

# CITIZEN RESPONSE TO ELECTORAL PROMISES AND POLITICAL PROGRAMS

REAGIMI QYTETAR  
NDAJ PREMTIMEVE  
ELEKTORALE DHE  
PROGRAMEVE  
QEVERISËSE

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# **Citizen response to electoral promises and political programs**

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## **Reagimi qytetar ndaj premtimeve elektorale dhe programeve qeverisëse**

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## Abstract

(ENGLISH) In the last political elections for the Assembly in the period 2009-2021, there is a decrease in the number of citizens participating in the elections. Meanwhile, voters for the left party have an increase, which seems to come at a consistent level, voters for the right party appear with ups and downs and lack of consistency. In this model of political system, small parties are safety valves for the two big parties, enabling their survival, leaving no opportunities and resources for them to compete with the big parties.

Political parties in Albania (especially big parties) have not been analyzed and judged by vote in their entirety to review the responsibility towards non-fulfillment of promises or deviation from promises when running the government. The main reason lies precisely in the bipartisan political system, in a fragile model of democracy, where control and balances of power are weak. Another reason that has dictated this approach is found in other factors that are considered by undecided voters and clientelist voters, who do not condition their vote with economic information.

From the perspective of reasoning for the undecided voter, the accountability mechanism has not worked and is worse than it used to be. This finding is seen in the decrease in the number of voters in general from one election to another.

For today's parties, all targeted voters are precisely these two categories (undecided and clientelist voters), which support a party based on a personal approach and not an ideological one. But these categories also pose the greatest risk if the governing mandate is not consumed as promised, as they can hold the government accountable louder than the category of ideological voters.

Electoral promises have not yet become a full object of analysis and debate to be considered as genuine commitments in party programs to carry out certain policies and achieve certain goals. But the activation of civil society with a growing role of analysis and expertise in the last decade seems to have helped shape social and political capital and advocate for controversial issues that need ongoing information accompanied by analysis.

The future motto of civil society could be *“A well-informed and politically mobilized electorate is more important than the level of economic development to ensure good governance”*.

## Përmbledhje

(ALBANIAN) Në zgjedhjet për Kuvendin në periudhën 2009 -2021 ka ulje të numrit të pjesëmarrjes së qytetarëve në votime. Ndërkohë, votuesit për partinë e majtë kanë rritje, e cila duket se vjen në një nivel konsistent, votuesit për partinë e djathtë paraqiten me ulje-ngritje dhe mungesë konsistence. Në këtë model sistemi politik, partitë e vogla shihen si valvola sigurie për dy partitë e mëdha, duke mundësuar mbijetesën e tyre, pa lënë mundësi dhe burime që ato të konkurojnë partitë e mëdha.

Partitë politike në Shqipëri (veçanërisht partitë e mëdha) nuk janë analizuar e gjykuar me votë në tërësinë e tyre për rishikimin e përgjegjësisë që drejtim të mosmbajtjes së premtimeve apo devijimit nga premtimet kur drejtojnë qeverinë. Arsyja kryesore gjendet pikërisht te sistemi politik dypartiak, në një model demokracie të brishtë, ku kontrolli dhe balancat e pushtetit janë të dobëta. Një arsye tjetër, që ka diktuar këtë qasje gjendet edhe te faktorë të tjerë që merren në konsideratë nga votuesit e pavendosur dhe ata klientelistë, të cilët nuk e kushtëzojnë votën e tyre me informacionin ekonomik.

Nga perspektiva e arsytimit për votuesin e pavendosur, mekanizmi i llogaridhënies nuk ka funksionuar dhe është më keq sesa ishte më parë. Kjo gjetje shihet në uljen e numrit të votuesve në përgjithësi nga njëra zgjedhje në tjetrën.

Për partitë e sotme, të gjithë votuesit e synuar janë pikërisht këto dy kategori, që mbështesin një parti duke u nisur nga qasje personale dhe jo ajo ideologjike. Por, gjithashtu këto kategori përbëjnë edhe rrishtje më të madh nëse mandati qeverisës nuk është konsumuar ashtu si është premtuar, pasi ata mund t'i kërkojnë llogari qeverisë me zë më të fortë se kategoria e votuesve ideologjikë.

Ndërsa partitë janë në opozitë kanë tendencën të rritin sasinë e premtimeve për politika tatimore zbutëse dhe angazhime politikash për grupe interesi specifike (pronarët e tokave, ushtarakët, minatorët, etj). Ndërsa partitë fitojnë mandatin për të qeverisur, premtimet elektorale janë të natyrës buxhetore, por pa harruar të përmendin si vijimësi të politikave tatimore, shtim buxhetesh për sektorët, por në fakt janë vetëm për efekt konkurrence elektorale.

Premtimet zgjedhore nuk janë bërë ende edhe sot një objekt i plotë analize dhe debati për ti konsideruar mirëfilli, si angazhime themeltare në programet e partive për të kryer politika të caktuara dhe për të arritur qëllime të caktuara. Por, aktivizimi i shoqërisë civile me një rol analize dhe ekspertize në rritje në dekadën e fundit duket se ka ndihmuar në formimin e kapitalit shoqëror dhe politik dhe advokimin e problematikave dhe çështjeve të diskutueshme dhe që kanë nevojë për informacion të vazhdueshëm të shoqëruar me analiza.

Motoja e ardhme e shoqërisë civile munde të ishte *“Një elektorat i mirë informuar dhe i mobilizuar politikisht ka më shumë rëndësi se niveli i zhvillimit ekonomik për të siguruar një qeverisje të mirë”*.

## Introduction

(ENGLISH) There is a sense that projects to help ordinary people are a thing of the past. Many citizens say they have lost faith in the government and believe that it has an unacceptable level of fulfillment of electoral promises.

Experience and interactions with the government also influence current perceptions of its performance. Because it is difficult to reach national government officials, citizen attitudes are most likely a function of interactions with local officials and low levels of central institutions.

In this political environment where public institutions have managed to open electronically, but without being perceived as an opening that enables the final addressing of the solution of their demands, citizens see the voting moment as the main opportunity to get closer to the government, because it is one of the few actions that is encouraged and de facto sanctioned by the government.

Citizens see voting as the main opportunity to engage with the government because it is one of few actions that is encouraged and officially sanctioned by the government. Citizens repeatedly mentioned several motivations for voting in elections, but mostly they motivate the vote as (a) responsibility, (b) possibility to achieve change, (d) as a rule of liberal democracy to go ahead, and (e) to punish bad leaders.

Although we have a good sense of the common reason's citizens verbalize for voting, there are likely underlying motivations that people are not able to consciously observe or articulate. For example, social pressure from communities and networks plays a significant role in driving the decision to vote, especially among poorer citizens.

Accountability in two-party political system can be explored using a simple model from elections of 2021. As a matter of fact, in a political election with a single round where the parties compete on a left-right ideological dimension, theoretically the party that positions its policies closest to the median voter will win. The winning party will possess a political legal mandate to implement its policies in future government. However, political accountability entails a retrospective judgment about what parties have previously done in office. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate a retrospective element also into the people judgment. That can be done by introducing a pre- and post-election analysis in the government's policy position.

Such analysis is entirely feasible under actual political system, because facilitate real understanding of 'strong government'. That is, a government that can use its majority status to take full control of the legislative agenda, less likely to worry about possible repercussions until the following election, which may be years away.

## Hyrje

(ALBANIAN) Ekziston një perceptim i gjerë se projektet e sotme për të ndihmuar njerëzit e zakonshëm janë një gjë e së kaluarës. Shumë qytetarë shprehen se e kanë humbur besimin tek qeverisja dhe besojnë se ajo është me një nivel jo të pranueshëm të përmbushjes së premtimeve elektorale.

Përvoja dhe ndërveprimet me institucionet e qeverisë duket se ndikojnë në perceptimet aktuale rreth performancës së saj. Për shkak se për ta është e vështirë të arrijnë të krijojnë komunikimin qytetar me zyrtarët kryesorë të qeverisë qendrore, qëndrimet e qytetarëve janë më së shumti një funksion ndërveprimesh me zyrtarët lokalë dhe nivelet e ulëta jo vendimmarrëse të institucioneve qendrore.

Në këtë ambient ku institucionet publike kanë arritur të hapen elektronikisht, por pa arritur të perceptohen si një hapje që mundëson adresimin final të zgjidhjes së kërkesave të tyre, qytetarët e shohin momentin e votimit si mundësinë kryesore për t'u afruar me qeveritarët, sepse është një nga veprimet e pakta që inkurajohet dhe është sanksionuar *de facto* nga qeveria. Ndërkohë, që arsyeja thelbësore dhe në interes direkt të qytetarëve është pikërisht njohja dhe komunikimi direkt me zyrtarët për adresimin e kërkesave të tyre, qytetarët përmendin në mënyrë të përsëritur se ata e motivojnë votën preferenciale si (a) përgjegjësi qytetare, (b) mundësi për të arritur ndryshimin, (d) rregull i demokracisë liberale për të ecur përpara nëpërmjet stimulimit të konkurrencës programore, dhe (e) për të ndëshkuar udhëheqësit.

