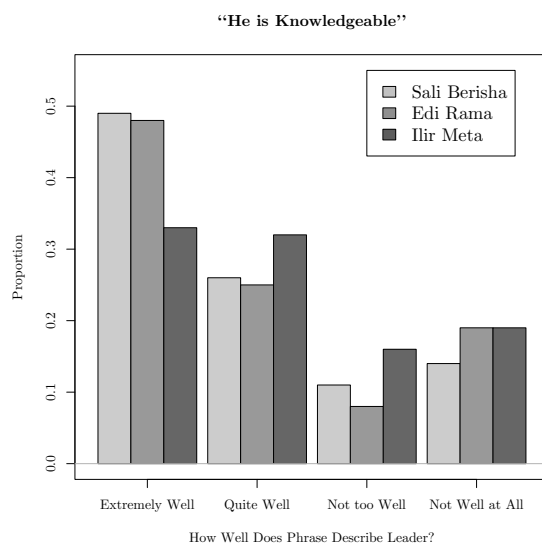
In Figure 6 one can observe that one public official, Edi Rama—represented by the medium shade of gray—receives consistently high marks on the governing capability items. On both leadership in Figure 6(a) and efficiency in Figure 6(c), Rama scores far better than the other two figures—39 percent say that “strong leadership” describes Rama extremely well and 40 percent say this for Rama’s ability to “get things done.” On the third measure of capability, whether the men are knowledgeable, Rama scores nearly as high as Sali Berisha (49 percent for Berisha and 48 percent for Rama say that “knowledgeable” describes these men extremely well). Interestingly, the modal responses for Berisha and Meta suggest that not a few Albanian citizens believe that these two leaders cannot get things done—38 percent say that the phrase “getting things done” does not describe Berisha well at all and 37 percent say the same for Meta.

4.1.2 Personal Character

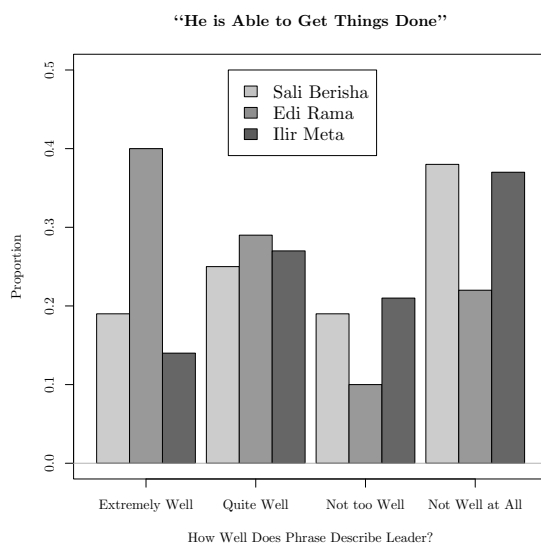
Although Sali Berisha receives middling marks on the governing capacity dimension, the mass public views his character in an especially positive light. Figure 7 shows that a near majority of Albanian citizens (43 percent) believe that the phrase “He is Honest” describes Berisha extremely well. Berisha also scores highest on the caring dimension, with 27 percent agreeing that “He Really Cares about People Like You” describes Berisha extremely well and another 24 percent saying that this phrase describes Berisha quite well for a total of 51 percent supporting this belief. And yet, the modal response on the caring item is unfavorable



(a) Leadership



(b) Knowledgeable



(c) Gets Things Done

Figure 6: The Albanian Mass Public’s Evaluations of Leader Traits: Governing Capacity

for each of the three leaders: most Albanians tend to believe that the phrase does not describe Berisha, Rama, or Meta well at all.

