



Electoral Behavior in the 2005 Albanian Parliamentary Election

Prepared by

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THE 2005 ALBANIAN ELECTION STUDY

The 2005 Albanian Election Study (AES) was organized in collaboration with the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA. CSES is a cross-national collaborative program among election studies in over fifty countries supported by the National Science Foundation of the United States. ALPSA is an Albanian professional organization. The AES survey fieldwork took place immediately after the last Albanian parliamentary election from July 4 - 20, 2005. The 2005 AES work was funded by the Open Society Foundation for Albania –Soros Foundation, and the Netherlands Embassy in Tirana.

The 2005 Albanian Election Study focused on three general themes: the impact of political institutions on citizens' political cognition and behavior (functioning of the parliament, the government, and the presidency; the electoral rules; and political parties); the nature of political, cultural, ethnic and social cleavages; ideological alignments in Albania; and the evaluation of democratic institutions and processes.

The post-election survey was administered through interviews with a representative sample of 1,500 households. Each household interview lasted for about 45 minutes, on average. The final dataset of the study contains 1148 observations. We used a stratified sample selection model whereby the country was divided into two parts: *i*) the six main districts counting for 48 percent of the total population of Albania, and *ii*) the rest of the country. In the six main districts, we interviewed seven to ten households in each Primary Sample Unit (PSU) selected for every 9,200 households sorted geographically from North to South (7 or 10 interviews x 83 PSUs for every 9,200 households). In the rest of the country, we interviewed seven to ten households in each PSU (90) selected for every 7,520 households. A list of all PSUs and the AES questionnaire in Albanian and English languages can be downloaded from the AES website (see below). At a confidence level of 95 percent, our survey results have a statistical precision of ± 2.2 percent of what they would be if we had interviewed the entire voting age population currently residing in Albania.

The 2005 AES questionnaire has over 200 questions. Here, we report only part of the data such as the main campaign issues, voters' evaluation of political leaders, voters' expectations from the new government, as well as a few socio-demographic variables like religious denominations and ethnic self-identification, issues that may be of interest to a broader non-academic audience. The 2005 AES survey aims to explain the official election results rather than confirm them. For this reason, we do not report survey data on vote choice.

The survey data suggest that the Albanian voters share sophisticated and strong perceptions about the political situation and the state of democracy in the country. Thus, while 96 percent of the voters believe in democracy and 63 percent express high levels of internal political efficacy, i.e., the belief that it is important to exercise one's political rights such as the right to vote, over 60 percent of them are either unsatisfied or not satisfied at all with the way democracy functions in Albania. At the same time, about 94 percent believe that individual and human rights are respected only to some degree - with 40 percent saying that there is little or no respect at all for individual and human rights in Albania.

Study results suggest that the two main political parties, the Democratic Party in power and the Socialist Party, now in opposition, have strong and loyal electoral bases [Chart C28]. The survey results hint that it was the voters' attitude toward the party leaders that may have played a pivotal role in their vote choice decision. Thus, 56 percent of the respondents characterized the former Socialist Party leader, Fatos Nano, as not honest; 62 percent believed that he did not really care about people like them; and 53 percent reported that they feel angry toward him. This compares to a rather favorable view toward the Democratic Party leader, Sali Berisha. At least 57 percent characterized Berisha as honest, and most of the people reported that Berisha made them feel hopeful and that they believed he really cares about people like them. In addition, voters appear to be weary of political instability and weak governance in the country. Asked about the main problem that Albania has faced in the last four years, voters ranked political instability (most commonly expressed as "bickering among politicians") and weak governance at the same level with water and electricity shortages, the latter being daily problems in Albania.

Voters appear to have strong and unfavorable views for Leka Zogu, the heir to the Albanian throne, and his political movement, LZhK. Of those who do share a favorable view about him and LZhK, about 60 percent listed the Democratic Party as their second choice, and 40 percent listed the Socialist Party or the Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI) as their second choice. These figures are within the margin of statistical error.

Voters' evaluation of the LSI leader, Ilir Meta, is all over the place. Survey results imply that the electorate was not entirely convinced about the honesty and sincerity of his motivations. Additionally, they do not appear to perceive him as a very strong and capable leader, qualities that were at the center of the LSI electoral strategy. Voters' evaluation of political leaders is presented in pages 21 through 27.

At the end, this appears to have been an electoral campaign shaped by the negative perceptions about the Socialist Party leadership and the populist campaign promises of the Democratic Party. About 40 percent of the respondents stated that the number one problem they would like the new government to deal with is unemployment and poverty reduction, followed by the fight against corruption. At the same time, they listed corruption as the number one problem that Albania has faced in the last four years [Chart C11] (in another question 78 percent reported that they believe corruption is very widespread among politicians, Chart C48). By blaming corruption as the universal diagnosis of all the ills of the Albanian economy and society, the Democratic Party has successfully copied a page from the "clean-hands" populist electoral campaigns that we have seen in other countries before. It

seems that once corruption and poverty were established as the defining issues of the electoral campaign, the public perception of Sali Berisha was also cast in that context i.e. as a honest leader who cares about the poor rather than as a former authoritarian president. The Socialist Party's electoral strategy of invoking the events of 1997 may have been too late and out of the sync with the voters.

Asked about who they most wanted to be the next Prime Minister, 26 percent of the respondents mentioned Sali Berisha as their choice; Edi Rama was the second choice with 21 percent. In addition, Sali Berisha had the support of 55 percent of the democratic (or blue) voters. Edi Rama was the PM choice of 32 percent of the respondents who identified with the Socialist Party, its allies or LSI. It is interesting that Edi Rama was the PM choice of about 6 percent of the blue voters and 18 percent of the LSI voters in our survey. These results are reported in Charts C31 through C31/PID (pp. 13-16).

We also report age, educational levels, religious denominations and ethnic self-identification of the respondents. As concerns age and political party identification, about 70 percent of the Democratic Party (DP) supporters are in the age group 18 – 49 years old. About 68 percent of the Socialist Party (SP) supports are in the 40 years old and above. DP had the support of 61 percent of the respondents in the 30-39 years old category, and of 54 percent of the respondents in the 18-29 years old category. One explanation could be that the 30-39 years old category is the generation of the anti-communist “revolution”, those who were in their twenties in the early 1990s and have stayed loyal to DP. The 18-29 year olds have become adults in the post-communist period when the SP was in power for the last eight years. They seem to have more of a “protest against Socialist Party” kind of affiliation with the DP as shown by the fact that LSI and Edi Rama also draw sizeable support from this age group. LSI draws most of its supporters from the 18-29 and 40-49 age categories. As concerns educational levels and party identification, we notice that the Socialist Party and LSI, combined, have an advantage over Democratic Party among respondents with a university degree or higher. In addition, we notice that LSI has attracted the younger and the more educated supporters of the Socialist Party.

Perhaps, one should be cautious about how much to read into our estimations of religious denomination and ethnicity as our sample captures only the voting age population that currently resides in Albania. Our data say nothing about Albanian emigrants in other countries (by some estimates up to 30 percent of the population). We need further surveys to study political and socio-demographic characteristics of the Albanian emigrants. 70 percent of the respondents in our survey stated Islam as their religion but only 7.5 percent knew if they were Sunni or Bektashi Muslims. In addition, over 46 percent stated that they never practice their religion, and 14 percent go to church or mosque very rarely. This could mean that religious denominations are, for the most part, only nominal labels. About 15 percent of the respondents said they were Orthodox, and 13 percent Catholics. On ethnicity, 96 percent identified themselves as Albanians. Among them, only 16 percent identified themselves as either Ghegs or Tosks. Ghegs were twice as likely to self-identify as compared to Tosks, this probably being a consequence of the decades long alienation of Ghegs by the former communist regime.

AES is primarily an academic study and its main product is the dataset that will be deposited with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in the coming months. The 2005 AES has produced the first comprehensive dataset on electoral behavior in Albania. The AES data can also serve as a baseline to compare changes in the public opinion toward the new Democratic Party government.

We are also planning the 2009 Albanian Election Study in the framework the CSES Module 3. The focus of the 2009 AES will shift to the study of political parties and the Albanian party system. The 2009 AES will investigate the extent to which political parties in Albania offer meaningful choices to voters through candidate party recruitment and public policy alternatives.

Public opinion is at the heart of every democratic system. It is widely recognized that in democratic societies there are strong links between public opinion and the actions of policymakers. I hope that this report will help the reader understand the decision and preferences of the Albanian voters as manifested in the July 3rd, 2005 parliamentary elections.

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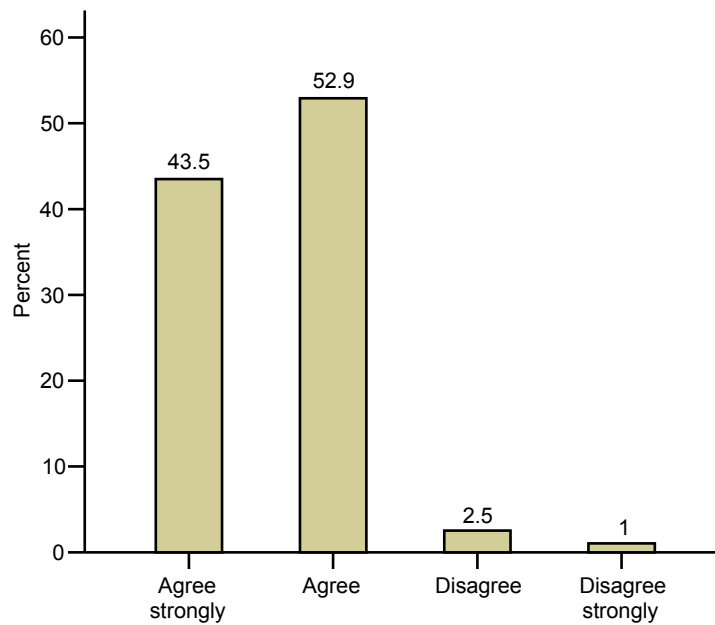
The following websites contain additional information about the 2005 Albanian Election Study:

- The 2005 Albanian Election Study, website (<http://www.alpsa.org/aes/>)
- Albanian Political Science Association (ALPSA), website (<http://www.alpsa.org/>)
- Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), website (<http://www.cses.org/>)

The 2005 Albanian Election Study was supported by:

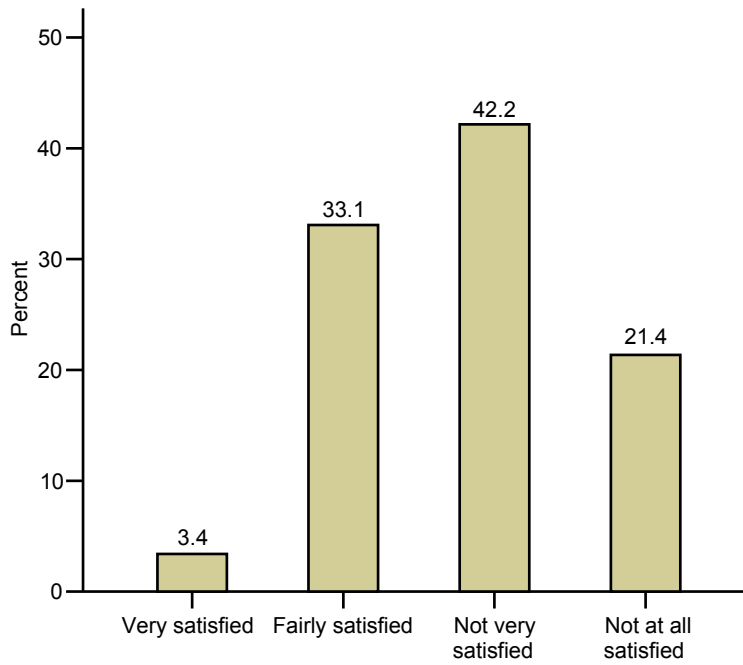
- The Open Society Foundation for Albania – Soros Foundation
website (<http://www.soros.al>)
- The Netherlands Embassy in Tirana
website (<http://www.netherlandsembassytirana.com/>)

C21. Please, tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government." Do you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly with this statement?



