Corruption in Albania
Perception and Experience

SURVEY 2005

Summary of findings

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Development
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Alternatives

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Summary of findings

1. Introduction[1]

This report presents the results from five opinion surveys conducted in Albania across four different samples and two points in time. The baseline survey of the general public in 10 major Albanian cities was conducted between December 2003 and January 2004. Four follow-up surveys were conducted two years later between December 2005 and January 2006 using samples covering the same 10 cities as in 2004—the whole nation, public officials and judges.

The main objective of both the 2004 and 2005 surveys is to measure Albanians' perceptions and attitudes regarding corruption. The 2005 series of surveys allows us to measure changes in public opinion over time and differences between the 10 major cities, the nation as a whole, public officials and judges.

Comparisons across the four sample domains are limited to a common pool of questions. That pool includes topics such as attitudes towards corruption, corruption victimization, perceptions of some of the organizations engaged in combating corruption, transparency of and trust in public institutions, and support for the Albanian political system. In addition, the survey looks briefly at topics specific to each sample, such as crime victimization, administration of justice, and corruption in the public sector.

This survey was carried out six months after the general elections were held in Albania (July 2005) and four months after the resulting change in government. The opinions and attitudes of the public recorded in this survey may have been affected by the fact that "corruption" was a main theme of the election campaign and the new government came to power promising to fight corruption.

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2. Survey Methodology & Margin of Error

This survey was conducted in accordance with the highest international standards to achieve the most reliable results possible. Details are as follows:

Sample sizes:

a)	10-city sample (2004 and 2005)[2]	– N=1200 (18+ years old)
b)	National sample (2005)	– N=1200 (18 + years old)
c)	Public Officials sample (2005)	– N=577 public officials
d)	Judges sample (2005)	– N=155 judges

Sampling

•	10-city and national	- multistage random samples
•	Public officials	- representative samples of four layers of public officials in the central administration, local administration, medical system, and education system
•	Judges	– universe of judges in Albania (367 judges)

Survey method   – face-to-face

Margin of Error
The sample for the general public in the 10-city and national surveys have 1,200 cases each, which provides for a sampling error of ±2.8 percent with a confidence interval of 95 percent. Technically, a sampling error of ±2.8 percent means that if we drew repeated samples of this size, 95 percent of them would reflect the views of the population with no greater inaccuracy than ±2.8 percent. The sampling error for the surveys of public officials and judges is ±4 percent and ±6 percent respectively.

2. The survey was conducted in 10 major cities of Albania: Tirana, Durres, Berat, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastra, Korca, Lushnja, Shkodra, Vlora.

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3. 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.

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

I will name various public and private institutions. I am interested to know how corrupt or honest 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										DN
	Very Honest								Very Corrupt		
PC1 Tax officials	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(88)

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.

Tax Officials

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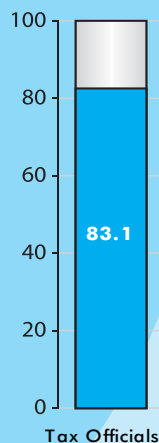
The institution pictured in this sample graph scored "83.1." The score does **NOT** mean that 83.1 percent of the public thinks that Tax Officials, for example, are corrupt. It means that the people surveyed, and by extrapolation all Albanians, think the institution is very corrupt – the number "83.1" therefore, represents the perception of how corrupt an institution is on a scale of 0 to 100.

The following report presents a summary of findings, while the full working document may be downloaded from the IDRA website at: www.idra-al.org

4. Results

4.1. Perception of corruption

The following set of questions deals with citizen perceptions of integrity:

- Across three samples from the 2005 survey (National, 10-city sample and Public Officials):

    - The President of the Republic, religious leaders and the military are seen as the three most honest among the 17 institutions and groups.

    - Customs officials, tax officials, doctors, judges and parliamentarians are seen as among the most corrupt.

- In the cities, of the 17 institutions and groups evaluated with respect to how corrupt they are, the perception of the following **improved** in the 2004-2005 period: members of parliament, ministers, judges, NGO leaders, prosecutors and customs officials. However, the overall perception for these groups is still negative. With the exception of NGO leaders (37.6), they all score more than 60 point on the scale of corruption perception. [Fig. 2]

- Public officials rated judges and NGO leaders **less favorably** compared to the national sample.

