

Corruption in Albania

Perception and Experience

SURVEY 2008

Summary of findings

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Summary of findings

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the 2008 survey of the general public and public sector employees on corruption issues. It is the fourth report of this kind after the 2004, 2005 and 2006 surveys. The main objective of these surveys is to measure, over time, the public perception of, attitude towards and experiences of corruption in Albania.

The set of surveys consists of:

- **General Public sample**

- o **Targeted** - national sample of 1,200 respondents, 18+ years old

- o **Interviewed** – 1,176 respondents

- **Public Sector sample**

- o **Targeted** - a sample of 600 public sector employees divided into four strata each with 150 respondents: i) Central Administration, ii) Local Administration, iii) Education Sector, iv) Health Sector

- o **Interviewed** – 568 respondents

- **Judges Survey**

- o **Targeted** – A sample of 300 judges of the Albanian courts in all levels.

- o **Interviewed** – 200 respondents

Note 1: The 2008 survey was conducted during the months of January and February 2008. The 2005 and 2006 surveys were conducted as follows: i) 2005 survey – November-December 2005; and ii) 2006 survey – November-December 2006. Consequently, the difference in time between the 2008 survey and the 2006 one is not two years, but only 14 months.

Note 2: This survey was carried out prior to the March 15, 2008 explosion in Gërdec. Whatever impact the ensuing political debate or media coverage of that event may have had on public opinion, it is not reflected in this survey's findings.



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Summary of findings

2. Sample Structure and Demographics

2.1. General Public Sample

The general public sample was drawn based on a multi-stage random sampling, from the list of voting centers of the last local elections. Voting centers for sampling purposes represent primary sampling units. One hundred primary sampling units were selected through a formula

with a randomly generated number, which takes into account the number of voters per each voting centers as well as urban vs. rural voting centers. Within the geographical area designated by these units, the respondent was selected based on random route sampling (every third door and interviewing the person with the last birthday in the selected household).

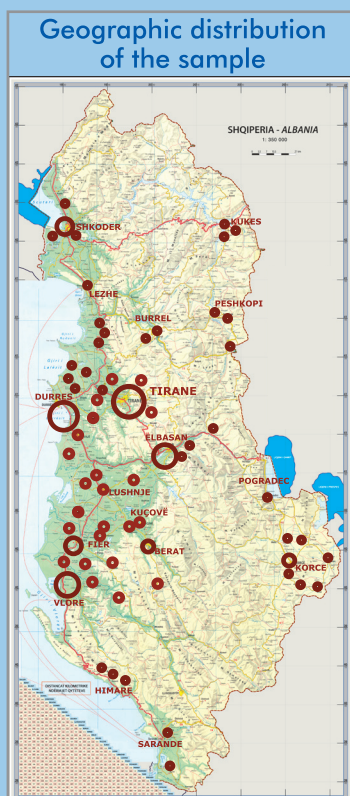


Fig. 1 Gender of the respondents
General Public 2008

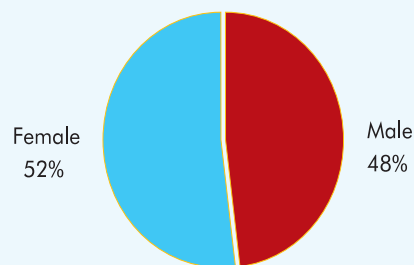
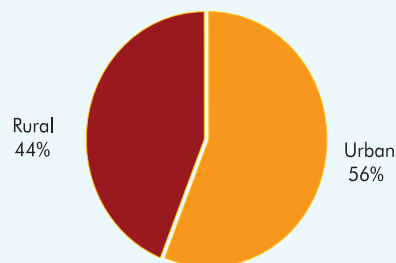


Fig. 2 Urban vs. rural respondents
General Public 2008



2.2. Public Sector Sample

A quota sampling based on four major strata, each with a maximum 150 respondents, was used for the Public Sector sample.

The strata of the sample were:

1. Central Administration

- a. All line ministries
- b. All other central institutions besides the line ministries
- c. The Fiscal System (Customs and Tax Department)
- d. Budgetary but independent institutions

2. Local Administration

- a. Communes
- b. Municipalities

3. Education Sector

- Geographically distributed sample of employees in:
 - a. Pre-primary (Kindergartens)
 - b. Compulsory (Elementary Schools – 9 years)
 - c. Secondary Schools
 - d. Universities

4. Health Sector

- Geographically distributed sample of:
 - a. Doctors
 - b. Nurses
 - c. Dentists and Pharmacists (public service)

Tab. 1 Distribution of actual sample according to public sector structures

Structure	No. of interviews	Percent
Central Administration	134	23.6
Local Administration	138	24.3
Education Sector	149	26.2
Health Sector	147	25.9
Total	568	100

Tab. 2 Gender of respondents according to public sector structures

Structure/Gender		Male	Female	Total
Central Administration	No.	57	77	134
	%	42.5	57.5	100
Local Administration	No.	70	68	138
	%	50.7	49.3	100
Education Sector	No.	29	120	149
	%	19.5	80.5	100
Health Sector	No.	31	116	147
	%	21.1	78.9	100
Total	No.	187	381	568
	%	32.9	67.1	100

3. Margin of Error

The margin of error for General Public samples is $\pm 2.8\%$ and for the Public Sector samples is $\pm 4\%$, both with a confidence interval of 95%. Technically, a sampling error of $\pm 2.8\%$ means that if repeated samples of this size were conducted, 95% of them would reflect the views of population with no greater inaccuracy than $\pm 2.8\%$. The testing of statistical significance, which takes into account the margin of error, is important especially when comparing historical data or when presenting subgroup analysis of results. These statistical significance tests are applied to the results presented throughout the report.

4. Presentation of Findings

Most of the survey findings are presented on a 0-100 scale. The different scales in the questionnaire are converted to a scale of 0-100 for better understanding and presentation.

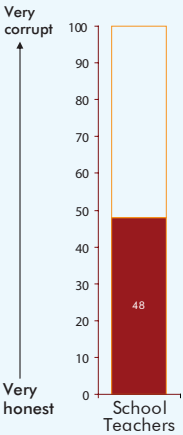
The following is an example of such a conversion of a question from the questionnaire:

[Use card “D”] Now, I will name various public and private institutions. I am interested to know how corrupt or honest do you think the representatives of these institutions are. Please, rate each one of them from 1 to 10, 1 being very honest and 10 very corrupt.

INSTITUTIONS	Levels of Corruption										DK/NR	
	Very Honest				Very Corrupt							
PC19. Public school teachers	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(88)	PC19

The conversion is achieved by subtracting 1 from each point on the 1-10 scale so that the questions are scored on a 0-9 scale. The scale is then divided by 9, so that it ranges from 0-1, and multiplied by 100 to obtain a 0-100 range. In this scale, 0=very honest and 100=very corrupt. An illustrative graph is presented on the right.

In this sample graph, the category “school teachers” receives a score of “48.” The score does NOT mean that 48 percent of the public thinks that school teachers are corrupt; it represents the perception of how corrupt an institution is on a scale of 0 to 100. The score of 48 points means that this group is in the middle of the scale of corruption as perceived by the public.



