



STATISTICAL STUDY ON IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY IN ALBANIA

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INTRODUCTION

With the establishment of a multi-party system in Albania in the early 1990s, the Socialist Party, the successor of the PLA (the communist party), identified itself as left-wing. Similarly to other communist parties in Eastern Europe, it appropriated the symbology of the socialist or social democratic parties of the West. At the same time, and partly as a reactive effect, the Democratic Party and other new parties of that period identified themselves as right-wing.

The same distinction or the same "left-right" divide in terms of political identity, without any precedent in the history of the country – it may even constitute the purest, most ex-nihilo case of this phenomenon in all Eastern Europe – is also mirrored in the self-identification of the Albanian citizens in their party preferences, as well as in the public discourse in general.

In this statistical study, the symbolic ideological identity is analyzed in depth to explore the extent to which it is in line with the real substance of the "left-right" divide from the point of view of political projects and values. We use as a reference the political spectrum of Western Europe, which is the classic space of this way of identification in politics.

For this study, a stratified sample of 1,119 adults residing in Albania was used. In the first layer, the interviews were distributed proportionally among the 12 districts of the country, based on their adult population. In the second layer, the interviews were distributed proportionally to urban and rural areas within each district, to reflect the geographical distribution. Similarly, age and gender quotas were set for each of the strata. Finally, the interview points were randomly selected from the digital map of Albania, in accordance with the above sampling scheme. The goal of this stratified approach was to achieve the most accurate geographical, demographic and political representation of the adult population, ensuring a statistical margin of error of up to +/- 2.9% at national level. This random/stratified sampling approach ensured that all adult Albanian residents had equal probabilities of selection for this survey.

Key results

- From an ideological point of view, 41% of the respondents in our survey consider themselves left-wing, 31.3% right-wing and 24.2% centrist (3.5% answered "I don't know").
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (82%-94%) support historically left-wing Western European policies on education, health, taxation, social assistance, and state intervention in the country's economy.
- Even among respondents who self-identified as ideologically right-wing, the vast majority (81%-95%) support historically left-wing Western European policies in these areas.
- Almost half of respondents (49.3%) consider themselves traditional in family life and only 17.8% consider themselves liberal (32.7% consider themselves somewhere in between). Those who

identify with the right are more likely to be traditional than those identifying with the left (58.4% vs. 48.6%).

Main conclusions

- The ideological self-identification of the Albanian citizens corresponds to a very large extent with the respective ideological self-identifications of the country's two main parties: the vast majority of those who consider themselves left-wing voted for the SP in the last elections, and the vast majority of those who consider themselves right-wing voted for the DP.
- Among Albanian citizens, regardless of their ideological self-identification, there is a very broad consensus in favor of social policies that in Western Europe are considered left-wing.
- The Albanian citizens with high family incomes are more likely to vote for the SP (self-identified as a left-wing party) than for the DP (self-identified as a right-wing party). This can be partly explained by the fact that, among public sector employees, those who voted in the last elections for the SP (the ruling party), are proportionately more than those who voted for the DP (currently in opposition).
- The ideological self-identification and voting of the citizens residing in Albania are greatly influenced by the family's political status during the communist dictatorship period: the vast majority of citizens from communist families of that period identify themselves as left-wing and vote for the SP, while the majority of citizens from persecuted or mixed families of that period identify themselves as right-wing and vote for the DP.

DETAILED RESULTS

In the following three tables, respondents were asked about some of the main areas of the state's social policies, which constitute important indicators of the "left-right" ideological divide, in the classical sense of the term: namely health, education and financial aid to the poor. In Western Europe, in fact, there has long been a convergence between left and right for state-financed social support, as well as for other policies addressed below. Nevertheless, the tendency for more public spending on social policies is seen as left-wing in the West. Answers in tables 1, 2 and 3 indicate an overwhelming consensus in the Albanian society in favor of expansive social policies.

1. What should the health service be like?	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	83.3
2. Free only for those with social insurance	14.2
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	2.4
4. (I don't know)	0.1

2. What should the education system be like?	%
1. Free, covered by the state	84.0
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	1.9

3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	13.9
4. (I don't know)	0.3

3. The poor should be supported mainly:	%
1. By the state	93.7
2. By charities	3.7
3. By family/social circle	2.4
4. (I don't know)	0.2

Although in Western Europe, housing (the object of the table below) is generally considered a citizen's universal right, in practice it is afforded by the state only for the neediest. Also in Albanian society, it is not seen mostly as a right that should be guaranteed by the state. Indeed, the attitude of the respondents about housing is different from the consensus we observed in the above three tables. The Albanian citizens lean more towards the idea that housing is not a citizen's right that must be guaranteed by the state but is something that must be secured in the market by everyone privately. Meanwhile, the percentage of those who see housing as a right is also relatively high.