Summary of findings

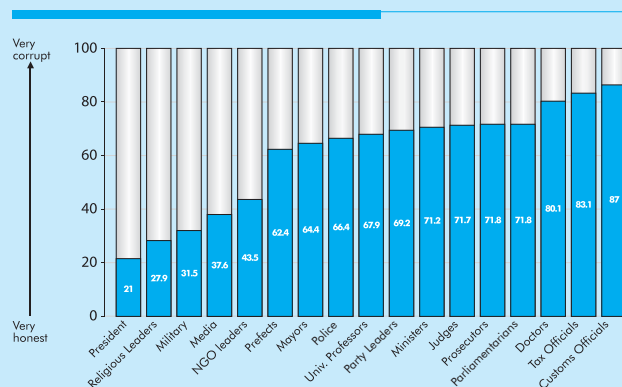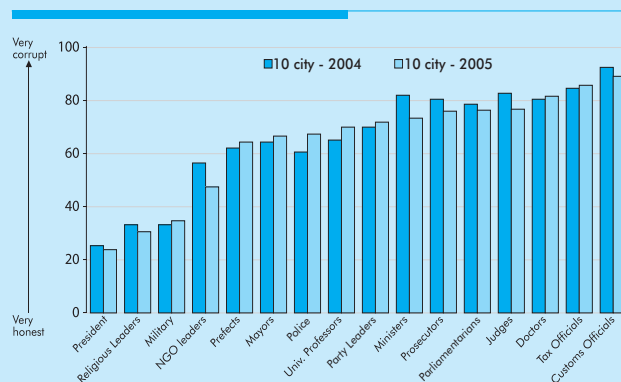Fig.1 Honesty vs Corruption in the following groups (2005 National sample)

Fig.2 Honesty vs Corruption in the following groups (Comparison 2004 - 2005)

4.2. Corruption victimization

Most survey questions are **perception-based**, but a number are intended to elicit responses on an individual's **experience** with corruption. Respondents were asked, for example, whether they have paid bribes to obtain different public services or in their dealings with officials during the last year. Ten such experience questions[3] were used to create a count index measuring the number of ways that each respondent is personally victimized by corruption.

- The percentage of respondents who indicates that they have to pay money "under the table" to doctors/nurses is much higher than in other scenarios of bribery- a reflection of the magnitude of corruption in the public health sector. [Fig. 3]

- However, the percentage of those paying bribes to doctors/nurses **declines** in cities by almost four percent between 2004 and 2005. Another improvement seems to be in "public administration", where the percentage of those who say they are asked by a public official to pay a bribe decreases from 20.4 percent to 14.1 percent. [Fig. 3]

- Out of a maximum possible 10 ways in which an individual could be victimized, the mean number of ways is less than 2. On average, a city resident is victimized in 1.8 ways in 2005, a decline of 0.2 points over 2004. The mean for the public official's sample is considerably lower than in the national sample. [Fig. 4]

- When we compare city-groups, we find a significant drop in the number of ways, on average, in which people fall prey to corruption in Tirana. There is an even larger drop among the smaller cities: Berat, Fier, Gjirokastra, Korca, and Lushnja.

Fig.3 During the last year did any of the following happen? (Comparison 2004-2005). Those that answered "Yes".
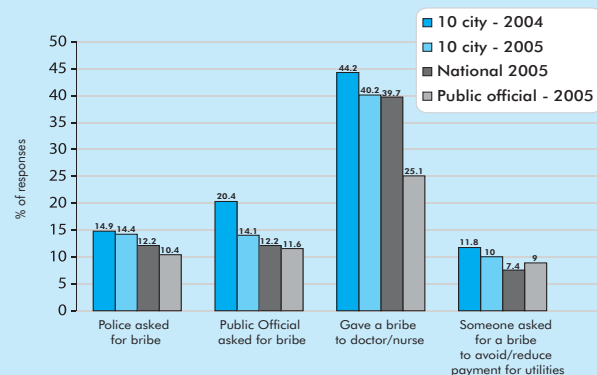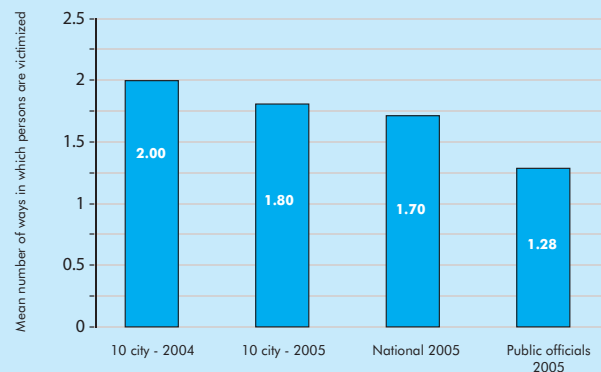