Summary of findings

5. Perceptions of Corruption

The ranking of institutions/groups based on perceived corruption in the 2008 general public survey is similar to the 2006 and 2005 surveys. The majority of institutions continue to be seen as corrupted, with more than 50 points in the scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is "Very honest" and 100 is "Very corrupt."

Religious leaders, military, the media, the president, school teachers and NGO leaders are perceived to be the most honest among the rated groups. All these institutions/groups receive less than 50 points on the corruption scale. Customs officials, doctors, tax officials, parliamentarians, and ministers are viewed as the most corrupt (Fig.3).

Corruption in the rated institutions is perceived as high even by public sector employees. Their evaluation is, however, slightly lower on average, compared to the general public (Fig.4). Media and NGO leaders are evaluated more negatively by public employees than the general public. Public employees assigned media at 41 points, six higher than the general public, though they still view media as more honest than corrupt. Similarly, public employees assigned NGO leaders six points more (48.3 points) than the general public (42.8 points). Public sector employees also view police, mayors, ministers, prefects, the president, parliamentarians and doctors more positively than does the general public. However, each of these groups/officials received more than 50 points which suggests that even public employees see them on balance as more corrupt than honest.

Fig. 3 Honesty vs. corruption
General Public 2008

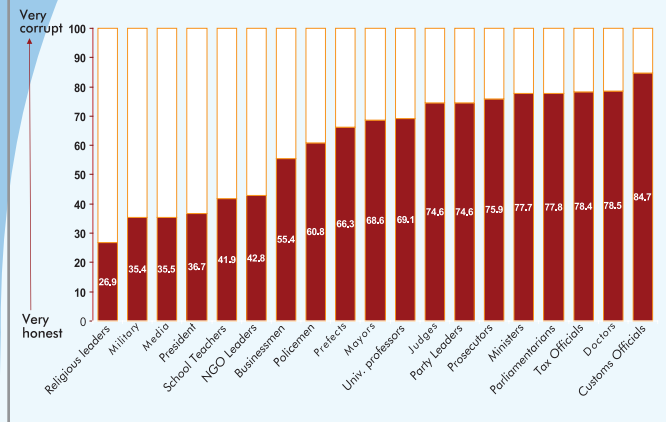
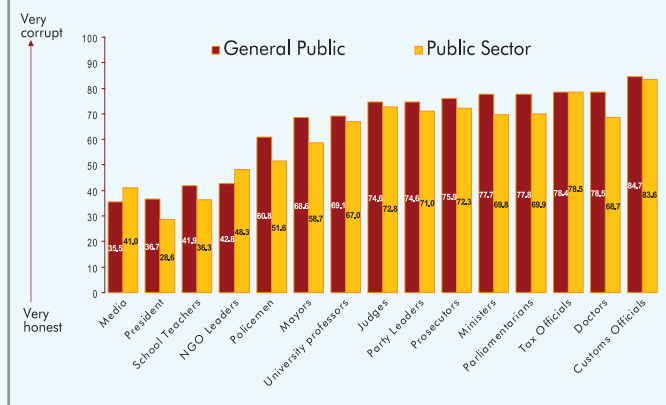


Fig. 4 Honesty vs. corruption
General Public vs. Public Sector 2008



Summary of findings

Most institutions show no change in public perceptions of corruption compared to 2006. Fig.5 shows only those institutions which are perceived differently from 2005 to 2008.

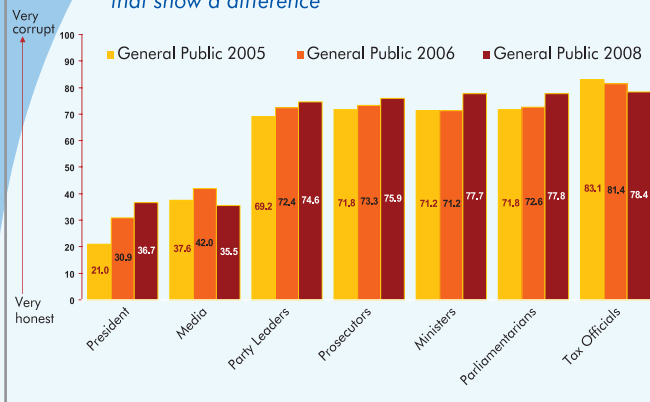
While the president is perceived by citizens as still honest, on balance, (36.7 points on the 0 to 100 scale), the 2008 score shows a 15-point deterioration over the 2005 score and eight points higher than 2006.

Perceptions of the media show an improvement of more than six points in 2008 compared to 2006 (from 42 in 2006 to 35.5 in 2008), media are thus seen as more honest compared to the previous survey.

Perceptions of ministers and parliamentarians worsened from 2006. Ministers score almost 78 points on the scale, up seven points from the 2006 survey. Parliamentarians have also scored 78 points, up five points from 2006.

Seen as one of the most corrupt groups of officials, tax officials nevertheless show a slight improvement in public perception since 2005 (83.1 in 2005 to 78.4 in 2008).

Fig. 5 Honesty vs. corruption
Comparison in years. Only those institutions that show a difference



Citizens believe that corruption is still common among public officials. Almost 92% of the respondents in the 2008 survey said that corruption is “Widespread” or “Somewhat widespread” among public officials (Fig.6). More than half of the respondents (57.1%) think that corruption among public officials is in fact widespread. The perception about the spread of corruption among public officials has not changed since 2005 (95.3% in 2005 and 94% in 2006).

Interestingly, public employees themselves think corruption is common among public officials. Approximately 83% of the respondents in the public sector sample said that this is a “Widespread” or “Somewhat widespread” phenomenon (Fig.7). This opinion is the same as in 2006.

To the question “How widespread is bribery among public servants?” 44.8% of the public sector employees responded that it is “Widespread,” an additional 44.1%, “Fairly widespread” and only 11.2% said it is “Negligible” or “Non-existent.”

Fig. 6 Opinions about corruption among public officials
General Public samples

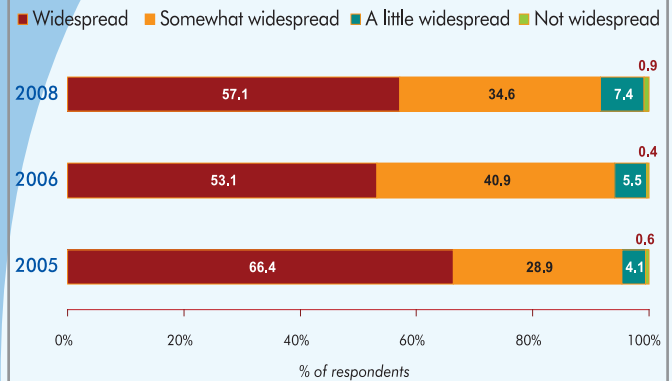
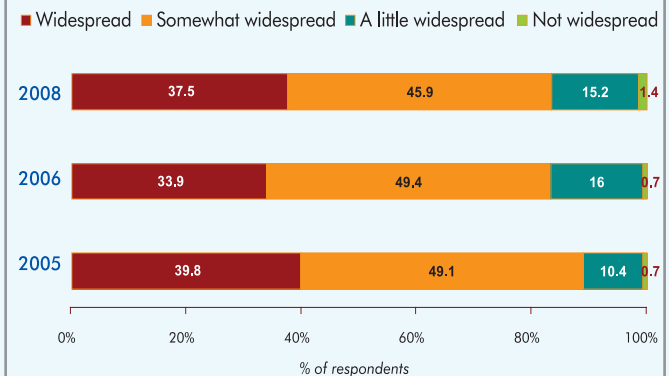


Fig. 7 Opinions about corruption among public officials
Public Sector samples



Only 13.3% of the general public thinks that corruption among public officials during last year has decreased (Fig.8). Nearly half of the sample thinks that corruption has in fact increased (47.2%), 13% more than in the 2006 survey.