4. Do you think that housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?	%
1. Yes	40.3
2. No, everyone should secure it for themselves	57.0
3. (I don't know)	2.7

In Western Europe, high tax rates are related either realistically or symbolically to the left, just as tax cuts are related to the right. Meanwhile, income taxes in Western Europe are progressive, regardless of the ideological identity of the governing forces. In Albania, the DP applied a flat tax the last time it was in power (2005-2013) and continues to have it in its program. But it can be said that even the SP, after returning to power (in 2013), maintained an almost flat tax: it claims to have restored the progressive tax, but in reality, taxes have the same rates that the DP government applied in 1992, at a time when the market economy had just started and business was still in infancy. While in Western European countries the upper rates of progressive taxes are over 40% and reach up to 60%, in Albania they reach only up to 23%. The following table shows that, unlike the current tax policies championed by the main Albanian parties, there is strong consensus among citizens on progressive taxation, i.e., in favor of income redistribution.

5. Income tax should be:	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	17.3
2. With higher percentages for those with higher incomes	82.8

Although citizens generally have a negative attitude towards the state, remembering the past communist state as repressive and considering the present state as parasitic/corrupt, it emerges from the following table that there is a very broad, practically complete, consensus in favor of state intervention in the economy.

6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?	%
1. Very much	91.8
2. Not much	7.3
3. (I don't know)	0.9

While the answers above show us a broad consensus in favor of left-wing solutions for some fundamental social policies like income redistribution and state intervention in the economy (always in the Western European sense of the term), in the table below, on the contrary, the results indicate that, in relation to the factor that determines the economic situation of a person, the Albanian citizens clearly lean towards the ideology of the neoliberal right. As it is well known, the ideology of the left tends to explain the good or bad economic situation of a person mostly as a result of chance, which justifies the redistribution of wealth through progressive taxation (a justification that is also articulated in the theoretical organon of the left), while the ideology of the neoliberal right, prevalent since the beginning of the 1980s in Anglo-Saxon countries and then widespread in the European continent, explains the good or bad economic situation of a person as something that depends mainly on each person, namely on their individual competence or incompetence. Thus, in the table below we see that most respondents lean towards the ideological explanation of the right, while the left-wing explanation ranks last in terms of the number of answers. However, this question differs in nature from the preceding ones, which belong entirely to the sphere of socio-economic policies. Whereas in the question of the table below, although it is addressed to the economic situation of a person, conceptually the headline is the person, or his view, and not the economic situation as such. So, we have the human being in front of his or her social context, in a sense the human being in front of the world, or the human being in the world, but also in front of oneself, with a narrative he tells oneself, and therefore the answer to this question has a philosophical nature, no matter how aware the respondent is about this. Consequently, if the above questions belong to the socio-economic dimension of the "left-right" ideological divide and are focused on certain state policies, the question in the following table belongs to a dimension

that can be called cultural, or subjective, in the sense of "lifeworld " according to Edmund Husserl or of "subjective meaning" according to Max Weber.

7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation? %

1. Individual competence/incompetence	53.2
2. Inherited wealth	16.5
3. Contacts with people in power	20.1
4. Mutual favors in social circles	5.4
5. Chance/good or bad luck	4.8
6. (I don't know)	0.2

The question in the table below clearly belongs to the cultural dimension of the "left-right" divide. The left-wing ideology tends to be more liberal as it pertains to family life, as well as in cultural customs in general, while the right-wing ideology tends to be more traditionalistic. The results of the following table prove the same trend in the Albanian society as those in the preceding table. In summary, for all the tables examined so far, it can be said that there is a very broad consensus in Albania in favor of those socio-economic policies that in Western Europe are considered left-wing, while in cultural terms there is a leaning to the right.