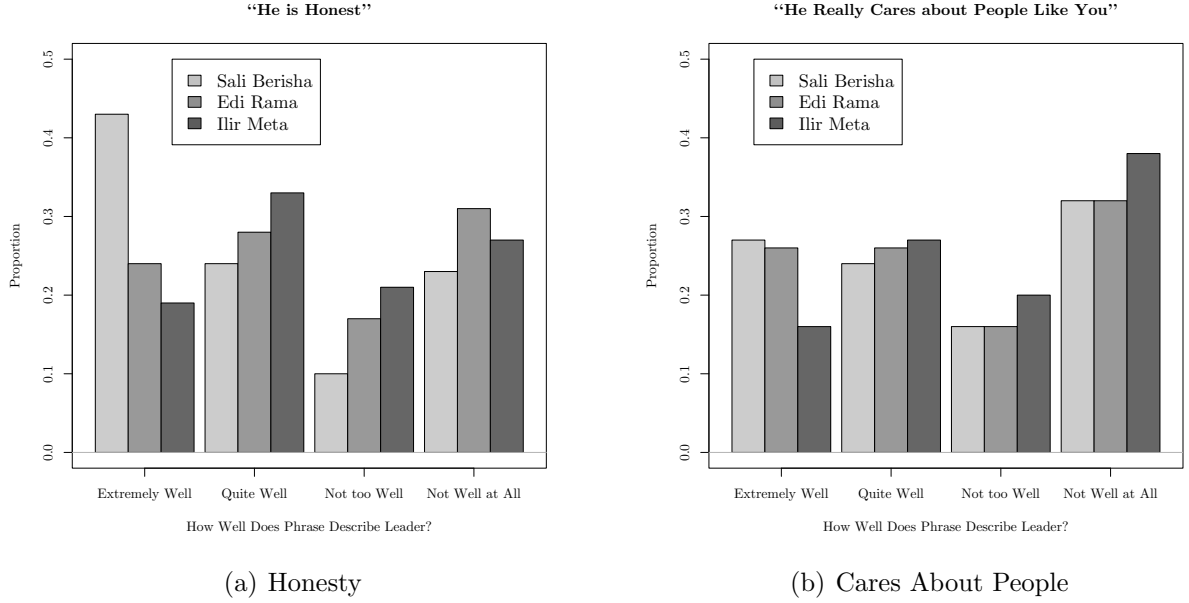


Figure 7: The Albanian Mass Public’s Evaluations of Leader Traits: Personal Character

4.2 Major Political Parties

We now examine similar evaluative ratings for the major political parties in Albania—namely, the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party. Respondents were again asked to evaluate how well particular phrases applied to the political parties, but here the exact phrases differed from the leader evaluations. The six stimuli are as follows: (1) Able to manage the government well; (2) Can bring about the kind of changes that the country needs; (3) Can integrate Albania into the European Union. (4) Governs in an honest and ethical way; (5) Is concerned with the needs of people like me; and (6) Can fight corruption better. As before, these six categories can be classified into two broad evaluative dimensions: 1–3 reflect people’s beliefs about party governing capability and 4–6 reflect beliefs about party character, broadly speaking.

4.2.1 Governing Capability

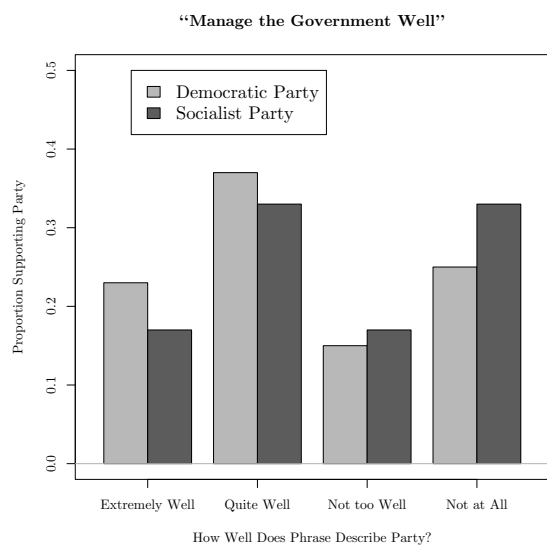
Figure 8, which details the governing items, shows that the Albanian mass public holds the Democratic Party as being more capable of: effective management in Figure 8(a), bringing about needed change in Figure 8(b), and building the bridge toward European integration in Figure 8(c). Granted, in the first two subfigures, relative to the Socialist Party distribution, the number of people who say that these phrases describe the Democratic Party “Extremely Well” or “Quite Well” is only slightly higher. But in the third—Figure 8(c)—the difference between beliefs about the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party is stark. In general, compared to Globic Survey of December 2005, we notice a significant improvement in the public perception of the Socialist Party.

4.2.2 Party Character

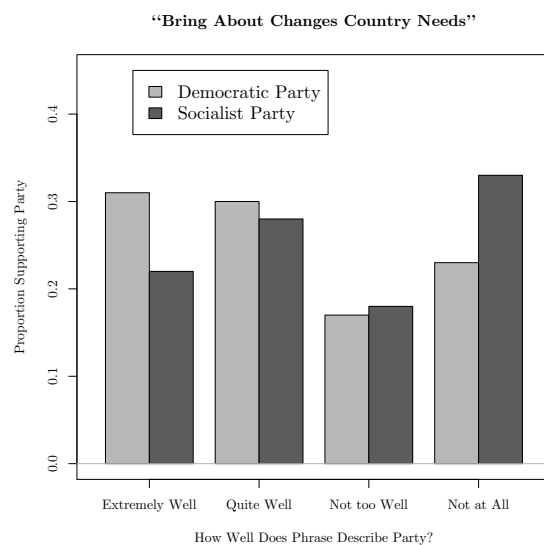
Moving now to Figure 9, we see once again that the Democratic Party receives relatively higher marks. But what is more striking here is the fact that, for the Socialist Party, the model response category for each of the three evaluative items is “Not at All.” In other words, the highest percentage of respondents believe that the Socialist Party as a whole is not very honest, compassionate, or capable of fighting corruption. As will be seen, this general belief about the PS affects several evaluations still to come.