The views of public employees about corruption trends are more positive than those of the general public. In the 2008 sample, only 21.6% of public sector employees said that corruption has increased. However we note that an additional 52.4% said that it has remained the same as last year.

Perceptions among public employees vary depending on the area in which they work (Fig.9). Only 12% of those working in the Education Sector and 19% of those working in the Health Sector, for example, said that corruption among public officials decreased compared to a year ago. This number is 40% for those working in central government structures and 36% for those working in local government.

Fig. 8 Corruption among public officials compared to the last year

General Public samples

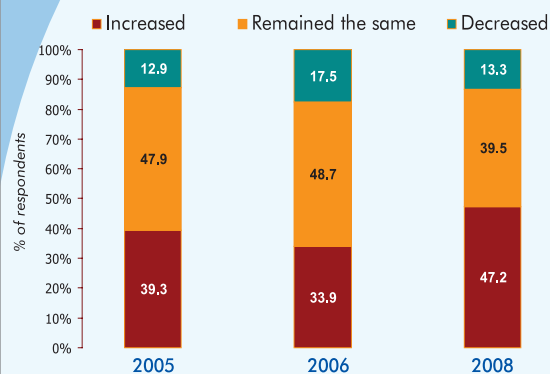
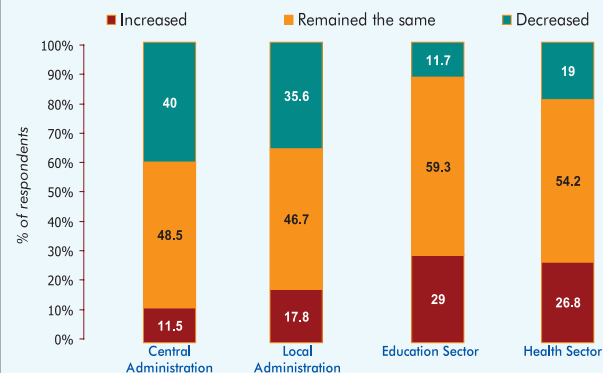


Fig. 9 Corruption among public officials compared to the last year - by sector

Public Sector 2008



Perceptions of corruption appear highly correlated with political orientations¹ of the respondents. While 61% of left-leaning respondents say that corruption among public officials has increased during the last year, only 38.5% of the right-leaning respondents think the same. Along the same lines only 6.3% of the left-leaning respondents think that corruption has decreased compared with 27.4% of the right-leaning respondents who think the same.

In the 2008 survey, “right-leaning” respondents who think corruption has “increased” over the last year rose 20% from 2006 (Fig.11).

Fig. 10 Corruption among public officials compared to last year - by political orientation
General Public 2008

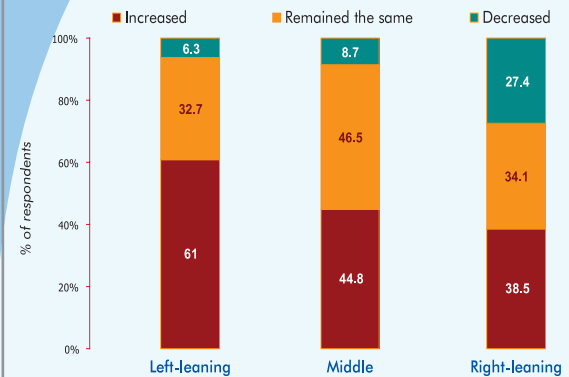


Fig. 11 Corruption among public officials compared to last year - right-leaning respondents
General Public samples



1 - Respondents were asked to place their own political orientation on a scale of 1-10 where 1 is far left and 10 is far right. Left-leaning respondents are defined as those that answered 1-4; center those that answer 5-6; right-leaning those that answered 7-10.

Summary of findings

6. Corruption experience

In addition to perception questions, a set of experience related questions about corrupt transactions was included in the survey. These questions ask whether people **paid bribes** to different institutions and officials, or whether they **were asked to pay** a bribe by a public official. The latter question tries to measure the pressure that public officials may exercise in soliciting bribes.

“Paying bribes to receive medical treatment” was reported by 69% of respondents that visited public hospitals and clinics during the last year (58% of the sample declared to have visited public hospitals/clinics). It confirms that the health sector remains one of the most corrupt sectors

in the country with no progress being made during these past years.

Only 10% reported being asked by a policeman to pay a bribe during the last year, though, 27.3% claimed they saw someone paying a bribe to a policeman.

Eleven percent reported they were asked to pay a bribe by a public official during the last year, while almost 15% claimed they saw someone paying a bribe to a public official.

Only 8% of the respondents said that they had contact with courts during the last year. Of those, almost 1 in 3 reported that they paid a bribe.

Tab. 3 Corruption experience

	Corruption experience	General Public 2008	in %	Yes	No	No. of resp.
1	Did police official asked you for a bribe during the last year?			10.4	89.6	1174
2	Did you see anyone paying a bribe to a policeman during the last year?			27.3	72.7	1172
3	Did you see anyone paying a bribe to a public official during the last year?			14.7	85.3	1167
4	Did any public official ask you for a bribe?			10.8	89.2	1171
5	Did you have to pay bribes to process official documents (certificates, licenses, etc)?			25.7	74.3	1166
6	Did you have to pay any bribe at the Prosecutor's Office during the last year?			10.2	89.8	157 *
7	Did you have to pay any bribe at the courts?			36.1	63.9	97 **
8	Do you know someone who has been asked to pay a bribe by a judge/court employee?			16.4	83.6	1156
9	Did you have to pay bribes to receive medical treatment?			69.0	31.0	688 ***
10	Were you asked to pay a bribe to avoid or reduce the payment of utilities (electricity, water)?			7.7	92.3	1146

* - Only those who dealt with the Prosecutor's office

** - Small base. Only those who dealt with the courts during the last year

*** - Only those who dealt with public hospitals/clinics

Summary of findings

Of those that had contact with the Prosecutor's office during the last year, 1 in 10 reported that they paid a bribe.

