



PUBLIC OPINION IN AZERBAIJAN 2006

Findings from a Public Opinion Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. OPINIONS ABOUT SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

- **Satisfaction with Overall Situation in Country:** There has been an increase in the level of satisfaction with the overall situation in the country since 2005. A majority are satisfied (52%, compared to 43% in 2005), while 44% are dissatisfied with the situation in the country (55% in 2005).
- **Current Economic Situation:** A majority (60%) describes the economic situation as good (48% in 2005), while roughly one-third (34%) of respondents describe the situation as bad (48% in 2005). Since 2005, there has been a decrease in the negative sentiments in regard to respondents' family economic situation. This year, 51% describe their family's economic situation as very or somewhat bad, while 47% describe it as very or somewhat good.
- **Key Issues for Azerbaijan:** When asked to describe the biggest problem facing Azerbaijan, 64% name Karabakh, 31% unemployment, 14% cite the low standard of living and 9% say corruption. On another question, when respondents are asked to name the issues of primary concern in the area where they live, 52% cite public utilities, 26% say unemployment, 13% indicate the low standard of living and 12% name the necessity of road repair or absence of roads.
- **Expectations for Future Economy:** Azerbaijani citizens remain optimistic about the economic conditions in one year's time. A plurality of Azerbaijani citizens (49%) think that the national economic situation will be better in one year's time, 27% believe that economic conditions will stay the same, and 8% believe that it will get worse. Looking at their family's economic situation in the coming year, a plurality of Azerbaijani citizens believes that their family's economic situation will be better in one year (37%), 29% think that their family's economic situation will be the same as it is now, and 11% think it will be worse.
- **Non-Oil Economy:** Roughly half of Azerbaijani citizens (51%) are not aware of efforts to develop any sector of the economy beside the oil sector, while only 31% say they are aware of such efforts. When asked what steps the government should take to develop the economy outside of the oil sector, 8% mentioned the development of agriculture and 12% say the opening of job-creation enterprises.

II. INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

- **Interest in Politics:** Interest in politics in Azerbaijan has slowly risen over the past few years, with 66% saying that they are very or somewhat interested in politics (65% in 2005). Thirty-one percent say that they are not too or not at all interested. Interest in politics remains higher among men than women, and higher among middle-aged Azerbaijani citizens than their younger or senior compatriots. In Azerbaijan, television continues to be the primary source for news on politics. Two out of every five Azerbaijani citizens (40%) say that they watch television every day for news and 34% watch it a few times a week. Only 25% of respondents report consulting a newspaper for news on politics and government.
- **Sociopolitical Participation:** Respondents were given a series of statements on possible activities and asked how often they have taken part in the activities. More than two out of five respondents report discussing developments on the national scene and discussing developments in their community with acquaintances more than ten times in the past year. Majorities of respondents report never having worked to address an issue or problem and never signing a written or email petition.

- **Political and Voter Efficacy:** The majority of respondents (58%) in this survey believe that people like them have little influence in politics, while 29% disagree with this statement (66% and 27%, respectively, in 2005). Slightly more respondents than not agree that voting gives people like them a chance to influence decision-making (44% agree, 39% disagree).
- **Information on Elections:** When respondents to the survey are asked whether they have enough information about political developments to make wise choices when voting, only 13% of Azerbaijani citizens say they have enough information to make wise choices. Forty-eight percent say they have some information, 28% say they have very little, and 7% say they have no information to help them make a wise choice when voting. The percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who say that they are either fully informed or somewhat informed about the election process has increased slightly since the previous year, 58% compared to 49% in 2005. But, 40% still say that they do not have much or any information about the election process.
- **2005 Parliamentary Elections:** When asked whether or not they voted in the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, 64% report casting a vote themselves in the election, with 30% who say that they did not vote in the parliamentary election. Of the percentage who cast a vote themselves, only 1% said that they also cast votes on behalf of others in the parliamentary election. More men than women report voting and more rural residents voted than urban residents.
- **Fairness of 2005 Parliamentary Elections:** Only 12% of respondents believe that the elections completely met the internationally accepted standards for the administration of elections that are free and fair. Thirty-two percent believe that the elections met most of the accepted standards, with 21% who think that elections met some of the standards and 8% who believe that the election do not meet any of the standards.
- Some respondents report that they are not aware of any candidates or parties participating in fraudulent behavior the past elections. A plurality (40%) say that ordinary Azerbaijani citizens being offered money or goods to vote for a particular party or candidate happens only some of the time or rarely, with only 14% who believe that it happens all or most of the time. Sixty-four percent do not know of any close friends or relative who were offered money, goods, or material things to vote for a particular candidate in the October 2005 parliamentary election.
- However, when respondents were asked about the ability of others to find out how a person voted, roughly two out of five (39%) believe that it is not possible for someone to find out how a person in their neighborhood voted, 19% believe it is possible and 22% believe it may be possible.
- **Confidence in Public Officials and Institutions:** Besides a great deal of confidence in the institution of the president (62%), most Azerbaijani citizens have little confidence in other public officials and institutions. Thirty-eight percent have a great deal of confidence in the military, with 15% having a great deal of confidence in their Executive powers in the city or rayon. Respondents report having not very much or no confidence in the courts (62%) and the police (56%), and the Milli Majlis (54%).

III. ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICAL PARTIES

- **Necessity and Effectiveness of Political Parties:** Similar to results from the 2005 survey, in 2006 roughly one-quarter (23%) think that political parties are essential for democracy in Azerbaijan, 37% think they are somewhat necessary, 22% think they are not very or not at all necessary. The feeling that political parties are necessary goes up with interest in politics. Most Azerbaijani citizens, however, do not believe that parties are effective in presenting their ideas to the public. Only 20% think that parties are very or somewhat effective in presenting their ideas, but 42% believe they are ineffective, and a further 21% state that they do not know of any ideas

from political parties. Even a plurality of those interested in politics thinks that political parties are ineffective in presenting ideas to the public.

- **Parties that Represent Aspirations:** When respondents are asked to name a political party that represents the aspirations of people like them, 54% say that none of the parties in Azerbaijan represents their aspirations. Thirty-three percent name Yeni Azerbaijan (YAP), 4% Musavat, 1% the Popular Front Party, and 2% other parties.
- **Political Finance:** A plurality (34%) of respondents believes that the primary motivation of those who contribute financially to political party campaigns is because the contributors expect something in return when the party gets into power. Only 14% of respondents think that the primary motivation behind contributors is due to their support of the policies being advocated by the party. Perhaps as a result of this negative view, a majority (51%) think that political parties should definitely be required to publicly disclose the sources of funding they use to finance their operations and activities.
- When read two statements regarding the public disclosure of government and elected officials' incomes, 75% strongly or somewhat agree that the officials in Azerbaijan should be required to disclose their incomes and assets. Only around 12% somewhat or strongly agree with the opposite statement, that government officials and elected leaders have a right to privacy and should not be required to publicly disclose their incomes and assets.

IV. OPINIONS ON DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW, AND CORRUPTION

- **Azerbaijani Democracy:** The percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who say Azerbaijan is a democracy has declined from 37% in the 2005 survey to 32% in this year's survey. The percentage who say that Azerbaijan is not a democracy (24%) and the percentage who say it has elements of both a democracy and a non-democracy (27%) has remained roughly the same.
- Of the respondents who do not think that Azerbaijan is a democracy and those that think the country has elements of both forms of governance, 50% believe that Azerbaijan is moving toward becoming a democracy. When asked what it means to live in a democracy, most respondents cite freedoms (44%), 10% cite equality before the law, 10% cite independence, and 6% cite a general rule of law in the country.
- **Rights and Freedoms:** When asked about several basic democratic rights and freedoms, a strong majority of Azerbaijani citizens think that these rights and freedoms should be granted to citizens of a democracy.
- When respondents were asked to indicate how much the authorities in Azerbaijan completely respected these rights, 64% say that the authorities completely respected the right to education up to the secondary level, 45% say that authorities completely respect the right to vote, and 21% say that the right to participate in politics is completely respected by authorities. Respondents indicate concern over the authorities' lack of respect for the legal system. A majority (52%) of respondents say that the authorities give little or no respect to the principle of equality before the law, and 48% say the authorities give little or no respect to citizens' right to a fair trial.
- Some respondents agree that establishing order and discipline in society does not necessitate limiting the political or civil rights of citizens. In fact, almost two out of five respondents (67%) disagree completely with the statement, "in order to establish order and discipline in society, it is necessary to limit the political and civic rights of the people." However, 16% agree completely or somewhat with this statement.
- **Opinions on Judicial System:** There is a great deal of dissatisfaction with the judicial system in Azerbaijan. A majority (60%) of Azerbaijani citizens disagree that the judicial system is unbiased.

The more likely one is to have negative impressions of the judicial system, the more likely they are to think that Azerbaijan is not a democracy.

- When asked about lawyers in Azerbaijan, 57% strongly or somewhat agree that lawyers in Azerbaijan have the training and education to effectively represent their clients. Azerbaijani citizens are split (38% disagree, 37% agree) about whether lawyers can protect their clients from unjust treatment from the state. A significant percentage also cites concerns with the ability of qualified women and minorities to obtain employment as lawyers.
- **Experience with Corruption:** There has been a decrease in the perception and reported incidence of corruption since the 2005 IFES survey in Azerbaijan. Thirty percent of Azerbaijani citizens report having paid a bribe to a public official in the past (down from 49% in 2005). The percentage that says they have never been asked for a bribe has increased from 26% in 2005 to 38% in this year's survey.
- The primary reasons for paying bribes were for medical care (11%) and for grades at school or university (8%). These two reasons for paying bribes were also most-mentioned in the 2004 and 2005 surveys.
- Given the high incidence of corruption in Azerbaijan, it is not surprising that many Azerbaijani citizens feel it is justified to pay bribes for specific services. A majority of Azerbaijani citizens (80%) believe it is sometimes or always justified to pay a bribe to a doctor for medical care and 52% also believe that it is justified to pay for good grades for their children

V. LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

- **Opinions on Local Governance:** When respondents are asked who they would first approach to help solve a problem, their Executive Authority or the head of their municipal council, 28% say that they would first approach their Executive Authority. Only 6% mention the head of their municipal councils, and 22% say that they would approach both equally. Over one-third (35%) say that they would approach neither body, compared to 19% in 2005.
- **Public Service Activities:** There has been a slight decline in the visibility of public service activities such as helping the poor and refugees. Twenty-nine percent think these types of activities are very or somewhat common in Azerbaijan (compared to 35% in 2005), 24% think that they are not very common (12% in 2005), while 34% think they are not common or do not happen at all in Azerbaijan (roughly the same as in 2005).
- For most types of public service activities mentioned to respondents, more people believe that the Azerbaijani government undertakes these activities rather than non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or both. The percentage of Azerbaijani citizens that say that NGOs play a role either exclusively or in addition to the government in at least one of the activities is 54% (55% in 2005).
- **Taking Action:** Thirty-six percent think that citizens are responsible to always follow the law, and 48% think that only sometimes are citizens responsible to follow the law. When it comes to protecting the environment or cultural and historical monuments, 33% and 37% always think that it is the citizens' responsibility. Thirty-three percent believe that citizens should always pay taxes, with 47% who think that citizens should sometimes pay taxes.
- **Awareness and Necessity of NGOs:** When asked whether members of their communities were aware of NGOs, 9% of those asked say that most members of their communities are aware of NGOs, 14% say that some members of their communities are aware of these organizations, 29% say very few are aware, and 36% say that nobody in their community is aware of NGOs.

- Over two-thirds (68%) of those who know what NGOs are say that these types of organizations are essential or necessary for Azerbaijan, while only 5% do not think they are necessary.
- Few Azerbaijani citizens would definitely volunteer for NGOs without pay (12%). Thirty-four percent may volunteer, and 43% would definitely not volunteer. There is a slightly higher likelihood of volunteering for community institutions such as schools or clinics.

VI. OPINIONS ON WOMEN'S STATUS IN AZERBAIJAN

- **Women's Status in Azerbaijan:** Sixty percent of Azerbaijani citizens strongly or somewhat agree that women enjoy the same basic rights as men. Thirty-two percent strongly or somewhat disagree with this statement. Women, however, are thought to have lesser opportunities than men in some key areas of life. Sixty-six percent of Azerbaijani citizens think that women have less opportunity than men in politics, while 49% believe this is the case for business. In contrast to politics and business, healthcare and education are areas in which women are felt to have disproportionately more opportunities than men. When respondents are asked whether it is good for Azerbaijani society that many women work, a majority (62%) think that this is good for society, 26% say it does not matter, and 10% think this is bad for society.
- **Women and Politics:** When respondents are asked how strongly they support or do not support women becoming involved in politics as candidates, a majority of men (64%) support women as candidates but almost one-third (31%) oppose this. Among women, 78% support women as candidates and 17% do not support.
- A majority (54%) would encourage their daughter to run for office, while 34% would not encourage their daughter to run for office. Among women, a majority (62%) would encourage their daughters but 26% would not. Among men, 45% would encourage their daughters and 43% would not.