8. In family life, how do you consider yourself? %

1. Liberal	17.8
2. Traditional	49.3
3. Somewhere in between	32.7
4. (I don't know)	0.2

The following is an analysis of the correlation between the aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide and the ideological self-identification of the respondents (41% of them identified themselves as left-wing, 31.3% as right-wing, 24.2% as centrists, and 3.5% answered "I don't know"). The table below demonstrates that, regardless of ideological self-identification, there is an overwhelming consensus in favor of expansive social policies, regarding health service (question 9/1), education (question 9/2) and support for the poor (question 9/3), which was to be expected given the first three tables of this study (see tables 1, 2 and 3 above), where the responses in favor of such policies are over 80%. The same can be said about taxes (question 9/5) and

about state intervention in the economy (question 9/6). In the question on housing (question 9/4), although percentages differ from above, ideological self-identification does not cause a split among respondents. Moreover, for the question about the factor that most affects the economic situation of a person (question 9/7), this table shows that respondents, regardless of ideological self-identification, are more likely to consider individual competence/incompetence as the determining factor rather than good/bad luck in life. Meanwhile, we note that respondents who identify themselves as left-wing are more inclined than others to explain a person's economic situation with individual competence/incompetence – which is, in the West, the ideological explanation of the right. Thus, among those who identified themselves as left-wing, there is a discrepancy between ideological self-identification and the values of the respective ideology, even a skew towards the right-wing ideology more pronounced than the other respondents. The answers to the next question (9/8), the one about self-perception as liberal or traditional in family life, present a rather different picture: while the respondents, regardless of ideological self-identification, leaned more towards traditionalism – which, in the West, is considered a right-wing value system, – such a leaning is clearer among those who identified themselves as right-wing. So, in this aspect and in this category of respondents, we have a greater correspondence between ideological self-identification and the values of the respective ideology.

9. Respondents according to ideological self-identification:	Left	Right	Center
<i>9/1. What should the health service be like?</i>	%	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	82.7	86.0	81.0
2. Free only for those with social insurance	15.4	12.0	14.8
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	1.7	2.0	4.2
4. (I don't know)	0.2		
<i>9/2. What should the education system be like?</i>	%	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state	84.5	85.8	82.6
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	2.3	1.4	1.9
3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	13.0	12.8	15.0
<i>9/3. The poor should be supported mainly:</i>	%	%	%
1. By the state	93.0	95.0	93.9
2. By charities	3.6	3.0	4.7
3. By family/social circle	3.0	2.0	1.4
4. (I don't know)	0.4		

<i>9/4. Do you think that the right to housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?</i>	%	%	%
1. Yes	41.2	40.9	37.8
2. No, everyone should secure it for themselves	57.1	53.8	60.4
3. (I don't know)	1.7	5.3	1.8
<i>9/5. Income tax should be:</i>	%	%	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	19.1	18.7	14.2
2. Higher percentage for those with higher incomes	80.9	81.3	85.8
<i>9/6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?</i>	%	%	%
1. Very much	92.1	91.6	90.8
2. Not much	6.9	6.9	8.7
3. (I don't know)	1.0	1.5	0.5
<i>9/7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation?</i>	%	%	%
1. Individual competence/incompetence	63.8	40.8	50.2
2. Inherited wealth	15.8	16.0	16.0
3. Contacts with people in power	11.8	30.7	23.0
4. Mutual favors in social circles	4.3	4.9	7.4
5. Chance/good or bad luck	3.9	7.5	3.4
6. (I don't know)	0.4		
<i>9/8. In family life, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%	%
1. Liberal	14.9	17.3	21.7
2. Traditional	48.6	58.4	41.4
3. Somewhere in between	36.6	24.0	36.4
4. (I don't know)		0.3	0.6

The table below shows the correlation between aspects of the “left-right” ideological divide and the educational level of the respondents (15.5% of them are with low education, 54% with secondary education and 30.5% with higher education – university or postgraduate). The same phenomenon as in the tables above is present regarding all aspects of the “left-right” ideological divide. However, in almost all aspects of this divide, respondents with low education are more inclined towards ideological indicators of the left, whereas those with higher education are more inclined towards ideological indicators of the right. The exceptions are the responses related to the self-perception of the respondents as liberal or traditional in family life (question 10/8), where we see an inverse phenomenon, as well as the answers regarding aid to the poor (question 10/3) and regarding the intervention of the state in the economy (question 10/6), in which the percentages of groups by educational level are practically equal to each other.