Fig.4 Corruption victimization

3. These questions asked whether respondents were asked by public officials to pay a bribe, whether they did pay a bribe or whether they saw someone paying a bribe. There were 10 such questions which stated 10 possible ways for people to fall prey to corruption.

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4.3. Contribution to the fight against corruption

▪ With one exception, all of the institutions evaluated for their contribution to the fight against corruption receive mean scores below the midpoint of the scale (50), suggesting that their performance in the anti-corruption fight is considered unsatisfactory. The one notable exception is the media, which receive mean scores in the 50s range in all samples. The institutions that are cited as the worst are the courts and General Prosecutor's Office. [Fig. 5]

▪ City residents perceive improved contributions in the fight against corruption from the following institutions between 2004 and 2005: the Central Government, the High State Control, and the former Anti-Corruption Monitoring Unit (ACMU)[5]. [Fig. 6]

▪ Public officials rate the corruption-fighting contributions of the following groups higher than the national sample: the Central Government and the High State Control. The media fare worse among public officials compared to the general public.

Fig.5 Extent to which the following institutions help to fight corruption (National sample 2005)[4]
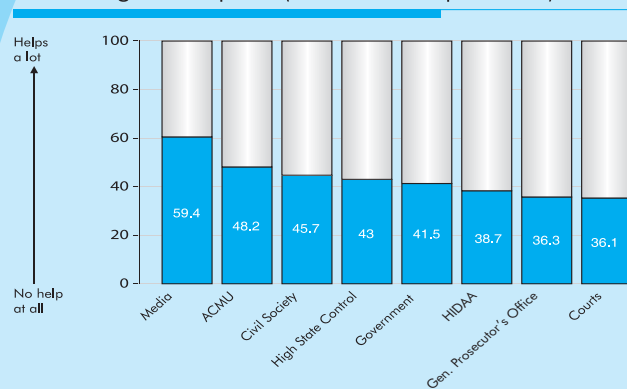
Fig.6 Extent to which the following institutions help to fight corruption (comparison between different sample domains 2004-2005)
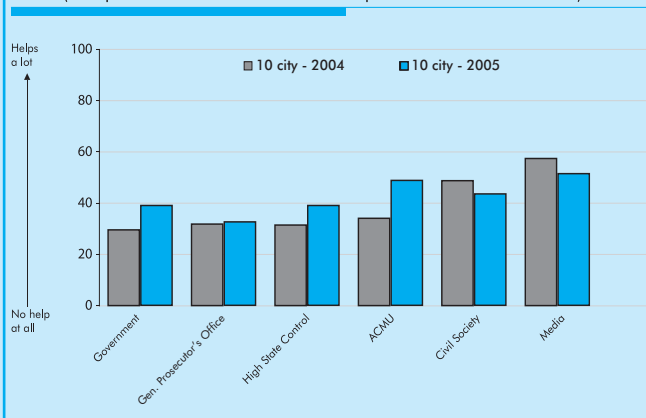
4. In figure 5, HIDAA is the acronym for the High Inspectorate for the Declaration and Audits of Assets.

5. This entity does not exist anymore.

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4.4. Transparency

▪ Transparency remains a challenge for public in-stitutions. With the exception of the Armed Forces, all institutions score below the mid-point on the "not transparent" part of the spectrum. Courts are per-ceived to be the least transparent. [Fig. 7]

▪ Perceptions of transparency from 2004 to 2005 in cities improve for almost all institutions, howev-er. The most striking increase is that of the central government which rose from 21.3 points in 2004 to 42.4 points in 2005. [Fig. 8]

▪ The improved perception of the central govern-ment may partly be explained by the "honeymoon" effect of the July 2005 elections and subsequent change of government.