VII. INFORMATION AND MEDIA

- **Information about Political and Economic Developments:** A majority (55%) of respondents says that they have a great deal or fair amount of information on economic developments (same as in 2005.) Fifty-eight percent say that they have at least a great deal or fair amount of information on political developments. Men are more likely to be informed about these affairs than women.
- **Awareness of Issues:** When respondents are asked about a series of issues and activities, a slight majority of respondents (51%) had heard of the Poverty Reduction Strategy for Azerbaijan, and 48% were aware of the Unified Election Code.
- **Frequently Used Media Sources:** Television is the primary source of information for Azerbaijani citizens. The most frequently used sources are TV Lider and TV Space which are used by more than 80% of the public. Radio ANS, and Radio Lider, are used by fewer than 20% of the public. Print media is used very little to obtain information. Only 5% of respondents report consulting *Yeni Musavat* at least once a week.
- **Objectivity of Media:** There is a lack of perceived objectivity in the media as only 9% strongly agree that the media in Azerbaijan provides objective coverage of social and political developments in the country. A slight majority (51%) agree somewhat with this statement, while 29% strongly or somewhat disagree with the statement. When respondents were asked to identify the proportion of the media in Azerbaijan that provides objective coverage, only 15% say that most of the media provides objective coverage, and 51% say that only some of the media

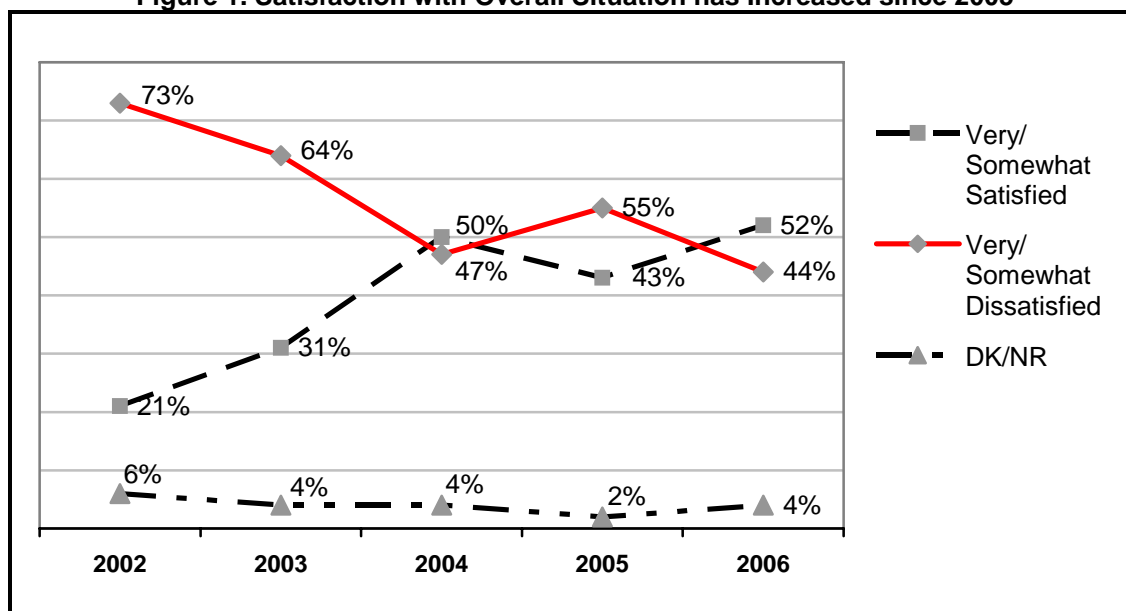
provides objective coverage, 25% say very few of the media outlets provide objective coverage, and 3% say that none do. Respondents were also asked to identify the type of media they are more likely to trust to provide objective coverage. Eighty-three percent of respondents say that they most trust television media to provide objective coverage. Few respondents say that they trust print media (2%) or (2%) radio to provide objective coverage.

- **State Media and Public Media:** Less than four out of ten respondents (39%) believe that the radio and TV stations in Azerbaijan not owned by the state are completely or somewhat independent from the government, but 43% believe that these stations are somewhat or completely controlled. Respondents are on the fence regarding the independence of newspapers and magazines not owned by the state. Thirty-nine percent believe that the newspapers and magazines are completely or somewhat independent from the government, and an equal percentage say that they are somewhat or completely controlled by the government. Slightly more respondents have confidence in the private media to provide objective information on financial aspects than the state media (45% vs. 40%, respectively).

I. OPINIONS ABOUT SOCIOECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY¹

Decline in Satisfaction with Overall Situation in the Country: Comparison of the data from the 2005 and 2006 surveys shows that satisfaction with the overall situation in Azerbaijan has increased substantially since the 2005 survey (43% 2005, 52% 2006), while dissatisfaction has declined (55% 2005, 44% 2006) (Figure 1).²

Figure 1. Satisfaction with Overall Situation has Increased since 2005



The data in the figure above indicates that the 2006 survey is the first IFES survey in Azerbaijan in which a majority of Azerbaijani citizens say that they are very or somewhat satisfied with the overall situation in the country. The trend captured in the figure above also shows that situation in Azerbaijan is markedly different from 2002 and 2003 when the vast majority of people in the country expressed dissatisfaction with the overall situation in the country.

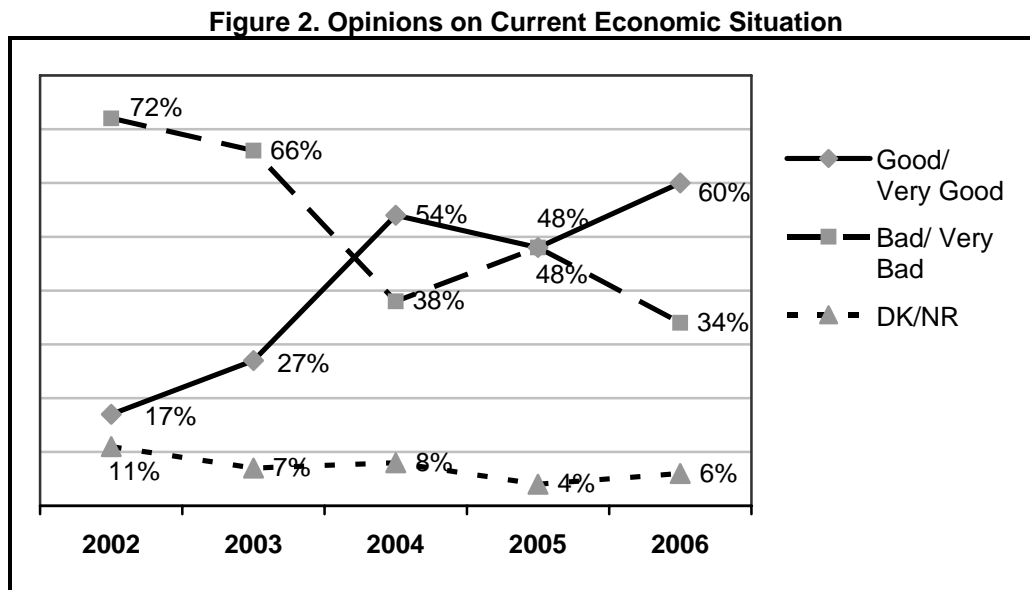
Satisfaction with the overall situation in the country is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas of the country. In rural areas, a majority (58%) say that they are satisfied with the overall situation while 37% say that they are dissatisfied. In urban areas, 49% say that they are dissatisfied with the overall situation while 46% say that they are satisfied. Even though more people in urban areas say that they are dissatisfied rather than satisfied with the overall situation in the country, the level of dissatisfaction has dropped from 60% in 2005 to 49% in this survey. Given that Baku is the largest urban center in the country, overall attitudes in urban areas are disproportionately impacted by the opinions of Baku residents. Given the overall percentage expressing dissatisfaction in urban areas, it is not surprising that a majority of residents of Baku (51%) say they are dissatisfied with the overall situation in the country, with 47% saying they are satisfied. The percentage dissatisfied in Baku has fallen from 67% in 2005 to 51% in this survey.

Opinions on Current Economic Situation a Catalyst for Overall Satisfaction: The increase in positive sentiment about the overall situation in Azerbaijan is accompanied by an increase in positive perceptions about the economic situation in the country. This is a familiar pattern in IFES surveys in Azerbaijan and indicates that Azerbaijani citizens may base their evaluation of the overall situation to a large extent on their perception of the economic situation in the country. Similar to the data on overall satisfaction,

¹ Survey fieldwork was completed before the January 2007 Tariff Increase.

² Question Text: "Could you tell me if you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the overall situation in Azerbaijan today?" (n=1400)

positive perceptions of the economic situation have increased markedly since the 2005 IFES survey (Figure 2).³



In this survey, 60% of Azerbaijani citizens rate the current economic situation in the country as good or very good, an increase from 48% in the 2005 survey. Roughly one in three rate the economic situation as bad (30%) or very bad (4%). A majority of residents of both urban and rural areas rate the current economic situation as good (53% and 69%, respectively). With the exception of Kazakh (42%) and Baku (49%), a majority of respondents in each region of the country also rate the current economic conditions as good.

Survey results indicate a strong relationship between assessments of the current economic situation and satisfaction with the overall situation in Azerbaijan, with positive and negative assessments largely coinciding on these two questions. Despite the strong and direct relationship between opinions on the current economic situation and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the overall situation in the country, the assessments of the current economic situation in the country and family economic situations is not quite so strong. Overall, 47% rate their family's economic situation as good or very good and 51% rate it as bad or very bad. The percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who rate their family's economic situation as good or very good has increased from 41% in 2005 to 47% in 2006, while the percentage who say their family's economic situation is bad or very bad has decreased from 58% to 51%.

Among those who rate the current economic situation in Azerbaijan as good or very good, 69% have a similar view of their family's economic situation but 27% rate their family's economic situation as bad or very bad. There is a significant percentage of respondents who think the country's economic situation is good but not that of their own family. The largest such gap occurs in Ganja where 91% of respondents think that the current economic situation in the country is good but 55% have this opinion of their family's economic situation, a differential of 36 percentage points. Other regions with large differentials are Mil-Karabakh (66, 45, 21 differential), Shirvan (54, 33, 21 differential), and Kuba-Khachmaz (58, 38, 20 differential). This gap tends to be larger in rural areas (19 percentage points) than in urban areas (8 percentage points).

Key Issues Facing Azerbaijan and Local Community: Historically, when respondents to IFES surveys in Azerbaijan have been asked to list the biggest problems facing the country, the Karabakh situation has consistently been the top mention, far outpacing mentions of other specific issues. The economic

³ Question Text: "How would you describe the current economic situation in Azerbaijan?" (n=1400)

situation, however, has also consistently received a high number of mentions. These two patterns are reinforced in this year's survey. The issues cited as the biggest facing Azerbaijan are listed below with percentages provide for both the 2006 and 2005 surveys:

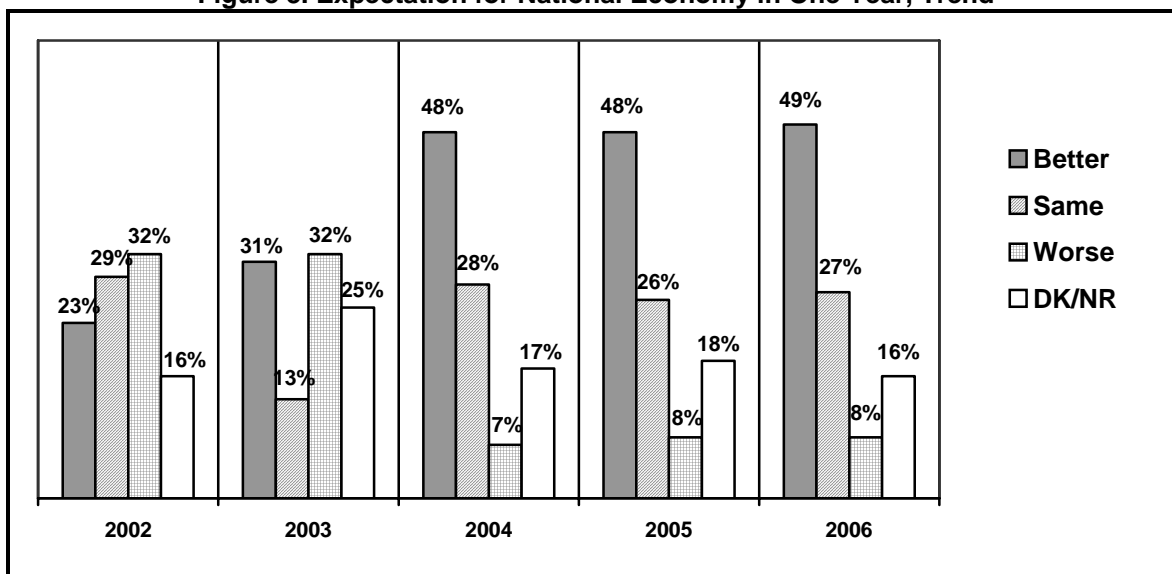
- Karabakh (64% 2006, 73% 2005)
- Unemployment (31% 2006, 36% 2005)
- Low standard of living (19% both years)
- Corruption (9% both years)
- General economic problems (7% 2006, 4% 2005)
- Refugee problems (3% 2006, 4% 2005)
- Improvement of social protections (2% 2006, 7% 2005)
- Crime/Lawlessness (2% 2006, 3% 2005)

It is instructive to note that while sentiment about economic issues has become significantly more positive from the 2005 to 2006 survey, economic issues are still listed with nearly the same frequency as the biggest problems facing Azerbaijan. This may reflect unease among many Azerbaijani citizens about the permanence of the perceived positive economic changes from 2005 to 2006.

Respondents were also asked to list the biggest problems facing their local communities. Inadequate public utilities such as water, electricity, and gas were the most oft-mentioned problems listed by respondents (52%). Unemployment was listed by 26% of respondents and other economic mentions included low standards of living (13%) and inflation (3%). Infrastructure is also a significant concern in local communities as 12% mentioned roads and roads repair problems facing their local communities, 4% sewage and sanitation concerns, and 3% listed various other infrastructure concerns. Ten percent say that their local community faces no significant problems.

Expectations for the Future Economy: Respondents to IFES surveys have been asked for their opinion on the future of the Azerbaijani economy, whether it would get better, worse, or stay the same over the course of the following year. This question has been asked in each of the surveys since 2002, and this trend data shows that opinions on this question have changed little over the past three years. (Figure 3)⁴

Figure 3. Expectation for National Economy in One Year, Trend



⁴ Question Text: "And twelve months from now, do you expect that the economic situation in Azerbaijan will be better than it is now, will be worse than it is now, or will it be about the same as it is now?" (n=1400)

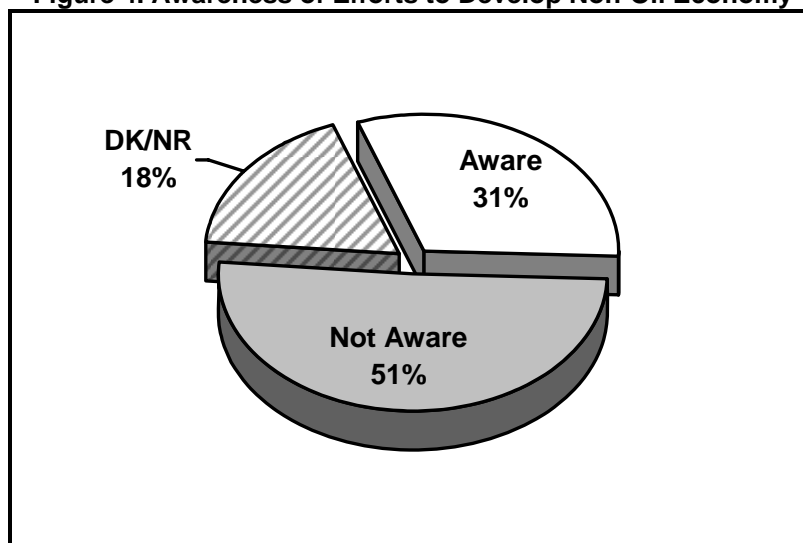
In each of the past three IFES surveys, nearly half of all respondents have stated that they expect the economic situation in Azerbaijan to get better over the course of the upcoming year. Similarly, slightly more than a quarter of respondents in the three surveys state that the economic situation will stay the same, and slightly less than one in ten say that the economic situation will get worse.

