

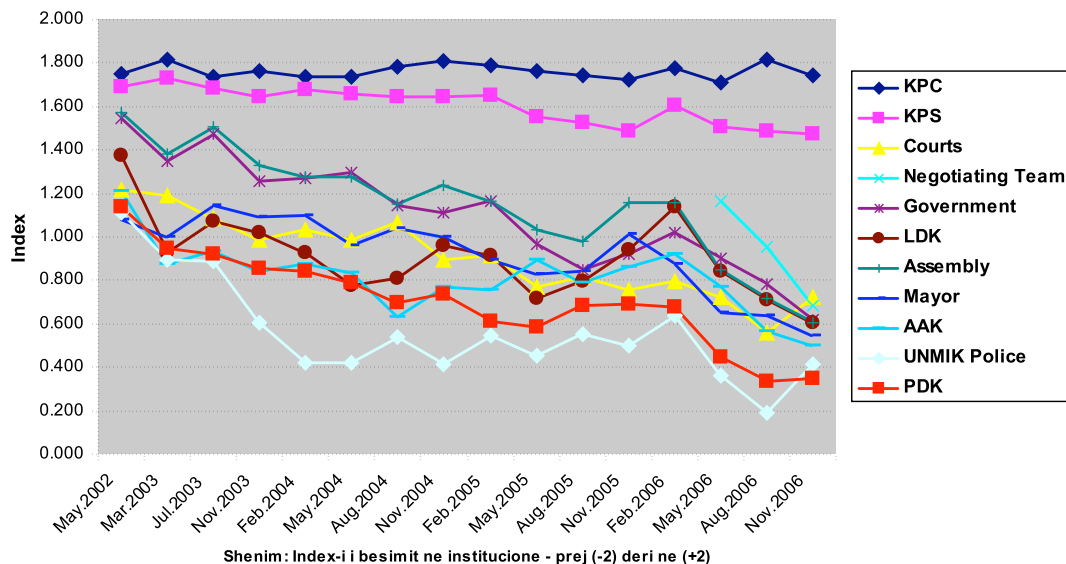
In Crisis for Leaders and Institutions

Visar Berisha

Since the 1991 referendum it is known that majority of Kosovan citizens are determined for Kosova as an independent country. This determination almost became reality after the end of war in Kosova in 1999. However, an independent Kosova still continues to remain just a determination of the majority of its citizens. And it seems that this majority understands and accepts very well the process Kosova has to go through in order to become an independent country, since this majority is still quite patient. Nevertheless, in spite of this patience of Kosovan citizens, they have started to loose their trust in political representatives that are governing and leading Kosova and its journey towards independence.

The Government of Kosova certainly seems to be in a crisis. Recently, it has been accused for bad governance, abuse of public finances and involvement in crime and corruption, and in the last couple of days it has also faced an existential crisis. The fall of the actual government is a possible reality, especially after the last clash in the parliament on the budget for 2007, which has been considered by some experts of economy as an inadequate budget because it is not based on he priorities that Kosova has, as well as after the announcement of the faction of Nexhat Daci within the LDK that this faction could bring down the actual institutions.

Index of trust in institutions: from (-2) “distrust a lot” to (+2) “trust a lot”



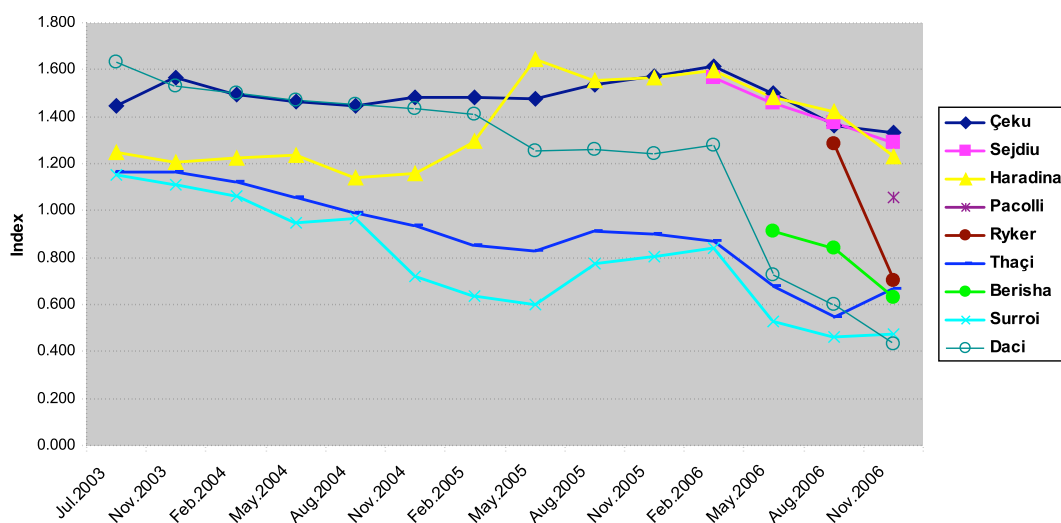
Seeing all these weaknesses and the inefficiency of the Government of Kosova to affect at least slightly in the economic growth and the improvement of lives of citizens, Kosovan citizens continue to loose their trust in their Government. According to the last survey conducted by Index Kosova with Kosovan Albanian and minorities (without Kosovan Serbs) in November this year, *unemployment* continues to be the main problem for Kosovan citizens. On the other hand poverty continues to be reality for almost every second citizen of Kosova, whereas the retired still remain

