

2005 Research Presentation

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NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



The National Democratic Institute in Kosovo

**Kosovo
December, 2005**

Insight Into Public Opinion
Qualitative Research (Focus Groups) Project

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DISCLAIMER

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Methodology

- Eight groups conducted
 - NDI Offices in Pristina
 - NGO Centre Gjakova
- December 6th and 7th, 2005
- Split by gender and age
 - Women 17-34, Women 40 – over
 - Men 17-34, Men 40-Over

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This qualitative research report is a follow up to similar national focus groups conducted with Albanian Kosovars in September 2004.

A copy of that report can be obtained by contacting our offices in Pristina at ndi@ndikv.org.

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Group Accuracy

- Qualitative Research has limitations
 - it is not polling and therefore not statistical replicable
- Why do we have faith in these results ?
 - They are in agreement with our September 2004 study
 - Due to the high level of concordance (agreement) amongst all participants
 - Confidence of expert facilitator in honest input by participants

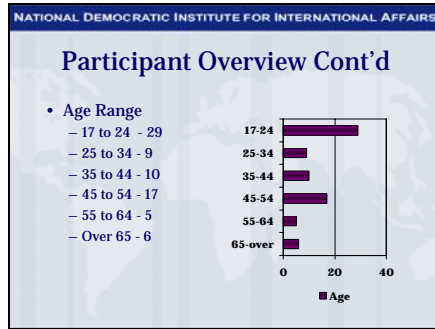
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Methodology Cont'd

- Simultaneous translation
 - Challenges to groups conducted in a second language
- Standard focus group methodology
- Concordance of views except where noted
 - A few differences emerged between group locations, addressed in presentation

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So what's changed?

- Certainty of achieving Final Status
 - Independent country
 - no compromise on borders and severing of ties w/ Serbia
- Increased certainty of what Final Status means
 - Status = FDI = Jobs = Improvements in all aspects of life
- Countries who supported liberation should help now with investment

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Key Positive Attributes

- Honest
- Respectful
- Puts people's interests first
- Acts in a unified way
- Delivers promises
- Professional / works hard

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Trend Over Time

In September of 2004, it was all about Final Status

In December of 2005, it is still all about Final Status

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Life Today

- Disparity between Pristina and Gjakova
 - Intensity of war experience
 - Further from the centre of things; sense of being left behind, isolation
 - Sense of loss, gap between what the community was and what it is becoming
 - Particularly desperate for youth

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Unemployment

- Not only number one issue in terms of concern but also in terms of intractability
 - Feeling no party, person will/can solve problem
- Single biggest killer of hope
 - “Work heals the soul”
- Talk about the “family job”
 - as opposed to work for every able bodied member of the family
- Heavy reliance on Status to fix; no sense of a plan or anyone working on a plan

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Healthcare and Education

- Systems are failing and are expected to continue to fail
 - Crisis of confidence
 - Expectation of further decline
- Plagued with corruption; encountered by all
- Wages are too low for all participants; Kosovo government is to blame
 - Teacher’s strike clear example of Kosovo government failure

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Growing Issues

- KEK and their “ABC plan” is the source of great concern
 - Unsure as to what it will mean
 - Sense that it is fundamentally unfair
 - Threat to stability and patience of public
- Generalized concern about infrastructure and the ability to improve it as necessary
 - “I may not have had a computer but I did have a light bulb that worked”

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Status

- Key to determining the future
- **Certain of its arrival**
- Little understanding/awareness of the process
- Confidence in Ahtissari
 - Awareness of Finnish experience, pre-war role
- Satisfaction with government’s handling
 - Pleased with ‘Unity’ team

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Privatization

- Great hopes attached to these initiatives
- Concern about:
 - the progress or lack thereof to date
 - the transparency of the process
- Beginning to understand that privatization may not create huge number of anticipated new/resurrected jobs
 - Realization but not acceptance

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The President

- President Rugova
 - Great concern for his health
 - Great respect for his service to Kosovo
 - Appreciation his skill and experience are needed

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National Symbols

- Strong need for a flag
- One flag for the Albanian Nation and a new flag for a Kosovo State
 - “No two countries can have the same flag”
- Want referendum
 - all citizens should have input, ownership

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Central Question

If people are generally unhappy with life in Kosovo, not only today but into the future, why is that they are relatively satisfied with the parties and their leaders?

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What Does This Mean?