10. Respondents by education level:	Low	Medium	High
<i>10/1. What should the health service be like?</i>	%	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	93.7	87.0	71.5
2. Free only for those with social insurance	4.7	10.6	25.2
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	1.0	2.4	3.3
4. (I don't know)	0.6		
<i>10/2. What should the education system be like?</i>	%	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state	92.1	84.2	79.4
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	0.6	2.1	2.1
3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	6.7	13.3	18.5
<i>10/3. The poor should be supported mainly:</i>	%	%	%
1. By the state	93.5	93.4	94.4
2. By charities	3.6	3.9	3.4
3. By family/social circle	2.3	2.5	2.3
4. (I don't know)	0.6	0.1	
<i>10/4. Do you think that the right to housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?</i>	%	%	%
1. Yes	49.9	40.7	34.7

2. No, everyone should secure it for themselves	46.7	56.3	63.5
3. (I don't know)	3.4	3.1	1.8
<i>10/5. Income tax should be:</i>	%	%	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	14.1	16.6	20.0
2. Higher percentage for those with higher incomes	85.9	83.4	80.0
<i>10/6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?</i>	%	%	%
1. Very much	93.0	93.1	89.0
2. Not much	3.9	6.5	10.4
3. (I don't know)	3.1	0.5	0.7
<i>10/7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation?</i>	%	%	%
1. Individual competence/incompetence	45.5	50.2	62.2
2. Inherited wealth	19.0	16.7	14.8
3. Contacts with people in power	18.0	23.2	15.8
4. Mutual favors in social circles	6.3	6.2	3.4
5. Chance/good or bad luck	10.6	3.7	3.6
6. (I don't know)	0.6		0.3
<i>10/8. In family life, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%	%
1. Liberal	8.3	14.4	28.6
2. Traditional	70.0	55.6	27.6
3. Somewhere in between	20.8	29.9	43.8
4. (I don't know)	1.0	0.1	

The table below shows the correlation between aspects of the “left-right” ideological divide and the level of family income (50.4% of the respondents have a low family income, up to 750 Euros per month; 36.4% have a medium level income, 750-1500 Euros per month; 11.7% have a high income, over 1500 Euros per month). In this table, the same phenomenon as in the tables above is evident, either in the consensus among

respective groups, or in the differences in relative trends between them. (Here, as well as in other paragraphs, when it comes to the level of income, it should be borne in mind that people with high incomes, in many surveys, tend to declare their income as lower than it really is, which is a widespread global phenomenon).

11. Respondents by family income level:	Low	Medium	High
<i>11/1. What should the health service be like?</i>	%	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	90.9	76.4	73.2
2. Free only for those with social insurance	7.6	19.7	24.8
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	1.4	3.9	2.1
4. (I don't know)	0.2		
<i>11/2. What should the education system be like?</i>	%	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state	88.9	79.3	77.2
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	0.6	3.1	2.5
3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	10.3	17.1	20.3
<i>11/3. The poor should be supported mainly:</i>	%	%	%
1. By the state	93.9	92.8	96.9
2. By charities	4.1	3.7	0.8
3. By family/social circle	1.8	3.3	2.4
4. (I don't know)	0.2	0.2	
<i>11/4. Do you think that the right to housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?</i>	%	%	%
1. Yes	49.3	33.5	26.8
2. No, everyone should secure it for themselves	48.0	63.4	71.4
3. (I don't know)	2.7	3.0	1.8
<i>11/5. Income tax should be:</i>	%	%	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	14.3	19.0	20.1
2. Higher percentage for those with higher incomes	85.7	81.0	79.9

<i>11/6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?</i>	%	%	%
1. Very much	94.6	90.1	84.1
2. Not much	4.0	9.6	15.2
3. (I don't know)	1.4	0.4	0.8
<i>11/7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation?</i>	%	%	%
1. Individual competence/incompetence	48.8	56.4	61.5
2. Inherited wealth	16.2	15.9	21.2
3. The contacts he has in power	21.5	20.3	11.6
4. Mutual favors in social circles	6.9	3.4	4.2
5. Chance/good or bad luck	6.2	4.0	1.6
6. (I don't know)	0.4		
<i>11/8. In family life, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%	%
1. Liberal	14.0	21.2	22.2
2. Traditional	61.0	39.3	33.9
3. Somewhere in between	24.7	39.3	43.9
4. (I don't know)	0.3	0.2	0.4

From the comparison of the two tables above, we observe that the respondents with a low level of education and those with low family income have the same leanings in relation to the aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide: specifically, they are more inclined towards ideological indicators of the left than the respondents with high educational level. On the other hand, the respondents with a high level of education and those with a high family income have the same tendency in terms of aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide: specifically, they are more inclined towards ideological indicators of the right than those with a low level of education. In the following table, the results indicate that there is a strong correlation between the level of education and the family income: the level of education affects the economic situation of the respective family in such a way that, the higher the level of education, the higher the family income. It can also be said that, conversely, the economic situation of the family can affect the level of education according to the opportunities it creates for education, but this inverse link seems less clear. However, it is

understandable that the strata most in need of social support are more interested and, consequently, more in favor of expansive social policies, which in the West are considered left-wing.