ignored due to the lack of vision and lack of adequate policies for addressing this problem. Hence, in November 2006, citizens of Kosova have declared their lowest trust in the executive since 2002. Nevertheless, seeing that trust in the Assembly of Kosova has also fallen in a similar way, as well as trust in the Negotiation team of Kosova, we cannot point only towards the position. We can freely say that in fact the whole political class of Kosova is in crisis. Trust in the three main political parties of Kosova (LDK, PDK, AAK) has fallen significantly and this trust is also in the worse position ever. Although the survey was conducted in November 2006, before the 17th Assembly of LDK, which burst into violence, it is certain that this event has further decreased the trust in the (still) biggest party in Kosova.

As for the Negotiating team, only 7% of respondents in this survey declared that they feel *very informed* about the work that the Negotiating team is doing related to the status of Kosova. Among the rest of respondents, 48% said that they feel *somewhat informed*, 26% *not so informed* and 15% stated they feel *not informed at all* for the work of this team. Also, only 8% of respondents expressed that the representative of the Negotiating team take into consideration *very much* the opinions, evaluations and the will of citizens of Kosova with regard to the resolution of the final status of Kosova., whereas 54% said that the Negotiating team is doing this *somewhat* and 28% said that it is not doing this *at all*. The only institutions that continue to enjoy trust stably among the citizens are KPC and KPS.

Optimism in Kosova drops – According to the end-of-year poll conducted by Gallup International in 53 countries of the world, which in Kosova was conducted by Index Kosova, Kosova is not anymore on top of the most optimistic countries in the world, although still remains among 10 most optimist places. While a year ago Kosova was in the second place, when 73% of citizens believed that 2006 will be better than 2005, this year the level of optimism drops to 65% and places Kosova in the sixth place in the world for optimism.

Index of approval of leaders: from (-2) “very unfavorable opinion” to (+2) “very favorable opinion”



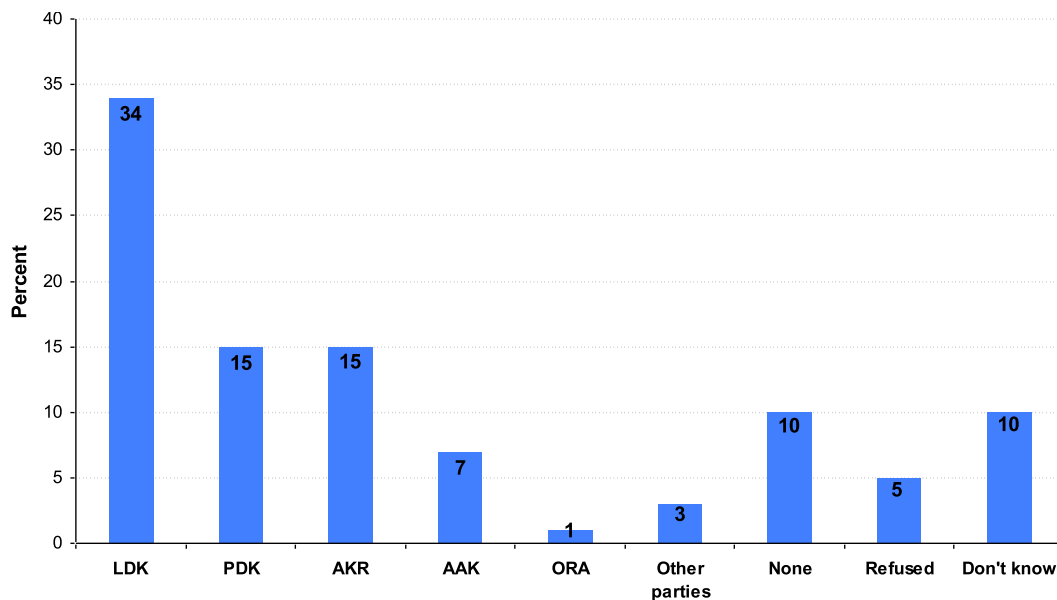
Shenim: Index-i i perkrahjes se lidereve - prej (-2) deri ne (+2)