Comparing the 2008 survey findings with those of previous surveys, most of the "corruption experience" questions received similar responses as shown on Table 4, thus, there is no progress on experience indicators. In two areas, the findings reveal deterioration:

- a) "Bribes to process official documents," in 2008 was reported by 25.7% of the respondents, 6% more than in 2006.
- b) "Bribes to receive medical treatment" in 2008 is reported 7% more frequently than in 2006.

Tab. 4 Corruption experience trend

	Corruption experience – General Public samples 2005 - 2008 Only those that answered "Yes" in %	Yes 2005	No. of resp.	Yes 2006	No. of resp.	Yes 2008	No. of resp.	<i>Trend Statistically tested</i>
1	Did police official asked you for a bribe during the last year?	12.3	1199	9.0	1197	10.4	1174	No change
2	Did you see anyone paying a bribe to a policeman during the last year?	33.2	1198	23.2	1194	27.3	1172	No change from 2006 Better than 2005
3	Did you see anyone paying a bribe to a public official during the last year?	18.7	1195	13.0	1195	14.7	1167	No change
4	Did any public official ask you for a bribe?	12.2	1195	8.5	1196	10.8	1171	No change
5	Did you have to pay bribes to process official documents (certificates, licenses, etc)?	29.6	1188	19.4	1193	25.7	1166	Worse than 2006 Same as 2005
6	Did you have to pay any bribe at the Prosecutor's Office during the last year ² ?	N/A		N/A		10.2	157	N/A
7	Did you have to pay any bribe at the courts?	39.3	89	32.3	96	36.1	97	No change
8	Do you personally know someone who has been asked to pay a bribe by a judge or court employee?	21.7	1191	14.7	1180	16.4	1156	No change from 2006 Better than 2005
9	Did you have to pay bribes to receive medical treatment?	72.7	660	62.3	640	69.0	688	Worse than 2006
10	Were you asked to pay a bribe to avoid or reduce the payment of utilities (electricity, water)?	7.7	1163	6.7	1168	7.7	1146	No change

2 - This question was not part of 2005 and 2006 survey. It was added only in 2008 survey.

Summary of findings

7. Contribution of Institutions in the Fight against Corruption

Public perceptions of institutions' contributions in the fight against corruption show little change from 2006. The media are still seen as the biggest fighter, holding first place (63.3 points in a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is "No help at all" and 100, "Helps a lot") by a sizable margin (Fig.12). All other institutions/groups score less than 50 points on the scale, meaning that they are seen, on balance, as not helping to fight corruption. Civil society holds a distant second place with 48.4 points. Seen as least helpful is HIDAA (High Inspectorate for Declaration and Audit of Assets) with 36.1 points.

If we compare findings from 2008 with those of 2005 as regards the Courts and the General Prosecutor's Office, there is slight improvement. Courts score 42 points in 2008, six more than in 2005, while the General Prosecutor's office scores 40.5 points, four more than in 2005 (Fig.13). Other institutions show no change in perceptions from year to year.

Fig. 12 Extent to which institutions help to fight corruption
General Public 2008

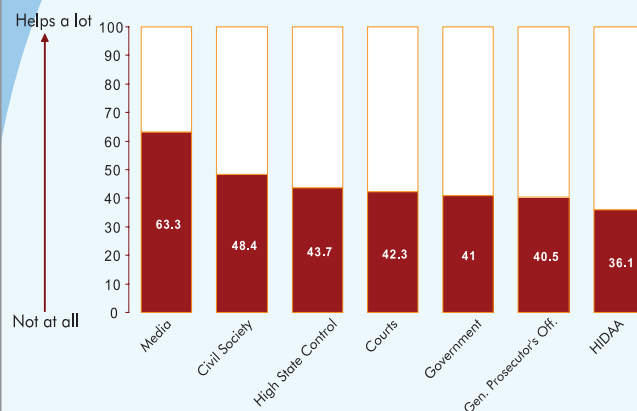
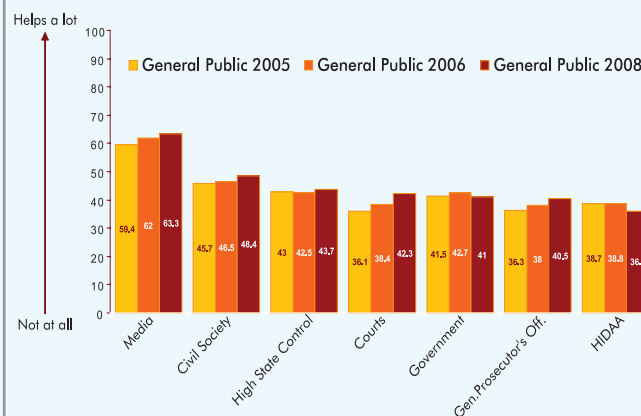


Fig. 13 Extent to which institutions help to fight corruption
Comparison in years



8. Transparency

Transparency remains a critical issue for Albanian institutions as seen by the public. All the institutions rated score less than 50 points in the scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is “Not at all transparent” and 100 is “Fully transparent” (Fig.14). This is a **perception** index not an **experience** one, but it shows that the public’s image of these institutions in terms of transparency is very low. The police maintain the best standing with 46.9 points and the Property Restitution and Compensation Agency has the poorest score with 27.3 points.

Even public employees think transparency is a problem in the institutions rated. Although their evaluation is more positive than that of the general public, only three institutions (Police, Local Government and Central Government) barely pass the mid-point of the 0 to 100 scale (Fig.15). The Property Restitution and Compensation Agency received the same poorest result from public employees as from the general public (27 points).

Fig. 14 Transparency of institutions
General Public 2008

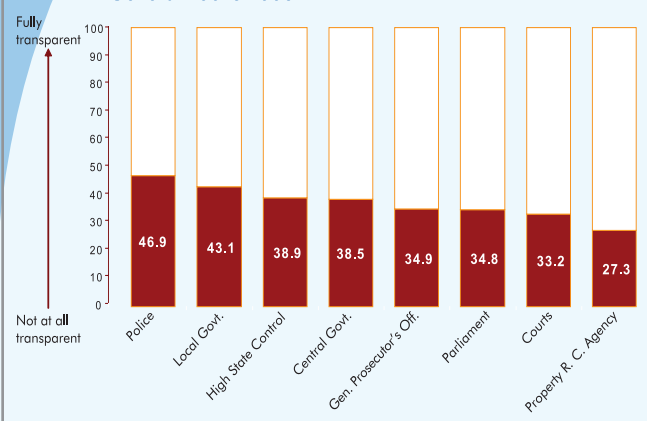
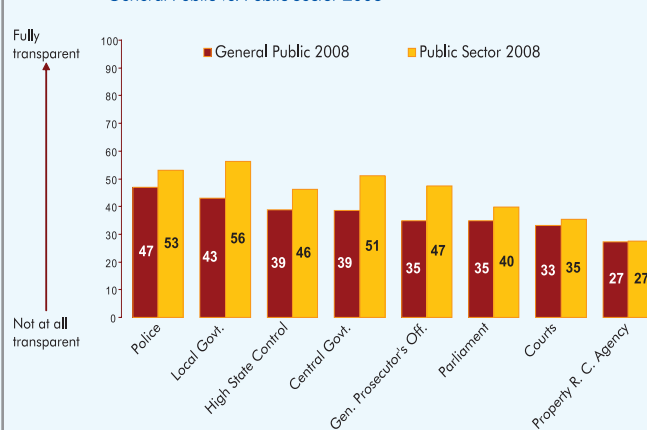


Fig. 15 Transparency of institutions
General Public vs. Public Sector 2008



In comparative terms, the central government and the parliament show a deterioration of general public perception of transparency from 2005 to 2008 (Fig.16).