Of the respondents on this survey who say that the current economic situation is good or very good, 69% expect the economic situation to get better over the coming year while 23% expect it to remain the same. Among those who say that the current economic situation is bad or very bad, only 19% expect the situation to get better, 31% expect it to remain the same, and 23% expect it to get even worse.

Respondents were also asked to assess the state of their family's economic situation in a year. Thirty-seven percent believe that their family's economic situation will be better in one year's time, 29% believe it will be the same and 11% believe it will be worse. The difference in expectations for future economic situation for the country and for one's family is similar to the differences observed for the current economic situation. There is not as much optimism regarding future prospects for the family's economic situation as there is for the national economic situation.

Efforts to Develop the Non-Oil Economy: One factor that significantly impacts future economic growth in Azerbaijan is the government's ability to develop sectors of the economy other than the natural resources sector. To provide a rough gauge for this type of development, respondents to the 2004, 2005, and 2006 IFES surveys have been asked if they are aware of any efforts by the government to develop the non-oil economy in Azerbaijan. As in the previous two surveys, less than one in three Azerbaijani citizens are aware of government efforts to develop the non-oil economy (Figure 4).⁵

Figure 4. Awareness of Efforts to Develop Non-Oil Economy



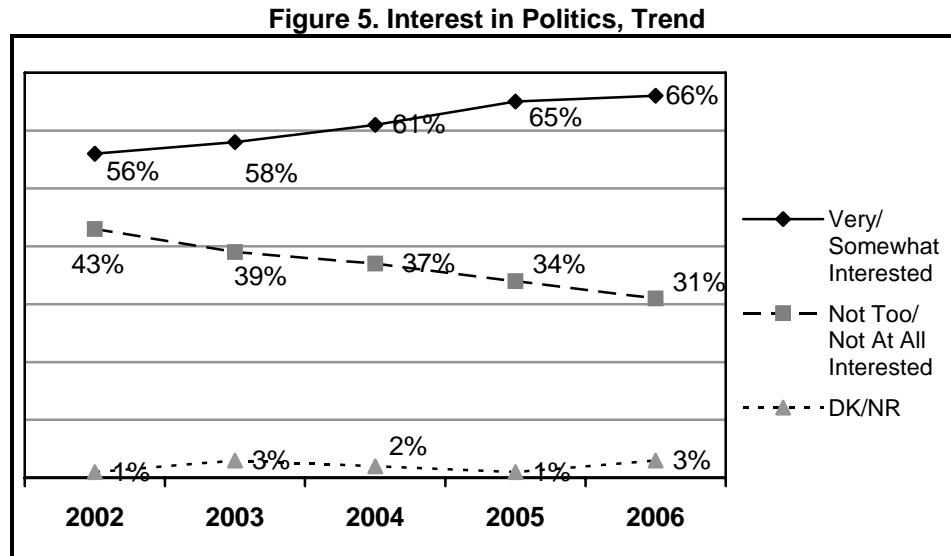
Thirty-one percent say that they are aware of efforts to develop the non-oil economy, similar to the 30% who reported being aware in the 2005 survey. Fifty-one percent say they are not aware of any such efforts while 18% either don't know or do not respond to the question.

Nine percent say they have heard of development in the construction sector, and 8% mention the agricultural sector as one which the government is seeking to develop. Other sectors mentioned included tourism, private sector banking and finance, industrial development, and the development of the technology sector.

⁵ Question Text: "Have you heard or read about any efforts by the government to develop any sector of the economy beside the oil sector?" (n=1400)

II. INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

Interest in Politics Continues to Rise: The majority of Azerbaijani citizens say that they are very or somewhat interested in politics, a pattern that has been evident on every IFES survey in Azerbaijan dating back to 2002 (Figure 5).⁶



A majority of both men and women say they are interested in politics and a majority in all age groups with the exception of those 18-24 (49%) also expresses at least some interest in politics. Interest in politics is fairly high across the country with the Kazakh (46%) and Mugan-Salyan (49%) regions the only ones in which less than a majority says it is at least somewhat interested in politics. Although a majority of women say they are at least somewhat interested in politics (57%), men are much more likely to say they are interested in politics (77%).

The survey data indicates that television is the dominant medium used by Azerbaijani citizens for news on government and politics. When asked how often they use television for news on government and politics, 40% say that they use television on a daily basis for news on politics, 34% say they use it a few times a week, 13% use it a few times a month, and 5% use it once a month or less. Only 5% say that they never use television for news on government and politics. By comparison, only 1% say that they use newspapers on a daily basis for news on government and politics, 7% use newspapers at least a few times a week, and 11% use it a few times a month, and 6% use it once a month or less. Seventy-three percent say they never use newspapers for news on government and politics, with rural residents especially likely not to use newspapers than urban residents (82% versus 63%). Even among those very interested in politics, a majority (55%) says that they never use newspapers for news on government and politics.

Sociopolitical Participation: In previous IFES surveys in Azerbaijan, the data has revealed that while the majority of Azerbaijanis take part in informal discussions about national and local development, most do not take part in sociopolitical activities that require a deeper level of commitment (signing petitions, working with others as part of a group to address key issues). This is still the case in this year's survey but the trend data from the 2004 and 2005 surveys indicates that there is an increasing trend in at least

⁶ Question Text: "Please tell me how interested you are in affairs of politics and government?" (n=1400)

two activities, signing petitions and writing letter to authorities that require greater commitment (Figure 6).⁷

⁷ Question Text: *“Please look at this list and tell me if you have taken part in these activities in the last year? Just give me your best guess and don’t worry if you’re not accurate. Please tell me whether you have taken part in these activities more than ten times, 6-10 times, 2-5 times, just once, or if you have not taken part at all?”* (n=1400)

Figure 6. Socio-Political Activities, Trend

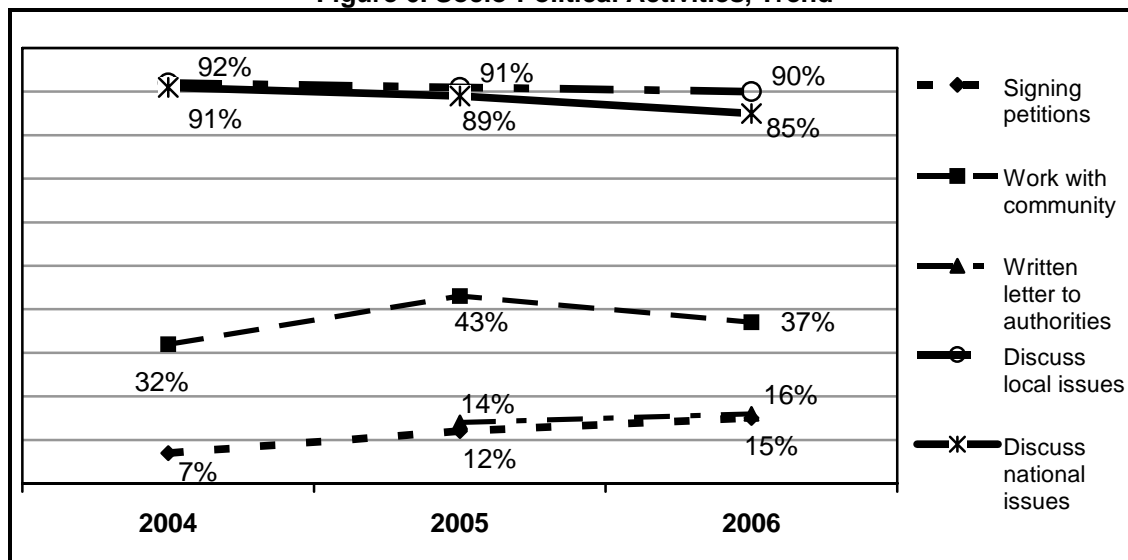


Figure 6 shows that there is a very high percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who report discussing national and local developments with their acquaintances, although there is a slight downward trend in discussion of national developments. A fairly significant percentage also reports working with others in their community to address issues of importance to the community. The percentage reporting working with others in their community has fallen from 43% in 2005 to 37% in this year's survey but that is still higher than the 32% reported in 2004.

The one type of activity that has seen a clear increase since the 2004 survey is the signing of petitions. In 2004, just 7% reported taking part in this type of activity but increase to 12% in 2005, and to 15% in this year's survey. Among those very interested in politics, 36% report having signed petitions in the past year. Sixteen percent overall also report having written letters to authorities in the past year, slightly higher than 14% who reported this activity in the 2005 survey.

Considering the three actions that require a deeper level of commitment than informal discussions on local and national developments, 58% of Azerbaijani citizens report that they did not take part in these three actions over the past year. Nearly a quarter (24%) say that they have taken part in one of these actions, while 9% each say they have taken part in two or three of these actions. Rural residents are more likely to have taken part in these actions than urban residents, and men are about twice as likely to have taken part in these actions as women.

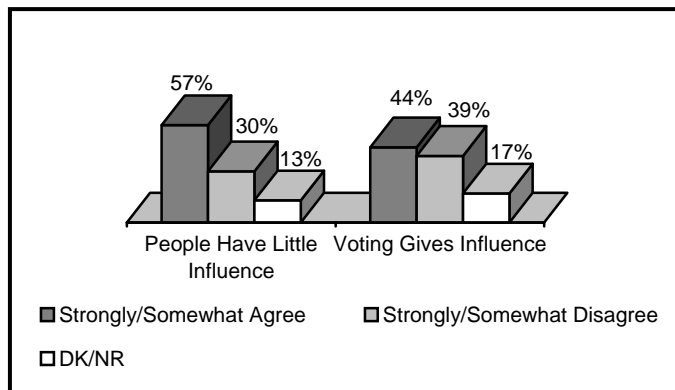
Low Belief in Political and Voter Efficacy: While the vast majority of Azerbaijani citizens may take part in discussions with acquaintances on local and national developments, the lack of widespread involvement in the other types of socio-political activities described above may be one reason that a significant share of Azerbaijani citizens doubt their ability to influence decision-making in Azerbaijan. The trend data from IFES surveys indicates that there is a lack of political efficacy among a large segment of Azerbaijani citizens. This trend continues in this year's survey (Figure 7).⁸

⁸ Agree or Disagree:

"People like me have little or no influence on the way things are run in Azerbaijan." (n=1400)

"Voting gives people like me a chance to influence decision-making in Azerbaijan." (n=1400)

Figure 7. Political and Voter Efficacy



A majority of Azerbaijani citizens (58%) agree that ordinary people in Azerbaijan have little or no influence on the way things are run in Azerbaijan. Roughly three out of ten (29%) disagree with this statement. The percentage who agree with this statement has fallen from 66% in 2005 to 58% in this survey.

In the 2005 survey, a slight plurality (46%) agreed that voting gives people like them influence on decision-making in Azerbaijan. This percentage has fallen slightly to 44% in this year's survey, higher than the 39% who

disagree that voting gives them influence over decision-making. Perhaps because voting is a discrete and demonstrable act, respondents are more likely to agree that voting gives influence while discounting the influence people have on the way things are run in Azerbaijan in general. Only 22% of Azerbaijani citizens agree that voting gives them influence while at the same time saying that people can have influence on the way things are run in Azerbaijan.

Information on Elections: When respondents to the survey are asked whether they have enough information about political developments to make wise choices when voting, a majority (61%) say they have at least some information on political developments to make wise choices. Of the majority, however, only 13% say that they have enough information. A minority (35%) say that they have very little or no information at all on political developments to make wise choices when voting.

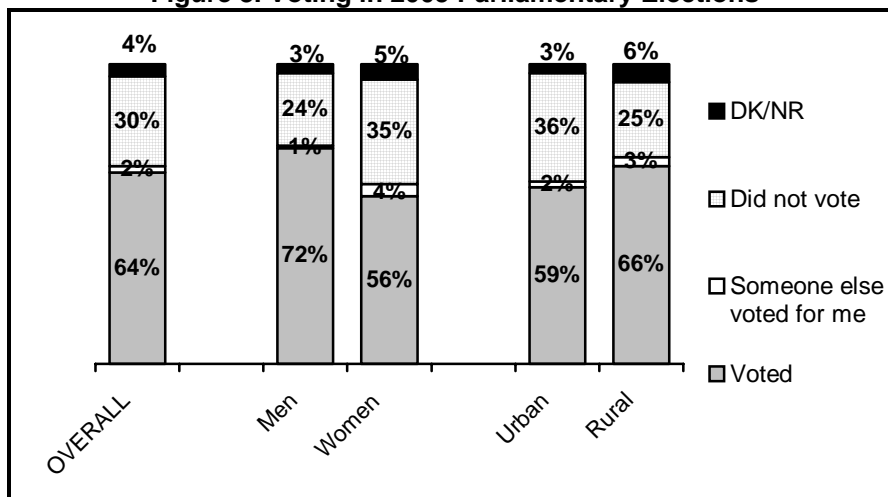
Since last year, there has been an increase in the percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who say that they are at least somewhat informed about the election process in Azerbaijan. In 2006, roughly six out of ten (58%) say that they are somewhat or fully informed about the election process in Azerbaijan, compared to 49% in 2005. Despite this gain, 40% still say that they do not have much or any information about the election process.

Voting in Elections: When asked whether they have voted in previous elections in Azerbaijan, 71% report having voted in the 2003 presidential elections, and a slight majority (51%) report having voted in the 2004 municipal elections. In both these cases, men are more likely to have voted than women. In the case of the municipal elections, rural residents are more likely to report voting in those elections than urban residents (57% versus 45%).