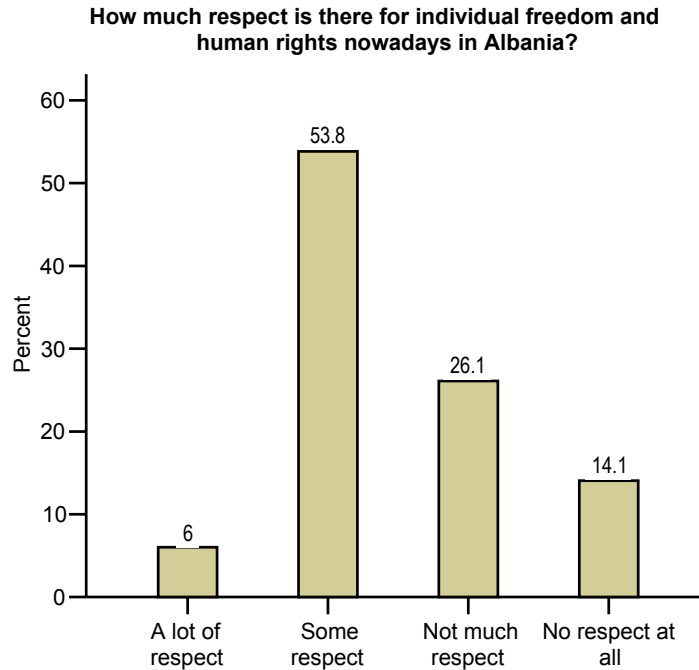
	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree strongly	43.5	43.5
Agree	52.9	96.4
Disagree	2.5	99.0
Disagree strongly	1.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

C18. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Albania?



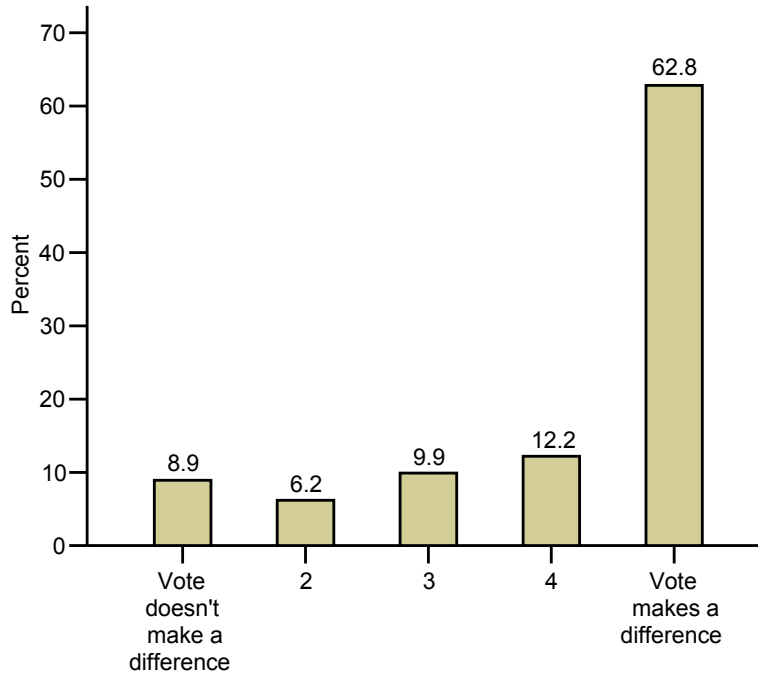
	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very satisfied	3.4	3.4
Fairly satisfied	33.1	36.5
Not very satisfied	42.2	78.6
Not at all satisfied	21.4	100.0
Total	100.0	

C47. How much respect is there for individual freedom and human rights nowadays in Albania? Do you feel there is a lot of respect for individual freedom, some respect, not much respect, or no respect at all?



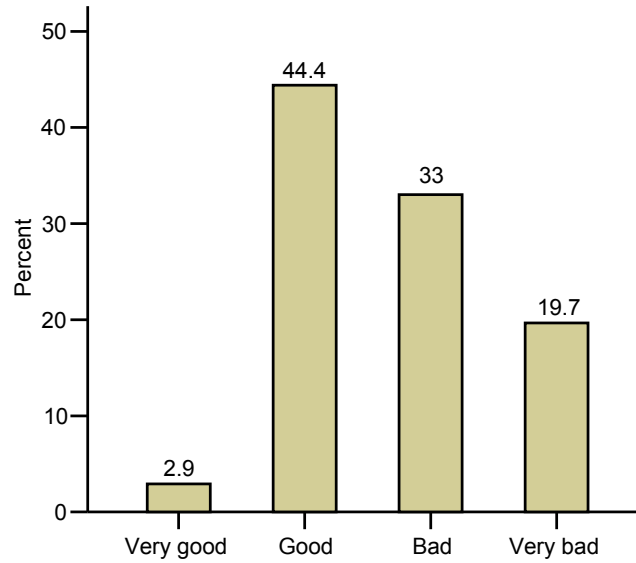
	Percent	Cumulative Percent
A lot of respect	6.0	6.0
Some respect	53.8	59.9
Not much respect	26.1	85.9
No respect at all	14.1	100.0
Total	100.0	

C20. Some people say that no matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens. Others say that who people vote for can make a difference to what happens. Using the scale on this card, (where ONE means that voting won't make a difference to what happens and FIVE means that voting can make a difference), where would you place yourself?



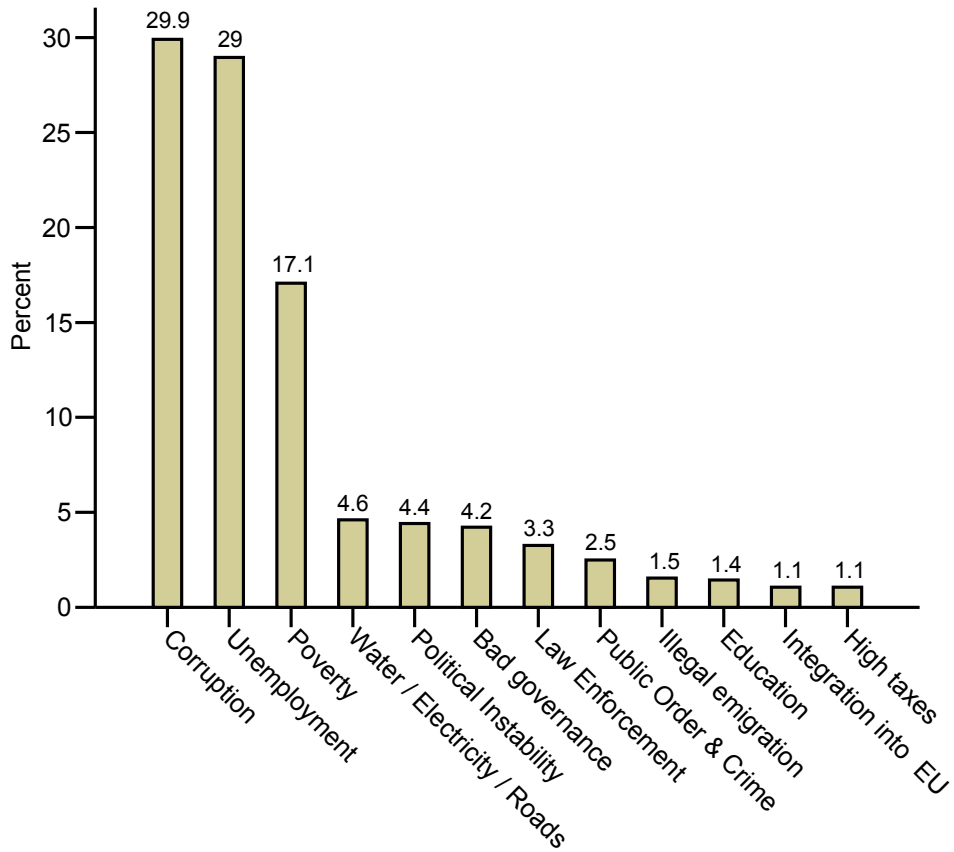
	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Vote does not make a difference	8.9	8.9
2	6.2	15.1
3	9.9	25.0
4	12.2	37.2
Vote makes a difference	62.8	100.0
Total	100.0	

C13. Generally speaking about the performance of the government in general, how good or bad a job do you think the socialist led government has done over the past 4 years. Has it done a very good job? A good job? A bad job? A very bad job?



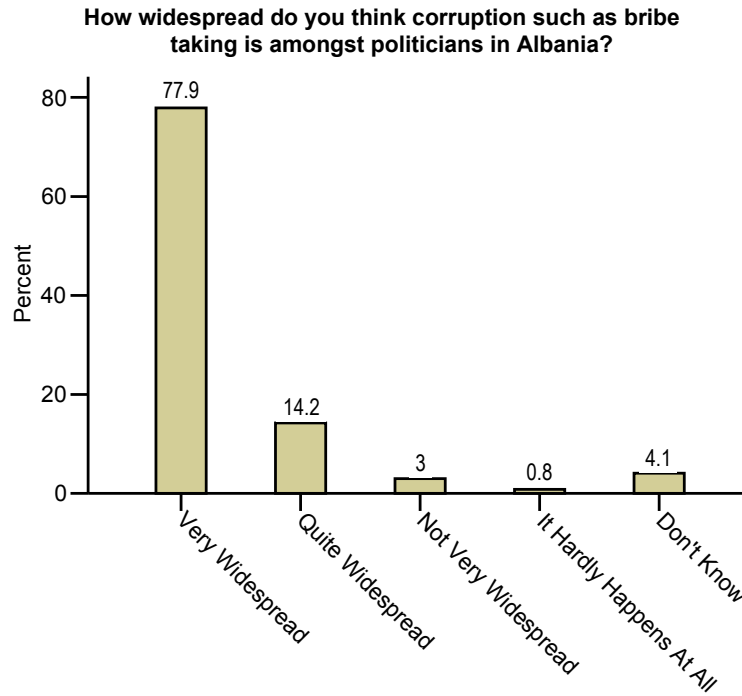
	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very good	2.9	2.9
Good	44.4	47.3
Bag	33.0	80.3
Very bad	19.7	100.0
Total	100.0	

C11. What do you think has been the most important issue facing Albania over the last 4 years?



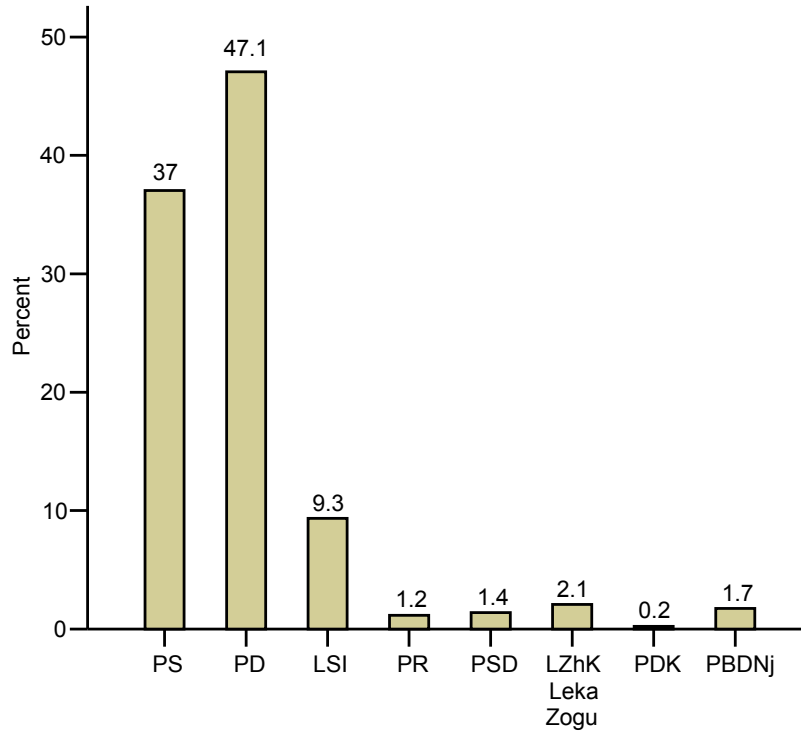
	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Corruption	29.9	29.9
Unemployment	29.0	58.9
Poverty	17.1	75.9
Water / Electricity / Roads	4.6	80.5
Political Instability	4.4	84.9
Weak governance	4.2	89.2
Law enforcement	3.3	92.4
Public order & crime	2.5	94.9
Illegal emigration	1.5	96.5
Education	1.4	97.9
Integration into the EU	1.1	98.9
High taxes	1.1	100.0