4.3 Political Party Likes & Dislikes

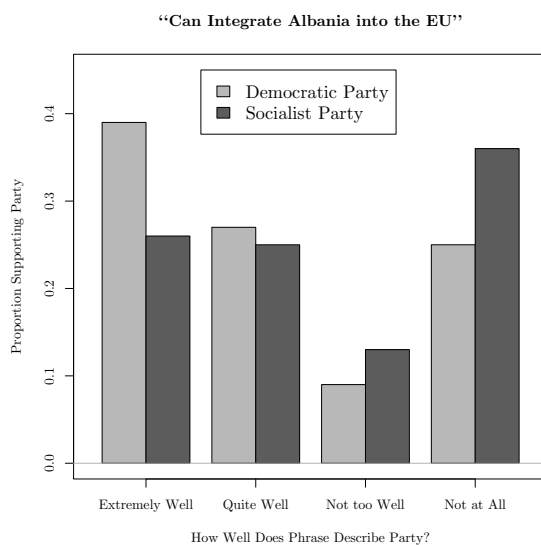
The evaluations in the preceding section present us with an interesting dilemma: Why does the Albanian mass public view the leader of the PS, Edi Rama, as being most capable of governing but also view Rama’s opponent party, the Democratic Party, as having the highest capacity for governing (while giving the PS poor governing ratings)? How can we explain this leader-party disconnect? As a first attempt at answering this question we



(a) Effective Management

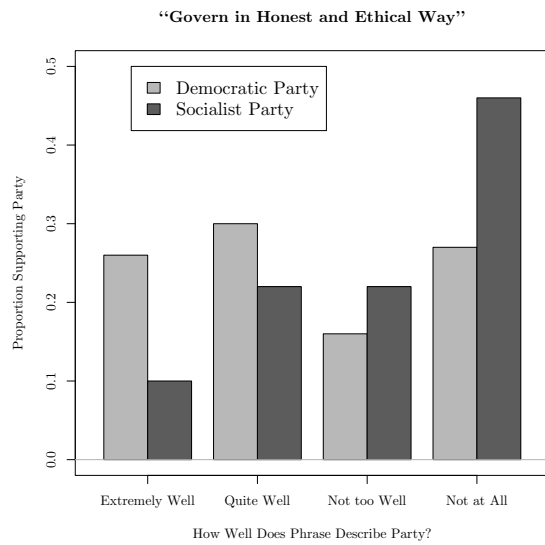


(b) Bring About Needed Changes

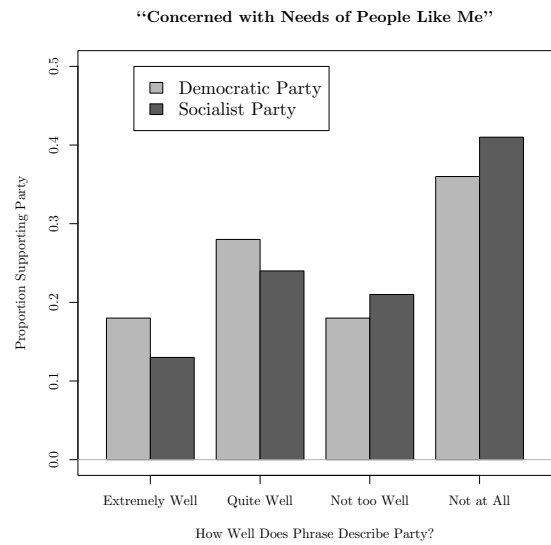


(c) European Integration

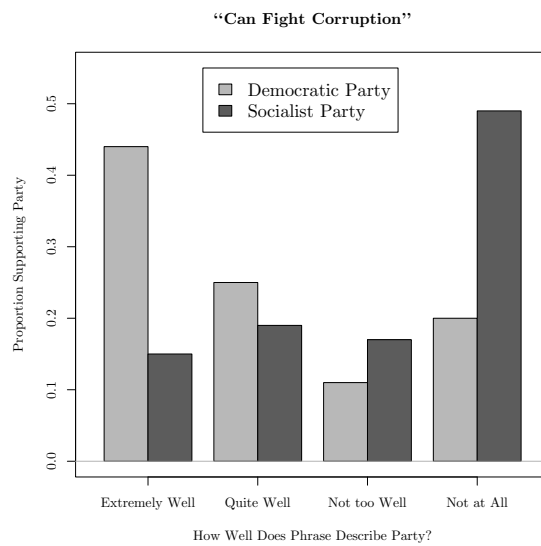
Figure 8: The Albanian Mass Public’s Evaluations of Major Parties: Governing Capacity



(a) Honest & Ethical



(b) Compassion



(c) Fight Corruption

Figure 9: The Albanian Mass Public’s Evaluations of Major Parties: Party Character

look to respondents' open-ended responses to the following questions: "What do you like most about the (Socialist/Democratic) Party? And what do you dislike most about the (Socialist/Democratic) Party?"

Summary responses to these questions appear in Tables 7 and 8. Table 7 presents the percentage of respondents who mentioned the likes and dislikes listed in the leftmost column for the Socialist Party. In terms of what Albanians like about the PS, the answer is clear: the Party's leftist ideology is especially important in that 21.5 percent of the respondents who offered a response offered some variant of the PS's ideology. Moreover, many Albanians like the PS's internal party democracy—specifically 15.2 percent reported that they like the Socialist Party's embracing of a diversity of viewpoints, as well as its one member-one vote principle. Finally, the organization of the party as captured by its leaders and its experience were popular among Albanians at 12.6 and 12.4 respectively.