Megjithëse kemi një kuptim të mirë të arsyes së përbashkët që qytetarët verbalizojnë për votimin, ka të ngjarë që të ketë motivime themelore që njerëzit nuk janë në gjendje t'i kuptojnë ose artikulojnë me vetëdije. Në zbërthim të kësaj qasje të njerëzve në sistemin politik dhe social aktual, ne do të përpiqemi të japim argumentet tona për të shtjelluar dhe përcjellë më tej arsyet dhe logjikën ekonomike dhe politike.

Përgjegjësia në sistemin politik me dy parti mund të vërehet duke përdorur një model të thjeshtë nga zgjedhjet politike në Shqipëri. Në fakt, në një zgjedhje politike me një raund të vetëm, ku partitë garojnë në dimensionet ideologjike të majtë dhe të djathtë, teorikisht partia që pozicionon politikën e saj më të afërta me votuesin mesatar (ne vijim votuesi i pavendosur) do të fitojë. Partia fituese do të ketë një mandat ligjor politik për të zbatuar politikën e saj në qeverinë e ardhshme. Sidoqoftë, përgjegjësia politike përfshin një gjykim retrospektiv në lidhje me atë që partitë kanë bërë më parë në detyrë. Prandaj, është e nevojshme të përfshihet një element retrospektiv edhe në gjykimin e njerëzve. Kjo mund të realizohet duke bërë një analizë para dhe pas zgjedhore në pozicionin e politikës së qeverisë.

Një analizë e tillë është plotësisht e realizueshme nën sistemin aktual politik, sepse lehtëson kuptimin real të “qeverisë së fortë”. Kjo është, një qeveri që mund të përdorë statusin e saj të shumicës për të marrë kontrollin e plotë të agjendës legjislative, me pak gjasa për t'u shqetësuar për pasojat e mundshme deri në zgjedhjet vijuese, të cilat mund të jenë vite larg.

## Voters and credibility in our political system

The performance of the political system depends more on the way in which the relationship between voters and politicians is structured or institutionalized according to the applicable constitutional framework. However, we will not analyze ONLY the extent to which politicians and voters are bound by clientelist relationships or any other type of similar relationship. But we will address exactly how the economic and political environment relates to political promises and governing programs based on them.

Let us assume that in a two-party electorally dominated political system, where the party or coalition that wins by a simple majority takes office, voters are faced with a choice between the ruling party (left-leaning socialist party, SP) and the opposition party, (right-leaning, democratic party, DP). We further assume that e.g. the left-leaning party won previous elections by vowing to implement economic and political policies in the next political term if it wins the popular vote.

But the moment it takes over the political mandate to govern, it implements policy changes to the economic model not included in the political promises, as well as a slightly more confrontational approach to the left-leaning political position. If the winning party had remained in the previous position of promises of economic access, it would have had as a rule an equal distance from the undecided voter to the right-leaning party, which is positioned in an unchanged economic model in three rounds of political elections of the last decade. However, the left-leaning party makes itself more electoral and less competitive, assuming it will not remain in the position of an unfulfilled economic program until the next election. Otherwise, the undecided voter can demand accountability from the left-leaning party, but by directing the vote to the right-leaning party.

From the perspective of reasoning for the undecided voter, the accountability mechanism has not

**Voters for the two major political parties, 2009 -2021**

Votes for SP and DP	DP and SP			
	2009	2013	2017	2021
Trunout	41%	36%	37%	38%
Other Political parties and non-participation	59%	64%	63%	62%

Source: CEC

worked and is worse than it used to be. This finding is seen in the decrease in the number of voters in general from one election to another<sup>1</sup>. The data in the table shows that the credibility of the two major parties together is declining, leading to a lack of accountability according to the demands of the voters and the lack of a sincere dialogue on real needs and the implementation of political programs according to an approach based on requirements arising from the electoral context and fiscal productivity of the country's budget.

<sup>1</sup> <http://ndiqparate.al/2021/04/30/rezultate-zgjedhore-ndarja-e-mandateve-per-deputet-procese-2021-2017-2013-dhe-2009/>

However, as seen in the other table below, the loss of public confidence does not seem to be necessarily related to budget performance and public finances (included also the Socialist Movement for Integration, SMI as part of coalition and political programs of two big parties).

Fiscal and economic promises and election results, 2009-2021

FISCAL - ECONOMIC PROMISES AND ELECTION RESULTS	DP				SP				MSI			
	2009	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013	2017	2021
Tax reduction/cut	1%	4%	15%	12%	4%	9%	8%	8%	10%	10%	46%	18%
Adding funds from budget	54%	41%	35%	17%	21%	23%	44%	23%	34%	34%	22%	12%
<i>Election Results</i>	40.2%	30.6%	28.9%	39.5%	40.9%	41.4%	48.3%	48.7%	10.5%	10.5%	14.3%	6.8%

\* <http://ndiqparate.al/2021/04/30/rezultate-zgjedhore-ndarja-e-mandateve-per-deputet-procese-2021-2017-2013-dhe-2009/>

*If we take into account that the fate of victory in the election is not decided by the focus on this category of voters, but in an election battle the influential factors are related to a wider range of elements, then the analysis with comprehensive content will be the methodology of analysis for reach the required conclusion.*

In the table above, it can be seen that although the promises for budget increase for economic sectors are more numerous in the political elections of 2009 and 2013, they do not seem to coincide with an increase in the election result for the Democratic Party in these elections. The same fact is worth mentioning for the Socialist Party regarding the promises in 2013 and 2021, where the election results are higher than the previous elections, but with reduced promises of increased budget funding (contradiction with the same argument as for the DP).

Under the assumptions based on the voting facts of the last decade<sup>2</sup>, despite the changes in economic policies and the non-fulfillment of promises partially transformed into governing programs, the popular vote is oriented and moderately influenced by the level of keeping promises and fulfilling governance programs.

This basic comparison orients the analysis, that there are other factors that are considered by undecided voters and those clientelist, who do not condition their vote with economic information. One approach to this perspective is that there is a lack of financial analysis of budget promises, to show the veracity of their implementation in the case of budget programming. On the other hand, in their perception, these promises are a repetition of past elections, losing hope of fulfilling them long ago, but focusing on demands by interest groups and not at the level of the wider community.

Voters at the national level for SP and DP, 2009 -2021

Voters for SP and DP	DP				SP			
	2009	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013	2017	2021
Turnout	21%	16%	14%	18%	21%	20%	23%	20%

<sup>2</sup> <http://ndiqparate.al/2021/03/16/rezultate-zgjedhore-ndarja-e-mandateve-per-deputet-procese-2009-2013-dhe-2017/>



If the undecided voter would support the logic of orienting his vote, according to economic programs, as well as from retrospective facts of previous governments, then the vote that would determine victory should come from this category of voter. The convincing argument not to vote for the party that has changed the model of economic policies, as well as that has not implemented above average economic programs in the period of government would be sufficient. But this finding seems to be contradicted by the voting indicators for each party in relation to the level of the total number of citizens with the right to vote.

Although the Rama 1 and Rama 2 government political programs have a dynamic that affects vital sectors for the interests of the widest possible community of voters, it does not appear to have an increasing impact of more than 1-2 percentage points (see table above). In the case of the 2017 elections, the difference in the increase in the number of voters is mostly a decision-making influenced by the undecided voter, which includes the category of voters starting from the political program approach, rather than from genuine economic programs. In the 2017 election campaign, the SP had a continuation of programs started in 2013, but not economic programs that differed from previous elections and made a difference in the philosophy of the new economic modeling.

In this regard, the tendency of promises and electoral propaganda towards reaching the undecided voter comes with an increased attention from one parliamentary election to other.

Our analysis so far has assumed that only the undecided voter is of considerable importance in terms of accountability. The undecided voter is normally in the spotlight in the two-party system because his support is necessary for one party to achieve victory.

However, this support is not enough. A party, in order to get a majority, should also aim to support also clientelist voters, who do not link their vote orientation to the ideological approach, but rather to the fulfillment of personal / family ambitions (a materialism-based approach<sup>3</sup>).

For big parties, the target voters are precisely these two categories, which support a party based on a personal approach and not an ideological one. But these categories also pose the greatest risk if the governing mandate is not consumed as promised, as they can hold the government accountable louder than the category of ideological voters.