C48. How widespread do you think corruption such as bribe taking is amongst politicians in Albania: very widespread, quite widespread, not very widespread, it hardly happens at all?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very widespread	77.9	77.9
Quite widespread	14.2	92.1
Not very widespread	3.0	95.1
It hardly happens at all	.8	95.9
Don't know	4.1	100.0
Total	100.0	

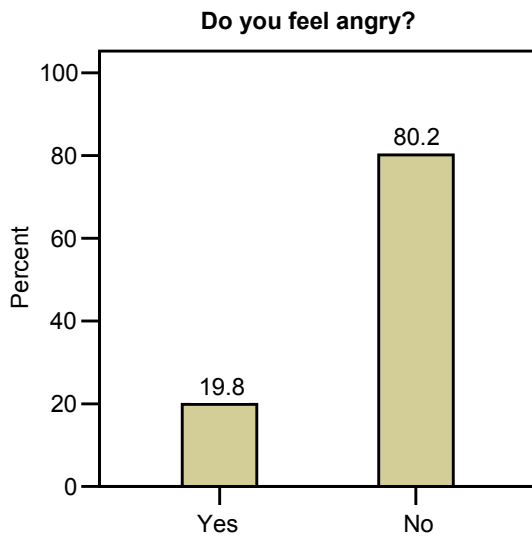
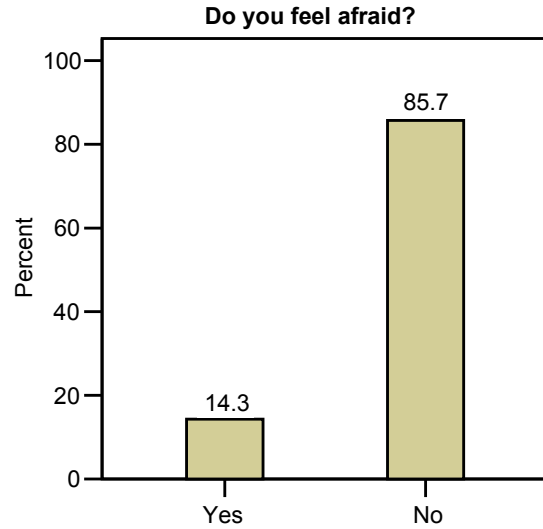
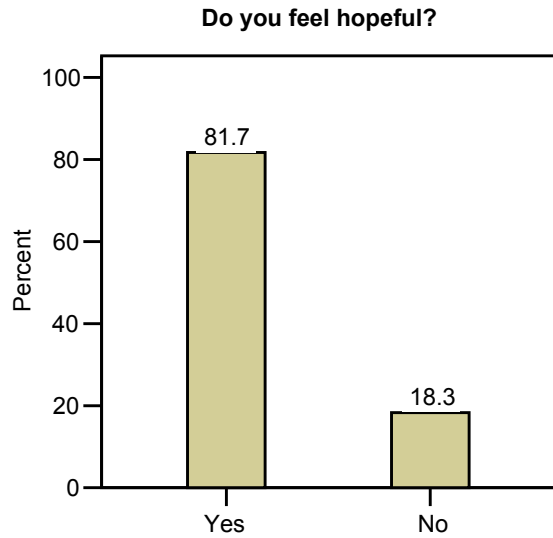
C28. Which party represents your views best?



	Valid Percent
PS	37.0
PD	47.1
LSI	9.3
PR	1.2
PSD	1.4
LZhK Leka Zogu	2.1
PDK	0.2
PBDNj	1.7

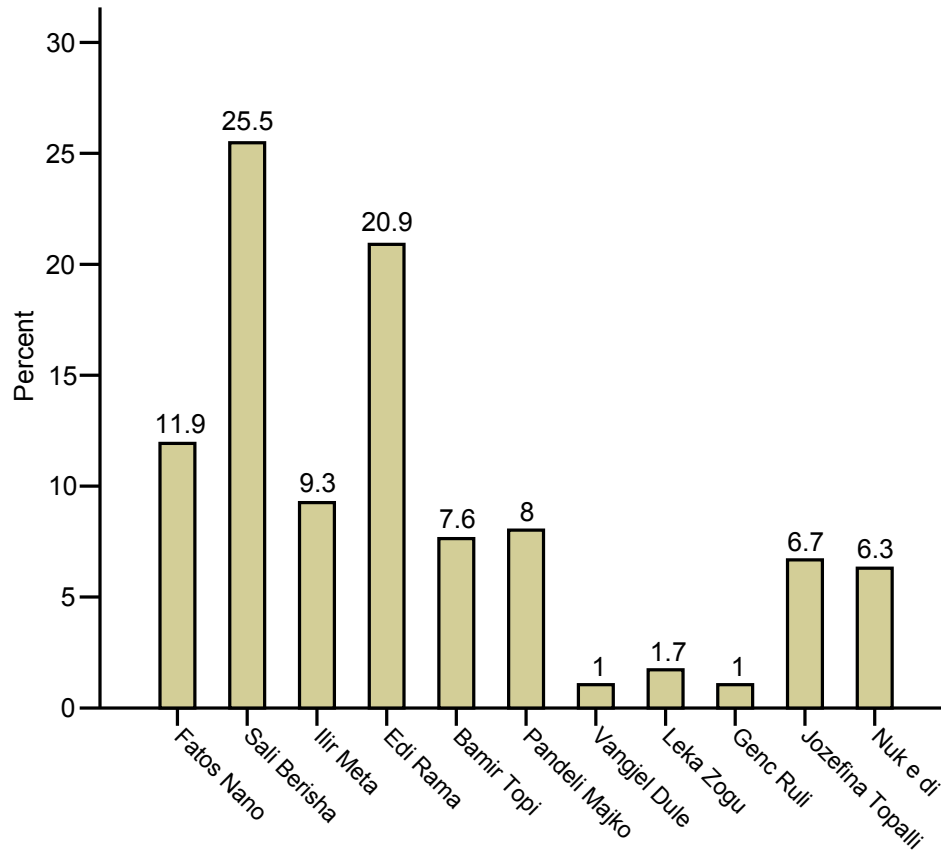
Note: This is not party identification of the respondents.

C67. Do the recent elections, because of their outcome or the way in which they were conducted, make you feel hopeful? feel afraid? feel angry?



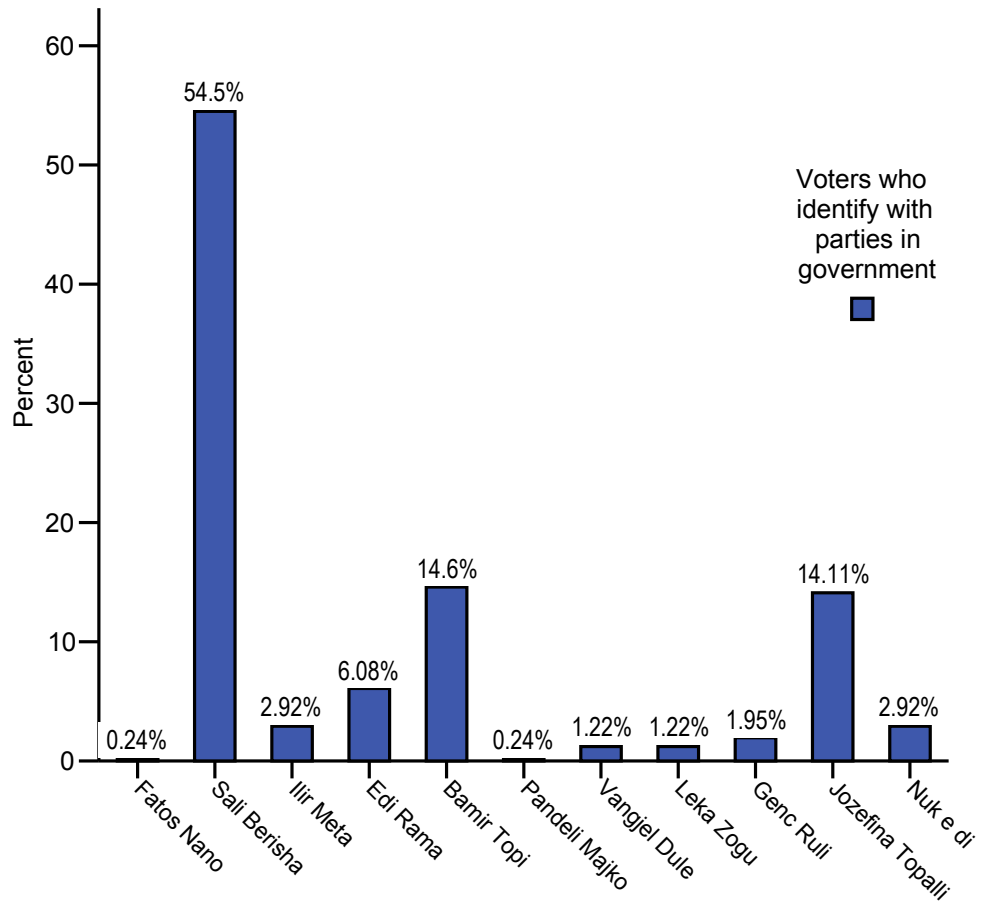
		Percent
Do you feel hopeful?	Yes	81.7
	No	18.3
Do you feel afraid?	Yes	14.3
	No	85.7
Do you feel angry?	Yes	19.8
	No	80.2

C31. On Election Day, on July 3rd, of all politicians in Albania, who did you most want to be the next Prime Minister?

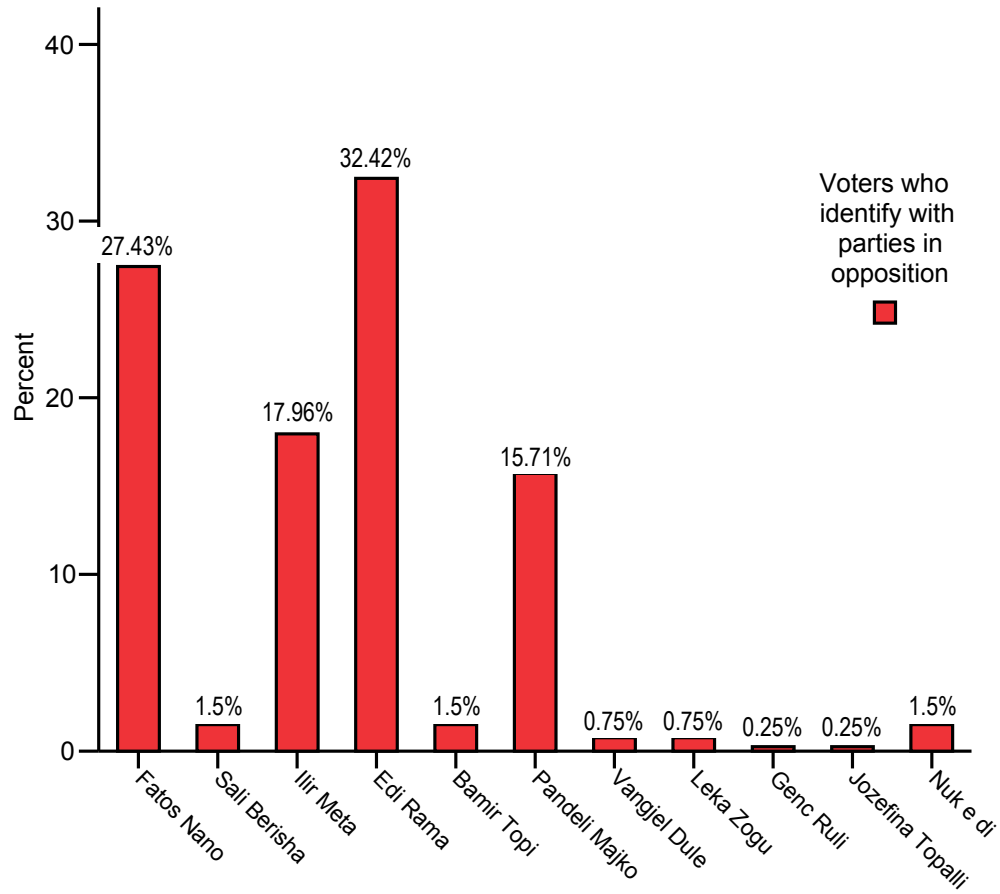


	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fatos Nano	11.9	11.9
Sali Berisha	25.5	37.4
Ilir Meta	9.3	46.7
Edi Rama	20.9	67.6
Bamir Topi	7.6	75.2
Pandeli Majko	8.0	83.2
Vangjel Dule	1.0	84.3
Leka Zogu	1.7	86.0
Genc Ruli	1.0	87.0
Jozefina Topalli	6.7	93.7
Don't know	6.3	100.0