As to what Albanians do *not* like about the Socialist Party, here the answer is even more striking: the PS's tolerance of corruption is number one on the list with 30.2 percent of the sample citing this belief. The second and third least-liked traits, as seen through the eyes of ordinary Albanians, tap a similar idea. 20.5 percent are turned off by the fact that the PS did not work within the governmental system and 14.2 believed that the PS showed a lack of honesty. Here, then, we may have some insight into the leader-party disconnect: people associate the tolerance of corruption with the Socialist Party generally but not with Edi Rama in particular. Rama's evaluation ratings, in other words, are not affected by people's belief that the Socialist Party tolerated corruption while in power. Second, Rama's ratings are consistently higher than those of the Socialist Party in the dimension of "getting things done" or producing results when in office.

Table 8 details the general public's likes and dislikes toward the Democratic Party, and here we observe fairly clear-cut distributions. In terms of what people like about the PD, number one on the list is its anti-corruption measures. Given that this concern also

Table 7: Socialist Party Likes and Dislikes

Like Most about PS:	Percentage that Likes:
Left Ideology	21.5%
Diversity of Views in Party	15.2
Experienced in Government	12.6
New Party Leadership	12.4
Includes Intellectuals	9.7
Party Organization	8.5
Past Achievements	7.6
Honesty of Party Leaders	4.2
Political Maturity	3.2
Behavior in Opposition	2.8
Old Party Leaders (Nano)	1.8
More Women in Leadership	1.0
TOTAL (N)	100% (624)
Dislike Most about PS:	Percentage that Dislikes:
Tolerated Corruption	30.2%
Did not Work in Government	20.5
Lack of Honesty	14.2
PS-LSI Division	9.2
Lack of Party Discipline	8.9
Leaders Care Only for Posts	5.6
Behavior in Opposition	2.9
Former Communist Heritage	2.6
Does not Follow Left Ideology	2.3
Lack of Reforms/Changes	1.9
Old Party Leaders (Nano)	1.9
TOTAL (N)	100% (802)

appeared in evaluations of the PS—where many people were put off by the belief that PS leaders tolerated corruption—it seems safe to say that the Albanian mass public has keen “corruption radar”. We have already seen that much of the Albanian public is attentive to corruption issues; now we have evidence that perceptions of corruption have political consequences. Table 8 also makes clear that one in six Albanians like the PD because they like its leader, Sali Berisha.

Of course, Albanians also voice PD dislikes. Here a belief that the PD did not keep its electoral promises tops the list. In fact, 42.4 percent of respondents offered this response, which suggests that accountability problems could affect the Democratic Party’s future electoral prospects. Also problematic in the mass public’s eyes are the PD’s behavior in government (8.9 percent) and the party leadership (8.8 percent). But clearly, with regard to the public’s dislikes of the Democratic Party, their belief that the PD has not kept its electoral promises looms largest.

4.4 Grading Political Figures & Parties

Thus far we have focused on people’s evaluations of important political objects. To gauge the reliability of these measures we now examine how people’s evaluations are distributed along a clearly-defined scale—specifically, the 4 to 10 grading scale familiar to all Albanians, in which 4 is a failing grade and 10 is an excellent grade. Figure 10 presents the average grades attributed to the Democratic Party and Prime Minister Sali Berisha. The averages appear on the right side of the bar chart and, for reasons that will become clear, the percentage of respondents who said “Don’t Know” is reported in parentheses.

4.4.1 Democratic Party & Sali Berisha

Overall, Figure 10 demonstrates that Sali Berisha scores high at 7.1, but that the Democratic Party deserves a lower mark in ordinary Albanians’ eyes. Here Albanians give the PD an

Table 8: Democratic Party Likes and Dislikes

Like Most about PD:	Percentage that Likes:
Anti-corruption measures	32.2%
Party Leadership (Berisha)	15.6
Reforms in Government	9.8
Party Leaders are Honest	9.6
Electoral Campaign Promises	9.5
Right-wing Ideology	8.4
Young Politicians (KOP)	4.5
Tough on Crime	3.8
Party Discipline	2.3
Supports Party Militants	1.6
Includes Intellectuals	1.6
Diversity of Views	1.2
TOTAL (N)	100% (697)
Dislike Most about PD:	Percentage that Dislikes:
Did not Keep Electoral Promises	42.4%
Behavior in Government	8.9
Party Leadership (Berisha)	8.8
Lack of Party Democracy	7.9
Inexperienced Ministers/Officials	6.5
Creates Political Tension	6.1
Weak Party Organization	4.3
Does not Support the Poor	4.1
Reforms in Administration	3.8
Supports Party Militants	3.3
Lack of Intellectuals/Experts	2.5
Policy on Property Return	1.5
TOTAL (N)	100% (786)

average grade of 6.5, which suggests that—although they believe Berisha does an adequate job—Berisha’s party does not perform all that well. To examine how the leader-party dichotomy works in greater detail, let us now consider how the Albanian mass public grades the Democratic Parliament’s cabinet ministers.