Meanwhile, the category of ideological voter, who has a logical argument for the orientation of his vote, mainly the political-economic and social nostalgia of ideology, which coincides with the ideological orientation of the party, which theoretically carries these trends in the current period remain as an static influential factor in election results of the last decade<sup>4</sup>, although the major parties have deviated from the basic ideology.

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<sup>3</sup> a tendency to regard material possession and physical comfort as more important than spiritual-ideological values

<sup>4</sup> <http://ndiqparate.al/2021/04/29/lista-e-zgjedhesve-ne-vite-pjesemarrja-dhe-vlefshmeria-e-votes-2015-2021/>

<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/f/38598.pdf>

<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/9/0/108194.pdf>

During the last 30 years of the new political system, the two parties that have opposite ideological tendencies have deviated to the abandonment of their previous political positions and moved to the right (left-leaning party), as well as more left (right-wing party) having points of convergence with each other regarding promises for the economy, social policy, policies for certain voter segments, as well as promises of sectoral policies for economical lobbyist.

The table below shows that while the right-leaning party has a decrease in the number of voters for it until the 2021 elections, the left-leaning parties have an increase in the number of voters, concluding that the number of undecided voters and clientelist voters are two categories that have been the focus for each of the parties, but without achieving the same goal.

Number of voters by main parties and election results, 2009-2021

VOTERS BY ELECTION CAMPAIGNS	DP				SP				SMI			
	2009	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013	2017	2021
Number of voters	610,463	528,373	456,413	622,187	620,586	713,407	764,750	768,134	73,678	180,470	225,901	107,538
Election Results	40.2%	30.6%	28.9%	39.5%	40.9%	41.4%	48.3%	48.7%	10.5%	10.5%	14.3%	6.8%

Source: CEC

In the analysis of the fulfillment of electoral objectives for maximizing votes in both categories, the two tables below show exactly that while the parties are in opposition they tend to increase the amount of promises for mitigating tax policies and policy commitments for specific interest groups (landowners , ex-military, miners, etc.).

The trends of promises when political parties are in opposition, 2009-2021

No.	Promise type	DP		SP		SMI		
		2017	2021	2009	2013	2009	2017	2021
1	Budget and tax policy	29%	29%	14%	11%	6%	34%	31%
2	Social	8%	4%	11%	11%	15%	5%	3%
3	Health	2%	5%	11%	5%	10%	5%	3%
4	Education, gender issues	13%	10%	11%	8%	21%	5%	20%
5	Infrastructure and energy	4%	15%	5%	21%	8%	7%	5%
6	Agro-tourism	17%	11%	23%	21%	14%	37%	10%
7	Economy	0%	7%	2%	1%	5%	7%	19%
8	Politics,etc.	27%	19%	23%	22%	21%	0%	8%

While the parties gain the political mandate to govern, the electoral promises are of a budgetary nature, but without forgetting to mention as a continuation of tax policies, increase of budgets for the sectors, but in fact they are only for the effect of electoral competition.

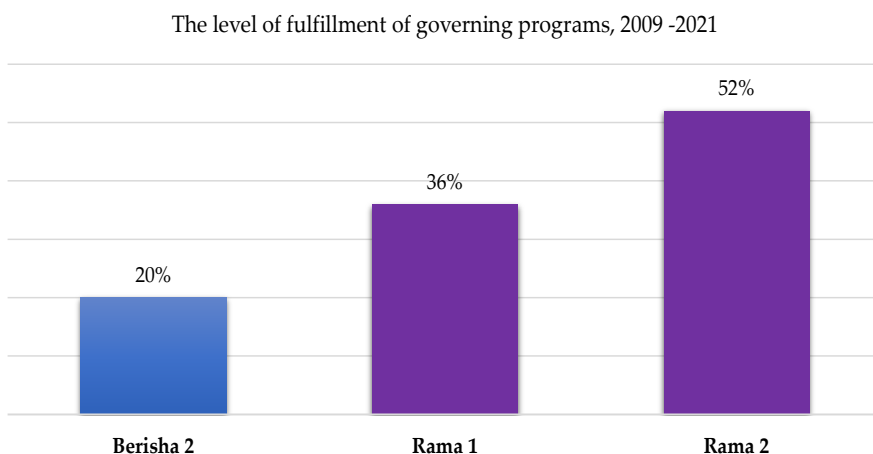
[http://www.cec.org.al/Portals/0/Documents/CEC%202013/syri\\_vezhguesit/Raporti%20i%20OSBE-ODIHR%20shqip.pdf?ver=2018-05-04-133953-700](http://www.cec.org.al/Portals/0/Documents/CEC%202013/syri_vezhguesit/Raporti%20i%20OSBE-ODIHR%20shqip.pdf?ver=2018-05-04-133953-700)  
<http://kqz.gov.al/results/results2021/results2021.htm>

**The trends of promises when political parties are part of Government, 2009-2021**

No.	Promise type	DP		SP		SMI	
		2009	2013	2017	2021	2013	2017
1	Budget and tax policy	8%	11%	27%	30%	12%	34%
2	Social	4%	4%	12%	2%	10%	5%
3	Health	4%	0%	8%	4%	10%	5%
4	Education, gender issues	18%	4%	25%	14%	12%	5%
5	Infrastructure and energy	31%	32%	5%	22%	26%	7%
6	Agro-tourism	18%	20%	14%	6%	16%	37%
7	Economy	3%	7%	2%	8%	6%	7%
8	Politics,etc.	14%	21%	7%	15%	8%	0%

This observation can be seen if we notice that the promises fail to materialize at best more than half of them during last decade.

In the Berisha 1 Government (in coalition with the SMI and other parties), the level of fulfillment of promises (as part of political program) is 20% until the end of the governing mandate in 2013.



In the Rama 1 Government, the level of fulfillment of promises is 36% (in coalition with SMI and other parties), while in the Rama 2 Government (the only SP in government), the level of fulfillment of promises is 52%. It seems that the level of

implementation of government programs based on electoral promises is increasing, but in fact even in the case of a single party in government this level is low compared to compliance levels in the region and Europe<sup>5</sup>.

The reasons for a low level of fulfillment of promises comes from the orientation of promises towards the wishes of the categories of undecided and clientelist voters, but also comes as a result of a still incomplete maturity of the political model implemented according to the system that the major parties have preferred to implement throughout these years.

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262823607\\_Is\\_a\\_Promise\\_a\\_Promise\\_Election\\_Pledge\\_Fulfilment\\_in\\_Comparative\\_Perspective\\_Using\\_Sweden\\_as\\_an\\_Example/figures?lo=1](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262823607_Is_a_Promise_a_Promise_Election_Pledge_Fulfilment_in_Comparative_Perspective_Using_Sweden_as_an_Example/figures?lo=1)

On the whole, both categories of voters, even though they have made their choices, were also influenced by politics, they did not increase the usefulness of the elections in the function of economic convenience, even though politics has shifted to ideological position farther from their ideal point.

At those distances, that parties have shifted from their initial ideology until to the moment they gradually were (re) formatted, the ideological voter should have shifted as well in relation to his initial convictions.

Based in the intensity of turnout of the age group over 60-65 years in the elections (an age group with ideological experience with left and right tendencies, and in difference with other age groups), as well as based on the fact of a shortage of political studies publications in the market (that could influence the ideological voters shift towards thinking based on the economic model and economics over politics), there has been a slight change in the shift of the political inclination of the voters towards the center or the right-leaning party.

The most effective, but not the only, approach to doing this would be the one based in information and arguments about economic and technical analysis of the effectiveness of political parties policies during the period they have governed (alone or in coalitions).

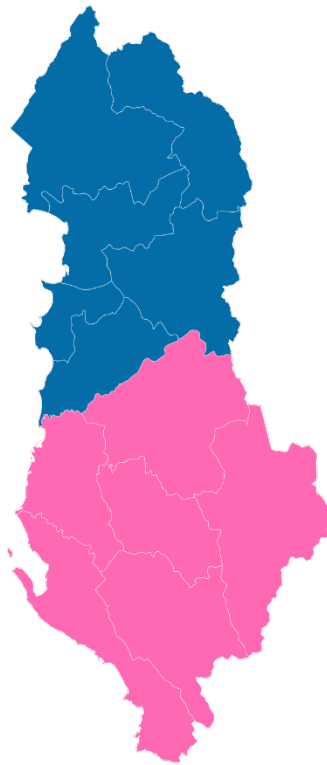
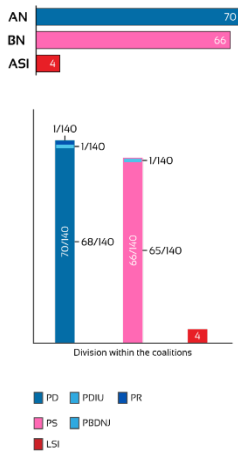
## **Citizen reaction to failure of accountability**

In the voting of the last 12 years, although with similarity in the level of abstention (not going to vote), it has been noticed that a good part of the voters have not exercised their right. Usually, replacing their missing vote have been ideological voters and those with a materialistic approach (clientelist voters).