From 45 points in 2005, the central government has slipped to an evaluation of 39 points in 2008. The parliament has also slipped by six points, from 41 points in 2005 to 35 points in 2008.

Perceptions of transparency of institutions have not improved over the years even among public employees (Fig. 17). With the exception of Local Government which shows improvement from 2006 to 2008 (from 49 points to 56 points) no other institutions show statistically significant changes.

Fig. 16 Transparency of institutions
Comparison in years - General Public samples

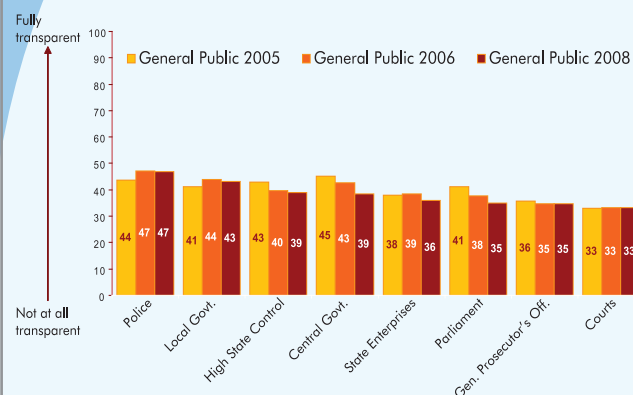
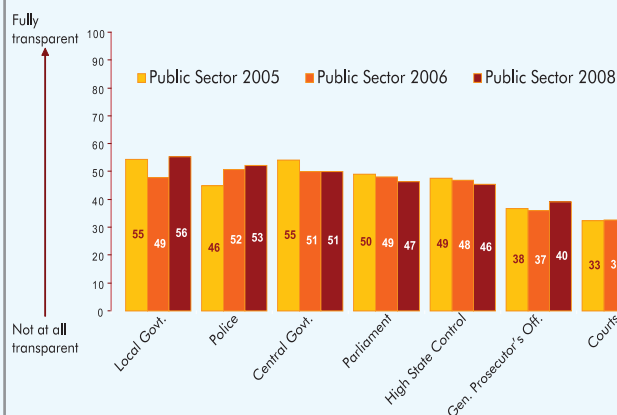


Fig. 17 Transparency of institutions
Comparison in years - Public Sectors samples



9. Trust in Institutions

Citizens' trust in institutions continues to be very low. With the exceptions of the military, religious leaders and police, all other institutions are evaluated with less than 50 points on the scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is "No trust at all" and 100 is "Trust a lot" (Fig.18). The Central Government (40), the Parliament (39.5), Trade unions (36.9), the Property Restitution and Compensation Agency (32.1), and Political parties (31.9) are the least trusted.

Trust in institutions is slightly higher on average among public employees compared to the general public (Fig.19). The central government scores only 50 points and the parliament only 49 points on the 0-100 scale. Police, local government, mayors and municipal councils are trusted more by public employees than by the general public. All these institutions are given scores higher than mid-point of the trust scale.

Trust levels vary among public employees according to the sectors they work in. Respondents working for the central government administration expressed much more trust in the central government than respondents in education and the health sector (63 points vs. 43 points on the scale). The same pattern applies to local administration respondents when asked about their trust in local government. These respondents assigned to local government 75 points on the trust scale compared to education and the health system respondents who assigned only 50 points.

Fig. 18 Trust in Institutions
General Public 2008

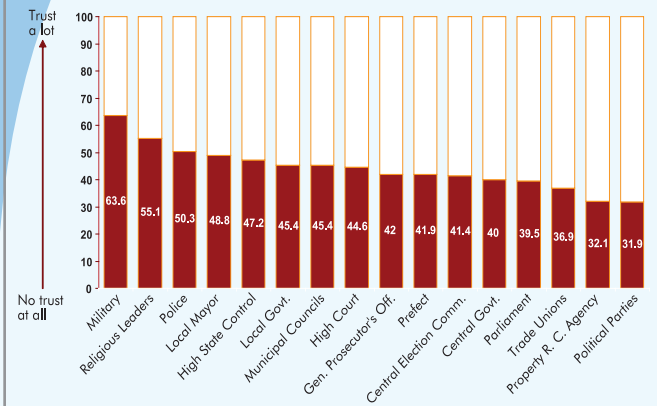
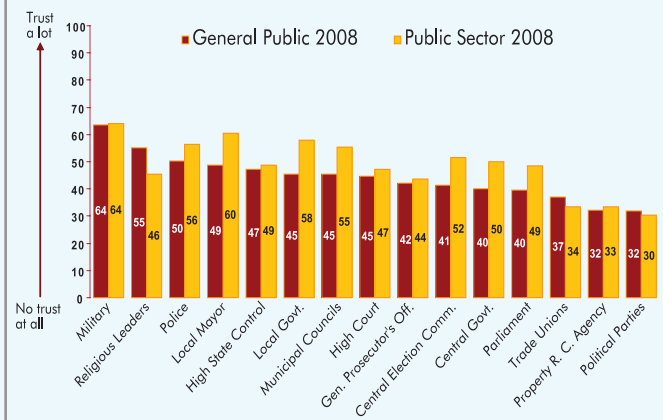


Fig. 19 Trust in Institutions
General Public vs. Public Sector 2008



Summary of findings

There is little change in trustworthiness of institutions evaluated by citizens from 2005 to the 2008 (Fig.20). The only two institutions that show some improvement in the level of trust since 2005 are: i) courts (from 40 in 2005 to 45 in 2008) and ii) the General Prosecutor's Office (from 37 in 2005 to 42 in 2008). All other institutions show no change in citizen trust expressed.

Urban and rural populations differ regarding trust in particular institutions (Fig.21). Rural residents trust religious leaders more than urban residents (62 vs. 50 points in the 0-100 scale). Also, the central government is slightly more trusted in rural than in urban areas (43 vs. 38 points). Rural people appear to trust their heads of commune more than urban people trust their mayors (52 vs. 46 points). Rural people appear to trust their heads of commune more than urban people trust their mayors (52 vs. 46 points).