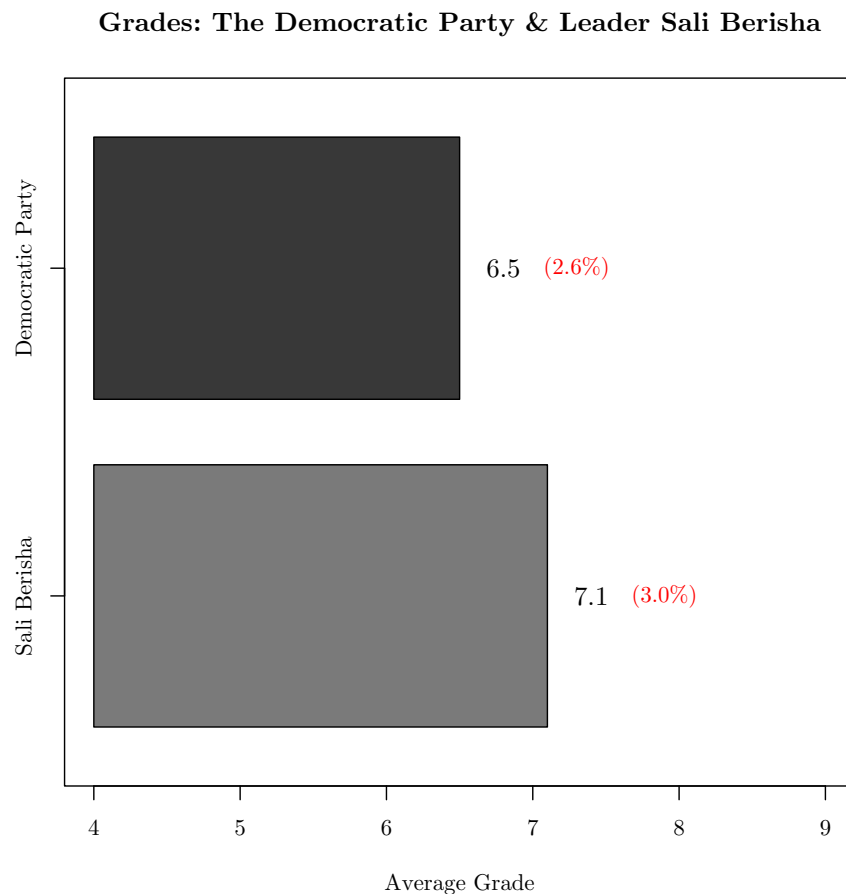


Figure 10: The Albanian Mass Public’s Grades of the Democratic Party and Sali Berisha

4.4.2 Democratic Party Cabinet Ministers

Table 9 reports the average grades for each of the ministers listed in column one. Note that column two presents the average grade given by respondents and column three lists the percentage of respondents who offered “Don’t Know” as the response, which is a reasonably

accurate measure of issue salience *or* a given government minister’s political stature (we cannot distinguish the two as yet). That is to say, higher percentages of “Don’t Know” responses should reflect the fact that the minister in question—and his/her area of expertise—is not visible to much of the Albanian mass public. The smaller the percentage of “Don’t Knows”, therefore, the higher the issues’s or minister’s salience.

Sokol Oldashi, Fatmir Mediu, and Genc Pollo receive the highest grade on average: 7.2 points. These high-scoring individuals are the ministers of Interior, Defense, and Education, respectively, and it is worth emphasizing that they receive not only the highest grades among the Parliamentary cabinet ministers but also the *lowest* percentage of “Don’t Know” responses. The real-world implication here is not entirely clear, but one could reason that the public shows heightened awareness of issues that pertain to the interior, defense, and education issues. Alternatively, because the public evaluates the head of these three ministries in a positive light, one might argue that these leaders do a sound job communicating their actions to the Albanian mass public.

As far as low marks, Koço Barka, Jemin Gjana, and Lufter Xhuvli receive the lowest grades at 5.8, 5.9, and 5.4 respectively. These cabinet ministers also have especially large “Don’t Know” rates, which is in line with our earlier logic. There is, it would seem, a clear incentive to enhancing one’s awareness among ordinary Albanians: better “grades”.

4.4.3 Other Political Leaders & Parties

Figure 11 reports the average grades for the Albanian president Alfred Moisiu, the Speaker of the Parliament Jozefina Topalli, Chairman of the Socialist Party Edi Rama, and the PS and LSI opposition parties. Moisiu and Topalli receive especially high marks (7.6 and 7.7, respectively). Edi Rama’s average grade of 7.2 is quite high as well, especially when we consider that Rama is not in power at the moment. But with respect to the opposition parties’ grades one can observe an obvious slippage: Both fall below 7, with the PS earning a