Respondents were also asked whether they had voted in the November 2005 parliamentary elections. A majority of Azerbaijanis report having voted in these elections (64%, Figure 8).⁹

⁹ Question Text: "As you may know, sometimes people cast votes for other people in elections. Did someone cast your vote for you in the November 2005 parliamentary elections? [If No] Did you vote in the 6 November, 2005 parliamentary elections?" (n=1400)

Figure 8. Voting in 2005 Parliamentary Elections



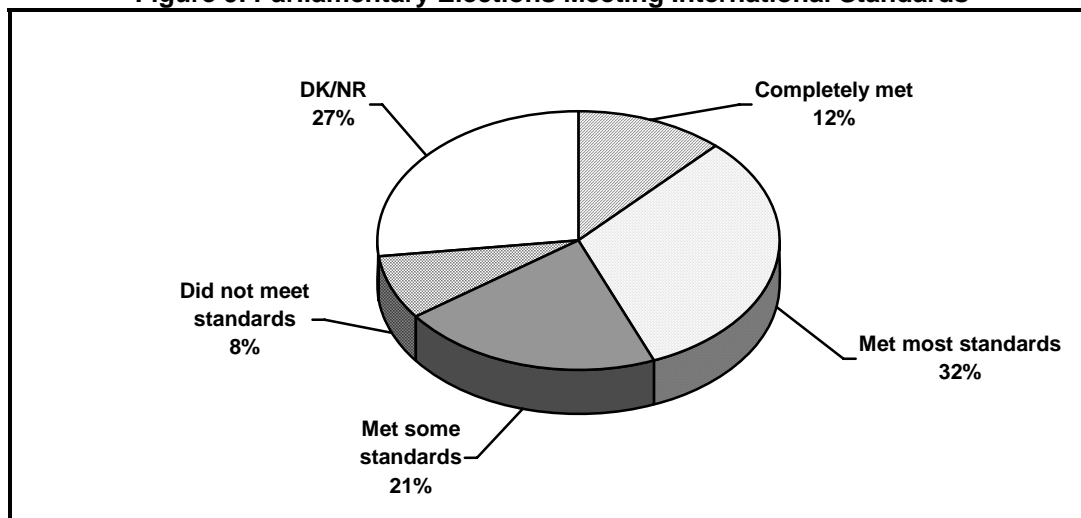
Because of concerns about family voting or other irregular forms of proxy voting in Azerbaijan, respondents were asked whether someone else had voted for them. If they said that no one had voted for them, they were asked whether they voted in the election. Two percent of respondents said that someone else voted for them. Only one percent say that they also cast votes on behalf of others.

Men are generally more likely to have voted than women (72% versus 56%), and turnout is reported to have been somewhat higher in rural areas than in urban areas (66% versus 59%).

As with previous elections in Azerbaijan, voting in the parliamentary elections goes up with the level of interest in politics. Among those not at all interested in politics, 38% report having voted in the parliamentary elections. This compares to 43% among those not too interested in politics, 73% among those somewhat interested, and 84% among those very interested in politics. There is also a strong correlation between voting and having taken part in any activity that requires greater than normal commitment to politics, such as signing a petition. Among those that took part in at least one of these activities, 74% said they voted in the parliamentary elections. This compares to 56% among those who did not take part in any of these activities.

Mixed Opinions on Whether Parliamentary Elections Met International Standards: Respondents to the survey were asked whether they think the November 2005 elections met international standards for free and fair elections. The survey data indicates that a majority of Azerbaijani citizens think that the parliamentary elections mostly met international standards, but at the same time a significant percentage found the elections failed to meet these standards (Figure 9).¹⁰

¹⁰ Question Text: "As you may know, there are internationally accepted standards for the administration of elections that are free and fair. To what extent do you think the November 6, 2005 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan met these standards? Do you think the November 2005 elections completely met the international standards, met most of the standards, met only some of the standard, or did not meet the international standards at all?" (n=1400)

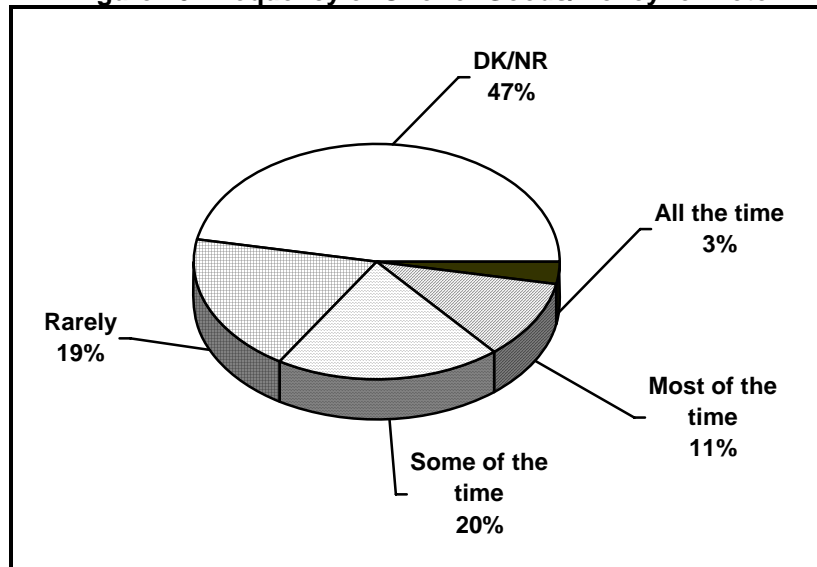
Figure 9. Parliamentary Elections Meeting International Standards

More than four in ten respondents say that the parliamentary elections either completely met international standards for free and fair elections, or that they most of these standards. Nearly three in ten, on the other hand, say that the parliamentary election either did not meet the standards at all or only met some of the standards. Opinions on whether the parliamentary elections met international standards differ by one's level of satisfaction with the overall situation in the country. Among those satisfied with the overall situation in the country, 56% say that the parliamentary elections met all or most international standards for free and fair elections. Among those dissatisfied with the overall situation in the country, only 32% have this opinion while 42% say that the parliamentary elections only met some international standards or did not meet these standards at all.

Perceptions of Irregular Practices Associated with Elections: In addition to being asked about their experience in voting in elections in Azerbaijan, respondents to the survey were also asked to offer their opinions on some irregular events that took place around an election, such as offers of goods or money to vote for a particular candidate or party, and whether any acquaintances had indeed been offered such material incentives for the November 2005 parliamentary elections. Data from the survey indicates that there is a significant percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who think that offers of goods or money are at least sometimes made to entice people to vote for particular candidates or parties in elections in Azerbaijan. (Figure 10)¹¹

¹¹ Question Text: "As you may know, there are reports around election time that ordinary Azerbaijanis are offered money or goods to vote for a particular party or candidate in the election. Do you think that this type of behavior happens all the time in elections in Azerbaijan, most of the time, some of the time, or that it happens rarely?" (n=1400)

Figure 10. Frequency of Offer of Goods/Money for Vote



Slightly more than a third of Azerbaijani citizens (34%) believe that offers of goods or money for votes are made at least some of the time in Azerbaijan. Nineteen percent believe that these offers are rarely made. A large percentage (47%) does not know enough to respond to this question or do not answer.

Respondents were also asked if any of their acquaintances had been offered money or goods to vote for a particular party in the November 2005 parliamentary elections. Eighteen percent say that they know of acquaintances who were offered money or goods for their vote, 64% say that none of their acquaintances were offered rewards for their vote, and 18% do not know if any of their acquaintances were offered rewards. The region with the highest mention of acquaintances being offered goods or money was Apsheron where 42% reported this happening. The regions with the lowest mention are Shirvan and Sheki where 85% and 82%, respectively, say that none of their acquaintances were offered money or good for their votes.

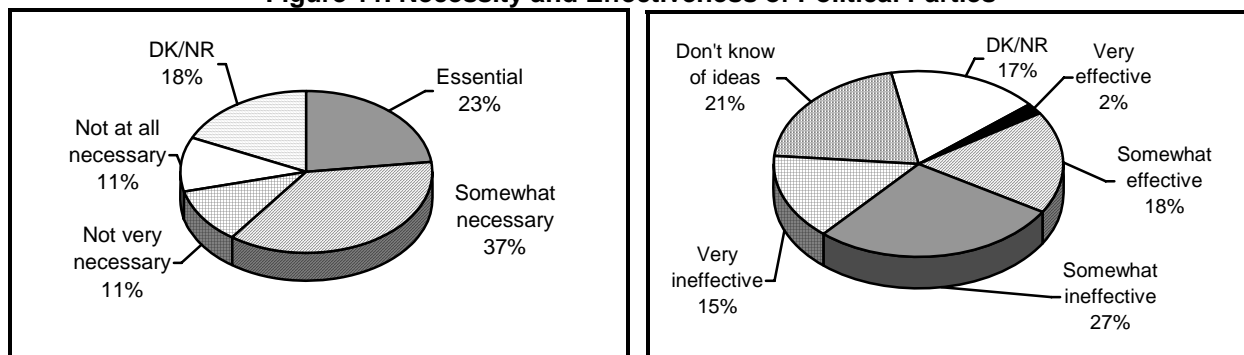
One issue that always arises when discussing offers of money or goods for votes is the fact that voters could always take the offer but still vote how they want in the privacy of the voting booth. However, many people argue that voters may not do this because they are afraid that others can find out how they voted. To address this concern, respondents to the survey were asked if they think it is possible to find out how someone voted even though the vote is secret. Nineteen percent of Azerbaijani citizens believe that someone could find out how they voted in an election, and 22% think it may be possible for this to occur. Forty percent do not think it is possible for someone to find out how they voted, and 16% do not know enough to respond. Respondents in the Kazakh region are most likely to think this is possible (34%), and another 25% in this region believe it may be possible for someone to find out how they voted. On the other hand, 73% in the Ganja region say it is not possible for someone to find out how they voted.

III. ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICAL PARTIES

Conflicting Sentiments on Political Parties: In previous IFES surveys in Azerbaijan, a pattern of conflicting sentiments has recurred with regard to political parties in Azerbaijan. While the majority of Azerbaijani citizens in each of the IFES surveys has expressed the belief that political parties are essential or necessary for Azerbaijani democracy, substantial majorities also believe that the existing political parties in Azerbaijan are not effective in presenting their ideas to the public. This finding continues in this year’s survey and suggests that while the Azerbaijani public is supportive of political parties in general, they are not especially satisfied with the particular political parties in Azerbaijan.

Six in ten Azerbaijani citizens say that political parties are essential or necessary while at the same time a majority believes that parties in Azerbaijan are either ineffective or cannot communicate their ideas. (Figure 11)¹²

Figure 11. Necessity and Effectiveness of Political Parties



Twenty-three percent of Azerbaijani citizens think that political parties are essential for Azerbaijani democracy and 37% think that they are somewhat necessary. On the other hand, nearly a quarter (11% not very and 11% not at all) do not think that parties are necessary for democracy. Somewhat surprisingly, those who consider Azerbaijan a democracy are more likely to say that political parties are not necessary for democracy than those who do not think that Azerbaijan is a democracy (28% versus 19%).

As indicated earlier, there is a reversal of opinions when respondents are asked whether parties are effective in communicating their ideas to the public. More than four in ten think that parties are very or somewhat ineffective in presenting their ideas, while another 21% say that they do not know of any ideas from political parties at all. A further 17% saying say they do not enough to provide an opinion, signaling further lack of information on political parties. Only 20% think that parties are very or somewhat effective at presenting their ideas.

The survey data also indicates that the perceived lack of effectiveness of political parties in communicating their ideas is not due to a lack of information, as even among those with a great deal or fair amount of interest in politics, only 27% say that parties are effective at presenting their idea to the public. Forty-eight percent think parties are ineffective at this and 15% say they don't know of any ideas from political parties.

¹² Question Text: “In your opinion, how necessary are political parties for democracy in Azerbaijan? Are they essential, somewhat necessary, not very necessary, or not at all necessary?” (n=1400)

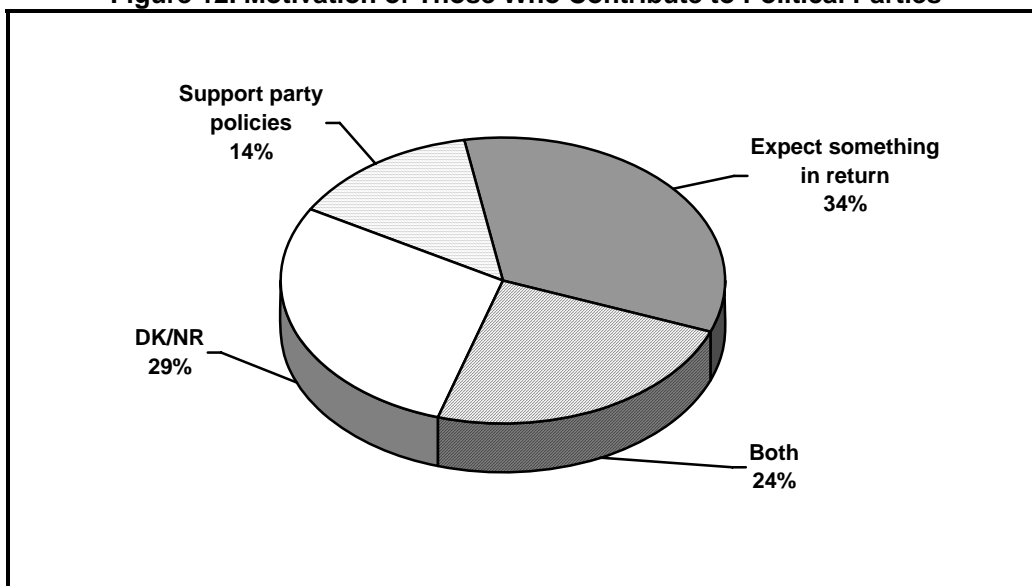
Question Text: “In general, how effective do you think political parties in Azerbaijan are in representing their ideas and principles to the Azerbaijani public?” (n=1400)

Political Party Financing: Respondents on this year’s survey were asked whether they know how political parties obtain funds to finance election campaigns and other party activities. The responses reveal that party financing is fairly opaque issue to the vast majority of Azerbaijanis, even those interested in politics. Overall, 66% of Azerbaijani citizens say that they do not know of the sources of financing that parties use to fund their operations and a further 13% do not provide any response to this question. Among those very interested in politics, 66% say they do not know the sources of financing or do not provide a response and this figure is 77% among those somewhat interested in politics.

Those who do mention specific sources of financing tend to focus on foreign sources. Eleven percent say that parties receive financing from foreign sources, not including a further 3% who list the United States as a source of financing. Five percent say that parties receive their financing from the state budget, 2% list rich businessmen/individuals, and 1% say financing is received through fraud, bribes or the black market.