Fig. 20 Trust in Institutions

Selected institutions

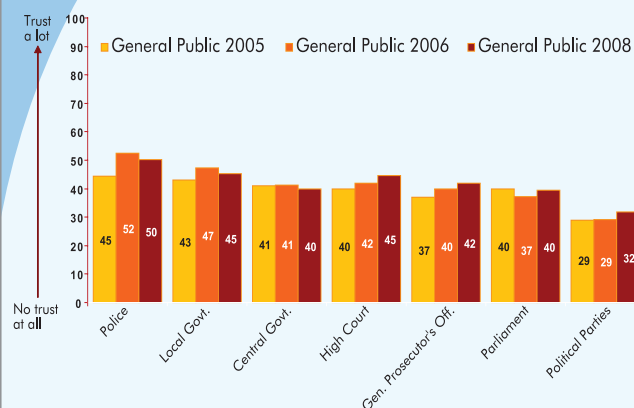
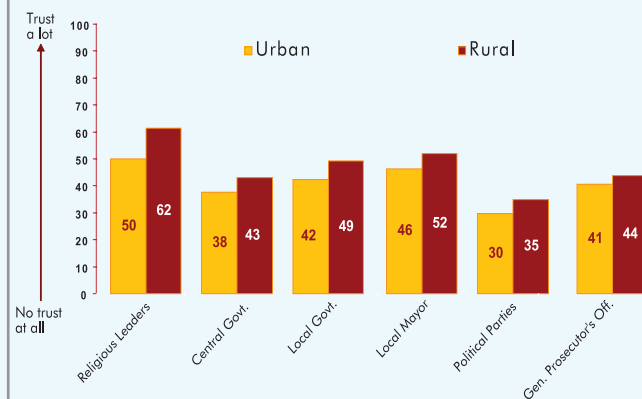


Fig. 21 Trust in Institutions

General Public 2008 (Urban vs. rural)



Political orientation also has an impact on the degree to which citizens trust institutions (Fig.22 to Fig.24). Right-leaning citizens trust central government (run by the Democratic Party) much more than left-leaning citizens (57 vs. 30 points). The same can be said about parliament.

Both groups of citizens (right and left-leaning) show little trust in political parties. Yet right-leaning respondents tend to trust parties more than left-leaning respondents (42 vs. 30 points).

Fig. 22 Trust in Central Government – by political orientation

General Public 2008

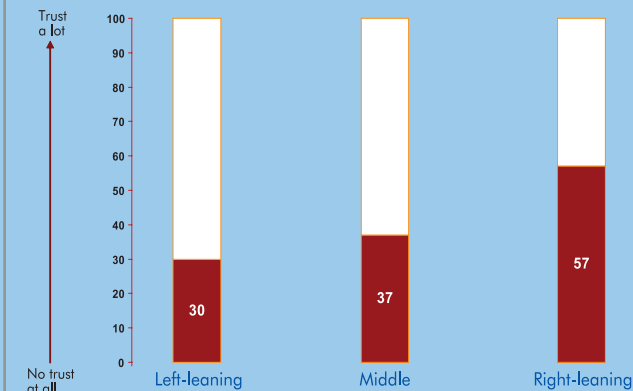


Fig. 23 Trust in Parliament – by political orientation

General Public 2008

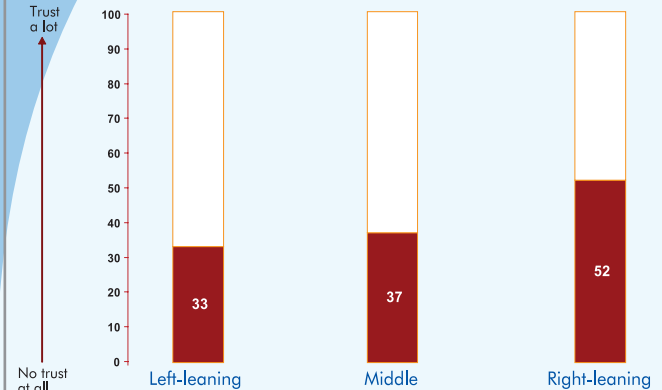
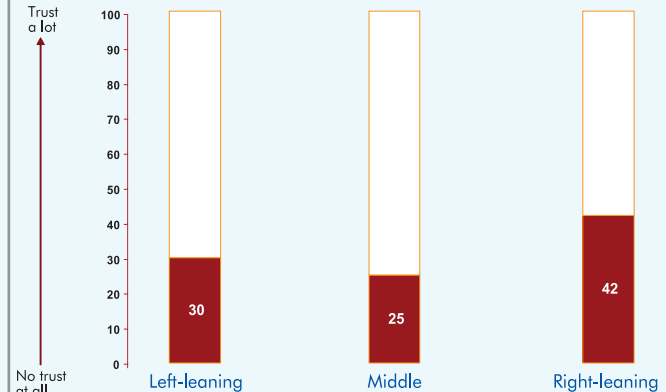


Fig. 24 Trust in Political Parties – by political orientation

General Public 2008



10. Judicial System

The judicial system is one of the most important pillars in the fight against corruption, yet the majority of Albanians (almost 60% of respondents in 2008 survey) say that they have little or no trust in the judicial system (Fig.25). Nevertheless, even this meager level of trust reflects a six percent improvement from 2005.

People who think judges are not impartial in conducting trials outnumber those that think they are impartial by more than 3 to 1 (Fig.26). This number has not changed from 2006.

Fig. 25 Trust in Judicial System

General Public samples

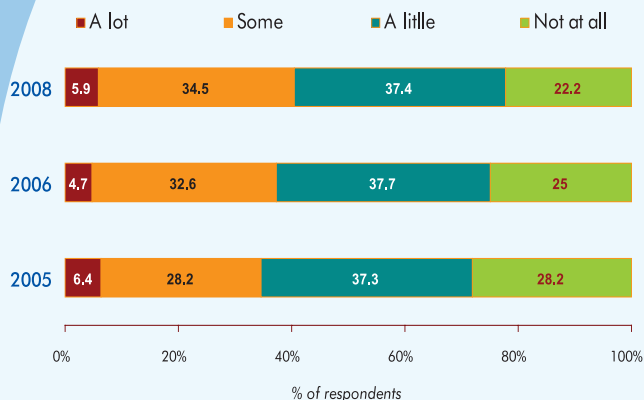
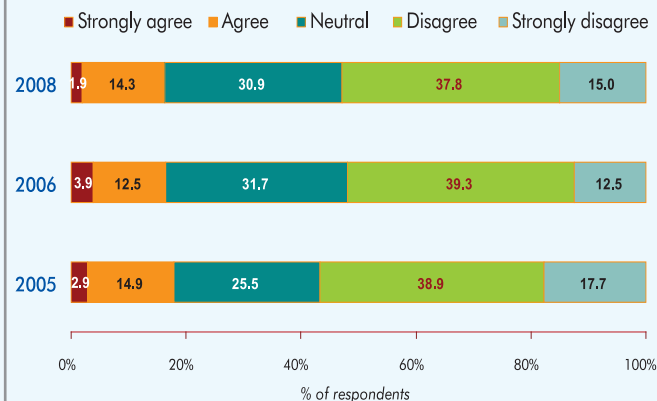


Fig. 26 Judges are impartial in conducting trials

General Public samples



“Facts and applicable law” is the least influential factor that affects the outcome of trials according to respondents (Fig.27). On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is “No influence” and 10 is “Influence a lot,” this factor scores 5.8 points. The factor that Albanians believe is most likely to affect the outcome of a trial, is “Monetary considerations” with 8.6 points followed by “Personal and Business connections” of the judges, with 7.5 and 7.3 points respectively.