Undecided voters (including centrists) have been more inclined to abstain and influenced by the perception that there is little difference between the parties, but that their turnout has increased.

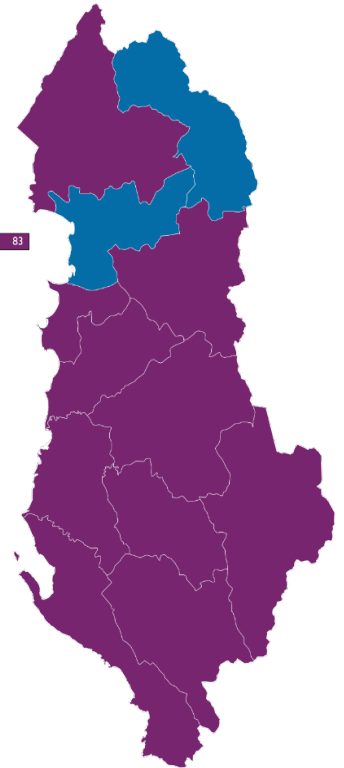
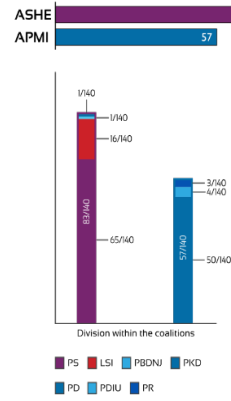
The graph showing the level of participation in the elections for the Assembly in the period 2009-2021 has a decrease in the number of citizens participating in voting's. Meanwhile, voters for the left party have an increase, which seems to come at a consistent level, voters for the right party appear with ups and downs and lack of consistency.

# 2009 General election



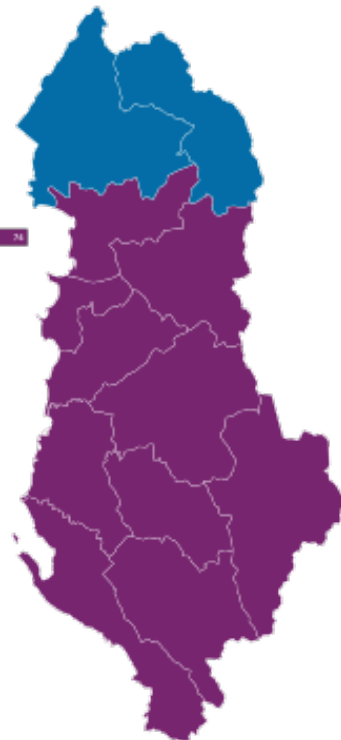
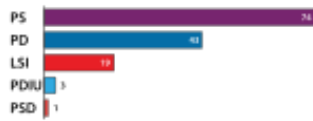
Turnout:  
50.5%

# 2013 General election



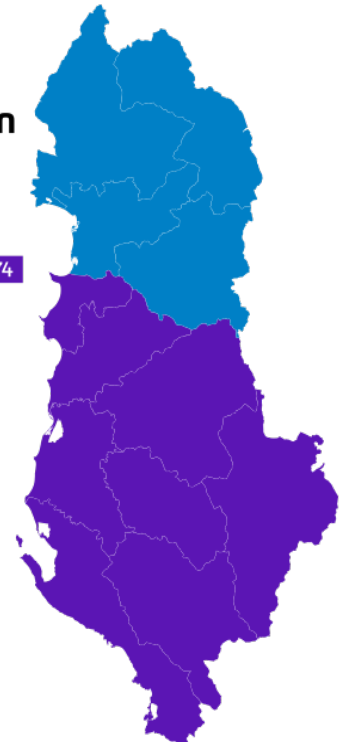
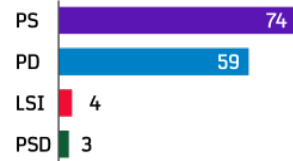
Turnout:  
53.5%

# 2017 General election



Turnout:  
46.8%

# 2021 General election

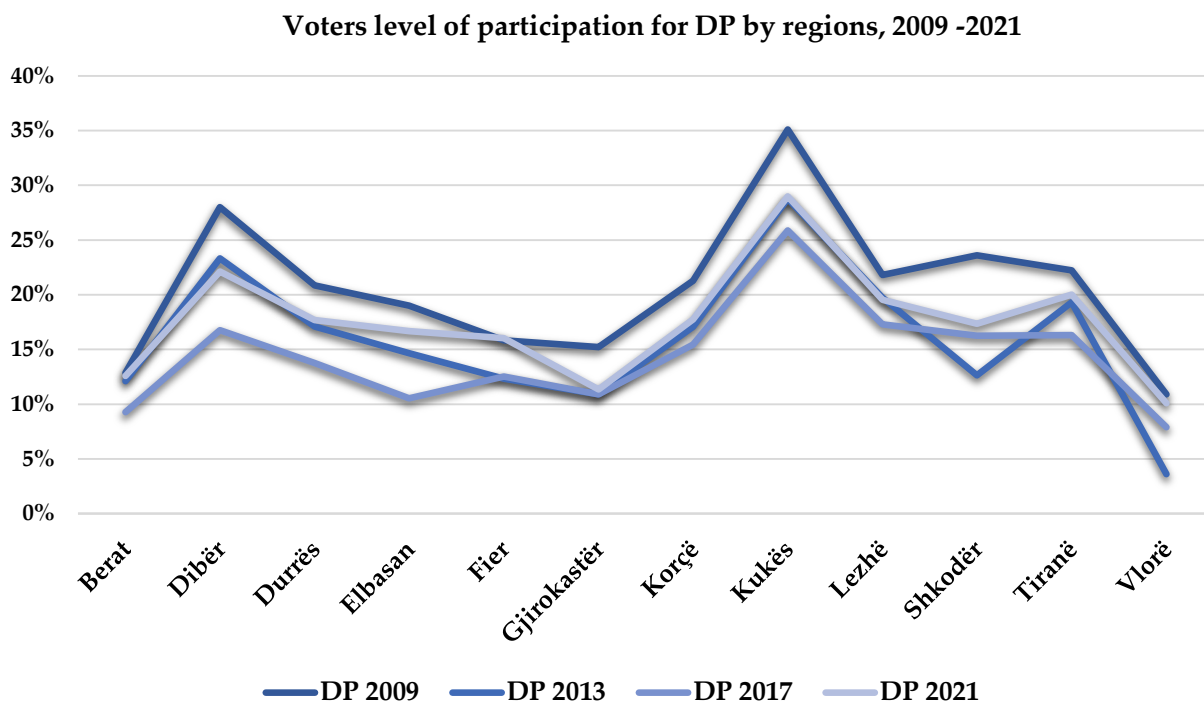


Turnout:  
46.29%

When it is known that the major parties have increasingly polarized the right to vote, it is seen that ideological voters are more motivated to vote, while the centrists have abstained, not so much because of indifference, but because of the alienation of their political spirit from the whole current political system.

Abstention is mainly related to undecided voters and voters with dissatisfied materialistic approach / without concrete material offers. This is also their reaction to the lack of accountability of political parties (position and opposition) because it involuntarily pushes dissatisfied voters to withdraw from the democratic process. Moreover, if the abstention were also from the extremists of the ruling party, then the victory would be disproportionately removed from this ideological wing. This could make it more likely that the party on the opposite ideological wing (opposition) would win the election.

However, abstention is a response to voter frustration with bipartisan politics. In the case of political elections in Albania this scenario we analyzed above as a reaction to the ruling party's lack of accountability does not necessarily occur in the direction described.



This attitude can be seen in the voters for the DP. From 2009 to 2021, the DP has been in governance over the period 2009-2013. Although in opposition for 8 years, the DP and the political allies still does not seem to have worked hard enough to strengthen the positions in its bastions, but also in the part of undecided voters in areas where leftist bastions are considered, or in the capital where the majority of voters are undecided.

The shift in the political profile of the right seems to have been reflected in the loss of ideological votes in its bastions (Shkodër, Kukës, Dibër, Lezhë). Moreover, this shift and its consequences have been essential for the rise of a nativist, populist right and for identifying and the solution of the broader problems facing democracy today in our country.

In addition to providing a populist approach with an opportunity to capture growing dissatisfaction with the economic situation and the level of welfare, corruption (Albania ranks among the most corrupt countries in Europe), the political shift of the right wing served to increase the dominance of social grievances and economic, but not being able to convert undecided voters into winning votes.