12. Respondents by education level:	Low	Medium	High
<i>What is your family's monthly income?</i>	%	%	%
1. Low income	92.1	59.8	15.3
2. Middle income	7.1	35.8	54.2
3. High income	0.9	4.4	30.5
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The following table shows the correlation between aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide and the areas where the respondents reside, 65% of which are in urban areas (with high buildings and villas) and 35% in rural areas (with agricultural and livestock economic activities). Their answers indicate that, beyond the general consensus between respondents from urban areas and those from rural areas, the latter, in some respects (question 13/1 and question 13/4), lean more than the former towards expansive social policies. Whereas, regarding self-perception as liberal or traditional (question 13/8), respondents from rural areas lean towards the latter more than respondents from urban areas.

13. Respondents by residential area:	Urban	Rural
<i>13/1. What should the health service be like?</i>	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	80.8	88.1
2. Free only for those with social insurance	16.0	10.7
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	3.2	1.0
4. (I don't know)		0.3
<i>13/2. What should the education system be like?</i>	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state	84.7	82.5
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	1.9	1.9
3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	13.1	15.3
4. (I don't know)	0.3	0.3
<i>13/3. The poor should be supported mainly:</i>	%	%
1. By the state	94.0	93.3

2. By charities	3.8	3.5
3. By family/social circle	2.1	3.0
4. (I don't know)	0.1	0.3
<i>13/4. Do you think that the right to housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?</i>	%	%
1. Yes	42.4	36.3
2. No, everyone should secure it for themselves	55.3	60.2
3. (I don't know)	2.3	3.5
<i>13/5. Income tax should be:</i>	%	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	18.0	16.0
2. Higher percentage for those with higher incomes	82.1	84.1
<i>13/6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?</i>	%	%
1. Very much	92.1	91.1
2. Not much	7.1	7.6
3. (I don't know)	0.8	1.3
<i>13/7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation?</i>	%	%
1. Individual competence/incompetence	54.8	50.1
2. Inherited wealth	16.4	16.5
3. Contacts with people in power	20.7	19.0
4. Mutual favors in social circles	4.6	6.8
5. Chance/good or bad luck	3.3	7.4
6. (I don't know)	0.1	0.3
<i>13/8. In family life, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%
1. Liberal	18.9	15.7
2. Traditional	44.9	57.4

3. Somewhere in between	36.1	26.5
4. (I don't know)	0.1	0.4

From the table below, which shows the correlation between household income and residing area, we note that, in rural areas, incomes are generally lower than in urban areas. This result, together with the results of the table above, which shows the correlation between aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide and the areas where the respondents reside (table 13), reinforces the opinion we expressed in the comment on table 12, that the neediest strata are more in favor of social policies that are considered left-wing.

14. Respondents by Residential Area	Urban	Rural
<i>What is your family's monthly income?</i>	%	%
1. Low income	45.5%	61.6%
2. Middle income	40.1%	31.2%
3. High income	14.4%	7.2%
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

The table below shows the correlation between aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide and the age of the respondents (47.8% of whom are 18-49 years old and 52.2% are 50 years and older). Thus, regarding several expansive social policies (question 15/1, question 15/2, question 15/5), the younger group is less in their favor than the older group. Perhaps this is because younger people are better able to adapt to a context where social protection is deficient (especially for pensioners).

15. Respondents by age:	18-49	50+
<i>15/1. What should the health service be like?</i>	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	80.3	86.3
2. Free only for those with social insurance	16.4	11.8
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	3.2	1.6
4. (I don't know)		0.2
<i>15/2. What should the education system be like?</i>	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state	80.5	87.5
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	2.8	1.0

3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	16.5	11.2
4. (I don't know)	0.2	0.3
<i>15/3. The poor should be supported mainly:</i>	%	%
1. By the state	94.6	92.9
2. By charities	3.0	4.5
3. By family/social circle	2.5	2.3
4. (I don't know)		0.3
<i>15/4. Do you think that the right to housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?</i>	%	%
1. Yes	39.3	41.3
2. No, everyone should secure it for themselves	59.4	54.6
3. (I don't know)	1.4	4.1
<i>15/5. Income tax should be:</i>	%	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	20.4	14.1
2. Higher percentage for those with higher incomes	79.6	85.9
<i>15/6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?</i>	%	%
1. Very much	90.7	92.9
2. Not much	9.1	5.4
3. (I don't know)	0.2	1.7
<i>15/7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation?</i>	%	%
1. Individual competence/incompetence	55.5	50.9
2. Inherited wealth	14.5	18.4
3. Contacts with people in power	20.1	20.2
4. Mutual favors in social circles	6.7	4.0