While the majority of Azerbaijani citizens are not aware of the sources through which political parties receive financing for their activities, they do have an opinion on what motivates those who contribute to political parties (Figure 12).¹³

Figure 12. Motivation of Those Who Contribute to Political Parties



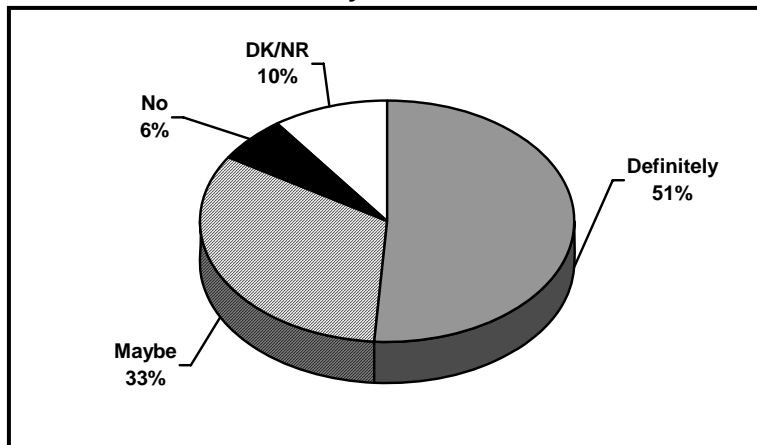
Respondents are more likely to say that those who contribute to political parties do so because they expect something in return rather than doing it because they support the party’s policies. Slightly more than one-third say that those who contribute to political parties do so primarily because they expect something in return, while 14% say contributors’ primary purpose is to support party policies. An additional 24% say that both these factors explain the motivation for contributors to political parties. A significant percentage (29%) does not know enough to provide a definitive response to this question.

Support for Financial Disclosures by Political Parties: Given the fact that a majority of Azerbaijani citizens believe that contributors, to some extent, expect something in return for their contributions to political parties, it is not surprising that the vast majority of Azerbaijani citizens support a system where political parties have to disclose the source of financing for their activities. (Figure 13)¹⁴

¹³ Question Text: “What do you think is the primary motivation of those who contribute financially to political party campaigns: because they support the policies being advocated by the party, or because the contributors expect something in return when the party gets into power?” (n=1400)

¹⁴ Question Text: “Do you think that political parties in Azerbaijan should be required to publicly disclose the sources of funding they use to finance their operations and activities?” (n=1400)

Figure 13. Majority Would Like Financial Disclosures by Political Parties



When asked whether political parties should be required to disclose their sources of financing, 51% say that parties should definitely be required to disclose this information, while 33% are not as definitive but still say that parties maybe should be required to disclose this information. Only 6% say that parties should not be required to disclose the sources of their financing. It is interesting to note that only 10% say they “don’t know”, a contrast to the high percentage responding this way on the other questions concerning party financing.

The data indicates that the perceived motivations of contributors have an impact on whether Azerbaijani citizens would like financial disclosures by political parties. Among those who think that the only reason contributors give money to political parties is because they support the party’s policies, 47% say that parties should definitely be required to disclose their finances while 14% say they should not. Among those who say that contributors give both because of party policies and because they expect something in return, 54% say parties should definitely be required to disclose and 7% say they should not. Among those who think the only reason contributors give money is because they expect something in return, 65% think that parties should definitely be required to disclose their finances and only 3% say they should not.

The percentage of respondents who say that parties should definitely disclose their finances also generally goes up with the perceived frequency of corruption in Azerbaijan. Among those who think that corruption is very common in Azerbaijan, 62% think parties should definitely disclose their finances. This compares to only 26% with the same opinion among those who think corruption is very rare in Azerbaijan.

Support for Disclosure of Assets and Incomes by Public Officials: In addition to the majority’s belief that political parties should disclose their financing sources, a majority also believes that senior public officials and elected leaders should be required to disclose their incomes and assets on an annual basis.

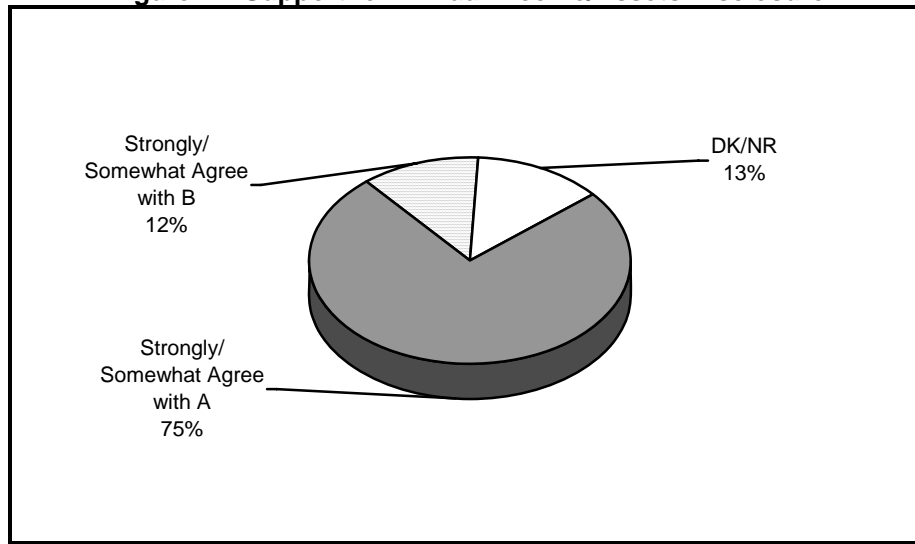
For this question, respondents to the survey were given two statements and asked to pick the statement with which they agreed more. The statements were:

A. *“In order to increase openness in politics in Azerbaijan, senior government officials and elected leaders in Azerbaijan should be required to publicly disclose their incomes and assets on an annual basis.”*

B. *“Senior government officials and elected leaders have as much a right to privacy as any other Azerbaijani and should not be required to publicly disclose their incomes and assets.”*

The responses are shown in Figure 14.

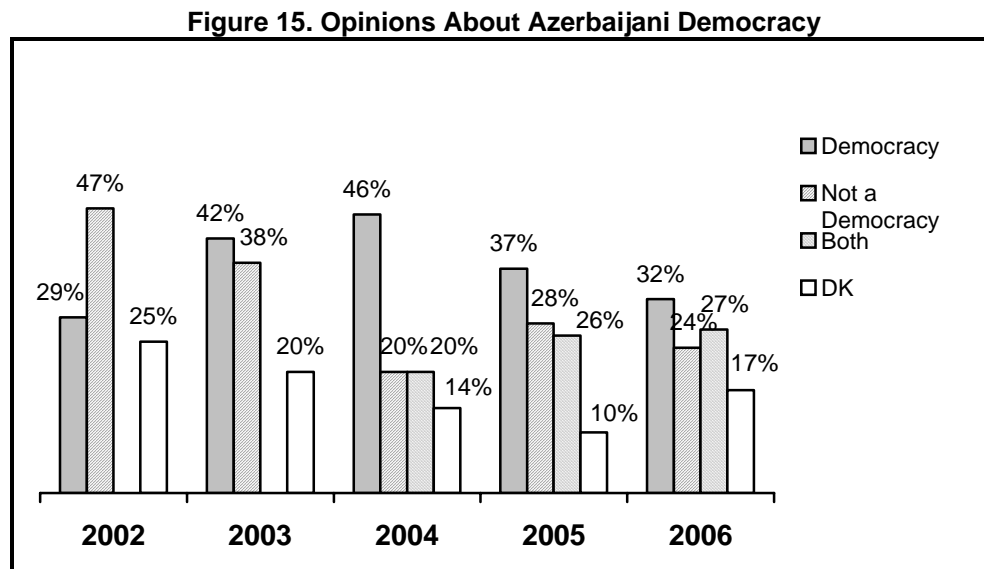
Figure 14. Support for Annual Income/Assets Disclosure



Three-quarters of respondents strongly or somewhat agree with requiring senior government officials and elected leaders to disclose their incomes and assets on an annual basis. Only 12% agree that privacy concerns should outweigh the disclosure of financial information by these officials. A majority of those who definitely or maybe support political party financial disclosures agree that senior and elected officials should disclose their financial information, while a majority of those who do not support party financial disclosures think that privacy concerns outweigh financial disclosures. The pattern of responses with regard to perceived frequency of corruption is similar to that for financing disclosure for political parties.

IV. OPINIONS ON DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW, AND CORRUPTION

Only one out of three Azerbaijani citizens say Azerbaijan is a democracy: Since 2004, the percentage Azerbaijani citizens who think that Azerbaijan is a democracy has gradually declined. Roughly one-third of Azerbaijani citizens (32%) say that Azerbaijan is a democracy, compared to 37% in 2005 and 46% in 2004 who held the same opinion. Roughly the same percentage as in 2005 say that Azerbaijan is not a democracy (24%) and 27% say that Azerbaijan has elements of both a democracy and non-democracy. (Figure 15)¹⁵



Past IFES surveys have demonstrated a link between perceptions of the economic situation and opinions on democracy in Azerbaijan, and this pattern continues in this survey. As positive perceptions of the economic situation are typically linked to support for democracy, it is not surprising that Azerbaijani citizens who say the current economic situation in the country is good are more likely to say that Azerbaijan is a democracy than those that describe the economic situation as bad (42% vs. 17%). Furthermore, the opinion of Azerbaijani democracy is positively correlated with the level of satisfaction with the overall situation in the country. Azerbaijani citizens who say they are satisfied with the overall situation in the country are more likely to say that Azerbaijan is a democracy than those that are not satisfied with the overall situation in the country (45% vs. 19%).

Respondents who do not think that Azerbaijan is a democracy or that it has elements of both a democracy and non-democracy were asked whether Azerbaijan is moving toward becoming a democracy. Half (50%) of those asked this question say that Azerbaijan is moving toward becoming a democracy, while 33% think that Azerbaijan is not moving toward becoming a democracy. Fewer say they do not know enough to answer (16%).

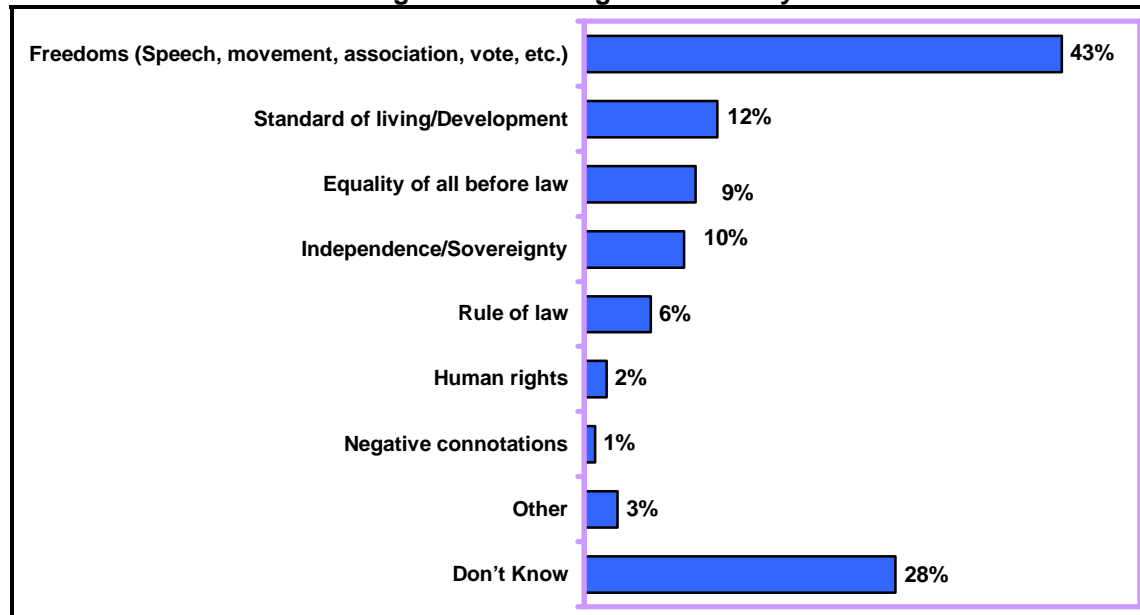
Perception of Azerbaijan as a democracy varies across different regions among respondents. Residents of urban areas are slightly more likely to say that Azerbaijan is not a democracy than residents of rural areas (31% vs. 19%). Residents of Shirvan (63%) and Karabakh (58%) are more likely to say that Azerbaijan is a democracy than in other regions, while residents of Baku (45%) are more likely to say that Azerbaijan is not a democracy in comparison to other regions.

Plurality of respondents equate democracy with certain freedoms: When respondents were asked what it means to them to live in a democracy, a plurality of respondents cite freedom of speech, movement, association and other freedoms (44%). In addition to freedom, respondents also mention

¹⁵ Question Text: "Do you believe that Azerbaijan is primarily a democracy today?" (n = 1400)

equality for all before the law (10%) as well as the rule of law in general (6%). For 9% of Azerbaijani citizens, democracy is signified by Azerbaijan's independence. Other responses to the meaning of democracy include high standards of living (4%), living in an advanced state (3%), the availability of information (3%), human rights (2%) and employment opportunities (1%). (Figure 16)¹⁶

Figure 16. Meaning of Democracy



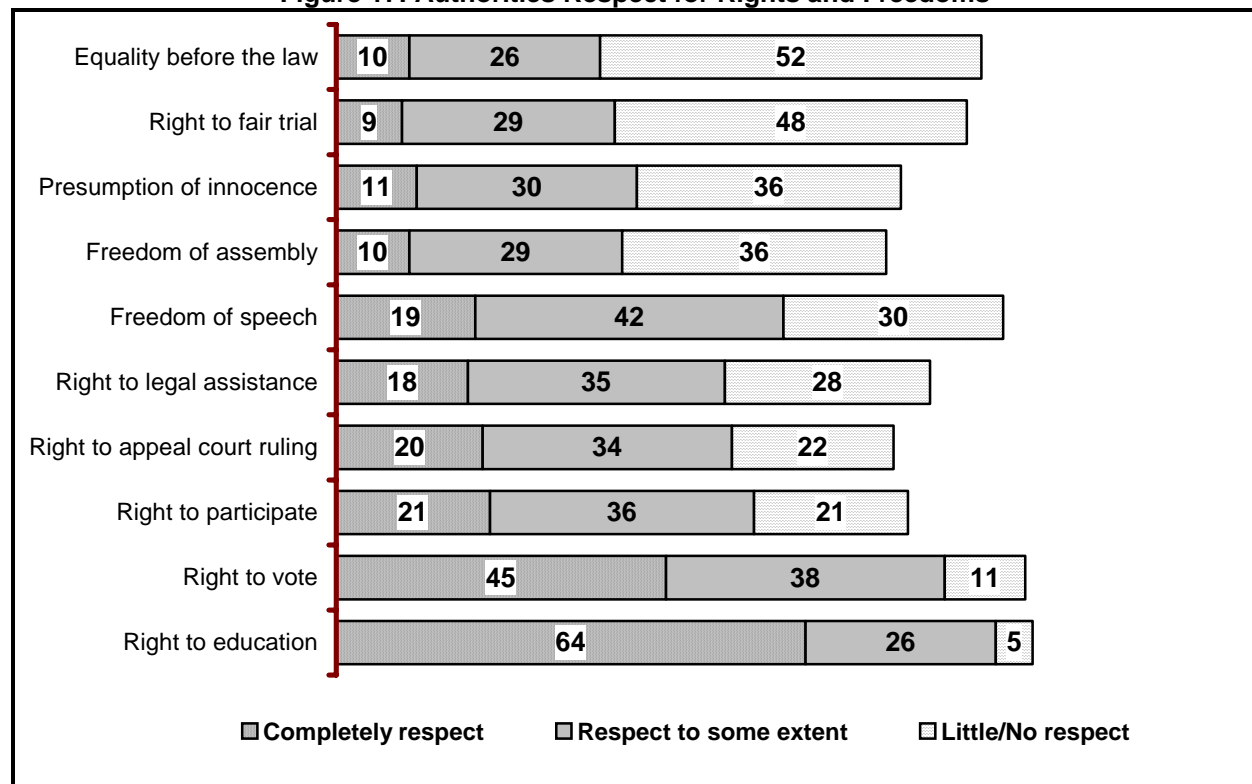
It is significant that core democratic principles such as freedoms and equality before the law are mentioned the most when Azerbaijani citizens reflect on the meaning of democracy, and may account for the declining perception that Azerbaijan is a democracy. The importance of freedoms can also be ascertained by responses to another question on the survey. On this question, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a statement that said that in order to establish order and discipline in society, it is necessary to limit the political and civil rights of people. Roughly two-thirds (67%) of Azerbaijani citizens disagree with this statement, while fewer than one out of five (17%) agree that it is necessary to limit political and civil rights of people to establish order and discipline. Opinion on this question has remained consistent throughout the previous IFES surveys in Azerbaijan.