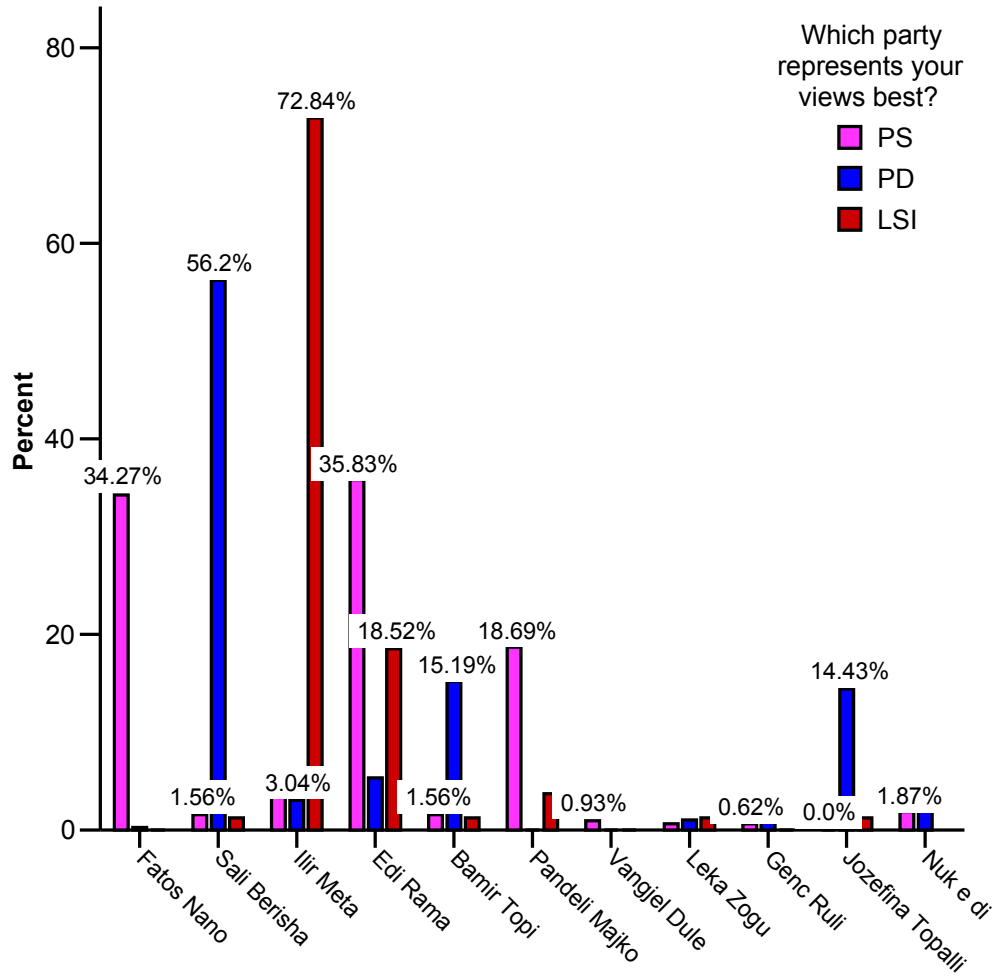
C31/Blue. On election day, on July 3rd, of all politicians in Albania, who did you most want to be the next Prime Minister? *[Voters who identify with political parties in the new government]*



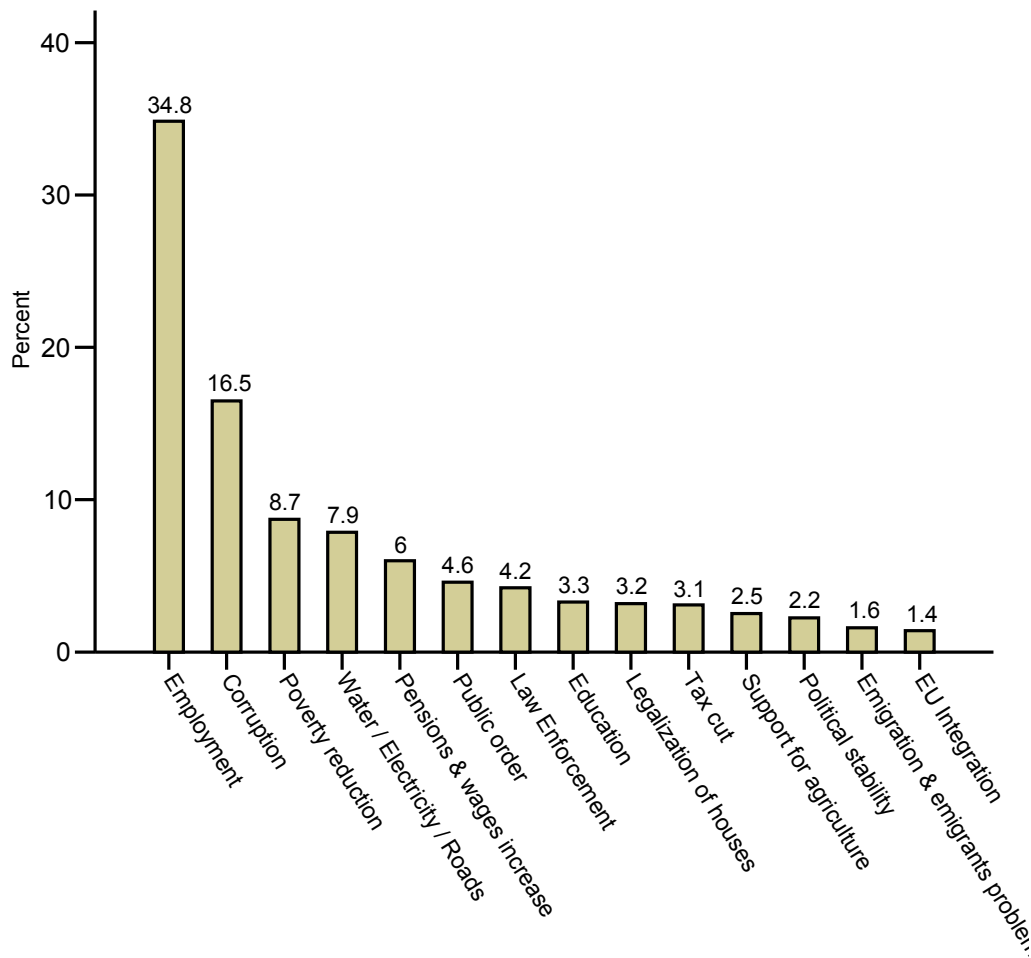
C31/Red. On Election Day, on July 3rd, of all politicians in Albania, who did you most want to be the next Prime Minister? *[Voters who identify with political parties in opposition]*



C31/PID. On election day, on July 3rd, of all politicians in Albania, who did you most want to be the next Prime Minister? [Next Prime Minister by party representation]

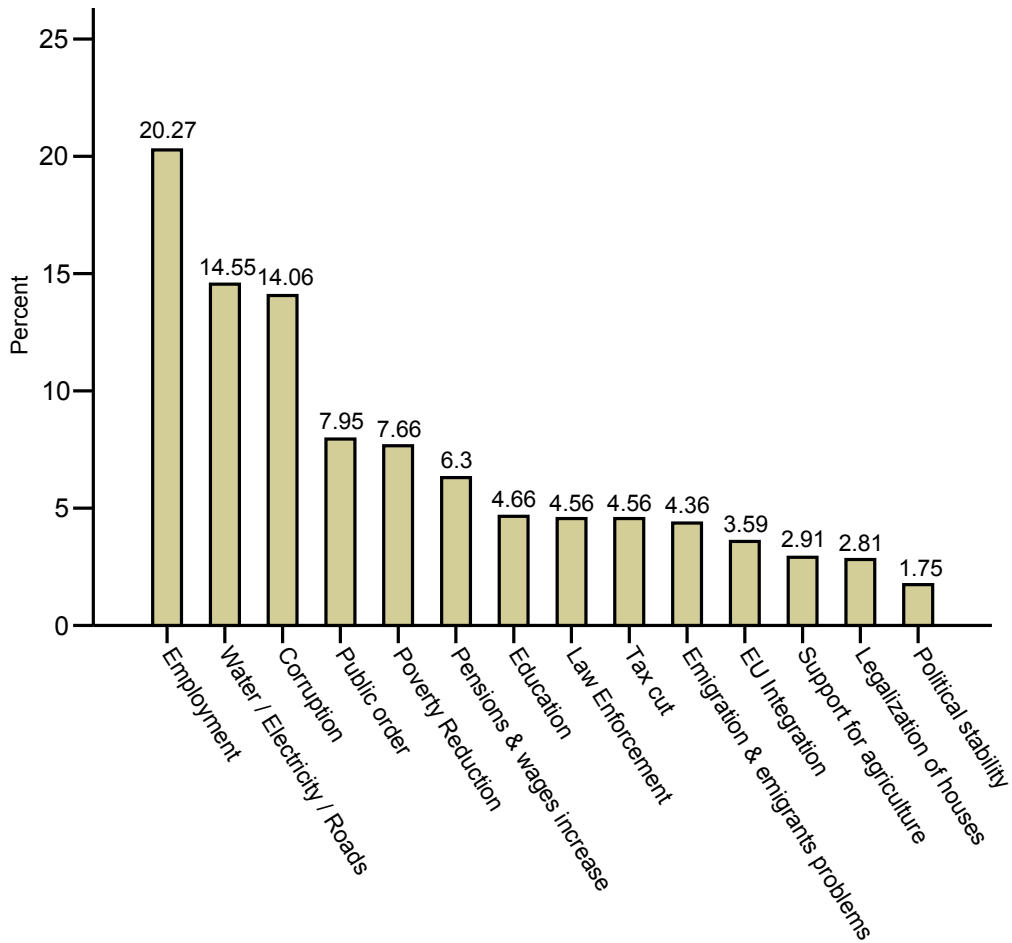


C14. What is the most important question or problem that you want the Government and the Parliament of Albania to deal with in the coming months?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Employment	34.8	34.8
Corruption	16.5	51.3
Poverty reduction	8.7	60.0
Water / electricity / roads	7.9	67.9
Pensions and wage increase	6.0	73.9
Public order	4.6	78.5
Law enforcement / Justice	4.2	82.7
Education	3.3	86.0
Legalization of houses with no permit	3.2	89.1
Tax cut	3.1	92.2
Support for agriculture & rural areas	2.5	94.8
Political Stability	2.2	97.0
Emigration & problems of emigrants	1.6	98.6
Integration into the EU	1.4	100.0

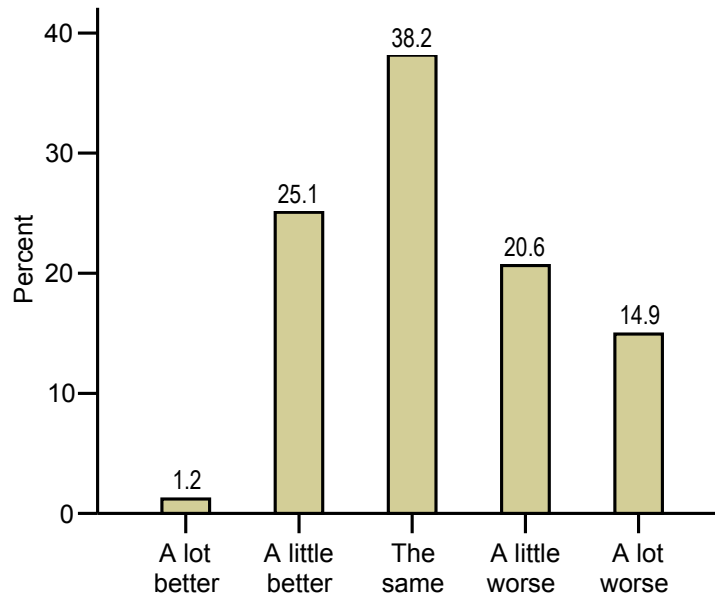
C16. And what would be the second most important question or problem that you want the Government and the Parliament of Albania to deal with in the coming months?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Employment	20.3	20.3
Water / electricity / roads	14.5	34.8
Corruption	14.1	48.9
Public order	8.0	56.8
Poverty reduction	7.7	64.5
Pensions and wage increase	6.3	70.8
Education	4.7	75.5
Law enforcement / Justice	4.6	80.0
Tax cut	4.6	84.6
Emigration & emigrants problems	4.4	88.9
Integration into the EU	3.6	92.5
Support for agriculture & rural areas	2.9	95.4
Legalization of houses with no permit	2.8	98.3
Political Stability	1.7	100.0