As the left and right leaning parties tend to converge on economic policy issues, the politicization of non-economic issues became topics that aimed to attract voters.

The DP failed to penetrate to undecided voter with in-depth and exhaustive analysis, but with an irrational self-confidence the leadership believed that the change of voting tendency would come by the historic cyclical rotation, which in the last 30 years has occurred after every 8 years of governing the right / left party. As consequence, DP only managed to get a modest share of the vote of the undecided voters.

In fact, the analysis of the electoral promises of the right and left party shows that there is a lack of competition of ideas in new topics / issues by appearing before the voters with little or no ideological / obvious differences from each other. This strategic electoral approach of the right and left party has not been able to avoid losing voters because of their indifference to politics.

These dynamics also prompted new parties / movements to emerge and compete in non-economic issues, but the great polarization of the electorate and the rampant propaganda to the point of violating the Electoral Code (ethics) put insurmountable barriers for new politicians<sup>6</sup>.

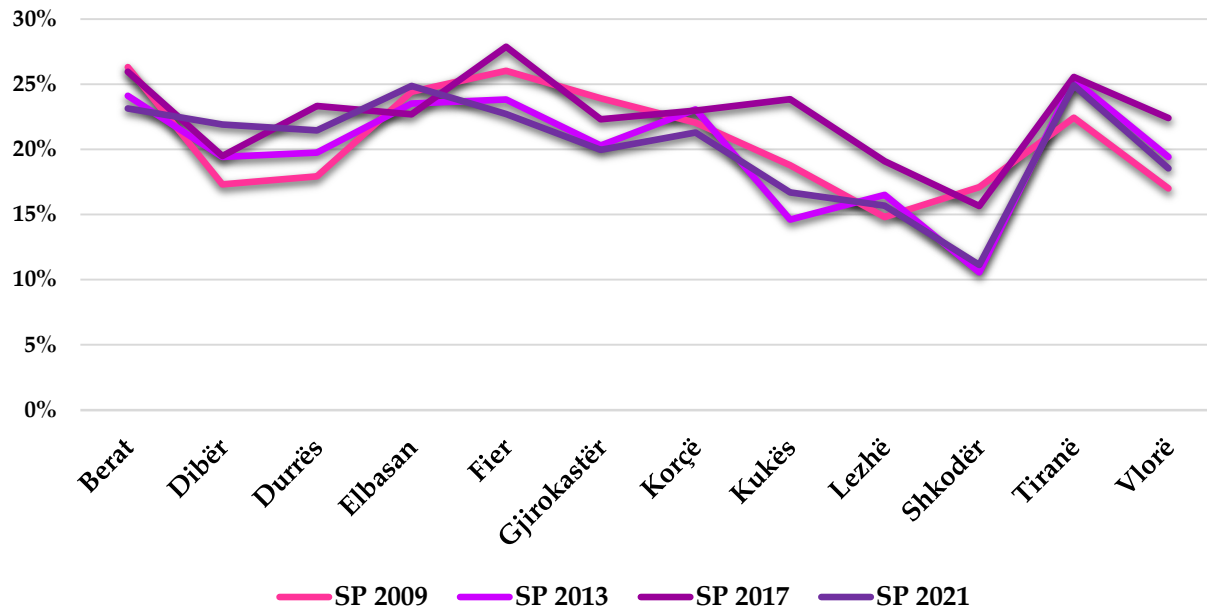
Similarly, with little difference between the left and the right, based on a traditional approach to the lack of proper attention to economic policy issues, voters found reasons to pay more attention to non-economic issues.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://polifakt.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PERGJEGJSHMERIA-FINANCIARE-E-PREMTIMEVE-TE-POLITIKES-SHQIPTARE-2009-2017.pdf>

<https://altax.al/al/publikime-te-altax/product/besueshmeria-dhe-pergjegjshmeria-financiare-e-premtimeve-zgjedhore-te-politikes-shqiptare-ne-2021>

Voters level of participation for SP by regions, 2009 -2021



Meanwhile, according to the graph above, a change in the support in the vote is noticed for the SP. This left-leaning party, the largest in terms of voters in the country, has governed the country from 2013 - 2021. In the period of governing the country there is a decrease of voters in its bastions (Berat, Fier, Gjirokastra), but an increase in areas where there are mostly undecided voters and clientelist voters (Tirana, Durres, Elbasan).

We argue that the shift of the left leaning party to the center regarding economic affairs, and in particular its acceptance of "neoliberal" reforms such as the privatization of some strategic parts of the public sector services, tax cuts and much funds for the welfare state, have had the effect of increasing support by undecided voters.

Although in the short run this shift makes sense, in the long run it can have detrimental, possibly fatal consequences, as the orientation towards the undecided and clientelist voter at the expense of the ideological voter lowers the party's political profile, but also the continuation of support in areas considered political bastions.

One reason where the voter abstention scenario has not occurred en masse is the presence of small parties, which have offered voters the opportunity to cast protest votes for these parties.

An example case in this argument is the Socialist Movement for Integration, which has grown until the 2021 elections mainly maintaining an anti-establishment profile although in the two governments (Berisha 2 and Rama 1) have been part of these cabinets. The votes won by this party are partly votes against the ruling parties, but they are also votes of undecided voters and clientelist voters, which show an unwillingness to vote for the main opposition party.



Voters who support small parties (SMI, Republicans, Social Democrats, Justice, Integration and Unity, Agrarian-Environmentalists, National Development, etc.) effectively abstain from being elected as a voting option for the government, because they look to these parties for the opportunity to win positions.

From one perspective, voting for a small party, not included in the alliance with large parties for the clientelist voter and the undecided voter is perceived as a waste of time and a waste of their vote. Meanwhile, the promises of a large party, which has a high chance of returning to the program, are more easily accepted as offers that are worth for the voter for a more expected service than the smaller party, and so it would be rational to vote for the party that makes the most motivated voter to not "spend" the right to vote on behalf / address of someone (small party leadership) who seems hopeless.

However, parliamentary elections are recurring events and voters can look not only to the future but also to the past.

A voter can expect higher benefit after the next election from the re-election of the ruling party. But if the same party has broken its promises after previous elections, it makes more sense for the voter to punish the government. Voting for him again is rewarding as his vote is given in favor of the punishment of breaking promises (non-involvement / non-fulfillment of the program) during the exercise of the governing mandate of the party. Meanwhile voting for the big opposition party does not give the same benefit to the clientelist / undecided voter, as the value of the conversion of his vote is less useful compared to the expected value gained with the big winning party.

In the four last parliamentary elections there is a tendency to introduce the electoral climate in informal / extra-legal processes, where among the main reasons is to provide a perimeter guarantee for safe voting not to be threatened by small and new parties.

An example that we can mention in this argument is the "invention" of Political Council, set up by both major parties, from which it was noted that the parties that relied on votes of protest against partitocracy and governing policy failed to move beyond the status of small parties, as they failed to enjoy geographically focused support due to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient votes for the electoral threshold, approved by the close-based consensus of the two major parties.

Although small/new parties had considerable levels of electoral support turned out that they cannot function more than being in the function of maintaining a mainly two-party parliamentary system, but that they are not allowed to be beyond this blocking format sanctioned in the Electoral Code. In this model of political system, small parties are safety valves for the two big parties, enabling their survival, and leaving no opportunities and resources for them to compete with the big parties. This functional political model in these three decades has influenced the support for small parties to fall and the flow of votes has been the most obvious consequence. Voting for small parties is a reaction that shows the flaws of the system, but also shows the need for

informing and educating the voters to be oriented in their vote to the failures of accountability in the two-party system, which is based precisely on the votes of clientelist voters and undecided voters.

Meanwhile, a limited influence towards the legislative representation of small parties is given by the division / conversion of the vote of small parties taken in the name of causes and dissatisfaction towards large parties, according to a materialist approach like the individual voter.

This approach of small parties has happened with the alliances made by the SMI in the last two governing mandates, without any ideological axis as motivation, or even as a missed argument for the undecided and clientelist voter.

However, the presence of small parties in electoral and governing coalitions has influenced the fusion of typical ideologies of political bias, giving large parties a stronger spirit of populism.

Shifting the main axis of political competition from economic to social issues to the reality of election campaigns in the last 12 years has been a greater benefit to the populist right than to the traditional left. Promises of pension increases, salary increases, tax cuts and the strengthening of social policies have produced larger votes in rural areas for the DP and its allies.