▪ The following institutions are seen as more trans-parent in 2005 than in 2004: Parliament, the High State Control, the General Prosecutor's Office and the courts. [Fig. 8]

▪ Local government, Parliament, the High State Control, and the central government are seen as more transparent by public officials than among the general population.

Fig.7 How transparent are the following institutions? (National sample 2005)

Institution	Value
Armed Forces	60.2
Central Gov.	45.1
Police	43.6
High State Control	42.9
Local Gov.	41.1
Parliament	41.1
State Enterprises	38
Gen. Prosecutor's Office	35.8
Courts	33.1

Fully transparent (100) / Not transparent at all (0)
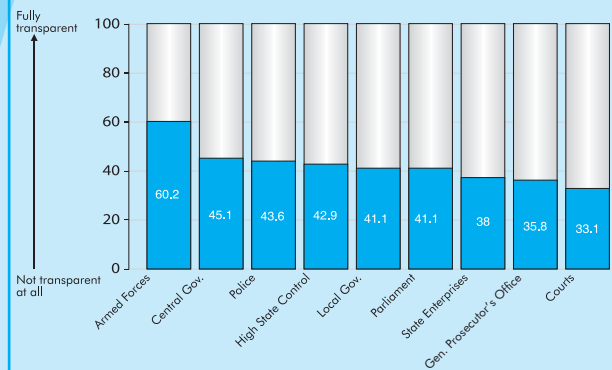
Fig.8 How transparent are the following institutions? (Comparison 10 city samples 2004 - 2005)

Legend: ■ 10 city - 2004   ■ 10 city - 2005

Institutions: Local Government, Parliament, High State Control, Central Government, State Enterprises, Police, Armed Forces, Gen. Prosecutor's Office, Courts

Fully transparent (100) / Not transparent at all (0)

Summary of findings

4.5. Trust in institutions & political system support[6]

The survey gauges public trust of social and political institutions, as well as overall support for the political system.

- The Armed Forces retain the highest level of trust in all four samples; political parties and trade unions maintain the lowest level of trust. In the national sample, all institutions, with the exception of the Armed Forces, score below the mid point, suggesting that public trust in institutions is still low. [Fig. 9]

- Trust in public institutions is low even among those who serve in them. In general, trust in institutions is higher among public officials than among citizens, but still low in absolute terms.

- Political system support increases by 8.7 points in the 2005 10-city survey, but still falls below the mid-point. Support nationwide is slightly higher than in urban centers, while support among officials is slightly higher than with the general public. [Fig. 10]

- Tirana accounts for most of the increase in political system support in urban areas in the 2004-2005 period. Small cities (Berat, Fier, Gjirokastra, Korca, Lushnja) see smaller increases in political system support.

- There is a negative correlation between the ways in which a respondent falls prey to corruption and political system support; support declines as victimization increases. This negative relationship between corruption victimization and political system support holds even after controlling for sex, age, and income. This suggests that corruption corrodes the support for the political system.
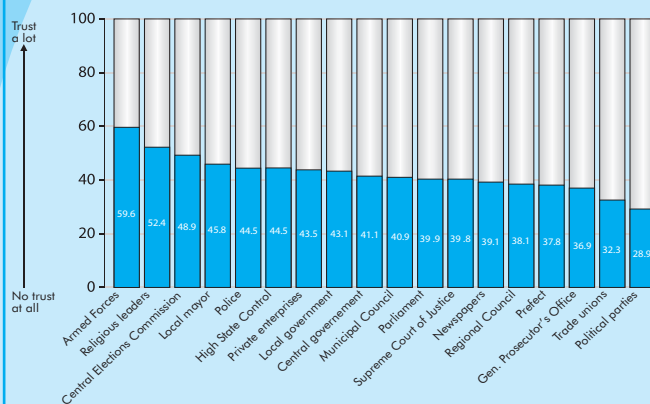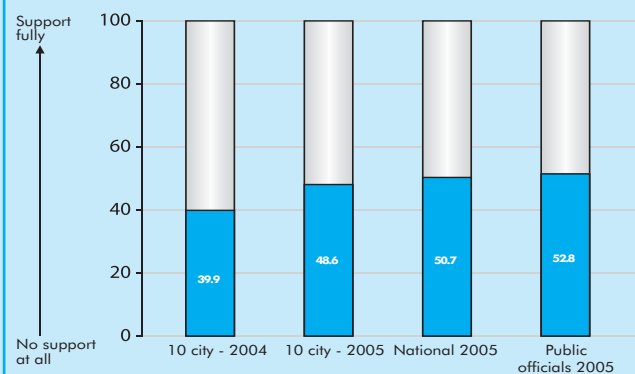
Fig.9 Trust in institutions (National sample 2005)