Table 9: The Albanian Mass Public's Average Grades for the Parliamentary Cabinet

Minister, Post	Average Grade	Percent Don't Know
Ilir Rusmajli, zv/Kryeministër	6.1	38.6%
Besnik Mustafaj, Ministër Jashtëm	6.8	13.3
Arenca Troshani, Ministre e Integrimit European	6.2	42.3
Sokol Oldashi, Ministër i Brendshëm	7.2	10.6
Fatmir Mediu, Ministër i Mbrojtjes	7.2	12.2
Ridvan Bode, Ministër i Financave	6.8	17.2
Genc Ruli, Ministër i Ekonomisë	7.0	12.6
Aldo Bumçi, Ministër i Drejtësisë	6.7	26.9
Lulzim Basha, Ministër Punëve Publike	6.7	13.1
Genc Pollo, Ministër i Arsimit	7.2	8.1
Maksin Cikuli, Ministër i Shëndetësisë	6.7	19.6
Koço Barka, Ministër i Çështjeve Sociale	5.8	50.1
Jemin Gjana, Ministër i Bujqësisë	5.9	20.5
Bujar Leskaj, Ministër i Kulturës	6.3	25.2
Lufter Xhuveli, Ministër i Mjedisit	5.4	19.1

6.5 and the LSI earning a 6.8 (note that the PS earns the same grade as the PD). Thus once again we find that individual leaders' grades outperform those of their respective parties. Note, however, that between six and eight percent of the sample could not assign a grade to these parties, which is a higher "Don't Know" rate than for the evaluations of any of the individual leaders in Figure 11.

5 Fall 2006 Elections

The final section of this survey report examines responses that are of particular importance for the elections scheduled for the fall of 2006. By no means are these analyses intended to be viewed as predictions of what *will* happen. Instead they are our attempt to gauge the tenor the Albanian mass public's current intentions. We are offering a portrait of expectations but nothing more.

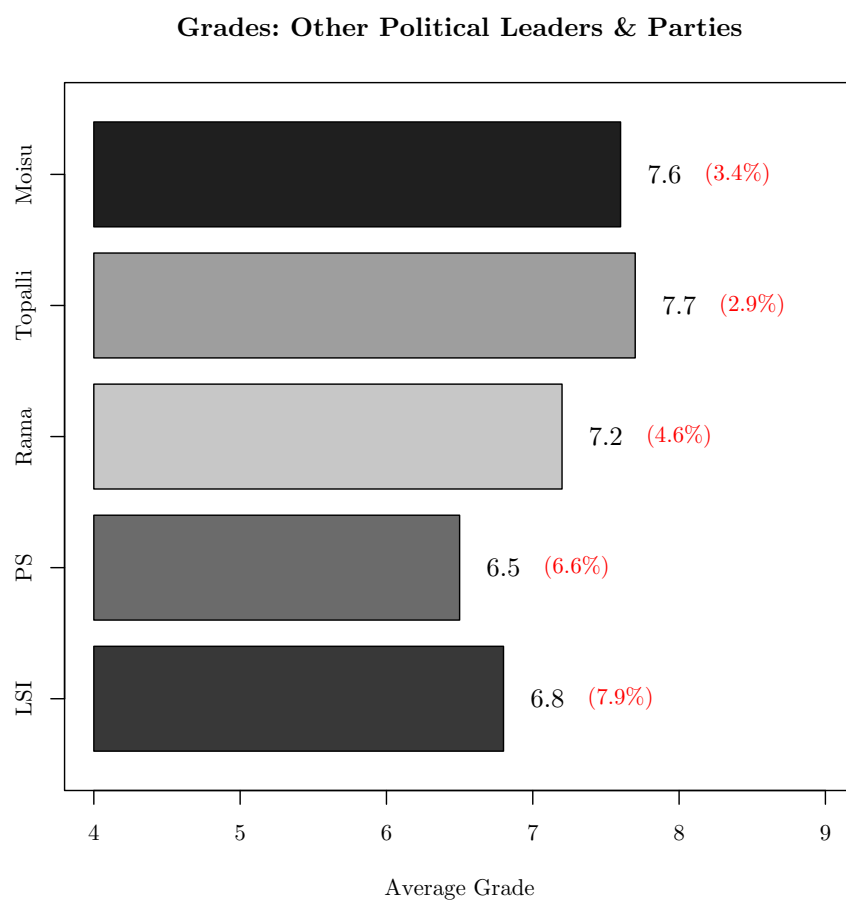


Figure 11: The Albanian Mass Public's Grades of the Opposition

5.1 Expectations

Regarding these expectations, first consider people's responses to the following question: "If local elections were to take place today, the candidate of which political party would you support for mayor?" The response distribution for this question can be seen in Figure 12. As most would expect, the PS and PD are the clear front-runners. What is interesting, however, is that the level of support is nearly equal, indeed it is essentially the margin of error for the survey statistics. And so from this measure there is no clear indication of which party would fare better in the upcoming elections.