Although a Prime Minister of a Government that lately has been facing many accusations for bad governance, abuse of public finances and involvement in crime and corruption, the figure of Prime Minister Agim Çeku, who is seen as a more neutral person in terms of party identification, continues to enjoy the biggest support from all leaders in Kosovo, together with the President of Kosovo, Fatmir Sejdiu. However, although on top of the list, approval of these two leaders is not as high as it was before – in fact it is declining more and more. Others do not stand better. Although in the third place, support for the leader of AAK, Ramush Haradinaj continues to fall, same as for the President of the Assembly Kolë Berisha, Nexhat Daci, and especially for the SRSJ Joachim Ruecker. Although in the end of the list, support for Veton Surroi remains stable, whereas the falling support for Hashim Thaçi has stopped in November this year and starts to increase. The newest personality in the political scene in Kosovo, Behxhet Pacolli, seems to have started on the right foot – he is fourth in the list, after Çeku, Sejdiu and Haradinaj.

If we go back to the issue of status of Kosovo, which is the second most important problem for citizens of Kosovo, the regular survey of Index Kosova with Kosovan Albanians and minorities (without Kosovan Serbs) in August this year shows 90% of respondents have expressed their preference that Kosovo should be an *independent state within its current borders*. The following survey conducted in November this year reveals that although citizens of Kosovo really want Kosovo to be an independent state within its current borders, they begin to see the process of definition of the status closer to the reality, closer to what is being discussed in the international arena. Almost one fifth of respondents (19%) think that the future status of Kosovo will be *an independent state within its current borders, but with conditional independence*, whereas majority (69%) think that *Kosova will be an independent state, without conditions*.

Related to the postponement of the process for definition of the status of Kosova, respondents have different attitudes about who is the most responsible for the postponement of this process. Almost one third of respondents (30%) see the *International Community and international politics* responsible for this delay. Around 17% blame *Serbia/Serbs* for this, 12% *Kosova/Negotiating Team of Kosova*, 11% *Marti Ahtisaari* and 6% see *The Contact Group* responsible for the postponement of this process. On the other hand, around 38% of respondents think that the main reason why Ahtisaari and The Contact Group decided to postpone the resolution of the status of Kosova for 2007 is *elections in Serbia/Belgrade and Serbs* in general. However, taking into account that a significant portion of citizens of Kosova feel uninformed about the work of the Negotiating Team, it is not strange that almost half of respondents (45%) answered this question with *don't know*.

Voting intentions for general elections



And lastly, that the actual political class of Kosova is really in crisis it is shown from voting intentions of respondents, where one can clearly see the drop of support for political parties that are currently in the Assembly and the support for a recently formed party. In the survey from November this year, respondents declared that if elections were held for the Kosova Assembly tomorrow, 34% would vote for the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), 15% for the Democratic Party of Kosova (PDK), 15% for the Alliance New Kosova (AKR), 7% for the Alliance for the Future of Kosova (AAK) and 1% for the Reformist Party ORA. The immediate emergence of Behxhet Pacolli party in voting preferences of citizens of Kosova is an indicator that citizens certainly are looking for something new in the political scene of Kosova. In this respect citizens expect more employment opportunities, poverty reduction and better living conditions from a political party formed by a person such as the businessman Behxhet Pacolli. However, it is worth mentioning that in November this year, 10% declared that they would not vote for any of the political parties, 5% refused to answer and 10% were not determined whom would they vote for.

The survey was conducted in the field by Index Kosova in the third week of November (17-24 November) 2006 and the survey covered Kosovan Albanian respondents and minorities (without Kosovan Serbs). The sample of 1,002 respondents is representative of the Kosova population aged 18+ years, whereas the margin of error is $\pm 3.1\%$.

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