Armed Forces 59.6, Religious leaders 52.4, Central Elections Commission 48.9, Local mayor 45.8, Police 44.5, High State Control 44.5, Private enterprises 43.5, Local government 43.1, Central governement 41.1, Municipal Council 40.9, Parliament 39.9, Supreme Court of Justice 39.8, Newspapers 39.1, Regional Council 38.1, Prefect 37.8, Gen. Prosecutor's Office 36.9, Trade unions 32.3, Political parties 28.9

Fig.10 Political system support by sample

10 city - 2004: 39.9, 10 city - 2005: 48.6, National 2005: 50.7, Public officials 2005: 52.8
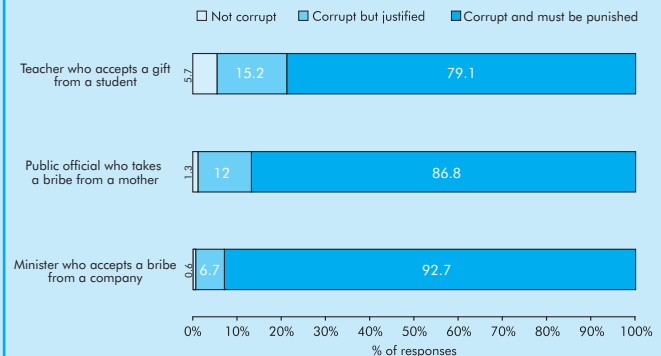
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6. *Political system support is a composite indicator that measures the extent to which citizens think they should be governed by the existing political system. The indicator is built from responses to five questions.*

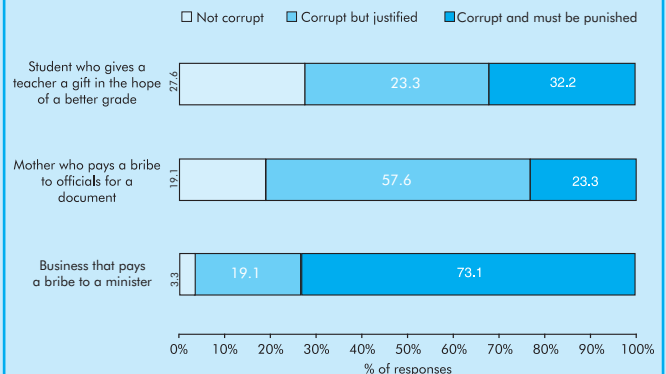## Summary of findings

4.6. Attitudes towards corruption

▪ "Corrupt transactions", for example bribery, require two actors – the one who offers the bribe and the one who takes the bribe. The surveys set up various scenarios to explore the attitudes of the public towards different dimensions of corruption. An interesting pattern emerges from these scenarios: the person receiving the bribe is judged more harshly than the one giving it. [Fig. 11]

▪ Almost 68 percent of people think that "a student who gives his teacher a gift in the hope of receiving a better grade" is either not corrupt or justified. [Fig. 11]

▪ Respondents have an even more benevolent view of "a mother who pays a bribe to get a birth certificate for one of her children." Almost 77 percent of respondents feel she is either not corrupt or justified. [Fig. 11]

▪ Interestingly, public officials accounted for the highest proportion of respondents (64 percent) in all four samples who feel that the woman who paid a bribe to receive a birth certificate is justified.