5. Chance/good or bad luck	3.2	6.3
6. (I don't know)	0.2	0.2
<i>15/8. In family life, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%
1. Liberal	27.8	7.7
2. Traditional	33.3	65.4
3. Somewhere in between	38.9	26.5
4. (I don't know)		0.5

The table below shows the correlation between aspects of the "left-right" ideological divide and the gender of the respondents (49.9% are women, 50.1% are men). Gender generally has not influenced respondents' answers. The exception is the housing aspect (question 16/4), for which women are more inclined than men in favor of the state guaranteeing housing as a citizen's right.

16. Respondents by gender:	Women	Men
<i>16/1. What should the health service be like?</i>	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state for everyone without distinction	83.6	83.1
2. Free only for those with social insurance	13.3	15.0
3. Private service, with payment, should be favored	3.0	1.9
4. (I don't know)	0.2	
<i>16/2. What should the education system be like?</i>	%	%
1. Free, covered by the state	84.4	83.5
2. Private education, with payment, should be favored	2.8	1.0
3. Mixed, lower-paying system than purely private	12.4	15.3
4. (I don't know)	0.3	0.2
<i>16/3. The poor should be supported mainly:</i>	%	%
1. By the state	93.2	94.3
2. By charities	3.7	3.8
3. By family/social circle	3.0	1.8
4. (I don't know)	0.2	0.2

<i>16/4. Do you think that the right to housing should be financially guaranteed by the state?</i>	%	%
1. Yes	43.4	37.2
2. No, everyone should provide it for themselves	53.4	60.5
3. (I don't know)	3.2	2.3
<i>16/5. Income tax should be:</i>	%	%
1. With the same percentage for everyone	16.3	18.2
2. Higher percentage for those with higher incomes	83.7	81.9
<i>16/6. How much should the state intervene in the country's economy?</i>	%	%
1. Very much	92.8	90.8
2. Not much	6.0	8.5
3. (I don't know)	1.2	0.7
<i>16/7. What is the most important factor that determines a person's good or bad economic situation?</i>	%	%
1. Individual competence/incompetence	51.4	54.9
2. Inherited wealth	18.7	14.3
3. Contacts with people in power	18.6	21.6
4. Mutual favors in social circles	6.0	4.7
5. Chance/good or bad luck	5.2	4.3
6. (I don't know)	0.2	0.2
<i>16/8. In family life, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%
1. Liberal	17.5	18.0
2. Traditional	50.0	48.6
3. Somewhere in between	32.0	33.4
4. (I don't know)	0.5	

In the table below, among the respondents who identified themselves as left-wing, there was a very pronounced tendency to vote for the SP in the last elections. On the other hand, among respondents who identified themselves as right-wing, there was a very pronounced tendency to vote for the DP. Therefore, it can be said that the ideological self-identification of citizens corresponds to a very large extent with the respective ideological self-identifications of the two main parties in the country.

17. Respondents according to ideological self-identification:	Left	Right	Center
<i>In the May 2025 elections, which party did you vote for?</i>	%	%	%
1. PS	89.6	1.9	11.7
2. PD-LSI-etc. coalition	0.5	73.9	8.0
3. Other Small Party	2.8	5.5	30.6
4. I didn't vote at all	7.1	18.7	49.7
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

In the table below, it is shown that, among the respondents from communist families of the dictatorship period (21.1%), the vast majority identified themselves as left-wing and very rarely as right-wing. The reverse trend, although somewhat less pronounced, is observed among respondents from politically persecuted or mixed families of the dictatorship period (25.8% of respondents).

18. Respondents by political status of the family during the communist regime:	Communist family	Persecuted or mixed	Neither one nor the other
<i>From an ideological point of view, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%	%
1. Left-wing	72.2	18.0	40.9
2. Right-wing	11.3	57.5	25.3
3. Center	14.0	22.5	29.2
4. (I don't know)	2.5	2.1	4.6
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

In the table below, it is noted that, among the respondents from communist families of the dictatorship period, the vast majority voted for the SP, a party that identifies itself as left-wing, and very few of them voted

for the DP, a party that identifies itself as right-wing. The opposite trend, albeit something less pronounced, is observed among respondents from politically persecuted or mixed families of the dictatorship period. This similarity with the table above is explained in the results of table 17, where it was shown that the ideological self-identification of citizens corresponds to a very large extent with the respective ideological self-identifications of the two main parties in the country.