Judges are aware that they do not enjoy a high public regard. Asked how they think the public perceives them, on a scale from 0 to 100 where 0 is “Very poorly” and 100 “Very well,” they gave 39.4 points to their image. The public does not think much of lawyers either, according to judges, who gave lawyers’ image only 34.1 points.

Fig. 27 Factors that influence the outcome of trials according to citizens

General Public 2008

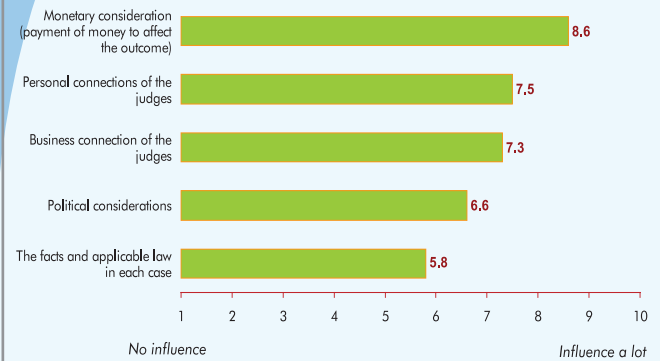


Fig. 28 Own assessment of how judges and lawyers are viewed by the public

Judges survey 2008



Almost half of the judges surveyed said that corruption in Albanian courts is a serious problem.

Judges also mentioned that litigants and lawyers approach them with corruption offers, revealing another dimension of active corruption from the other side of the equation. According to their answers, sometimes parties in trials (litigants and lawyers) are not just passive actors. They are active participants in trying to corrupt judges. 41% of judges surveyed said that litigants approach them with bribe offers (Fig.29). More than 55% of them also said that lawyers approach them outside of the court room to try and influence their decisions.

Judges oppose the view that they, judges, are not impartial in conducting trials. 75% of them said that judges are impartial in conducting trials, with only eight percent thinking otherwise (Fig.30).

Fig. 29 Corruption in Albanian courts and approach of lawyers and litigants to judges
Judges survey 2008

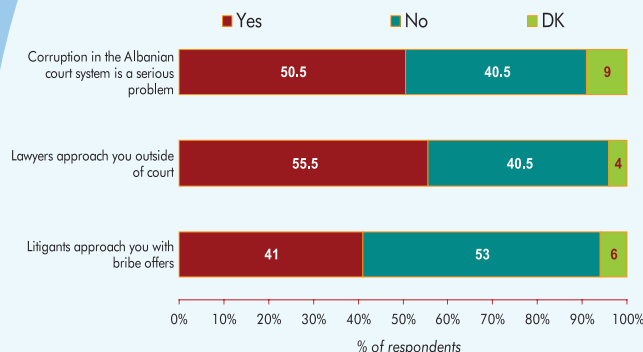
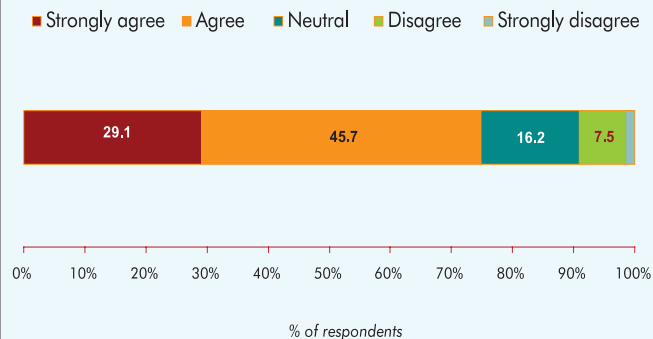


Fig. 30 Judges are impartial in conducting trials
Judges survey



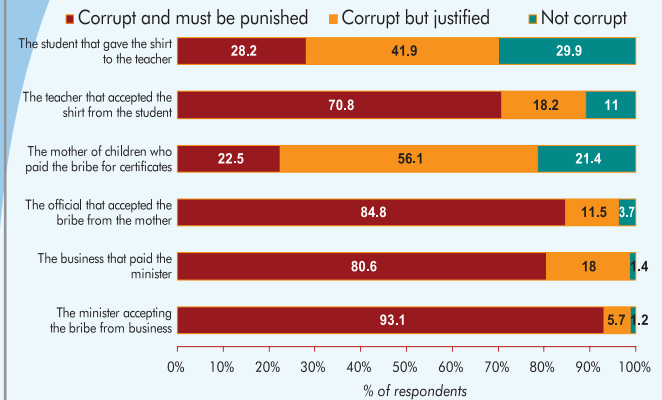
11. Attitudes towards Corruption

As in previous surveys, the 2008 survey included questions that asked opinions of citizens about parties involved in different scenarios of corrupt transactions. The results show that Albanians “judge” differently those who “take” a bribe from those who “offer” it. A certain tolerance can be noted in the case of “givers” in corrupt transactions. This is especially obvious in the scenarios other than the classic corruption scenario of a business paying a bribe to a minister to get a tender (Fig.31).

A student who gives a shirt to the teacher with the hope of receiving better grades is mostly seen as either not corrupt (29.9% of respondents) or as justified (41.9% of respondents). The mother of children who pays 500 leks to get certificates for her children, as a bribe not to stay in queue is also seen largely as “not corrupt” (21.4% of respondents) or “justified” (56.1% of respondents).

Fig. 31 Attitudes towards corruption

General Public 2008



There still exists some confusion among the Albanian public in clearly understanding what constitutes corruption. Asked about a “flower store owner who raises the prices of flowers during holidays,” 52% of citizens responded that this store owner is corrupt and must be punished (Fig.32). The opinions of public sector employees for the same scenario are strikingly similar. 52.7% of respondents from this sample said that the owner is corrupt and must be punished.

Evidence of the confusion of perceived “abuse” (businesses charging excessively high prices for their goods or services) with corruption is also present in the responses to questions about what makes lawyers corrupt. Sixty percent of the respondents said that if a lawyer charges too high a fee, then he/she is corrupt (Fig.33).

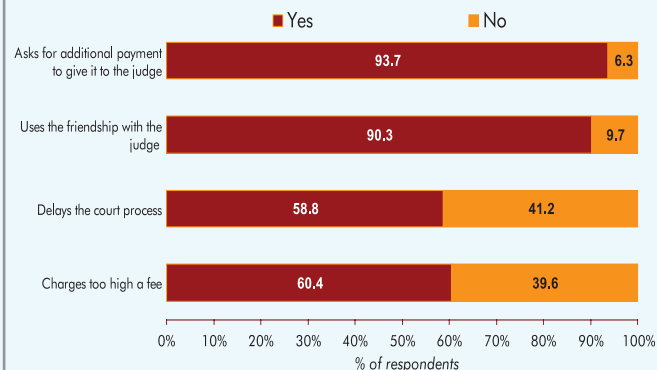
Fig. 32 A flower store owner who raises the prices of flowers during holidays

General Public vs. Public Sector 2008



Fig. 33 Do you think a lawyer is corrupt when conducting following actions?