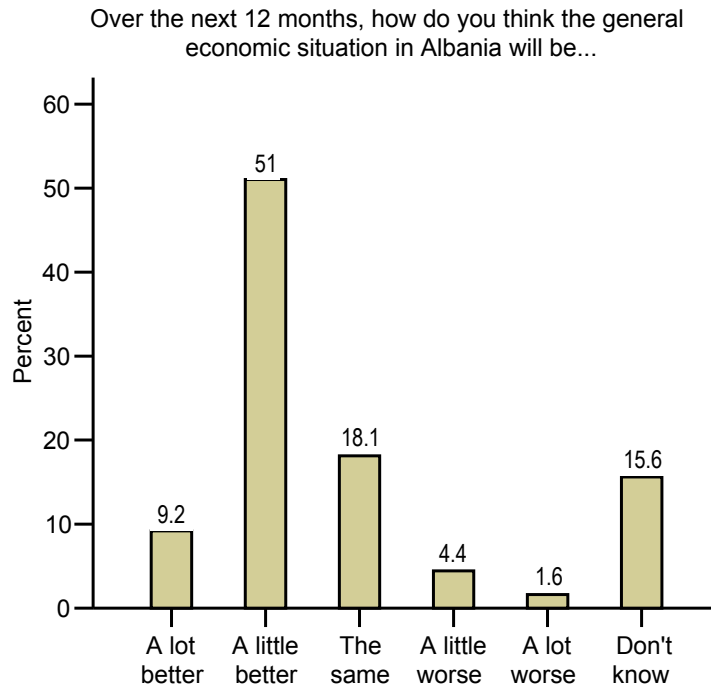
C51. Compared to 12 months ago, do you think the general economic situation in Albania is ...

Compared to 12 months ago, do you think the general economic situation in Albania is...



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
A lot better	1.2	1.2
A little better	25.1	26.3
The same	38.2	64.4
A little worse	20.6	85.1
A lot worse	14.9	100.0

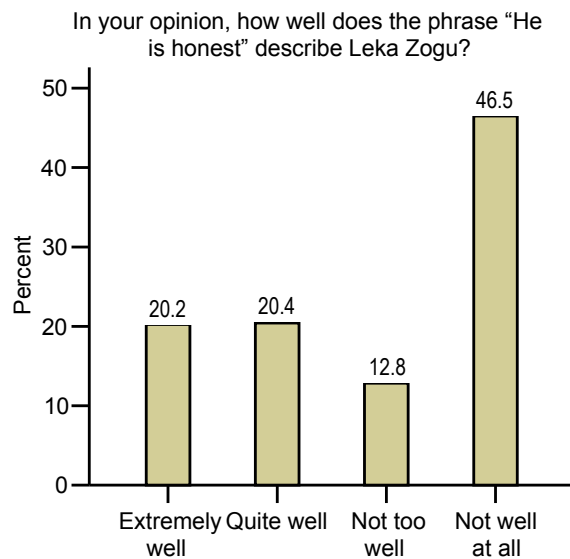
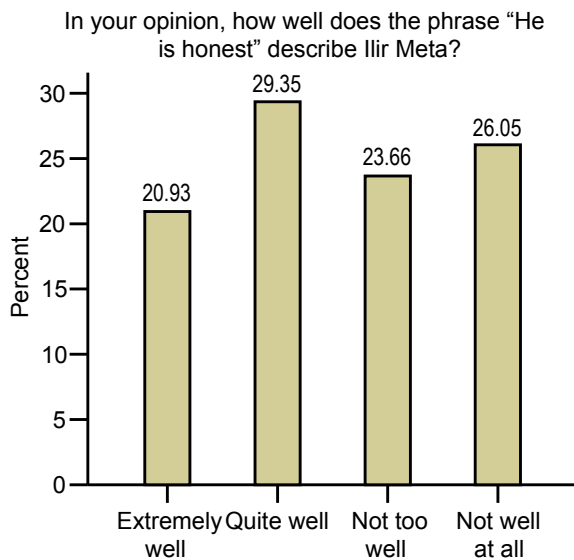
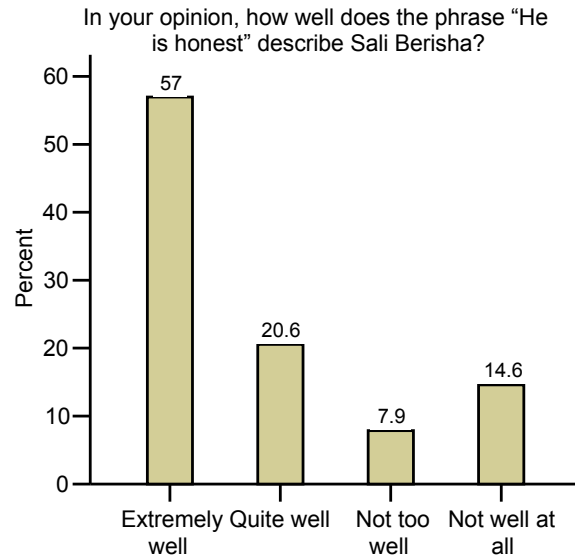
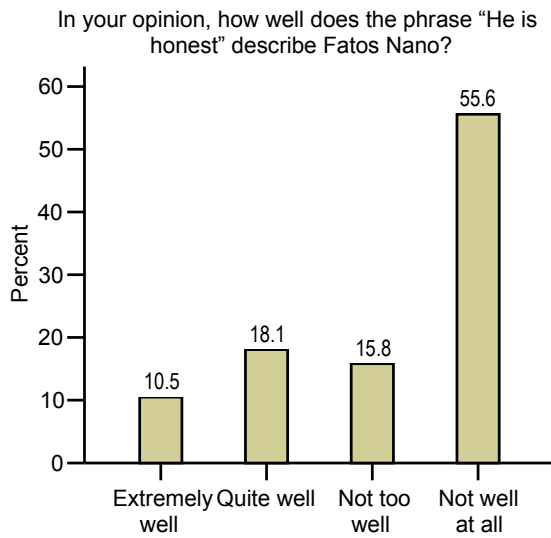
C54. And over the next 12 months, how do you think the general economic situation in Albania will be ...



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
A lot better	9.2	9.2
A little better	51.0	60.2
The same	18.1	78.4
A little worse	4.4	82.8
A lot worse	1.6	84.4
Don't know	15.6	100.0

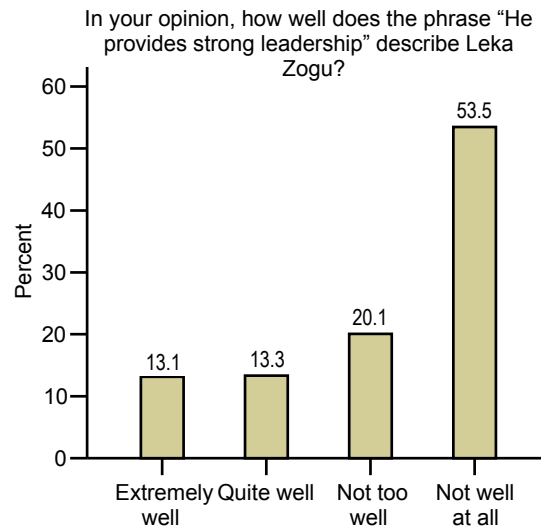
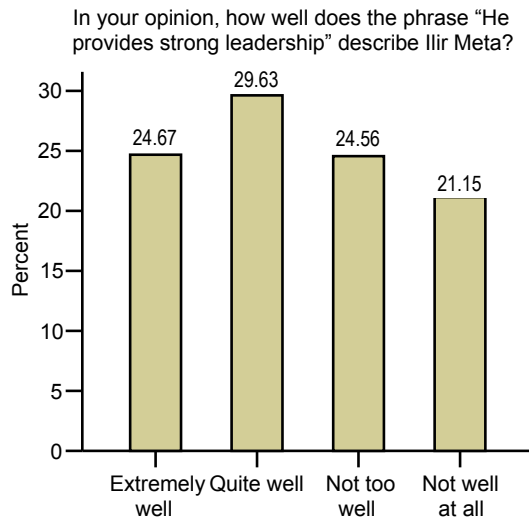
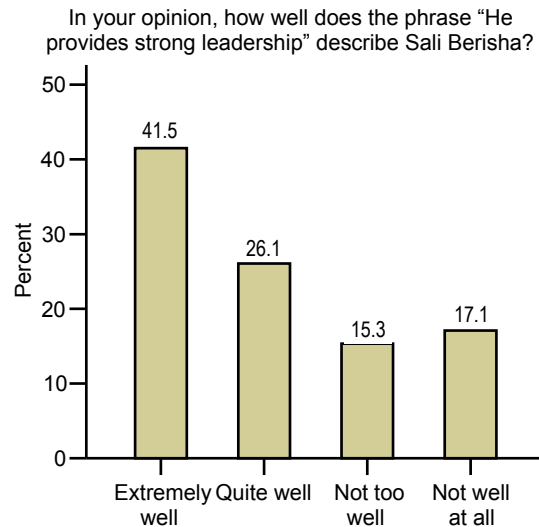
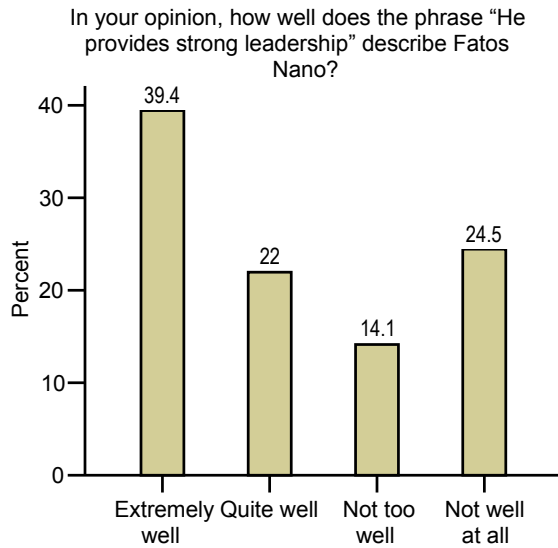
Political Leaders [1]

C40/A. In your opinion, does the phrase “He is honest” describe [*Politician’s name*] extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?