19. Respondents by political status of the family during the communist regime:	Communist family	Persecuted or mixed	Neither one nor the other
<i>In the May 2025 elections, which party did you vote for?</i>	%	%	%
1. PS	72.6	18.0	39.2
2. PD-LSI-etc. coalition	10.0	46.8	22.1
3. Other Small Party	7.4	9.3	12.2
4. I didn't vote at all	10.1	25.9	26.5
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The table below shows that, among the respondents with high household incomes, those who identified themselves as left-wing are – by a significant margin – more numerous than those who identified themselves as right-wing.

20. Respondents by household income:	Low	Medium	High
<i>From an ideological point of view, how do you consider yourself?</i>	%	%	%
1. Left-wing	42.0	39.5	41.8
2. Right-wing	34.4	29.2	23.0
3. Center	20.3	28.3	28.9
4. (I don't know)	3.3	3.0	6.3
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

Since, as seen in Table 17, the ideological self-identification of citizens corresponds to a very large extent with the respective ideological self-identifications of the two main parties in the country, in the following table, which shows the correlation between voting in the last elections (40.2% SP, 26.4% DP and allied parties, 33.4% other parties or non-participation) and the level of family income, the same trend is observed as in Table 20:

among respondents with high family incomes, those voting for SP, a party self-identified as left-wing, were more numerous than those voting for DP, a party self-identified as right-wing. In fact, in the table below this trend becomes more pronounced. However, the correlation between ideological self-identification or voting and family background (tables 18 and 19 respectively) is much stronger than that with the income level.

21. Respondents by household income:	Low	Medium	High
<i>In the May 2025 elections, which party did you vote for?</i>	%	%	%
1. PS	40.8	38.4	44.3
2. PD-LSI-etc. coalition.	28.6	25.3	20.0
3. Other Small Party	8.8	10.7	15.3
4. I didn't vote at all	21.8	25.7	20.4
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

In the table below, the results indicate that the percentage of public sector employees (health, education, etc.) among SP voters (20.3%) is higher than the corresponding percentage among DP voters (only 10.1%). Given that salaries in the public sector are generally higher than in the private sector for comparable jobs, this result partly explains the trend observed in the table above.

22. Respondents according to the May 2025 vote:	PS	PD-ASHM	Other voters and non-voters
<i>What kind of work do you do?</i>	%	%	%
1. Non-agricultural worker	12.5	15.1	18.8
2. Technician/Engineer	3.3	2.7	4.0
3. Manager	2.8	3.6	5.7
4. Health/education	7.6	4.2	4.2
5. Other state employee	12.7	5.9	3.1
6. Agriculture/Livestock	4.5	4.5	4.9
7. Self-employed	19.0	22.6	25.6
8. Pensioner/disabled	30.3	31.7	19.2
9. Looking for a job	2.6	5.4	5.2

10. At home, not looking for a job	2.1	2.6	2.1
11. Student	2.1	1.7	6.8
12. Other	0.4	0.0	0.4
<i><u>TOTAL</u></i>	<i><u>100</u></i>	<i><u>100</u></i>	<i><u>100</u></i>

SUMMARY

As mentioned in the preamble of this study, the ideological self-identification along the "left-right" divide in the Albanian society corresponds to the ideological self-identification of the parties – SP left, PD right. This correlation is clearly evidenced in voting patterns. In the legislative elections of May 2025, among the respondents who identified themselves as left-wing, 89.6% voted for the SP and only 0.5% for the DP and its allied parties. Among the respondents who identified themselves as right-wing, 73.9% voted for the DP and its allied parties and only 1.9% for the SP. But, as can be seen from the totality of the tables in this study, this ideological identity does not correspond at all to the "left-right" divide in the sense given to these terms in Western Europe, which, as mentioned above, is the classic space of this type of identification in politics.