Respect for right and freedoms and Azerbaijan: Respondents on this survey were given a list of ten political, legal, and social rights that are normally guaranteed in a democracy and asked for their opinion on whether these rights and freedoms should be guaranteed in a democracy. For each of the rights and freedoms listed, 87% or more say that these rights and freedoms should be guaranteed in a democracy.

For each right and freedom that respondents thought should be guaranteed in a democracy, the respondents were next asked to rate the extent to which this right or freedom was respected in Azerbaijan. The responses indicate that Azerbaijanis think that few rights are completely respected in Azerbaijan, and that some legal and political rights are less likely to be respected by the authorities in the country (Figure 17).¹⁷

¹⁶ Question Text: "Could you tell me what it means to you to live in a democracy?" (n = 1400)

¹⁷ Question Text: "Listed on this card are several rights and freedoms. How much are these rights or freedoms respected by the authorities in Azerbaijan?" (n= 1400)

Figure 17: Authorities Respect for Rights and Freedoms

Less than half of Azerbaijani citizens (45%) say that the authorities in Azerbaijan completely respect the right to vote and even fewer (21%) say that the authorities completely respect the right to participate in politics. Roughly seven out of ten (72%) Azerbaijani citizens say that the authorities have only some respect or no respect for freedom of speech. A majority of respondents also says that authorities in Azerbaijan have only some or no respect for freedom of assembly (65%), with specifically 29% saying that the authorities respect this right to an extent and 36% saying that there is little or no respect by the authorities.

Considering the lack of confidence in the judicial system by Azerbaijani citizens, only minorities of respondents think that the authorities have complete respect for certain judicial rights granted to citizens of a democracy. Two out of five respondents say that the authorities completely respect a citizen's right to appeal a court ruling (20%) and right to have legal assistance (18%). Even fewer (11%) think that the authorities have complete respect for the right for a defendant to be presumed innocent until they are found guilty.

There are additional concerns regarding basic legal rights. Roughly half of Azerbaijani citizens say that the authorities have little or no respect for the right to a fair trial (48%), while only 9% say that the authorities completely respect this right. Similarly, 52% of Azerbaijani citizens say that the authorities do not respect a citizen's right to have equality before the law, and another 26% say that the authorities only somewhat respect this right. Given these findings, it is not surprising that there is little confidence in the neutrality of the judicial system in Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani citizens dissatisfied with judicial system: As was the case in the 2005 IFES survey in Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani citizens remain dissatisfied with the judicial system in the country. Six out of ten Azerbaijani citizens (60%) disagree that the judicial system in Azerbaijan is unbiased and applies the law equally for all people, while only 23% agree with this statement. Significantly, this low opinion of the judicial system does have an affect on opinions of Azerbaijani democracy. Respondents who disagree

with the statement that the judicial system is unbiased are far more likely to say that Azerbaijan is not a democracy than those who agree with this statement (36% vs. 4%).

The perceived lack of respect by the authorities for basic judicial rights has an impact on respondents' lack of confidence that the judiciary is both unbiased. Respondents who say that the authorities have little or no respect for the citizen's right to have equality before the law are more likely to have little confidence in the courts than those that say the authorities do respect this right (83% vs. 40%). Furthermore, respondents who say that the authorities have little or no respect for the right to a fair trial are more likely to disagree that the judiciary is unbiased and impartial than those that say the authorities respect this right (87% vs. 35%).

Respondents to this year's survey were also asked whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements about lawyers in Azerbaijan. The findings from this series of questions show that a majority of Azerbaijani citizens believe that lawyers have adequate training to effectively represent their clients but that there are significant concerns on other issues (Figure 18).¹⁸

Figure 18. Opinions about Lawyers in Azerbaijan



A majority of Azerbaijani citizens (57%) believe that lawyers in Azerbaijan have adequate training to effectively represent their clients, while 26% disagree with this statement. This positive evaluation is offset by concerns about whether lawyers have the ability to protect their clients from unjust treatment from the state. Almost four out of ten (38%) disagree that lawyers in Azerbaijan have the ability to protect their clients from unjust treatment, but a similar percentage agree with this statement (37%). A quarter of respondents (25%) do not provide a response.

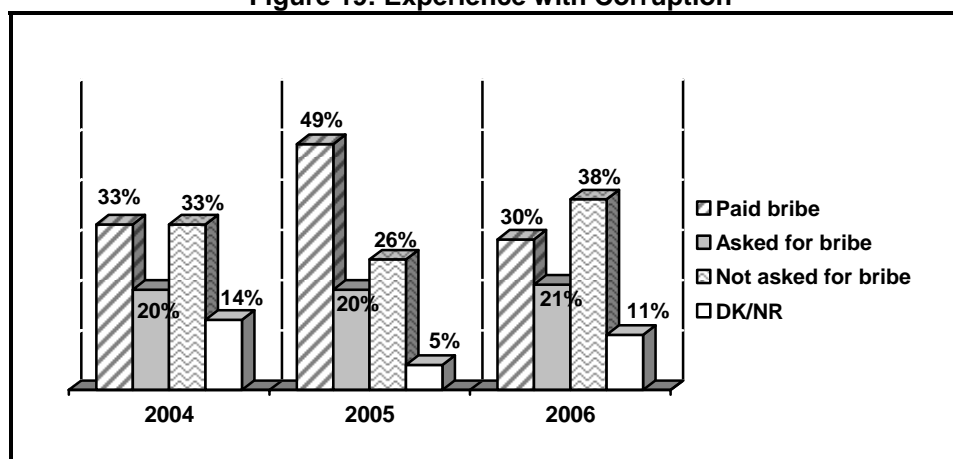
There are also a significant percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who express concerns with the opportunities afforded to women and minorities in obtaining employment as a lawyer. While a plurality (40%) agrees that minorities do not have any problems obtaining employment as a lawyer, only slightly fewer (28%) disagree with this statement. Similarly, around four out of ten (38%) agree that women do not have any problems obtaining employment as a lawyer, but a roughly equal percentage (36%) disagrees with this statement. It should be noted that there is not a significant difference in the opinions of men and women on whether women have problems obtaining employment as lawyers, signaling that men are just as likely to be concerned on this issue as women.

¹⁸ Question Text: "I will now read you some statements about lawyers in Azerbaijan. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with these statements." (n=1400)

Most Azerbaijani citizens say corruption is common: Data earlier in this report showed that corruption is an issue that is cited by a large percentage of respondents as one of the biggest problems facing Azerbaijan today. The significance of corruption as a big problem can be judged by that fact that the vast majority of Azerbaijani citizens say that corruption is very or somewhat common in Azerbaijan. In this survey, a majority (76%) of Azerbaijani citizens believe that corruption in Azerbaijan common, with 42% saying it is very common and 34% saying it is somewhat common. Only roughly one out of ten (12%) believe that corruption in Azerbaijan is somewhat or very rare.

Since 2004, survey respondents have been asked whether they have ever paid a bribe to a public official. If respondents had never paid a bribe, they were asked whether they were ever asked for a bribe. The percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who have paid a bribe has decreased since last year. (Figure 19)¹⁹

Figure 19: Experience with Corruption



Reported paying of bribes has gone through an up and down pattern on IFES surveys since 2004. In 2004, 33% reporting having paid bribes in the past. In 2005, this figure jumped to 49% and has dropped to 30% in this year's survey, roughly equivalent to the figure in 2004. Another one out of five (21%) say they have been asked for a bribe in the past by a public official (same in 2005). One reason for the decrease in reported paying of bribes may be because of the re-emergence of a rural-urban divide on this issue that was not evident in the 2005 survey. In 2005, similar percentages of rural and urban residents indicated that they had paid bribes in the past. In this year's survey, urban residents are more likely to say they have paid a bribe than those in rural areas (36% versus 24%). Still, even in the case of urban residents the percentage saying they have paid a bribe has declined significantly since the 2005 survey.

Medical services most mentioned reason for paying a bribe: Those who reported paying bribes say that obtaining various government services was the major reason for them paying a bribe. Paying a bribe for medical services continues to be most often mentioned by respondents (11% in 2006; 18% in 2005; 12% in 2004). Paying for education is also another major reason for Azerbaijani citizens to pay a bribe (8% in 2006; 12% in 2005; 6% in 2004). The dramatic increase between 2004 and 2005 (1% to 9%) in payments for a passport and other official documents has subsided in 2006 as only 2% report paying a bribe for this purpose. The following were the major reasons mentioned for paying bribes in this year's survey:

- Medical services (11%)
- For grades at school/university (8%)
- Obtain passport/official documents (2%)

¹⁹ Question Text: "Question Text: "Remembering this is a confidential survey and your responses will never be revealed, can you tell me if you have ever paid a bribe to a public official to obtain a service or avoid a fine?" (n=1400) "Have you ever been asked for a bribe by a public official?" (n=983)

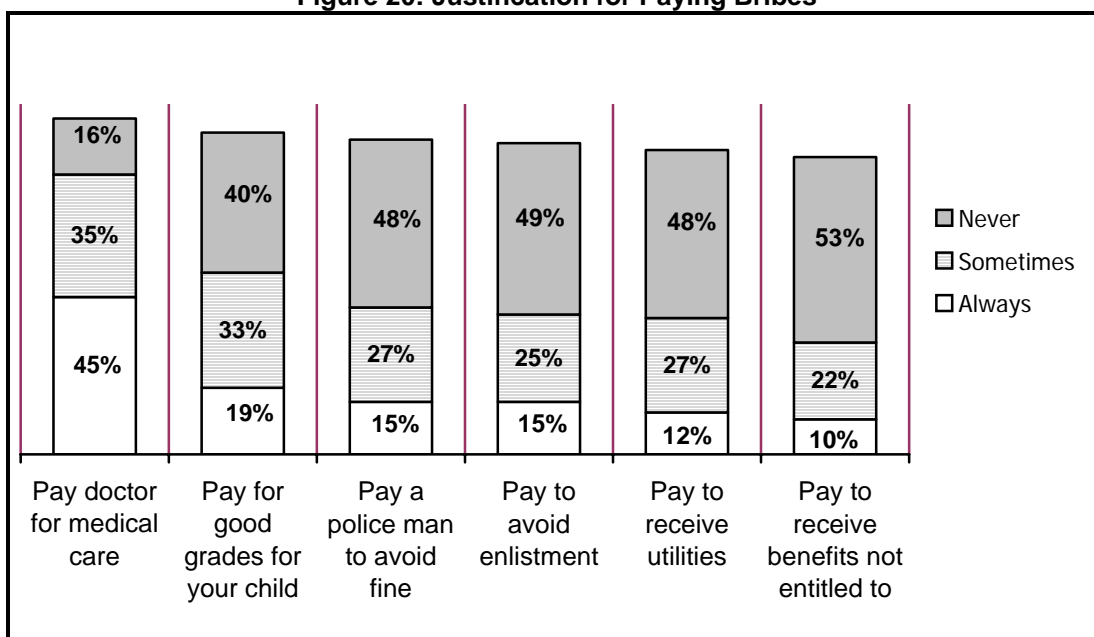
- Obtain pension (2%)
- Obtain employment (2%)
- To avoid traffic fine (2%)

Respondents who reported paying or being asked for a bribe were asked to name the public agency that employed the official asking for the bribe. Roughly four out of ten (38%) mentioned a public health institution, one-quarter (25%) cite schools or universities, 17% cite the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 7% cite Housing and Communal Services, and 6% cite the Ministry of Defense.

Justification for Paying Bribes:

Due to the high incidence of paying or being asked for bribes for services such as medical care and education that are nominally provided free of charge by the government, a significant percentage of Azerbaijani citizens believe that it is always or sometimes justified to pay bribes for these services. (Figure 20)²⁰

Figure 20: Justification for Paying Bribes



Consistent with previous years, a majority of Azerbaijani citizens think it is always or sometimes justified to pay bribes for government services which the survey data indicates are major sources of corruption in the country. Eighty percent of Azerbaijani citizens believe it is always or sometimes justified to pay bribes for medical care, while 52% believes that it is always or somewhat justified to pay for grades at school or university.

There is less acceptance for paying bribes for other acts that are not common services such as medical care and education. A majority of Azerbaijani citizens believe it is never justified to pay bribes to receive government benefits to which one is not entitled, and almost half have the same opinion on paying bribes to a policeman to avoid a fine, to avoid enlistment in the armed forces, and to receive utilities.

²⁰ Question Text: “I will read to you some actions that may be taken by people in Azerbaijan. Can you tell me if each of these actions are never justified, sometimes justified, or never justified?” (n=1400)

V. LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Executive Authority still preferred method of contact with local government: Azerbaijani citizens can turn to two separate institutions to address issues at the local level: their appointed Executive Authority or their elected Municipal Council. When respondents were asked who they would approach first to solve a problem that requires help at the local-level, the Executive Authority or the head of their municipal council, more Azerbaijani citizens say they would approach the Executive Authority than the municipal councils, 28% vs. 6%. This finding is similar to data from the 2005 survey when 38% listed their Executive Authority versus the 12% who listed the head of their municipal council. The lack of identification with the municipal councils has been a consistent finding in IFES surveys since 2002.