**Fig.11 Some attitudes towards corruption (National Sample 2005)**

Takers

Legend: ☐ Not corrupt ☐ Corrupt but justified ■ Corrupt and must be punished

Scenario	Not corrupt	Corrupt but justified	Corrupt and must be punished
Teacher who accepts a gift from a student	5.7	15.2	79.1
Public official who takes a bribe from a mother	1.3	12	86.8
Minister who accepts a bribe from a company	0.6	6.7	92.7

% of responses

Givers

Legend: ☐ Not corrupt ☐ Corrupt but justified ■ Corrupt and must be punished

Scenario	Not corrupt	Corrupt but justified	Corrupt and must be punished
Student who gives a teacher a gift in the hope of a better grade	27.6	23.3	32.2
Mother who pays a bribe to officials for a document	19.1	57.6	23.3
Business that pays a bribe to a minister	3.3	19.1	73.1

% of responses

Summary of findings

The response to the following scenario is illustrative of a pervasive attitude:

• Asked about their perceptions of a flower seller who raises the prices of flowers during holidays, a large percentage of respondents (in all 3 samples) label the flower seller corrupt and feel the seller should be punished. [Fig. 12]

• This finding is interesting, since there is nothing inherently corrupt about the seller's actions. The seller's prerogative to raise prices of certain goods (such as flowers) in response to higher consumer demand is a basic market principle.

Fig.12 Perceptions of a flower store owner who raises flower prices on holidays.

Summary of findings
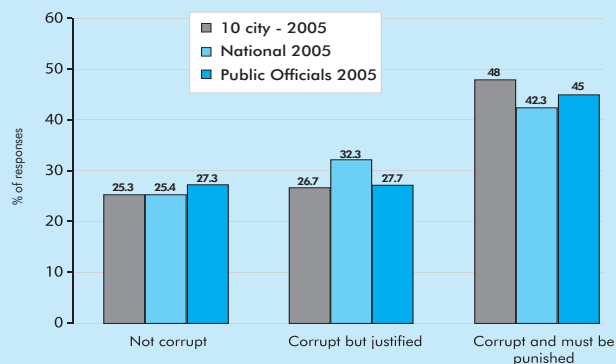
4.7. Civil society involvement in combating corruption

▪ Awareness of anti-corruption initiatives undertaken by civil society in urban centers drop markedly in 2005. Nationally, awareness is slightly lower than in cities in 2005. A higher proportion of public officials know of such initiatives compared to the national sample. [Fig. 13]

▪ The idea that civil society and the government should cooperate to combat corruption is widely supported across all samples. From 94 percent in the 2004 10 city sample, the number of respondents increases to 98 percent in 2005.

▪ Citizen awareness of the work of the Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC) increases in cities between 2004 and 2005 by approximately five percentage points, to 18 percent. [Fig. 14]

▪ In contrast to the low figures in cities, more than one in four public officials indicate an awareness of ACAC's work. [Fig. 14]

▪ Citizens use television as the primary source of information about corruption cases. In all four samples, more than 70 percent of the respondents cite this source.

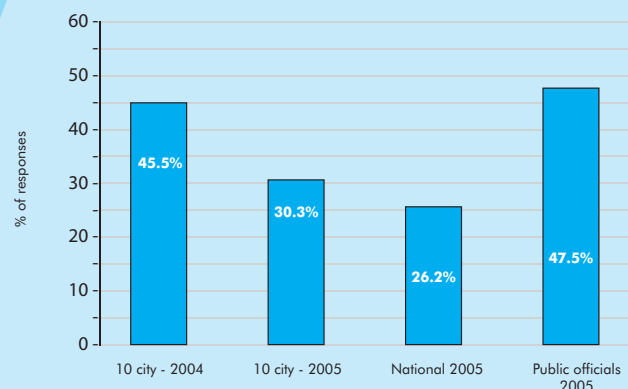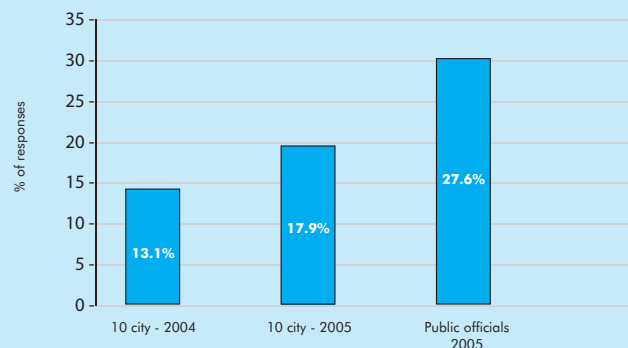Fig.13 Awareness of civil society anti-corruption initiatives

Fig. 14 Awareness of the work
         of the Albanian Coalition Against Corruption (ACAC)

Summary of findings

4.8. Crime and administration of justice

▪ Reported crime victimization drops by half in cities between 2004 and 2005. [Fig. 15]

▪ In all three samples less than half the victims report crimes. The most common reason cited by respondents for not reporting crimes is that it is simply "not worth it" – reflecting among other factors a lack of confidence in the justice system.