General Public 2008



12. Problems facing Albania

One section in the survey was dedicated to finding out the opinions about most important problems facing Albania.

The economy is the number one concern of people in the 2008 survey. Unemployment, economic problems, poverty and inflation combined, are identified by 83.1% of respondents as main problems facing Albania (Fig.34). The problems, ranked by citizen perceptions of their seriousness, are unemployment (32% of respondents), followed by “economic problems” (31.9%).

During the 2005 and 2006 surveys, Albania was experiencing an electricity crisis with daily power cuts. In that situation, “electricity” was considered as the number one problem in 2005 (35.6%) and the second problem in 2006 (22.8%). In the first months of 2008, Albania was not experiencing an electricity crisis, a factor that may be responsible for pushing “electricity” down the ranks with only 2.6% of respondents mentioning it.

Public employees agree with the general public about the priority accorded to economic issues, with 34.2 percent of the public sector sample mentioning “economic problems” as the number one concern followed by unemployment with almost 20% of the answers (Fig.35).

This year it is noteworthy that “inflation/high prices” received mention among the main problems facing Albania. Almost 8% of respondents in the general public and 11.1% of the respondents in the public sector considered inflation a main problem facing Albania (Fig.35)

Fig. 34 The most important problem that Albania is facing
General Public samples

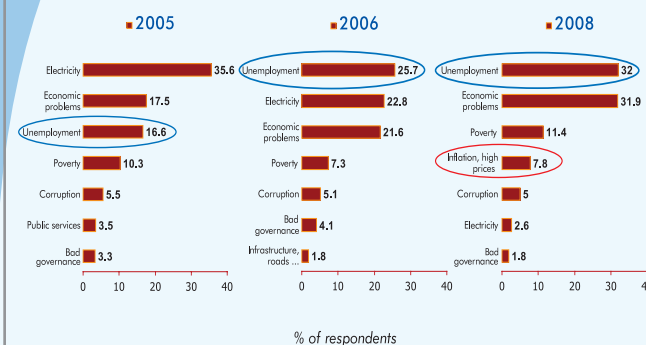
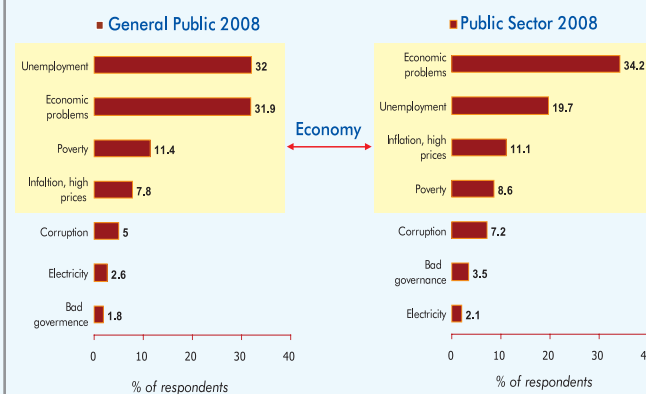


Fig. 35 The most important problem that Albania is facing
General Public vs. Public Sector 2008



Summary of findings

Most Albanians in 2008 (60.4%) evaluated the general economic situation of the country as “Bad or Very Bad” (Fig.36). This number is almost 13% higher than in the 2006 survey (47.8%). When asked to compare the economic situation to a year ago, 54% of respondents said that the situation this year is worse (Fig.37). This figure has more than doubled from 2006, when only 24% of people thought that the economic situation of that year was worse than the previous year.

Public employees are not as bleak in their assessment of the general economic situation as compared with the general public. But their responses reflect concern even among a segment of the population that is employed and relatively financially secure.

- 40.1% of public employees believe that the general economic situation is “Bad or Very Bad;” only 14.9% think it is “Good or Very Good.”
- 44% of them think that the economic situation is worse than a year ago, which corresponds to the feeling of the general public that economic circumstances are declining.

Fig. 36 General economic situation of Albania

General Public samples

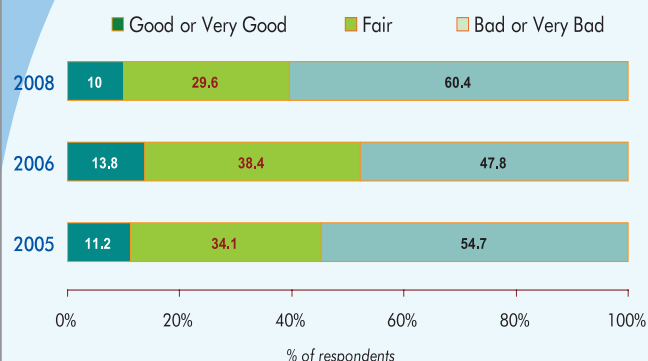
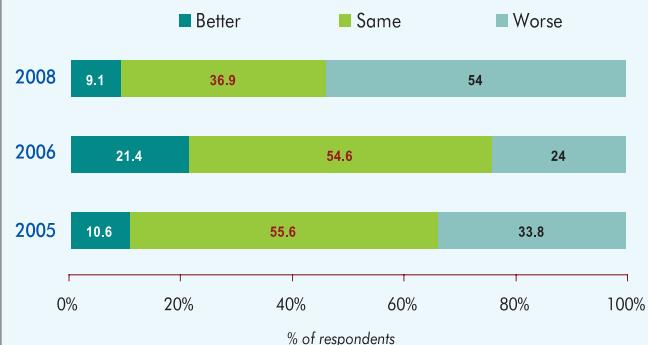


Fig. 37 General economic situation of the country compared to a year ago

General Public samples



People's perceptions that the economic situation is deteriorating is further reinforced by peoples' beliefs about their personal economic situation. A third (33%) of Albanians say that their own economic situation is worse than a year ago, an increase of 19% from the 2006 survey (Fig.38).

Citizens are becoming more pessimistic about the economic future. Almost 28% of the general public think that the economic situation of the country will be worse a year from now (Fig.39), 16% higher than in the 2006 survey.

Fig. 38 Own economic situation compared to a year ago

General Public samples

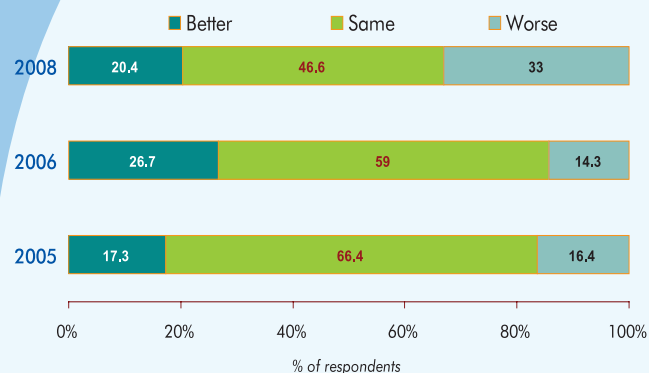


Fig. 39 Economic situation of the country a year from now

General Public samples