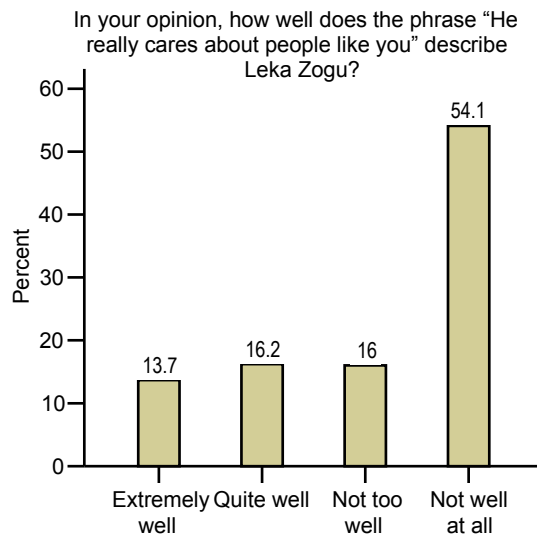
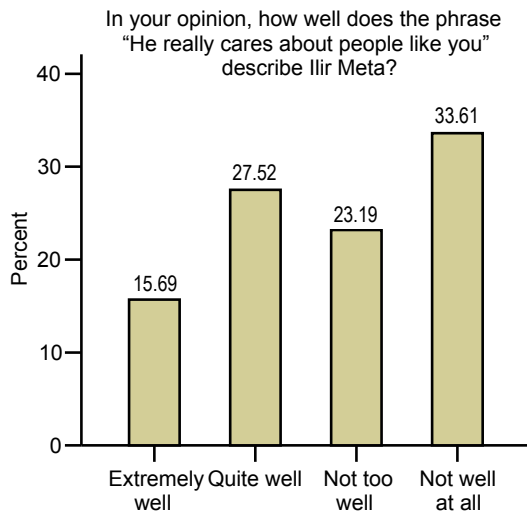
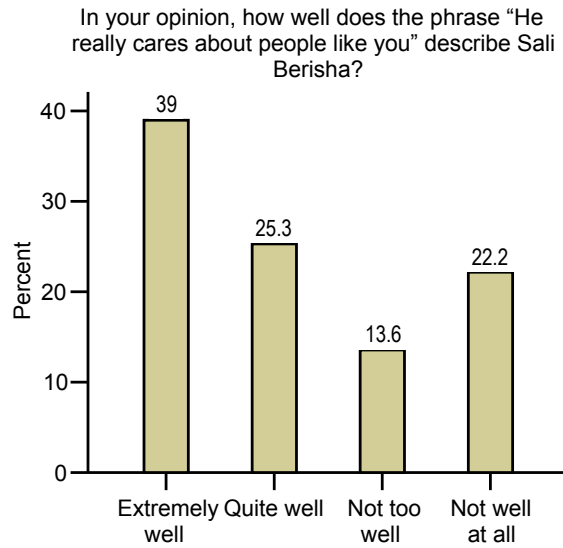
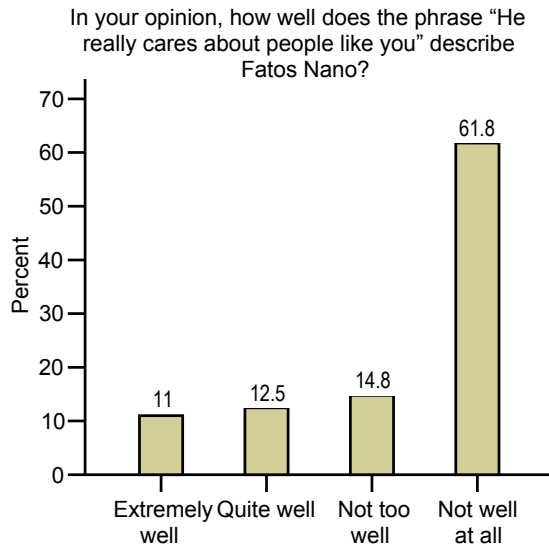
Political Leaders [2]

C40/B. In your opinion, does the phrase “He provides strong leadership” describe [*Politician’s name*] extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?



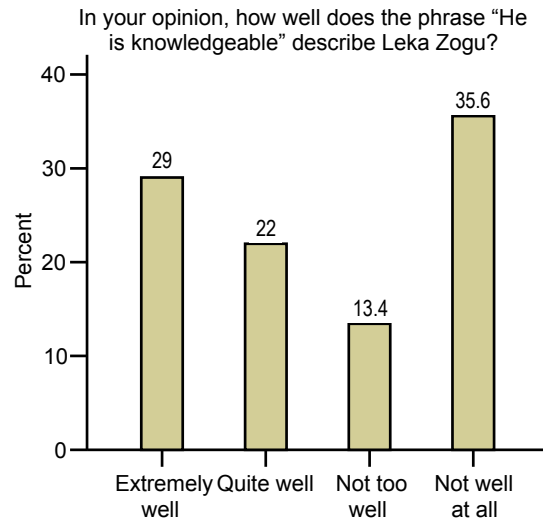
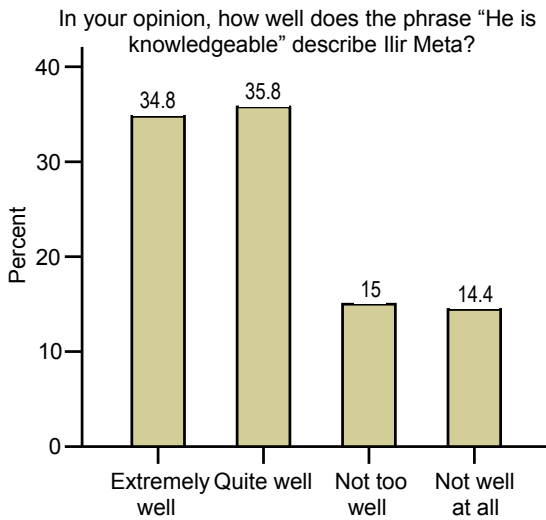
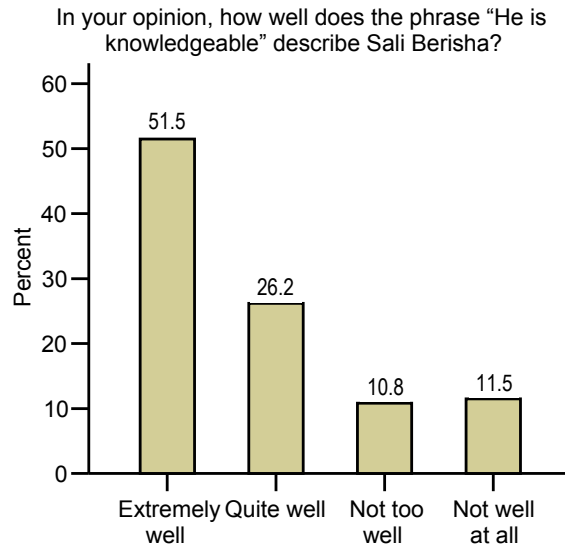
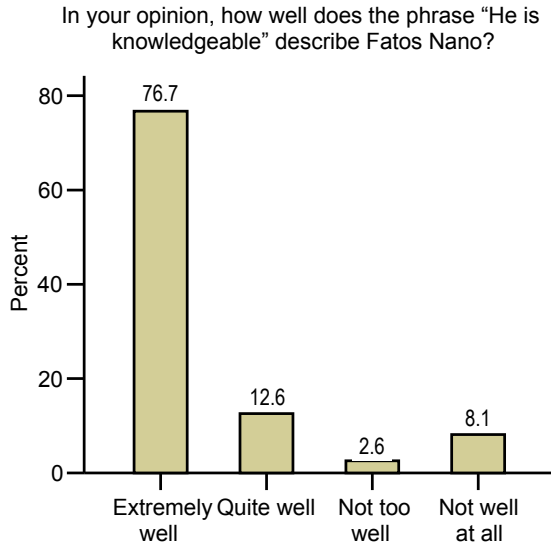
Political Leaders [3]

C40/C. In your opinion, does the phrase “He really cares about people like you” describe [Politician’s name] extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?



Political Leaders [4]

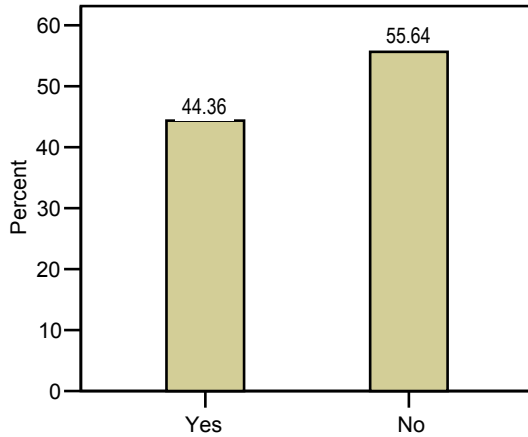
C40/D. In your opinion, does the phrase “He is knowledgeable” describe *[Politician’s name]* extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?



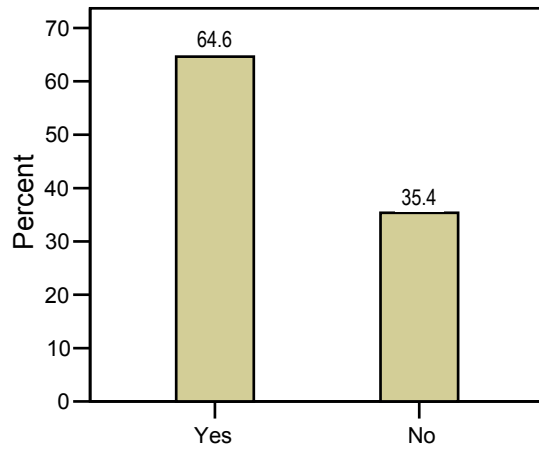
Political Leaders, Part Two [1]

C57/A. Has [*Politician's name*], because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel hopeful?

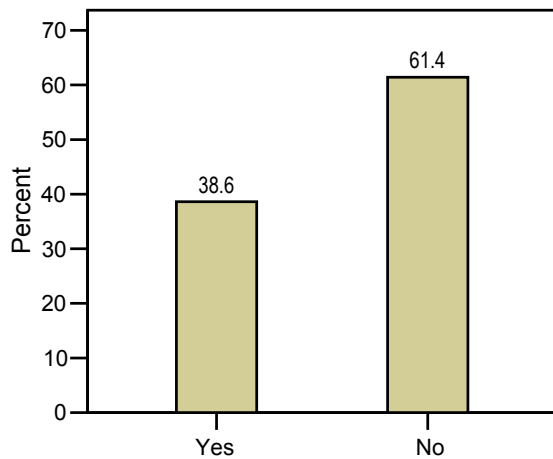
Has Fatos Nano, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel hopeful?



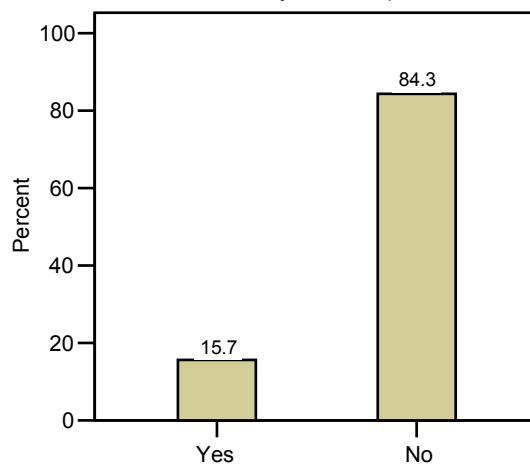
Has Sali Berisha, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel hopeful?



Has Ilir Meta, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel hopeful?



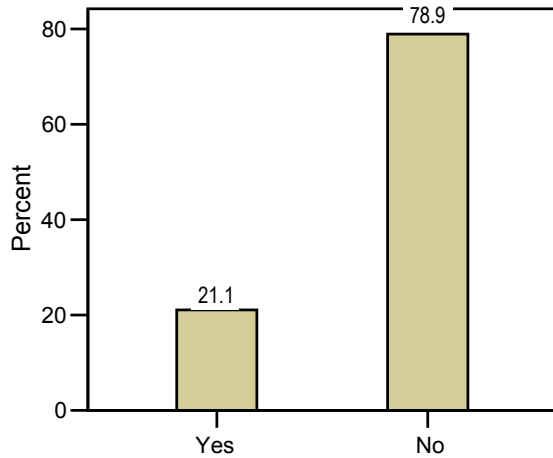
Has Leka Zogu, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel hopeful?



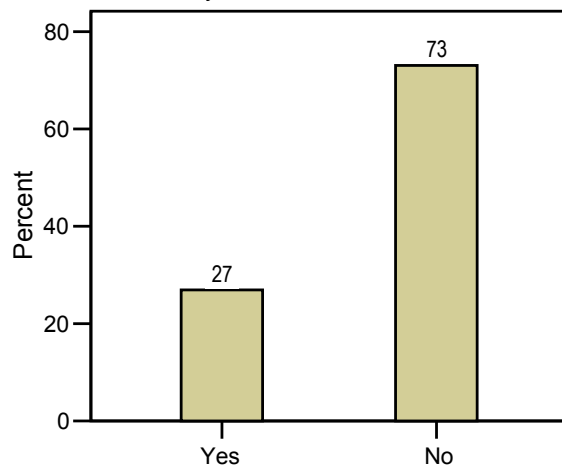
Political Leaders, Part Two [2]

C57/B. Has [Politician's name], because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel afraid?