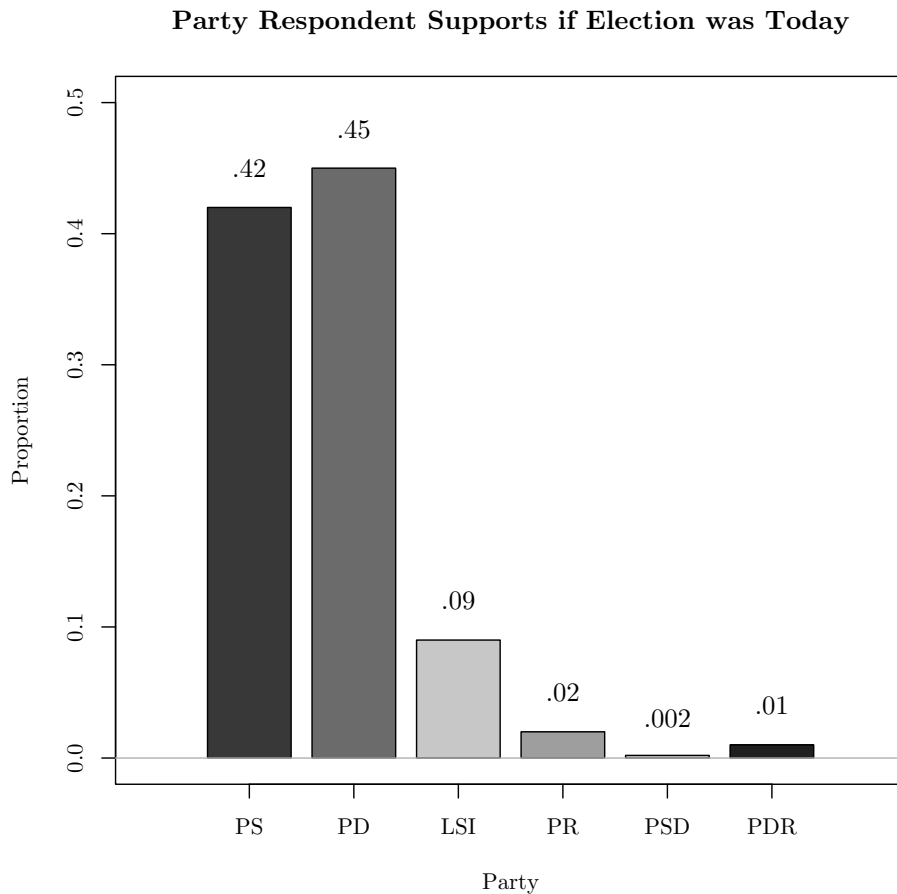


Figure 12: The Albanian Mass Public's Party Vote if Election was Held "Today"

Perhaps a look at levels of support for specific *candidates* would provide additional

Table 10: The Expected Vote for Mayor of Tirana if Election was Held “Today”

Left vs. Right				
Left Candidate		Right Candidate		
Edi Rama	63%	vs.	37%	Sokol Olldashi
Edi Rama	62	vs.	38	Lulzim Basha
Edi Rama	52	vs.	48	Bamir Topi
Ilir Meta	57%	vs.	43%	Sokol Olldashi
Ilir Meta	56	vs.	44	Lulzim Basha
Ilir Meta	41	vs.	59	Bamir Topi
Erion Veliaj	52%	vs.	48%	Sokol Olldashi
Erion Veliaj	51	vs.	49	Lulzim Basha
Erion Veliaj	38	vs.	62	Bamir Topi

insight on the next election’s likely winners and losers. We have at our disposal a battery of questions that pit two potential candidates against one another, all based on the question: “If local elections were to take place today, in a hypothetical race between the following candidates, how would you vote?” The mass public’s average responses to these questions appear in Table 10 below. In each row of the table, a potential left-wing candidate is listed to the left and a possible right-wing challenger to the right. The expected vote distributions, tabulated from respondents’ professed intentions, appear in the middle columns of the table (expected percentage for the left-wing candidate versus expected vote percentage for the right-wing candidate).

What do we learn from Table 10? Two results are particularly revealing. First, Edi Rama remains a strong candidate. In each of the hypothetical pairings Rama wins a majority of the “vote”, which has important implications when one considers that the local elections are being treated by some as a referendum on the current party in control (PD). Second, of the hypothetical right candidates presented to respondents, Bamir Topi appears to have the strongest support. Indeed, in two of Topi’s three pairings he receives a higher percentage

of the intended vote—by 18 percent in the hypothetical election with Iir Meta and by 24 percent against Erion Veliaj. Although Topi falls short against Rama, the leader’s margin of defeat is close nonetheless.

5.2 Election Reform

Beyond what parties and candidates people might support, it is worth asking what other sorts of opinions are supported by the mass public. Our survey asked several questions intended to tap Albanians’ preferences for reforming the electoral system, specifically, and for politics generally. With respect to the former we asked people, first, who do they think should be charged with making a decision about election reform, and second, if a referendum was held on the choice of the electoral system, what reform option would they vote for?⁷

By an overwhelming majority, ordinary Albanians favor empowering themselves: 75 percent of respondents said that any decision about electoral reform should be left to Albanian voters. But how would these voters vote? Table 11 summarizes respondents’ preferences on this item. No single response dominates in the mass public, as 46 percent prefer the same electoral system and 37 percent would rather vote for the district candidate only. What is clear, however, is that the option to choose only the political party is not supported by many Albanians (only 17 percent).