▪ Urban respondents report they have been treated worse by police in 2005 than in 2004. The mean evaluation is below the scale midpoint suggesting overall poor treatment compared with 2004 when the mean was above the midpoint. There is no difference among the three samples with respect to treatment in the courts. The mean evaluation is below the scale midpoint suggesting overall poor treatment.

▪ The evaluation of services in the municipalities is slightly higher nationally than in the urban centers in 2005.

▪ Compared to 2004, city residents feel safer in their neighborhoods. That improvement in perception of public safety is reflected even more so nationwide.

▪ Confidence in the judicial system's ability to deliver justice to crime victims, while already low, drops even further in urban areas, though nationally it fares slightly better. A mean score of roughly 35 in three samples indicates that Albanians have little faith in the justice system. [Fig. 16]
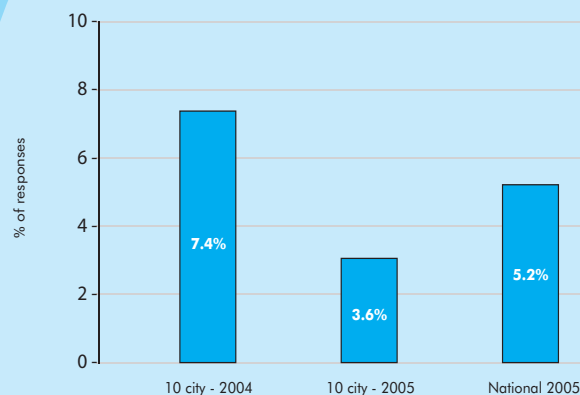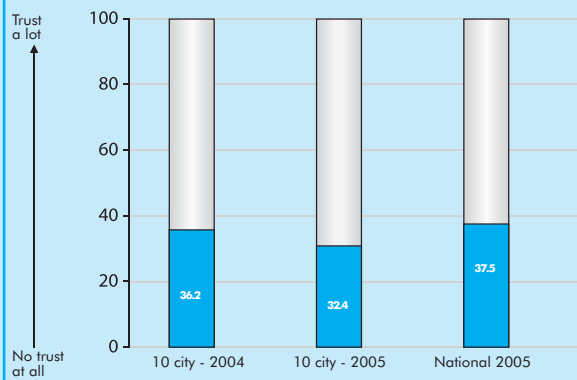
Fig.15 Crime victimization[7]

Fig.16 Trust that the judicial system will punish criminals

7. *Percentage of respondents reporting having been victims of crimes.*

Summary of findings

The following results are taken from the Judges Survey[8]

- Slightly more than half the judges surveyed agree that corruption in the Albanian court system is a serious problem and that lawyers approach them outside of court to influence decisions. [Fig. 17]

- Judges acknowledge that neither they nor lawyers are viewed in a flattering light by the public; both categories receive mean scores well below the midpoint of the scale. [Fig. 18]

- Judges approve of the quality of training at the Magistrates School; which receives a score well above the midpoint of the scale (71 points.) [Fig. 18]

- Of seven possible factors important to the daily work of judicial officials, judges are most satisfied with the quality of personnel they work with and least satisfied with the pay of their employees.

- A large number of judges cite training as the factor that would help them improve their performance. A salary increase is the next most cited factor.

- A majority of judges feel that continuing legal education is the most important type of training that judges need in order to keep abreast of newly passed laws.