Historically, or at least in the period we are analyzing, the left has benefited the most when its electoral identity has been oriented towards marginalized groups / strata tending to be in symbiosis with the dissatisfaction of the ideologic left voter. They don't identify as bad policy the party politics and programs, but the political system. This strategic camouflage of the left party under the ideological umbrella aiming to expand the voting base of the left party in its diversity (base diversification) is more evident than the base of the right-leaning voters (in terms of ethnicity, religion and sexual identity). Naturally, through the policy of diversification of the voter base, it has been achieved to divide the political orientation between a "new" left and an "old" left that was stood out for the traditional social norms, inherited from the previous system. So when political competition focuses on social issues, it becomes more difficult for left-leaning parties to build and maintain broad, cohesive electoral coalitions, while the abandonment of this political electoral approach by right-leaning parties has resulted in the collapse and lack of expansion of voter base, in a similar way to the left party.

## **Accountability of political parties as a showdown with the political promises and programs and not as a necessary evil**

Political parties in Albania (especially large parties) have not been analyzed and judged by vote in their entirety to review the responsibility towards non-fulfillment of promises or deviation from promises when running the government. At first glance, this form of responsibility seems to occur on election day, subject to the assumption that the voter is careful to take a stand on the

political and governing responsibility of the parties. A relationship in this format can occur if the political / governing performance is considered unacceptable by the voter and on this argument the responsibility is determined and the exchange of persuasion in the vote is made to the address of the party that is on the side of responsibility. But, in the analysis of the last four parliamentary elections, the governments, winners of elections have shown that they have not fulfilled the promises during their mandate or have been presented by excuses as impossible in exercising their duties (leaders of central institutions with reduced capacities and integrity), the electorate again did not "punish" them, but re-voted them in the next elections.

The main argument lies precisely in the bipartisan political model, in a fragile model of democracy, where control and balances of power are weak. Bipartisan models do not embody competition structures for governance. They include the same parties alternating in party-majority administrations. Party structures are the unfair competition of the open government model applied in countries that successfully apply a liberal democratic system.

In partitism-based governance model, which is present in Albania, small and young parties are included in every political mandate, which have enjoyed the right to join the larger parties in government, but with an inclusion that has compromised their good name and the trust of the electorate that has believed in them until they discredited themselves through process of will corruption of the entire governance.

As an opposition of two-party model, Albania need to develop and practice the open political model.

This model always tends to be multi-party in nature and technocrat based. The choice of government composition in open systems is less restrictive than the choice of a compulsory cabinet, as in our two-party system. If voters do not like the government of one main party in the broad-based coalition, they have the right influence to convey the message to another government. In a large left-wing party, which rules with a parliamentary majority, if a strong part of its supporters are dissatisfied with its performance, they have the opportunity to shake up the ruling coalition as the system provides options for parties to vote closer the opportunity to win and represent them in a coalition without the big parties. They can vote for small centrist parties while also influencing their obligation to form a governing coalition. Each outcome would force a change in government policy.

Naturally, also big questions arise in this kind of elections, as well regarding the responsibility and coalition governments, as they are not directly elected by the voters, but are formed after the elections during the negotiations between the parties participating in the elections. This broad-based coalition becomes problematic when election promises are traded to sign a coalition agreement. Other reasons that indicate coalition problems may be plentiful, but if voters manage to find the culprit for the lack of governing performance, then the punishment for the guilty party has consequences for the future, as the political system continuously generates new parties.

From the perspective of comparison between the two political models, it can be seen that in the two-party political model there is a weak level of responsibility, for the simple reason that there is only one alternative governing opportunity, despite the ideological bias closing the opportunities for competition and government openness to the public.

An open political model, based on the competition of the big ones from the smaller parties that are seen by the voters as strong influencers on the accountability of the government, given their need to compete in the political market would enable the voters to demand account by the government for changes / fulfillments of its policies. If the interest of the voters is related to the results of the governing policies, the method of accountability through the support of small / new parties will better ensure the desired policy change.

The current version of accountability claims by vote on a given day in 4 years has failed to apply with the same force to the protection of voter rights. Keeping a group of undecideds, influential and growing voters in times of crisis is the link between the vote and the result in the two-party system. This relationship should function as a relationship built on accountability between citizens and elites. But, in the reality of the mechanisms of the functioning of politics in Albania, necessary changes in the electoral system are rare. The major parties benefit from the status quo and are still able to block reform proposals, as may be seen by the voters themselves. From time to time they create extra-legal political instruments to manipulate the voter with the idea of change, but in fact occurs and is approved in favor of maintaining and reinforce of their dominant position in the political market.

The political responsibility of the major parties is supposed to be difficult to refer to electoral promises and political programs during the period of government. Moreover, as party competition has become increasingly bipolar, it has also become more difficult for voters to exchange support between parties in each bloc, as a means of holding them accountable for maintaining promises, but also the fulfillment of governing programs. Undecided voters can move between political blocs, enabling partial accountability, but this does not yet resolve the pressure of voting to punish political responsibilities and mistakes at a cost for the political future and the present. However, we raise the issue of accountability as a necessary direction as an essential orientation for debate about democracy.

Do the governing parties have any electoral consequences from not keeping their promises?  
Should governing parties fear losing political elections if they perform poorly in fulfilling their programs?

In fact, Albania does not make a difference from the strong link between keeping promises and re-election of politicians as in every liberal democratic country<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> see Annex "Budget, economic and social performance of political promises and programs 2009-2021"

One of the dilemmas ascertained from the history of the election results in the period 2009-2021 is the fact, whether the citizens consider this change in political performance in the election of the party they vote for?

**Fulfillment of promises and election results, 2009-2021**

PROMISES AND ELECTION RESULTS*	DP				SP			
	2009-2013	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013-2017	2017-2021	2021
<b>Level of fulfillment of promises by the government</b>	20%					36%	52%	
<i>Election Results</i>	40.2%	30.6%	28.9%	39.5%	40.9%	41.4%	48.3%	48.7%

\* calculation by ALTAX

Looking at it from this point of view of the analysis, we can see from the table above that there may be significant consequences in re-electing the party given the maintenance / non-maintenance of the level of performance of electoral promises in the political programs of the main governing party. This is evident from the measured fact that while the level of keeping promises by the right-leaning party, as the main party in the ruling coalition, has resulted in a high level of non-compliance with political statements and statements-based programs, and as consequence it has not been re-elected. Meanwhile, a higher performance of the left party shows that the fulfillment rate of promises has been an important reason to be re-elected and to govern, even alone as a political force. Of course, this alone is not enough as a reason to attract the votes of the undecided, but it is a direct and measurable fact to orient the argumentation of a chance to win political elections.

The performance rate of a party's promise fulfillment has affected its chances of being re-elected, as the ideas presented with the element of logical and political-economic argument enable greater support from voters. In the case where the government is led by only one political party, it remains the only responsible in accordance with the consequence of the policies implemented by the previous government in various areas of the country's life. With this approach, it can easily influence the orientation of the vote of undecided voters, but also of clientelist voters considering that it is closer to their preferences. On the one hand, campaign promises tend to satisfy the personal desires of these voters. On the other hand, turning a larger share of promises into implementation programs, compared to the opposition party provides a sure basis for a greater attraction of undecided and clientelist voters in its favor.

This electoral strategy successfully used by the Socialist Party has functioned as a foresight to meet voters' expectations for the future by using past government performance as a reliable source of information and argument.

But, based on research analysis, research, and pre- and post-election discussions, we find that only in recent years have researchers begun to think seriously about using government performance as a record of fulfilling promises made by parties in their election programs.

Of course, politicians have previously been interested in the dimensions of promises related to political accountability to voters, but we cannot say that they have been interested in promoting such a topic for extended analysis and debate. Our research on this topic shows that the discussions and studies are mostly focused on the relative discussion on the topics of the election program of the main parties, as well as the transparency of spending and use of the budget and budget / public resources of the ruling party, but partially and not the full picture with details included.

Electoral promises have not yet become a full object of analysis and debate to be considered as genuine commitments in party programs, to implement certain policies and achieve certain goals. Thus, the analysis and discussion of electoral promises in the political elections of April 25, 2021 focused on specific parts of a party's electoral programs, but not considering all the promises as the only commitments of future politics, where depending on the content of the promise, should have been accompanied by cost estimates and allocated sources and rules as a full package, such as legislation, ministerial decrees or budgetary resources.

However, beyond this broad assessment of the overall ability and willingness of each politician and party to present the promises made, naturally the debate should also focus on keeping / re-addressing the promises made in previous political elections. Voters seem to have lacked information and in this election were no more informed than in previous elections about the concrete performance of the ruling party's promises, as well as a historical analysis of the quality, cycle and need for concrete and achievable promises.

From our analysis for the elections of the period 2009-2021 we come with the finding that citizens' perceptions reflect the actual performance of the promise. This finding is important, if we will make its connection with the results of the electoral processes in the analyzed period, including the great role that civil society already has in all political processes.