Fewer than one-quarter (22%) say they would approach both bodies equally to solve a problem that requires the help of a local-level body. On the other hand, a plurality of respondents (35%) says they would approach neither body to solve a problem at the local-level. Urban respondents are more likely to say they would not approach either body than rural respondents, 41% vs. 27%.

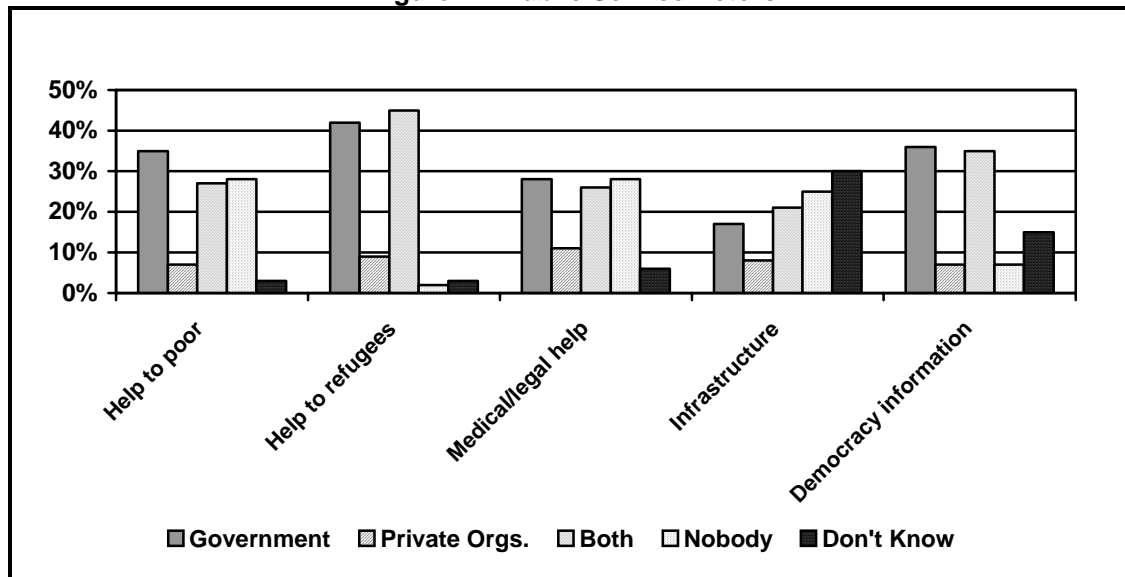
Slight Decrease in the Visibility of Public Service Activities: The past two IFES surveys have seen a decline in the percentage of Azerbaijani citizens who say that charitable or public service activities that are carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are common. This trend continues in this survey, with roughly three out of ten (29%) respondents saying that charitable or public service activities are very or somewhat common in Azerbaijan, compared to 35% in 2005 and 43% in 2004.

About a quarter of respondents (24%) say that these types of activities are not very common, while a plurality (34%) think they are not common at all or that they do not happen in Azerbaijan. In previous IFES surveys, respondents living in areas for people displaced due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were more likely to think these types of activities are common than those who do not live in these camps. In this survey, however, there is little difference in opinions between the displaced population and others, signaling a possible reduction of NGO activities for this particular population.

Those who thought that charitable or public service activities take place in Azerbaijan, were next asked whether they think that the government, private organizations, or both undertake certain types of activities. For each type of activity listed, more respondents think that the government undertakes the activity than the percentage that mention NGOs, although many respondents do say that both the government and NGOs are responsible for undertaking the activities. (Figure 21)²¹

²¹ Question Text: "And for each of the following types of activities, what organization do you think undertakes the activity: the government, private organizations, or both?" (n=783)

Figure 21. Public Service Actors



When it comes to providing help for the poor, a plurality of respondents (35%) say that the government undertakes this activity, but very few (7%) says that private organizations solely undertake this activity. Providing help to refugees is thought to be carried out by both the government and private organizations according to a plurality of respondents (45%), but a large percentage (42%) also say the government exclusively provides help to refugees. Only 9% say that private organizations exclusively provide this type of assistance.

Interestingly, over one-third (36%) of respondents say that the government provides information on democracy and elections, while a roughly equal percentage say that this information is provided by both the government and private organizations (35%). Only 7% believe that private organizations exclusively provide such information.

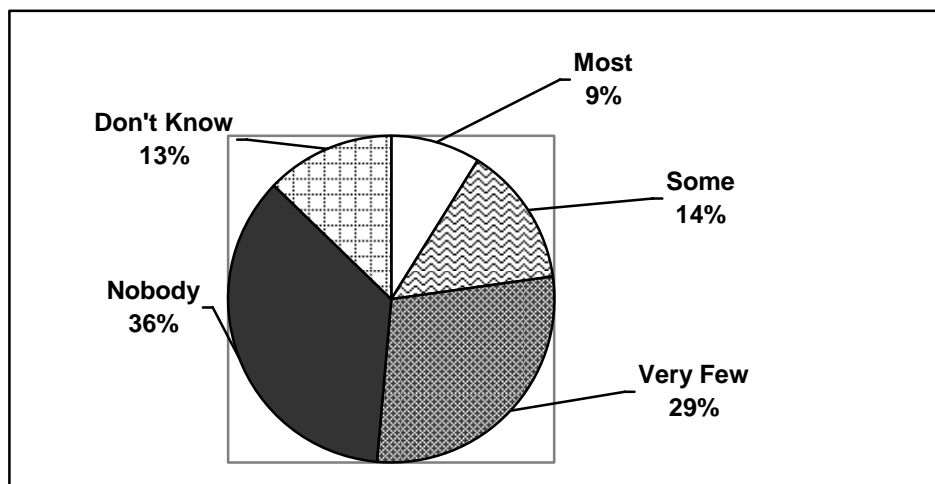
Respondents are generally less sure about the source of medical or legal help, as well as infrastructure aid for local communities. Roughly three out of ten (28%) say that the government solely provides medical or legal help, with a roughly equal percentage saying that it comes from both private organizations and the government (26%). At the same time, 28% of respondents say that nobody provides medical or legal aid in Azerbaijan. In the case of aid for infrastructure, more than half of the respondents either do not know who provides help with infrastructure for local communities (27%), or say that nobody provides this assistance (25%).

Citizen Responsibilities: When asked whether Azerbaijani citizens have a responsibility to always, sometimes, or never take certain actions that could be mandatory or expected of citizens in a democracy, less than a majority in each case thinks that it is always the responsibility of Azerbaijani citizens to take these actions. This is even the case for two actions that are normally mandated for citizens of any democracy, following the law and paying taxes. Only a third (33%) think that Azerbaijani citizens have a responsibility to always pay taxes, while 47% say that this responsibility should be followed only some of the time. Seven percent say it is never the responsibility of citizens to pay taxes. When it comes to following the law, slightly fewer than one-third (36%) say that Azerbaijani citizens should always obey the law, while 48% think that this responsibility should be followed only some of the time. One out of ten (11%) think that Azerbaijani citizens never need to follow the law. Significantly, respondents who say that Azerbaijan is not a democracy are more likely to say that it is only sometimes a citizen's responsibility to pay taxes or follow the law than those that say it is always a citizen's responsibility, (pay taxes: 52% vs. 22%; follow the law: 55% vs. 22%).

Respondents share a similar opinion for citizen's responsibilities that are not mandated, but considered to be part of a citizen's civic duty in any democracy. One-third of Azerbaijani citizens say that it is always a citizen's responsibility to protect the environment (33%), while 43% think it is only their responsibility sometimes. On the other hand, two out of five (20%) say that it is never a citizen's responsibility to protect the environment. In addition, when asked about protecting cultural and historical monuments, 37% say that it is always a citizen's responsibility to protect these monuments, and roughly an equal percentage say that it is only sometimes their responsibility (37%). Seventeen percent think that citizens never have the responsibility to protect cultural and historical monuments.

Awareness of NGOs in communities is low: Of respondents who think that charitable or public service activities exist, very few say that most or some people in their community are aware of NGOs. A minority of respondents (9%) say most people in their community are aware of NGOs with only slightly more (14%) saying that at least some are aware of NGOs. Roughly three out of ten (29%) say that very few in their community are aware of NGOs, and over one-third (36%) say that no one in their community is aware of NGOs. These responses are not significantly different from responses in 2004 and 2005. (Figure 22)²²

Figure 22. Awareness of NGOs in communities



Respondents who moved due to the Karabakh conflict are more likely to say that most or some in their community are aware of NGOs than those who moved for other reasons. A majority of respondents in Mil-Karabakh (64%) and Shirvan (58%) say that at least some people in their community are aware of NGOs.

As in previous years, the Red Cross/Red Crescent continues to be the most well-known NGO (9%). Other NGOs mentioned include Nidjad (4%), Hamid Society (2%), Ahmed Society (2%) and UNICEF (2%).

Despite the low awareness of NGOs in respondents' communities, slightly less than half believe that NGOs in Azerbaijan are necessary. Of respondents who say that charitable or public service activities exist, a majority (68%) say that NGOs in Azerbaijan are necessary, with specifically 33% saying they are essential and 35% saying they are very necessary. These figures are roughly similar to data from previous surveys.

Of those who are aware of charitable or public service activities, very few would volunteer their time to a NGO. Roughly one out of ten (12%) say they would definitely be willing to volunteer some of their time to a NGO without pay. Around one-third (34%) say they may be willing but over four out of ten (44%) say they would not be willing to volunteer their time.

²² Question Text: "How many people in your community do you think are aware of these types of organizations, most of them, some of them, or very few of them?" (n= 968)

Just as few Azerbaijani citizens are interested in volunteering for a public institution in their neighborhood as for NGOs. Only 15% say they would definitely be willing to volunteer their time to a public institution in their neighborhood and over twice as much (38%) may be willing to volunteer some of their time. But, over four out of ten (43%) say they would not be willing to volunteer their time to a public institution in their neighborhood.

VI. OPINIONS ON WOMEN’S STATUS IN AZERBAIJAN

Women’s Status in Azerbaijan: The IFES surveys over the past three years have tracked Azerbaijanis’ opinions on the rights and opportunities available to women in Azerbaijan. Data from this year’s survey is similar to data in previous surveys which shows that while most Azerbaijani citizens believe that women have the same basic rights as men, there are specific areas such as business and politics where a significant percentage of Azerbaijanis believe that women lack the same level of opportunities as men.

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement: “Women in Azerbaijan enjoy the same basic rights as men.”

As in previous surveys, a majority of Azerbaijanis agree that women do enjoy the same basic rights as men. Sixty percent agree that women have the same basic rights as men, while 32% disagree with this statement. Women are slightly less likely to agree with this statement than men (64% versus 56%), a finding evident on the 2005 IFES survey as well.

Respondents on the survey were also asked to assess whether women have greater, the same, or lesser opportunities in several areas of life. Findings from this question are presented in (Figure 25).²³

Figure 25. Opportunity for Women Compared to Men

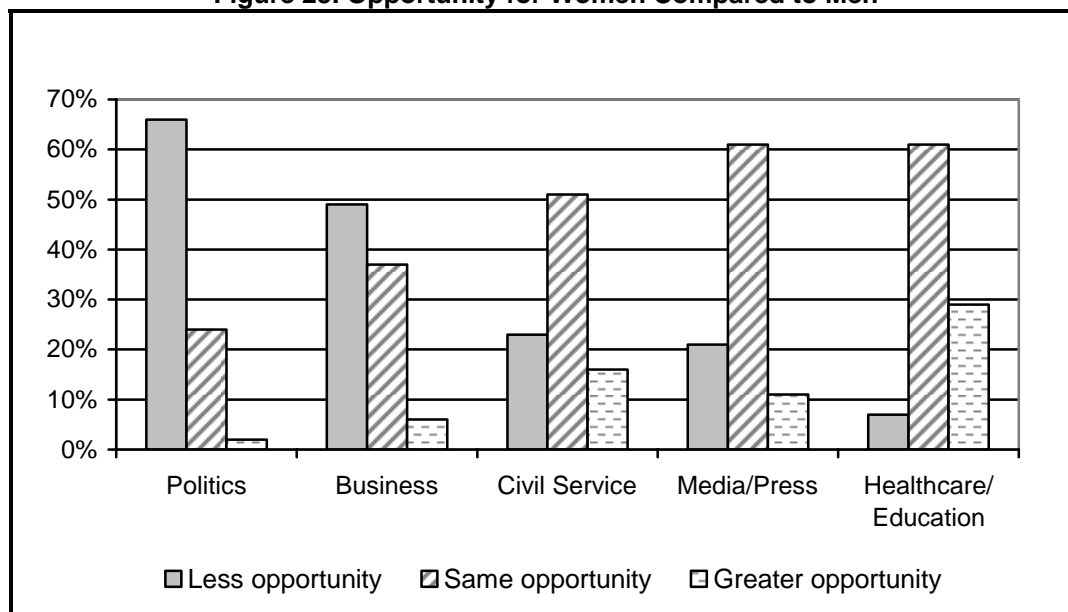


Figure 25 indicates women are perceived by a more than six in ten to have similar level of opportunities as men in the healthcare/education and media sectors. Just slightly more than half believe that women have similar level of opportunity as men in the civil service, but 23% also believe that women have less opportunity than men in the civil service.

The two areas in which a majority or significant percentage of Azerbaijani citizens believe that women have less opportunity than women is in the areas of politics (66%) and business (49%). This finding is roughly similar to the findings from the 2005 survey in Azerbaijan, and reflects the lack of opportunities available to women in areas of life that could allow them to wield significant influence in the country.