Fig 17. Assessments by judges of the vulnerability of courts to corruption
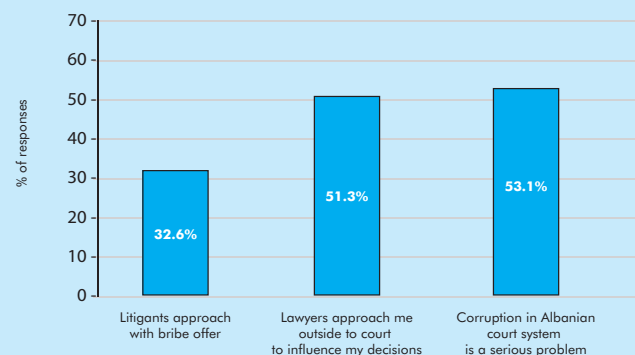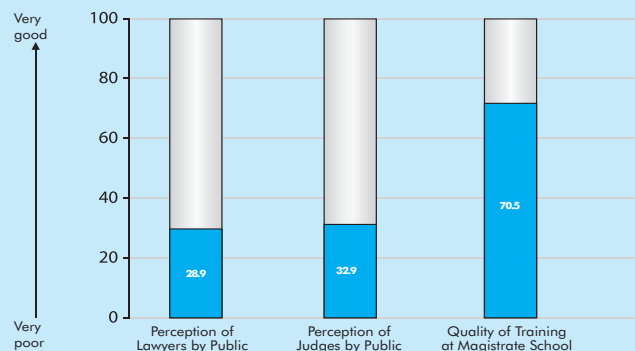

Fig.18 Assessments of perceptions of lawyers and of judges and training at the Magistrate School

8. There were 155 judges interviewed across Albania out of a list of 367 judges. The margin of error for this sample is ± 6 percent.

Summary of findings

4.9. Corruption in the public sector

Several additional questions were specifically posed to public officials[9]. The findings are as follows:

- Public officials feel that political influence in the hiring and promotion of officials is most prevalent in the education system and less prevalent in the local administration.

- Almost 65 percent of those who answered (almost one third of the sample) say that in order to receive a procurement contract, it is necessary to offer a bribe. Forty percent say that this payment ranges from 1 percent to 10 percent of the value of the contract while another 25 percent say that the payment is more than 10 percent of the contract value. [Fig. 19]

- Among public officials, bribery is seen to be more prevalent in influencing decisions about obtaining public services and contracts than in altering laws and regulations.

- Payment of bribes to obtain public services is seen to be most widespread in the medical system and least widespread in the local administration.

- Payment of bribes to public servants is seen as most prevalent in the public sector and among local businessmen. It is perceived to be far less widespread among foreign investors and international organizations. [Fig.20]

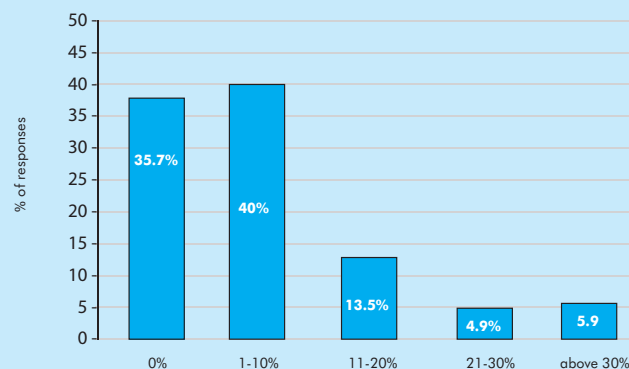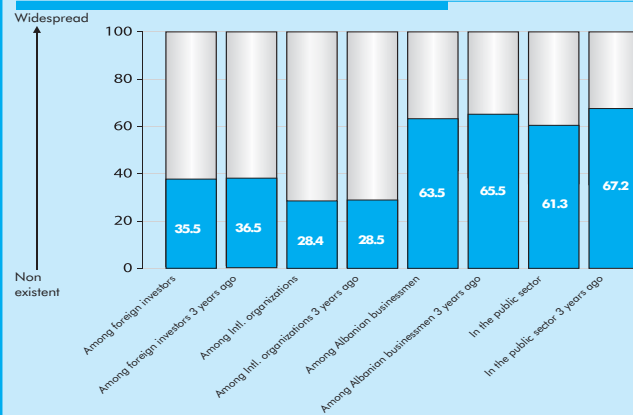Fig.19 Amount of bribery in procurement as a percentage of contract value

Fig.20 Perception of ubiquity of bribes in public sectors.

9. There were 577 public officials interviewed across Albania. The margin of error for the sample is ±4 percent.

Summary of findings