Activating civil society with a growing role about analysis and expertise in the last decade seems to have helped shape social and political capital. The apparent revelation of political and systemic anomalies, as well as the civil activity of civil society has reduced electoral involvement and support for populist political parties that do not keep their commitments. The contribution of civic participation at the local level, as well as the expertise and advocacy of the values and problems of the under-represented strata in political forums have been another visible achievement in the formation of social and political capital. The most special political effect that has formed and is strengthening social capital is the activation of civil society activists at the local and central level, strongly contributing to the contact and accountability of public officials. Citizens working together at the local level thus show a strong tendency to convey their demands to the government and to be the voice that should be heard loudly about promoting legal initiatives, such as that of public consultation, or similar initiatives, which are mostly part of the achievements of strengthening of the role of civil society as a direct contributor and in the daily strengthening of its role in decision-making for political decisions and public interest.

In the circumstances of the political, social, and economic environment, in which the political programs of the parties are promised and implemented, it is a very difficult task for the voters to attribute responsibilities to the governing party. The economy and its performance have within the processes very complex phenomena to be identified, clarified, and presented as the involvement and responsibility of only one political party. Economic development is intertwined with different actors, such as: business companies, interest groups, public interests, interests of states and multinational businesses, as well as influences from cross-border trade. Based in the various combinations in everyday life, the responsibility cannot be clearly attributed to one of these political actors, to make him responsible for a bad state of the economy. From the point of view of retrospective promise voting, however, parties can be ascertained by the voter as responsible for different policies and outcomes. Thus, retrospective promise-based voting establishes a link between expectations created by a party's own promises and the actual fulfillment of those promises during its time in government (or non-fulfillment of political promises, for specific legal initiatives during a party's time in opposition).

Voters do not forget about the previous promises of a governing party and in the circumstances of a correct information, without political bias, professional and argued with facts react to the fulfillment of promises in the next elections. First, fulfilling promises means rewarding them with votes in the next election. Second, the governing parties, which keep their promises during the legislative term, are perceived as credible and responsible actors, and consequently the voters basically trust them in the future as well, as competent in governing the country. Such an argument, the Socialist Party uses and exploits in election campaigns effectively in the request to vote for the continuation of the government of the country. The results of the comparative analysis really show us that the fulfillment of a commitment of a ruling party affects its election result.

Accordingly, it seems that the governing parties could worsen their chances of being re-elected if they do not adhere to what was promised to their voters during the previous election campaign. However, interesting and in contrast to this finding, it seems that the vote for the party is more likely to be in support of it, when it manages to convey clearly and with facts the high responsibility of non-fulfillment of promises by the governing party, as well as high corruption which should in fact be the main cause to gather and articulate directly for convincing the undecided voter.

The main parties have played bad in respect of the transparency and broad dialog about the promises and their rate of fulfillment. The lack of publication of election promises (Political manifesto) in at least the parliamentary elections of 2009, 2013 and 2017 seems to be the electoral tactics of the parties to enable the avoidance of accountability for their holding. With the advancement of online information and the distribution of information resources to many individuals, this tactic has already lost its importance and in the 2021 elections they tried to make sure that they have a more complete package of promises / action plan. But, it seems that this approach was already forced as a merit of technology, Albanian media's, as well as the group of dedicated civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations to do more analysis,

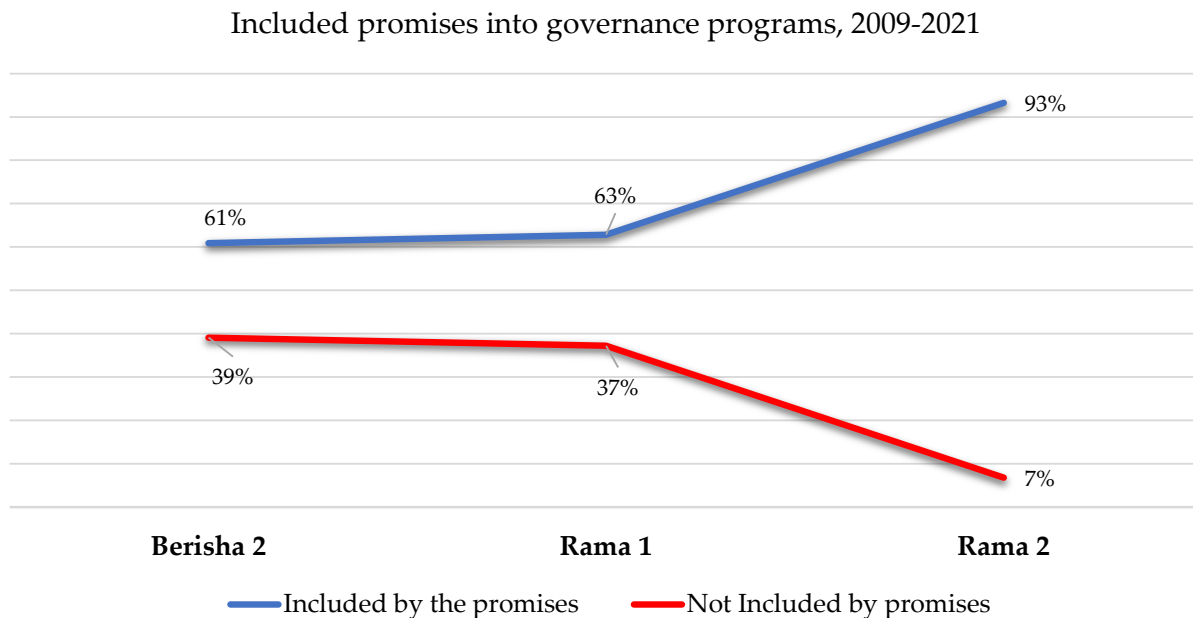
but also transparency regarding the responsibility for party promises, but also governing programs based on the promises of the winning party in the election.

The change in vote level is a measure placed in the economic voting literature. Gains or losses in office are calculated by subtracting the percentage of valid votes won by each governing party in the current election with the percentage in previous elections. Thus, the governing parties considered in this study suffer a loss of 5 percent of the votes on average.

As in the democratic systems of the countries of the Balkan region, like the pluralist systems in other developing countries, Albanian politics in the two most recent political election processes (2017 and 2021) has been characterized by clientelist politics.

The aim of the campaign with little or no substantial policy content has changed the pattern of past election campaigns, orienting the parties more with the spirit conveyed by its leader than with presentations of platforms and programs of models that we have known since '90. Even the promises of policies and actions that are declared for the tentative governing mandate seem to be in function of the clientelist model, rather than only political objectives.

One fact that proves this is the non-inclusion of an insensitive number of election campaign promises in the governing political program, as seen in graph.





But the most obvious clientelist policy appears in the continuation of the phenomenon of buying the right to vote. Vote buying is widespread<sup>8</sup> and widely accepted<sup>9</sup>, and the vote price usually varies from 10 thousand Lekë (at least 80 Euro) to 37 thousand Lekë (at least 300 Euro) per family<sup>10</sup>, although these accusations of the opposition are difficult to prove by justice institution. The price varies with local economic conditions and election competition and what we mention above are references from investigative media<sup>11</sup>, along with public statements of political right leadership. These are significant amounts, given that the poverty line in 2015 does not exceed 500 Lekë<sup>12</sup> (at least 4 Euro) per day for a family<sup>13</sup>.

Although these prices are outside the legal and moral norm, serving as an abnormal factor in the pre-election process, vote buying is still a relatively cost-effective strategy, as continuity manages to challenge the law on electoral crime despite its toughening of punishment of such a criminal phenomenon. Moreover, vote-buying and levels of challenge to the law are positively correlated, using the possibility of lack of evidence that could prove the direct commission of the crime of vote-buying. The gap between the lack of complete and evidence-based information and analysis, as well as clientelist electoral strategies, highlights a valid reason for the lack of policy reference content in the Electoral Code amendments to these elections. Lack of engagement in programmatic lecturing and lack of dissemination of information continue to be a non-positive practice in pre-election campaigns and during their official process.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.reporter.al/transformimi-i-ps-ne-makineri-elektorale-i-jep-edi-rames-mandatin-e-trete/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://euronews.al/al/vendi/politike/2021/04/19/soreca-nga-elbasani-te-shqetesuar-per-blerjen-e-votes-por-edhe-shitja-perben-veper-penale/>

<https://al.usembassy.gov/sq/deklarate-per-median-e-ambasadores-yuri-kim/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.panorama.com.al/vota-shkoi-deri-300-euro-basha-ne-shkoder-dora-e-rames-qe-shtrihet-per-bashkepunim-e-mbushur-me-helm-jo-ja-ime-eshte-finale/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://top-channel.tv/2021/04/28/denoncimi-fiks-fare-skema-e-shitjes-se-votes-1-vote-100-mije-leke-qytetaret-japin-id-ne-kundrejt-parave-te-tjeret-votojne-per-ta/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=21126&langId=en>

<sup>13</sup> <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/253301590709924620/RER-note-WeBa-poverty-impacts-Covid19-20May2020-2-ALB.pdf>

## Closing remarks

Our research on retrospective voting <sup>14</sup>, based on the examples according the showdown of the above facts, it shows us that Albanian voters consider little of the past behavior of parties and politicians in their voting decisions. In this finding, we find that this is entirely expressed by the level of turnout, as well as related to the category of voters that is more massive on election day.