However, we should emphasize that, regardless of citizens' ideological self-identification, there is a very broad consensus (82%-94%, as emerges from the respondents' answers) in favor of historically left-wing Western European policies on education, health, taxation, social aid and state intervention in the economy. The three groups of ideological self-identification, such as left, right, or center, do not differ from each other in terms of levels of support for such left-wing policies. Likewise, there is a transversal tendency, regardless of ideological self-identification, in the answers about the factor that mostly affects a person's economic situation and in the answers about self-perception as liberal or traditional in family life. However, the trend is in the opposite direction to the preceding questions: more than half of the respondents think that the main factor for personal economic success is individual competence/incompetence, and almost half consider themselves traditional in family life, with less than a fifth considering themselves liberal. In both cases, the answers, regardless of respondent's self-identification, lean towards right-wing ideology, in the Western European sense of the term. Peculiarly, those who identify themselves as right-wing are more inclined than others to consider chance an important factor for personal economic success – which is, in the West, the left-wing ideological explanation for the economic situation of persons, justifying the redistribution of income – and they are less inclined than others to consider individual competence/incompetence as the most important factor – which is, as already mentioned, the ideological explanation of the neoliberal right; while the respondents who identified themselves as left-wing are more inclined than the other respondents to explain a person's economic situation with this factor, which means that in this respect they coincide with the right-wing ideology more than the respondents who identified themselves as right-wing. However, with regard to the fact that the answers to these two questions have an opposite tendency to the answers of the

other questions that refer to the indicators of the "left-right" ideological divide in Western Europe, we think that this is because the nature of these two questions, as we have explained in the comment on the relevant table, can be defined as "cultural", while all the other questions that refer to the ideological difference are focused on certain state policies. So, it can be said that, in terms of the ideological indicators "left-right", there is generally a left-wing consensus in the socio-economic dimension of this divide and a clearly right-wing tendency in its cultural dimension, regardless of the ideological self-identification of the citizens.

So, what determines this ideological self-identification? In this context, from the point of view of the relationship between the ideology and the socio-economic reality of Albanian citizens, we find an interesting result that is in contrast to this relationship in the West: respondents with high family incomes (over 1500 Euros per month) are more likely to identify themselves as left-wing (41.8% of the respondents in this strata, versus 23% who identified themselves as right-wing) and also more likely to vote for the SP (44.3%, versus 20% who voted for the DP). This is partly explained by the fact that, among respondents employed in the state sector, where salaries are higher than in the private sector for similar jobs, the number of those who voted for the SP (20.3% of respondents) is greater than those who voted for the DP (only 10.1%). In addition, the SP's model of socio-economic policies, no less neoliberal than that of the DP, is one that, essentially, favors polarization.

However, incomparably more than economic interests, what determines the ideological self-identification of Albanian citizens is clearly their family origin. Among citizens originating from communist families of the dictatorship period, the vast majority identify themselves as left-wing (72.2% of respondents, versus 11.3% who identified themselves as right-wing) and voted for the SP (72.6% of respondents, versus 10% who voted for the DP), while the majority of citizens originating from persecuted or mixed families of the dictatorship period identify themselves as right-wing (57.5% of respondents, versus 18% who identify themselves as left-wing) and voted for the DP (46.8% of respondents, versus 18% who voted for SP).

Thus, the ideological self-identification of the Albanian citizens has nothing to do with the indicators of the "left-right" difference according to Western European criteria. As we have seen, in relation to all these indicators, there is a transversality among ideological self-identification groups in the Albanian society. Likewise, if we look at the correspondence of this self-identification with the way of voting, where 89.6% of those who identified themselves as left-wing voted for the SP, while 73.9% of those who identified themselves as right-wing voted for the DP and its small allied parties, we notice another interesting data: among the respondents who identified themselves as centrists and participated in the elections, the majority voted for new parties. This seems very significant: while among the new parties we find both the left and the right in ideological terms, voting for these parties is a centrism *sui generis*: not as an expression of a centrist ideology, but as a rejection of both the SP, identified as left-wing, and the DP, identified as right-wing. Such a way of voting, where the center is presented as a negativity, as a void (which is reinforced by the fact that almost half of the self-identified as centrists did not vote at all), highlights even better the emptiness of ideological

self-identification. From this point of view, Albania has remained where it was three and a half decades ago, when the SP, the heir to the communist party, defined itself as left-wing, while the DP emerged as an alternative and as a broad anti-communist front. At that moment, people associated with the old regime and, consequently, with the successor of the communist party, identified themselves as left-wing, while those who aspired to regime change mostly supported the main opposition party of the time and thus identified themselves as right-wing. Since then, a host of other parties have been created, but all of them atrophied very quickly, sometimes even from the embryo phase. And, while the SP and DP have undergone changes in these three and a half decades, the inertia of the absence of a democratic tradition and of the patriarchy in politics continues.