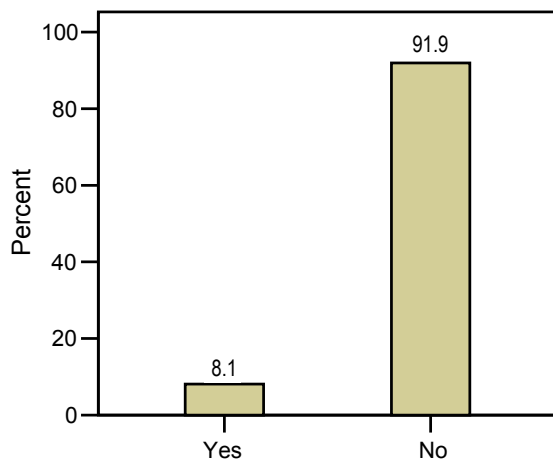
Has Fatos Nano, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel afraid?



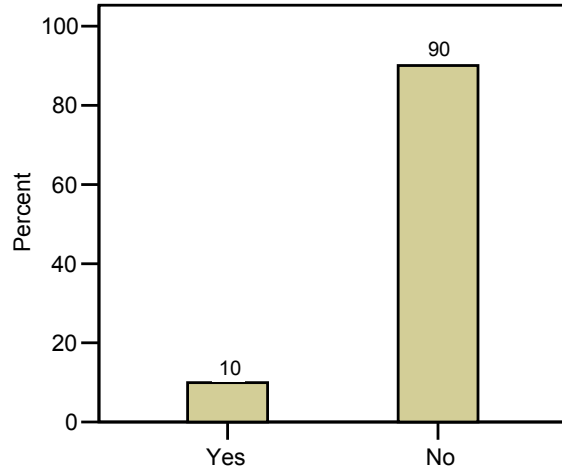
Has Sali Berisha, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel afraid?



Has Ilir Meta, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel afraid?



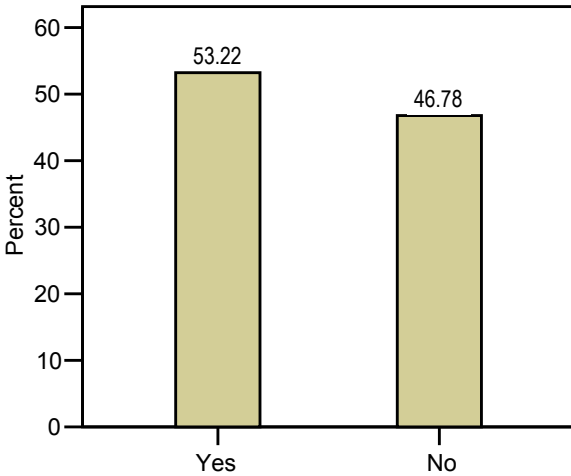
Has Leka Zogu, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel afraid?



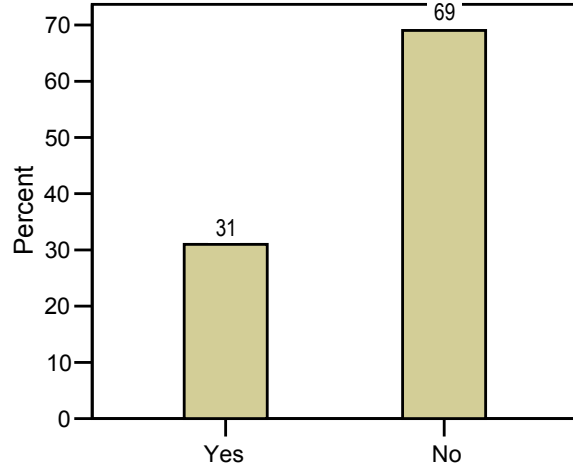
Political Leaders, Part Two [3]

C57/C. Has [Politician's name], because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel angry?

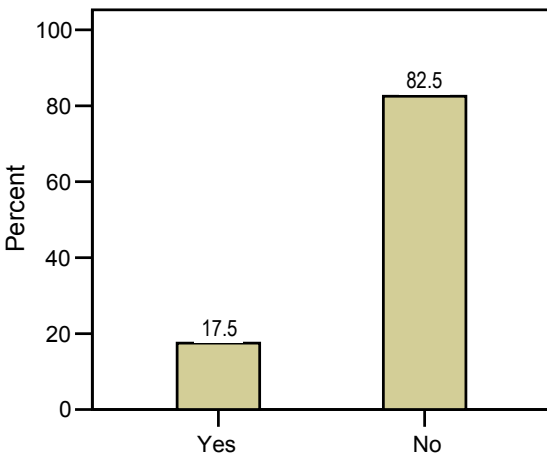
Has Fatos Nano, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel angry?



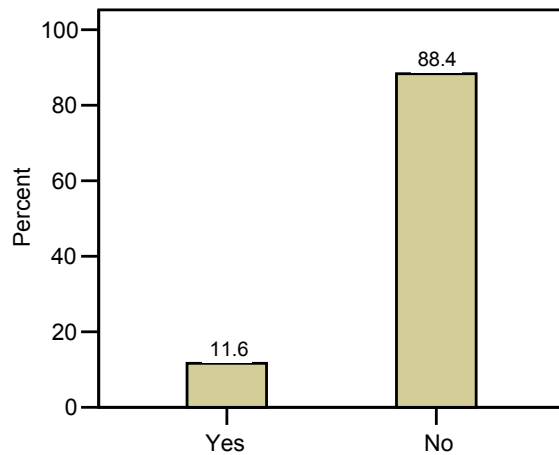
Has Sali Berisha, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel angry?



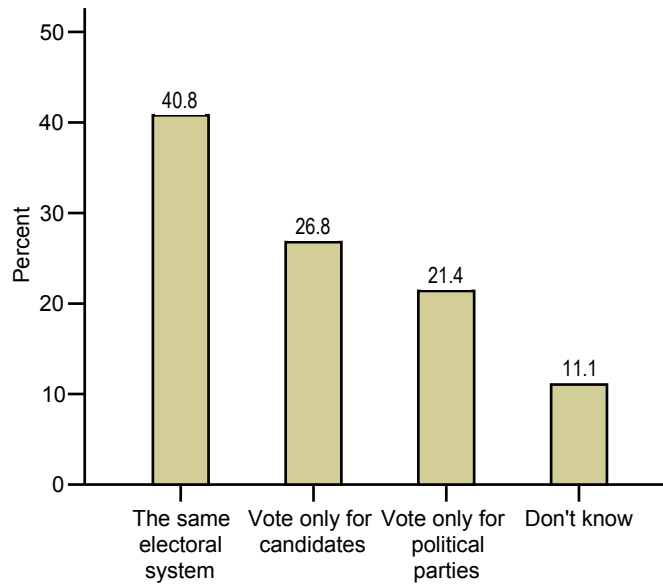
Has Ilir Meta, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel angry?



Has Leka Zogu, because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done, ever made you feel angry?

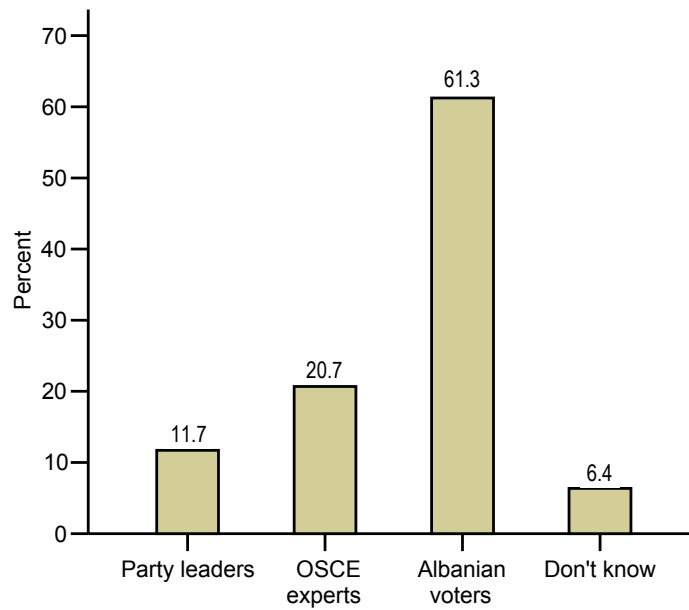


C55. Now let me ask you about the electoral system in Albania. Under the current electoral system, voters have two votes one for the district candidate and one for the party list. In your opinion, for the next parliamentary elections, should we keep the same electoral system, vote only for the district candidate, or vote only for political parties?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
The same electoral system	40.8	40.8
Vote only for candidates	26.8	67.6
Vote only for political parties	21.4	88.9
Don't know	11.1	100.0

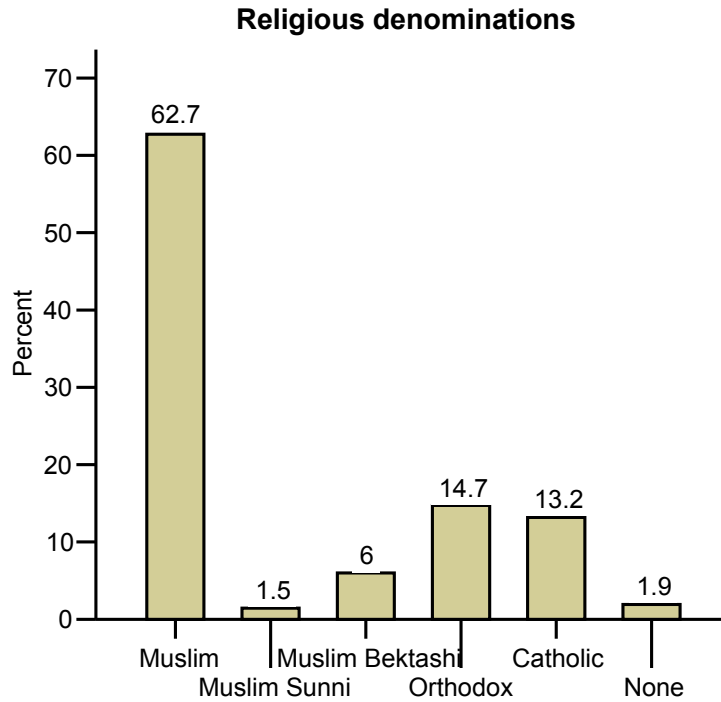
C56. In your opinion, who should decide which electoral system is best for Albania, the party leaders, experts of the OSCE Mission, or the Albanian electorate?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Party leaders	11.7	11.7
OSCE experts	20.7	32.4
Albanian voters	61.3	93.6
Don't know	6.4	100.0

SOME SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

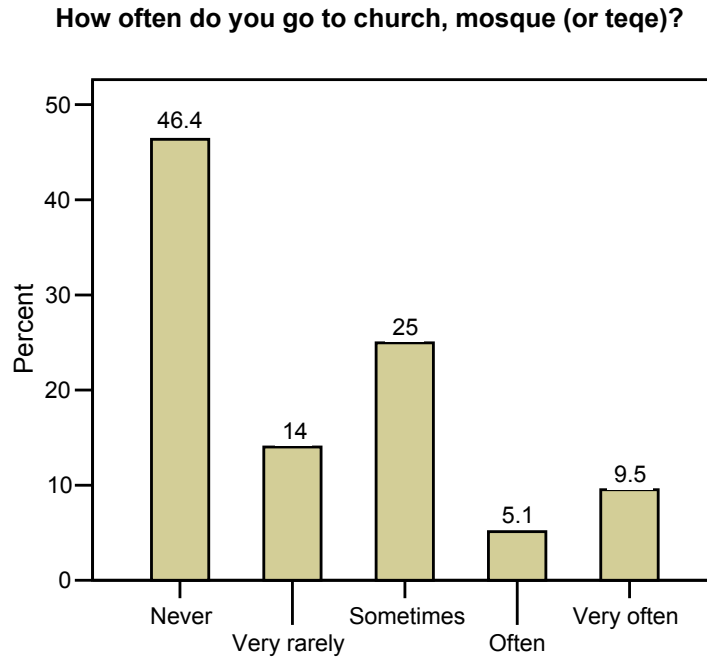
D31. Do you belong to any religion? Which one?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Muslim	62.7	62.7
Sunni Muslim	1.5	64.2
Bektashi Muslim	6.0	70.2
Orthodox	14.7	84.9
Catholic	13.2	98.1
None	1.9	100.0
Total	100.0	

Note: The study sample represents Albanian voters who live in Albania. Albanian emigrants in other countries (by some estimates up to 30 percent of the total population of Albania) are not captured in this study.