²³ Question Text: “Listed below are some areas of life in Azerbaijan. In your opinion, for each of these areas, do women have the less opportunity than men, greater opportunity than men, or the same level of opportunity as men?” (n=1400)

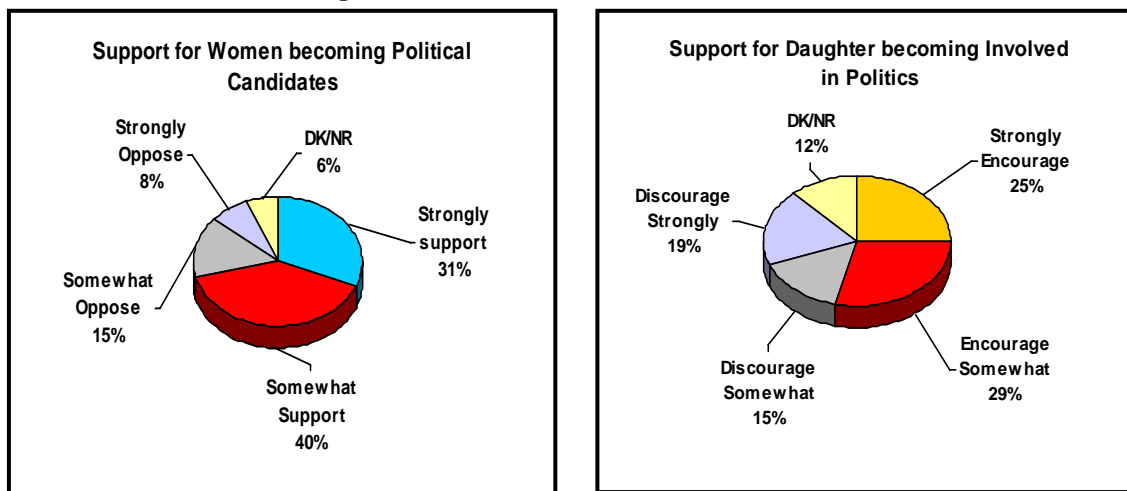
Women are slightly more likely than men to say that women have less opportunity in these particular areas.

Respondents were also asked whether it is good for Azerbaijani society that many women work. Most Azerbaijani citizens (62%) think that the fact that women work is good for Azerbaijani society, 26% think it makes no difference on society if a woman works or not, while 10% think that the fact that women work is a bad thing for society. There is a large difference in attitudes between men and women on responses to this question. Among women, 73% believe that that fact that women work is a good thing for society, compared to 50% who have this opinion among men.

Women and Politics: There is also a significant difference between men and women in their opinions toward women’s involvement in politics. When respondents are asked how strongly they support or do not support women becoming involved in politics as candidates, men are more likely to oppose this than women. Among men, 64% support women as candidates while 31% opposes this. Among women, 78% support women as candidates while 17% do not support this. It should be noted that the percentage of support for women’s involvement in politics has gone up since the 2005 IFES survey among both men (55% 2005, 64% 2006) and women (70% 2005, 78% 2006).

When respondents are asked whether they would support their daughter (if they have one, or supposing they have one) if she decided to run for office, a majority of women (62%) say that they would support their daughter while 26% of women say they would oppose this. There is much more a split in opinions among men. Among men, 45% say that they would support their daughter in running for political office, while 43% say they would oppose this. (Figure 26)²⁴

Figure 26. Attitudes on Women and Politics



²⁴ Question Text:

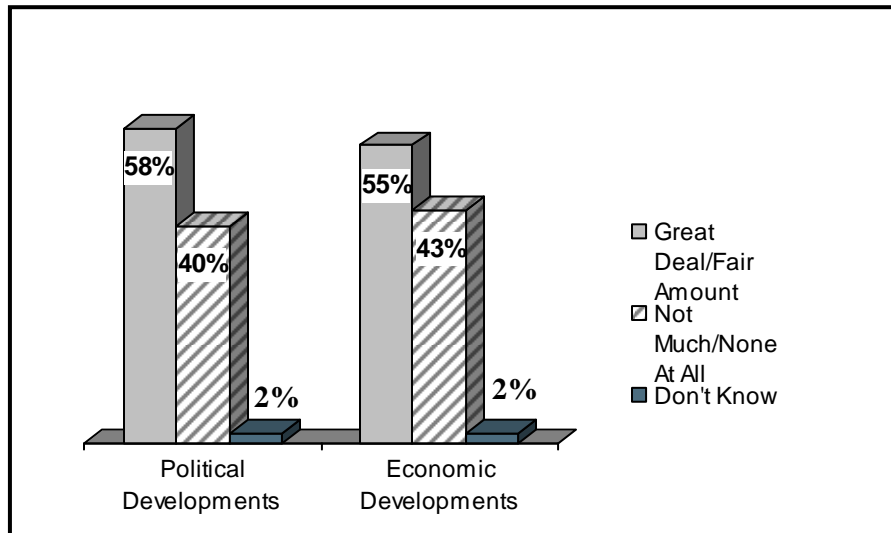
“Do you support women becoming involved in politics as candidates for office?” (n= 1400)

“Please tell whether you would encourage your daughter (if you have one, or supposing you have on) to become involved in politics as a candidate? (n= 1400)

VII. INFORMATION AND MEDIA

Information About Political and Economic Developments: Consistent with results from 2005, a majority of respondents say they have information on economic and political developments in Azerbaijan. (Figure 27)²⁵

Figure 27: Information on Political and Economic Developments



Roughly six out of ten respondents (58%) say that they have at least a fair amount of information on political developments. A majority of Azerbaijanis feel similarly about the amount of information they have on economic developments. Fifty-five percent say they have at least a fair amount of information on economic developments.

Men are more likely to say that they have information on political and economic developments than women. Majorities of men say that they have at least a fair amount of information on political developments (71%) and economic developments (66%). Only a minority of women say that they have information on political developments (46%) and economic developments (46%).

Respondents in the youngest (18-25) and oldest (56+) age groups are more likely to say that they have little information on political and economic developments. Of those respondents between 18-25 years of age, 55% say that they have little information on political developments and a roughly equal percentage say that they have little information on economic developments. A similar percentage of respondents 56 years of age and older say they have little information on economic (54%) and political developments (51%).

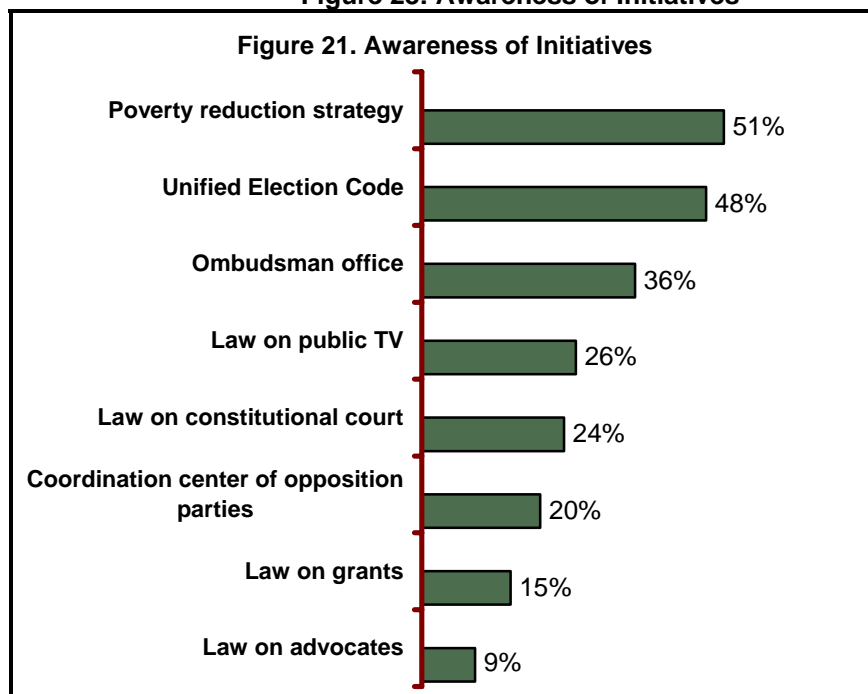
There remains little difference among urban and rural residents and how much information they have on political and economic developments. Majorities of urban and rural residents continue to say they have information on political and economic developments. Around 59% of rural residents and 57% of urban residents say they have at least a fair amount of information on political developments. Similarly, majorities of rural (56%) and urban residents (54%) say they have at least a fair amount of information on economic developments.

Even though a majority of Azerbaijanis say that they have at least a fair amount of information on political developments, there is a broad lack of awareness of several public initiatives. Respondents in each of the IFES surveys in Azerbaijan have been asked whether they had heard of several important political

²⁵ Question Text: "To begin, could you tell me how much information you have about political developments in Azerbaijan?" (n=1400)
 "And how much information do you have about economic developments in Azerbaijan?" (n=1400)

initiatives. Consistent with IFES' 2005 results, only the Poverty Reduction Strategy received recognition by a slim majority (51%) of respondents. (Figure 28)²⁶

Figure 28: Awareness of Initiatives



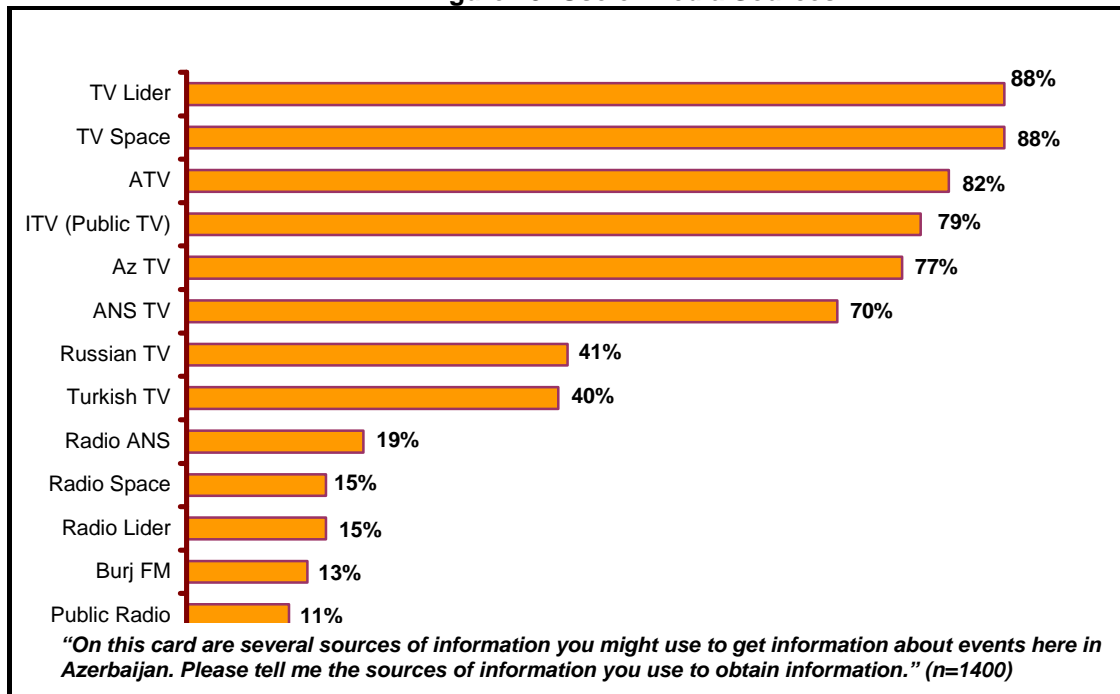
Besides the Poverty Reduction Strategy, only a minority of respondents were aware of each of the other initiatives. Almost half (48%) say they are aware of the Unified Election Code and slightly fewer (36%) are aware of the Ombudsman's office. Roughly one-quarter say that they are aware of the Law on public TV (26%) and the Law on the constitutional court (24%). Even fewer claim to know about the Coordination center of opposition parties (20%), the Law on grants (15%), and the Law on advocates (9%).

Frequently Used Media Sources: The lack of perceived information on political and economic developments among a significant percentage of Azerbaijanis is not for a lack of available sources of information. Indeed, since 2004, a strong majority of respondents report using four or more specific media outlets. Furthermore, respondents who use several media outlets to obtain information are more likely to say they have information on political and economic developments than those who only use a few sources for information. In 2006, almost nine out of ten (87%) respondents report using four or more media outlets to obtain information (89% in 2005; 75% in 2005). The most popular media outlets for information about events in Azerbaijan tend to be television channels. (Figure 29)²⁷

²⁶ Question Text: "Have you heard of the following issues or activities?" (n=1400)

²⁷ Question Text: "Please tell me the sources of information you use to obtain information." (n =1400)

Figure 29: Use of Media Sources



Television channels such as TV Lider (88%), TV Space (88%) and ATV (82%) are most often used by respondents to obtain information.

After television, few respondents use radio to obtain information. Fewer than one out of five respondents report using Radio ANS (19%), Radio Space (15%) and Radio Lider (15%) to obtain information. Even fewer say they use Burj FM (13%).

Only a handful of Azerbaijanis look to newspapers as a major source of information. The most often-mentioned newspapers are *Yeni Musavat* (5%), *Zerkalo* (5%), *Azadlig* (4%), *Azerbaijan* (4%), and *Echo* (4%). Other print media to receive some mention include *Khalg* (3%) and *Okhy Myani* (3%).

Objectivity of Media in Azerbaijan: While Azerbaijanis generally do not lack for sources of information, they continue to be wary of the objectivity of these media sources. Consistent with previous year's surveys, roughly one out of ten (9%) respondents strongly agrees that the media in Azerbaijan provides objective coverage of the social and political developments. A slim majority (51%) somewhat agrees with this statement.

When respondents were asked to identify what proportion of the media provides objective coverage, few say most of the media. Only 15% say most of the media provides objective coverage, while roughly half (51%) say that only some of the media provides objective coverage.

Considering that most Azerbaijanis turn to television to obtain information, it is not surprising that most respondents say they are more likely to trust broadcast media over print and other forms of media to provide objective coverage of events in Azerbaijan. A strong majority of respondents (83%) say they are more likely to trust broadcast media over print media. Fewer respondents say they are likely to trust none of the sources (6%), while others do put their trust in the Internet (4%), print media (2%) and radio (2%).

Independence of the media: Over the last months of 2006, the authorities in Azerbaijan have had stepped up pressure on media outlets with the detention of several journalists and the temporary closure of the ANS television network. This survey was mainly fielded before most of these events and thus does not reflect public opinion based on the events. Still, the survey data indicates that many Azerbaijanis

believe that private media in the country is somewhat or completely controlled by the state. Only 8% say the TV and radio stations in Azerbaijan not owned by the state are completely independent, with 32% saying that the stations are somewhat independent. Over four of ten (43%) respondents think that private television and radio stations in Azerbaijan are somewhat or completely controlled, with a further 4% who think that all TV and radio is owned by the state. Slightly more respondents have confidence in the private media to provide objective information on financial aspects than the state media (45% vs. 40%, respectively).

Respondents have a similar opinion on the increasing influence of the government on private print media outlets. Roughly four out of ten (39%) think that the private newspapers and magazines are somewhat or completely controlled by the government, while an equal percentage think that private newspapers and magazines are completely or somewhat independent (38%).