5.3 Confidence in Election

We also asked people how confident they were that the upcoming elections would adhere to international norms: “How confident are you that the next local elections in Fall 2006 will

⁷The exact questions read: (1) “In your opinion, who should decide which electoral system is best for Albania, the party leaders, experts or international organizations, or Albanian voters with referendum?” and (2) “Political parties are now discussing about electoral system reform. Under the current electoral system, voters have two votes: one for the district candidate and one for the party list. If a referendum were held today on the choice of electoral system, how would you vote?: (a) Keep the same electoral system; (b) Vote only for the district candidate; (c) Vote only for the political party.

Table 11: The Albanian Mass Public's Preferences for Electoral Reform

Reform Option	Percent Supporting
Keep the Same System	46%
Vote only for District Candidate	37
Vote only for Political Party	17
TOTAL (N)	100% (1079)

be free and fair, and that votes will be accurately counted?” The distribution of responses, which appears in Figure 13, indicates that not a few Albanians have some apprehensions about the election. To be sure, 59 percent of those who responded said that they were somewhat confident or very confident, but this leaves 41 percent of the mass public with fairly low confidence in a free and fair election. This, coupled with Albanians’ desire for reform, demonstrates that most Albanians recognize that the nation’s electoral process is still in a developmental stage. At the same time, the nature of mass beliefs also suggests that citizens are motivated toward understanding and improving the current system.

5.4 Desire for Cooperation

Our final foray into expectations for the upcoming elections asks what the public might be looking to see from its leaders—that is, beyond the universal desire for competency and efficiency. What we uncovered was a clear desire among Albanians for coalition building. When asked: “Generally speaking, do you prefer a government made up of a single party or a coalition government made up of more than one party?”, 71 percent of respondents said that they preferred coalitions. What is more, when asked whether a single-party or a coalition was better for: (1) improving stability; (2) keeping promises; (3) bringing about needed changes; (4) doing what people want; and (5) fighting corruption, more than 58 percent of the mass public said that a coalition government was better. This is not to discount the 28–32 percent of the public that favors single-party rule, but to show that a majority of

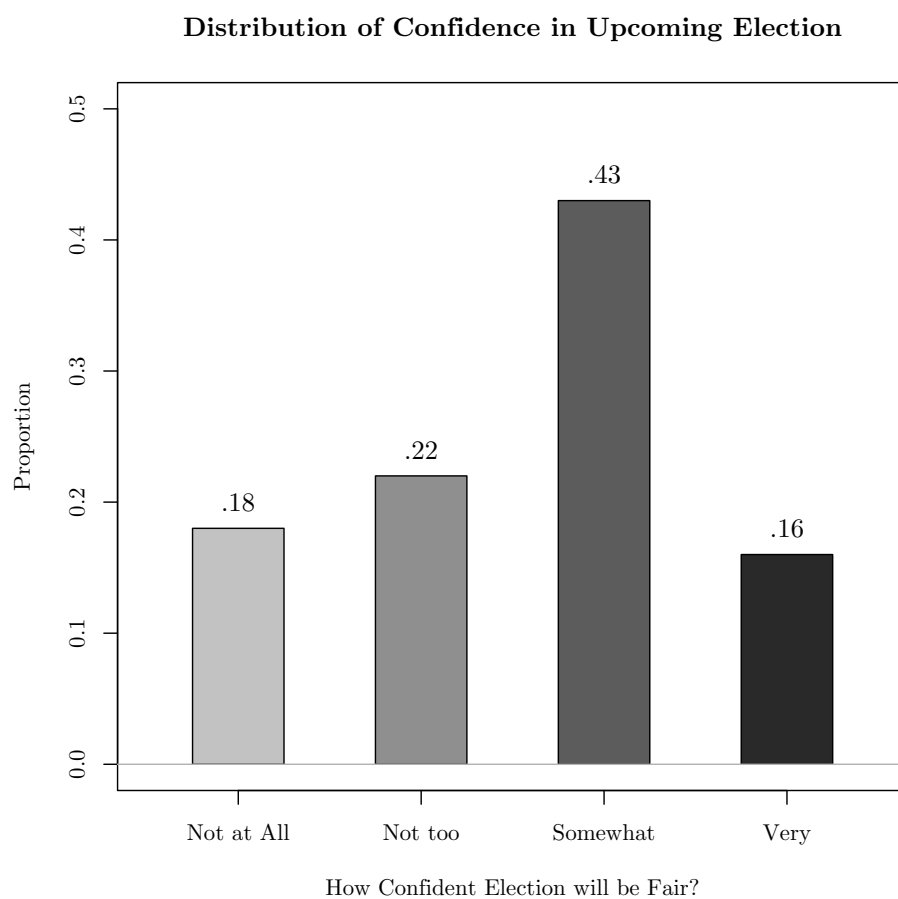


Figure 13: The Albanian Mass Public's Confidence in a "Free and Fair" Election in Fall 2006

Albanians show a consistent desire for cooperation.⁸ This desire bodes well for Albania's growth as a democracy, as compromise is an undoubtedly critical cornerstone of democratic rule.

⁸Pearson's r for the five items is consistently above .5 in every pairwise correlation but one and all are significant at $p < .05$.