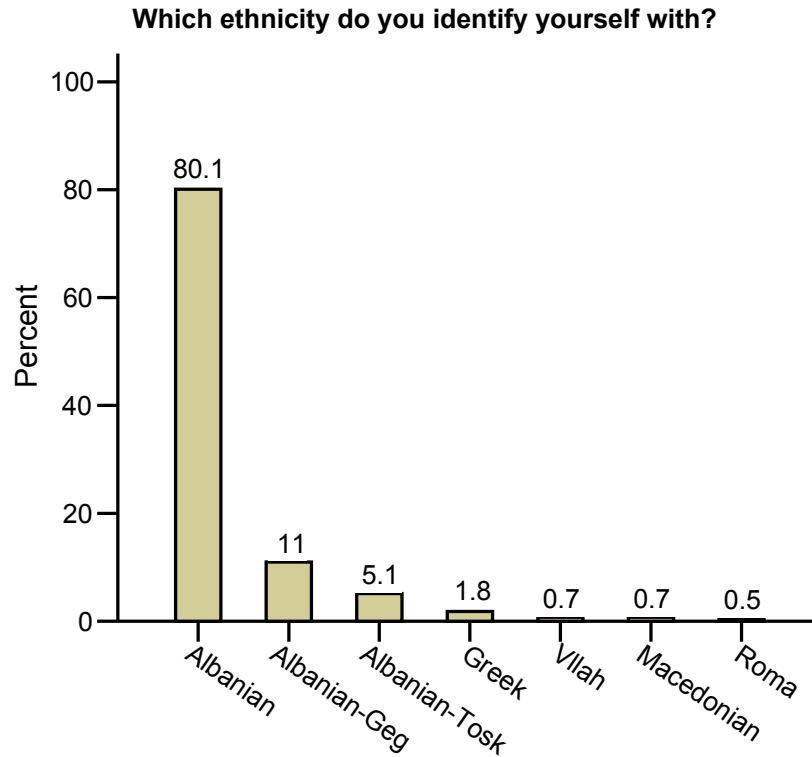
Religious practice: How often do you go to church, mosque (or teqe)?



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	46.4	46.4
Very rarely	14.0	60.4
Sometimes	25.0	85.4
Often	5.1	90.5
Very often	9.5	100.0

Note: The study sample represents Albanian voters who live in Albania. Albanian emigrants in other countries (by some estimates up to 30 percent of the total population of Albania) are not captured in this study.

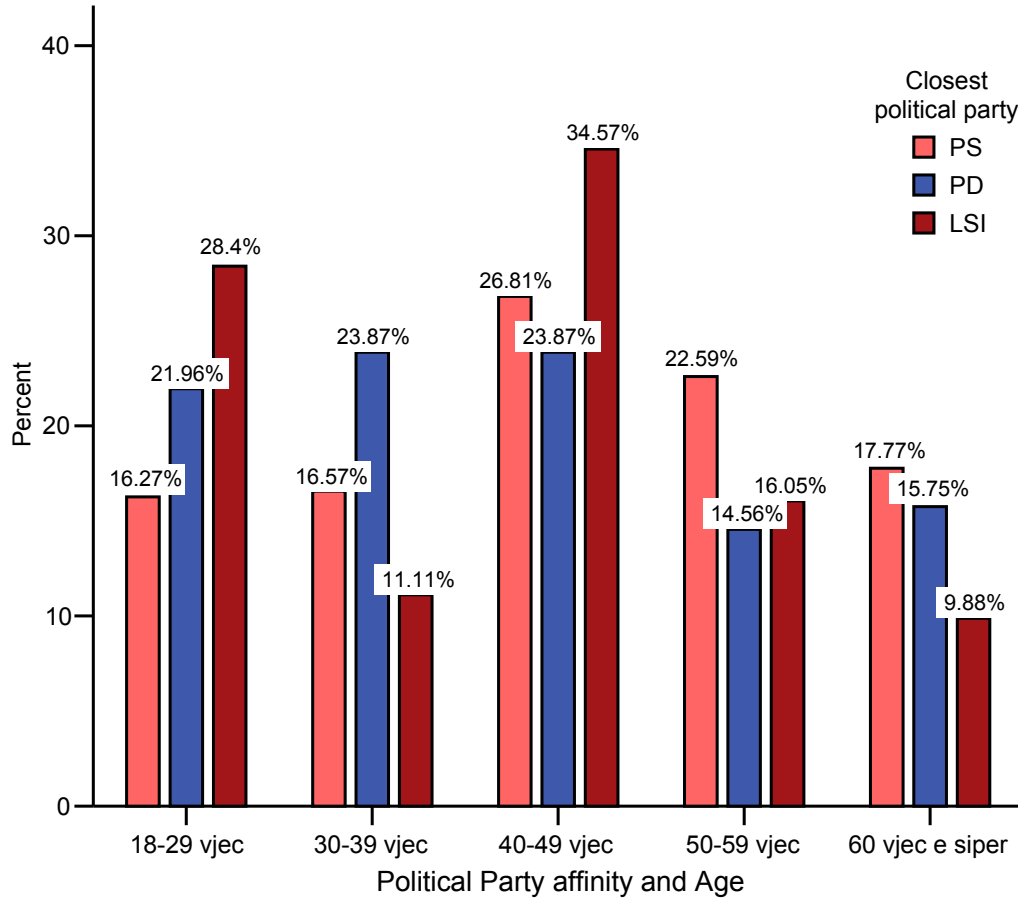
D33. Please, use the card to tell us which ethnicity you identify yourself with.



	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Albanian	80.1	80.1
Albanian-Geg	11.0	91.1
Albanian-Tosk	5.1	96.2
Greek	1.8	98.0
Vllah	.7	98.7
Macedonian	.7	99.5
Roma	.5	100.0
Total	100.0	

Note: The study sample represents Albanian voters who live in Albania. Albanian emigrants in other countries (by some estimates up to 30 percent of the total population of Albania) are not captured in this study.

Figure No. 1
Political Party Affinity and Age.



Legend:

- 18-29 vjec = 18-29 years old
- 30-39 vjec = 30-39 years old
- 40-49 vjec = 40-49 years old
- 50-59 vjec = 50-59 years old
- 60 vjec e siper = 60 years old or above

Figure No. 2
Age and Political Party Affinity

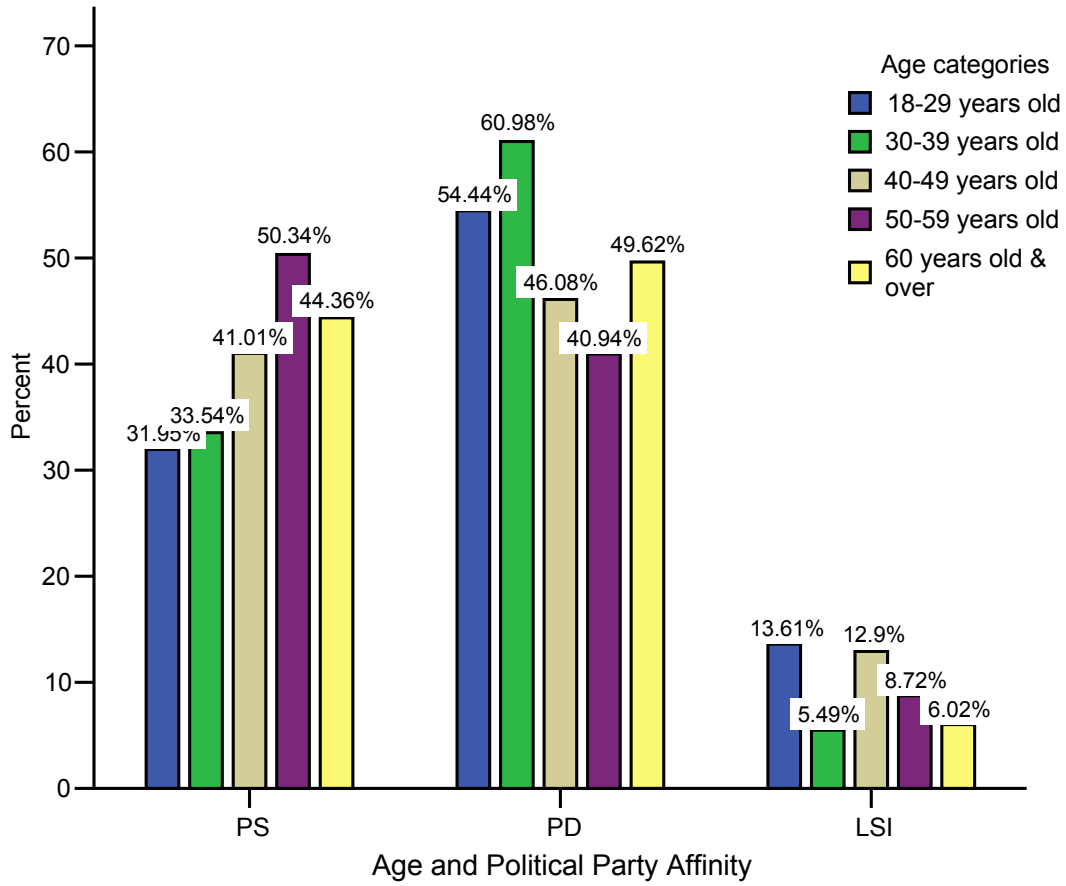
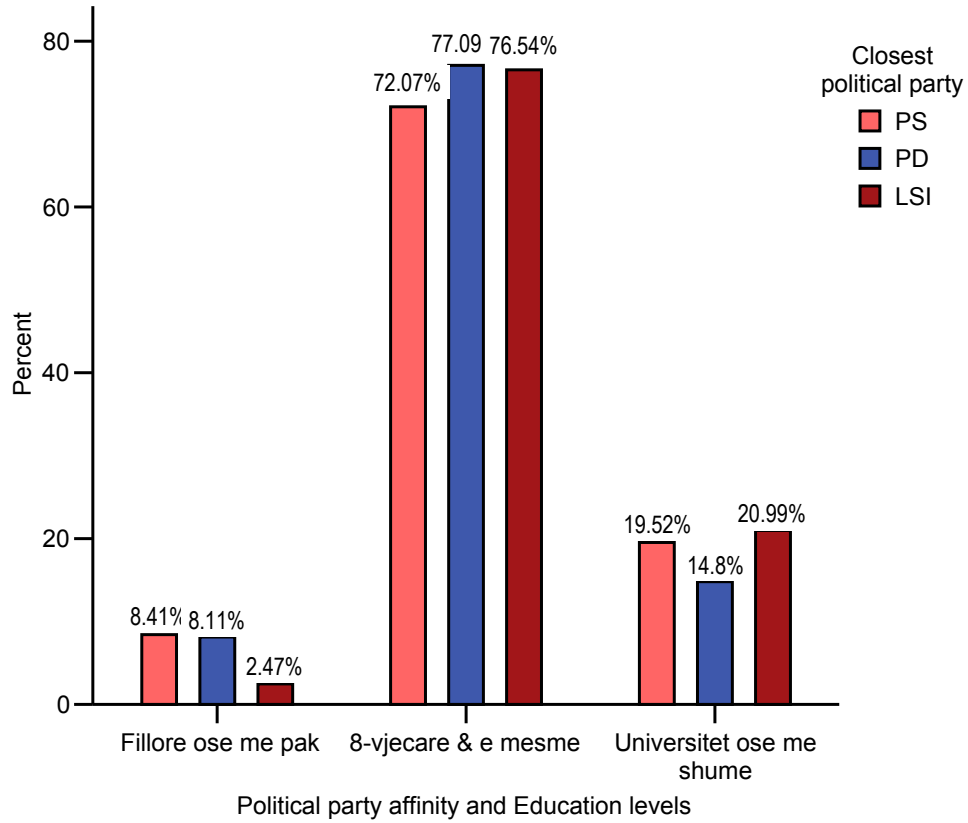


Figure No. 3
Political party affinity and Education levels



Legend:

Filllore ose me pak = Elementary school or less

8-vjecare & e mesme = 8 grade or high school

Universitet ose me shume = University degree or higher

Figure No. 4
Education levels and Political party affinity