Following this argument, it seems that elections are in the same time instruments through which voters reward the best economic performance based on political propaganda with a vote, but not only, because a part of undecided voters are influenced in their voting decisions from other policy areas beyond economy, such as: issues of national interest (e.g. maritime borders, emigrant policy, nostalgia etc.). On the other hand, the category of ideological voters influences the election result by increasing/ mobilizing the votes for their party. The category of clientelist voters was also observed to be easily influenced by the specific proposals offered in the election campaign, such as: promises or actions by the ruling party (tax exemptions and facilities, construction / improvement of infrastructure), promises by the opposition party (promises for raising the minimum wage, for employment, for reducing tax rates, for large budget funds in education, agriculture and health and vote buying price)<sup>15</sup>.

In the last decade, civil society has revived as a key variable to explain political and economic terms of promises. However, civil society remains a broad concept to have a truly analytical impact. On the one hand, mostly focused on the assistive approach, but still lacking the courage to be a direct contributing factor to electoral competition, organized members of civil society are not yet part of the package as in any other strong society, that is, a society with high levels of social capital and citizens more strongly engaged in matters of decision-making and governance performance.

To achieve an increase in social capital, it is necessary to move to another level of action beyond simply informing the citizens. Coordinating the voice of the citizen through creating a community to expand and strengthen the network of targeted assistance to the citizen to assist them with focused analysis to exhaustive levels is for a much better understanding than to date of behavior and promises of policy towards the citizen.

On the other hand, this means a lot for the next steps that civil society should take, with the aim that citizens are well informed, but also active to hold politicians accountable for their actions. Strengthening social capital is just another way of referring to political responsibility. A strong civil society can be the most competitive model of governance through other ways, such as: achieving high levels of interpersonal trust and which are perfected as models of social interaction, with bureaucrats and policymakers to cooperate and easily monitor each other in

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<sup>14</sup> Retrospective voting refers to voting after considering factors such as the performance of a political party in government assuming that people are more concerned about policy outcomes than political instruments.

<sup>15</sup> See analytical promises in <https://polifakt.al/publikime/trajnime/>

their work; strengthening social capital by nurturing civic virtue among citizens, which in turn leads to better governance within a community that adheres to self-adopted rules.

To have credible and efficient politicians for the public interest, it is necessary to have a politically active, well-informed, sophisticated, and civic courage electorate based on expertise and truth.

All these remarks, it is very crucial, because political control of public functions turns out to depend on two key factors. *First*, free, and fair elections allow citizens to discipline politicians given the credible threat of losing governance in the coming period if politicians have not responded to the interests of voters to a considerable extent according to the information at their disposal. *Second* and equally important, the level of information of citizens inhibits the chances of politicians getting involved in corruption and political mismanagement.

Government performance improves as citizens have more precise knowledge of both the policies adopted by politicians, but also the environment in which they are implemented, provided the elections are competitive and with the parameters needed to punish the party that has not fulfilled its promises. As shown in this analysis, the presence of a well-informed electorate is an indicator that can punish by voting inconsistencies in poor government performance and not in line with electoral commitments and the increased presence of corruption.

A well-informed and politically mobilized electorate is more important than the level of economic development to ensure good governance.

## ANNEX

### Budget performance, economic and social performance of political promises and programs, 2009 -2017

<b>Government 2009-2013 – Promises</b>	<b>Budget performance, economic and social performance based on Government programs</b>
Opening of new Jobs – 160 thousands	Total 49 thousands new jobs
Promises for social protection and care – ALL 8 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 5.7 billion
Promises for Agriculture – ALL 35 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 3.5 billion
There will be no pension in villages below \$ 100	Pension amount in villages 80 US.D
Promises for pensions – ALL 14.7 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 7.4 billion
Promises for Foreign investment and the economy – Euro 2.8 billion	Additional revenue in the budget + ALL 4 billion
Promises for Tax cuts and budget contributions	Additional revenue in the budget + ALL 30 billion
Promises for Education – ALL 30 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 8.6 billion
Promises for road infrastructure – ALL 140 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 180 billion
Promises for Energy, Water Supply and Sewerage – ALL 20 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 1.5 billion

<b>Government 2013-2017 – Promises</b>	<b>Budget performance, economic and social performance based on Government programs</b>
Opening of new Jobs – 300 thousands	Total 198 thousands new jobs
Promises for social protection and care – ALL 10 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 9.5 billion
Promises for Agriculture – ALL 34 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 8.5 billion
Promises for pensions – ALL 13.5 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 9.5 billion
Promises for Foreign investment and the economy – Euro 3.6 billion	Additional revenue in the budget + ALL 7.5 billion
Promises for Health sector – ALL 29 billion (SMI)	Total additional budget - ALL 5.7 billion
Promises for Tax cuts and budget contributions	Additional revenue in the budget + ALL 69 billion
Promises for Education – ALL 14.5 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 1.6 billion
Promises for road infrastructure – ALL 75 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 29 billion
Promises for Energy, Water Supply and Sewerage – ALL 15 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 17.2 billion

<b>Government 2017-2021 – Promises</b>	<b>Budget performance, economic and social performance based on Government programs</b>
Opening of new Jobs – 220 thousands	Total 89 thousands new jobs
Promises for social protection and care – ALL 8 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 7.5 billion
Promises for Agriculture – ALL 35 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 6.5 billion
Promises for public sector salaries – ALL 8 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 4.5 billion
Promises for Foreign investment and the economy ≤ Euro 3.9 billion	Additional revenue in the budget + ALL 7.5 billion
Promises for Tax cuts and budget contributions	Additional revenue in the budget + ALL 25 billion
Promises for Education – ALL 18.5 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 24.5 billion
Promises for road infrastructure – ALL 65 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 78 billion
Promises for Energy, Water Supply and Sewerage – ALL 15 billion	Total additional budget - ALL 12 billion

**Number of voters on the list by regions, 2009 -2021**
*number*

No	Region	2009	2013	2017	2021
1	Berat	169,423	177,944	175,794	183,119
2	Dibër	122,287	129,298	127,231	131,225
3	Durrës	290,258	308,092	313,353	358,730
4	Elbasan	299,945	319,457	321,138	346,948
5	Fier	352,423	376,208	373,706	403,220
6	Gjirokastrë	121,683	123,883	122,039	123,270
7	Korçë	264,492	275,689	273,287	284,363
8	Kukës	72,942	77,968	77,072	83,027
9	Lezhë	148,491	160,189	159,207	173,899
10	Shkodër	239,578	250,144	250,803	272,078
11	Tiranë	725,446	784,484	785,086	910,494
12	Vlorë	277,978	290,899	293,169	318,428

Source: [kqz.gov.al](http://kqz.gov.al), [instat.gov.al](http://instat.gov.al)

**Turnout by regions (SP and DP), 2009 -2021**
*number*

No	Region	PD				PS			
		2009	2013	2017	2021	2009	2013	2017	2021
1	Berat	21,805	21,549	16,302	23,038	44,564	42,897	45,637	42,355
2	Dibër	34,230	30,137	21,331	29,020	21,168	25,103	24,795	28,742
3	Durrës	60,569	52,703	43,163	63,431	52,038	60,833	73,066	76,924
4	Elbasan	57,035	46,788	33,868	57,878	73,255	75,086	72,881	86,224
5	Fier	55,841	46,374	46,799	64,680	91,723	89,637	104,162	91,572
6	Gjirokastrë	18,527	13,509	13,321	14,004	29,091	25,148	27,222	24,604
7	Korçë	56,303	47,061	42,177	50,479	58,289	63,584	62,787	60,543
8	Kukës	25,596	22,426	19,935	24,071	13,692	11,385	18,387	13,856
9	Lezhë	32,400	31,605	27,550	33,998	21,992	26,433	30,406	27,269
10	Shkodër	56,515	31,605	40,763	47,205	40,964	26,433	39,247	30,296
11	Tiranë	161,332	151,472	128,065	182,335	162,757	198,834	200,517	226,842
12	Vlorë	30,310	10,552	23,207	32,128	47,284	56,481	65,684	59,023

Source: [kqz.gov.al](http://kqz.gov.al)

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