- Axiom of politics: it must be someone's fault
 - At the moment, that means 'internationals'
- Status now a given
 - No appetite for negotiation on borders or sovereignty
- Opportunity to solidify positions, gain support of citizens/voters
 - Migrate "pride" to "on my side" or "stands up for me"

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Other issues

- Preference for open lists

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Answer

You can not hold people accountable for that which they are not responsible.

Internationals, specifically the SRSG and UNMIK, have reserved the power needed to deal with these issues

Result, elected officials are "off the hook"

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Moderator

- Jaime Watt
 - Chair, Navigator Limited
 - Moderated more than 2500 focus groups over a period of 20 years
 - Navigator is a research-based public affairs firm located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
 - Watt's services have been provided pro-bono to NDI and USAID

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Observation Team

- Each major Albanian political party was allowed to have 2 observers of every group
 - Observers monitored by closed circuit television in an adjoining room
 - Observers met with moderators before and after each group and could suggest questions for the moderator to raise
- Observers attended a training on focus group methodology
- A briefing was held with moderator and observers to discuss findings in detail

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Support Team

- NDI
 - Chad Rogers, *Country Director, NDI Kosovo*
 - Arta Zherka, *Senior Program Manager, NDI Kosovo*
 - Mjellma Hapciu, *National Program Officer, NDI Kosovo*
 - Kushtrim Shehu, *Director of Operations, NDI Kosovo*
- External
 - Index Kosova
 - 'Coalition of Women NGO's', Gjakova

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The National Democratic Institute in Kosovo

**“Kosovo: It’s All About Final Status”
September, 2004**

Insight Into Public Opinion
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Key Positive Attributes

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Methodology cont’d

- Simultaneous translation
- Standard focus group methodology
- Pre and post ballot test
- Post it note exercise
- Concordance of views except where noted
 - Broad strokes
 - Urban more cynical
 - Rural more hopeful / trusting

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Methodology

- Participants randomly recruited by Reinvest
- Nine groups conducted at NDI Offices
 - September 20, 21, 22
- Split by gender and geography
- Young to middle age

– Urban women	26
– Rural women	16
– Urban men	17
– Rural men	21

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Life Today

- Very challenging; daily struggle. Expected better five years out
- Everyone is waiting for Final Status when everything will change
 - Expected mid – 2005
- Unemployment terrible problem
 - Tearing families apart
 - Young people abandoning dreams to support families

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Life Today cont'd

- Nepotism / favouritism still rampant
 - In both domestic and international institutions
- Hard to see who is on the people's side
- Believe they are Europeans but aren't treated as so
 - Treated as children
 - Held to a different standard
- Just hanging on

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Life In A Few Years cont'd

- Not rationally based; what's needed to keep going
- Hope is moving them forward
- If this does not happen, many expect to leave the country

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Key Issue – Employment

- Desperate problem
- Clinging to hope of FDI after Final Status
- Expect once plants start working things will change
- Until then, little they can do
 - Much like treading water

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Life In A Few Years

- Life will be much better
- Final Status will trigger massive foreign investment
- FDI response will be swift
 - Factories will be up and running in no time
- Significant improvements in
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Economy generally

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Key Issues

1. Employment
 - Twice the next issue
2. Final Status
3. (tied) Education
3. (tied) Working For The People
4. Corruption

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Key Issue – Employment cont'd

- Significant source of family stress
 - Too many people to support on one wage
 - Young people asking why bother with an education
 - Tough choices

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Key Issue – Final Status

- Coming for sure mid – 2005
- Is in the hands of the International Community
- Will revolutionize life in Kosovo
 - FDI will pour in; almost instantly
 - Business people literally waiting to invest
- The World will know us then
- How can they be sure?
 - Domestic and International leaders have **promised**

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Working For The People

- Familiar theme
- Linked to lack of connectiveness to parties and leaders
- Sense that leaders (domestic and international) are working for themselves; not the people
- Also linked to corruption

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Who Is Working On Key Issues

- No one; although domestic leaders are let off the hook due to reduced authority
- No sense authorities are concerned about and working on the problems of the average citizen
- Preoccupied with their own agenda
- Again, expectation much will be solved with Final Status

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Key Issue -- Education

- Key to a better future
 - For both themselves and the country
- Improvements seen; reforms very slow
 - Teaching methods have improved
 - Still too many outdated professors
 - Serious lack of course materials
- Teacher's salaries problematically low
 - Teachers are too tired to teach

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Corruption

- Impact is pervasive
- So bad, some hope simply for a government that is 'less corrupt'
- Don't believe there is a level playing field
- Driving a cynicism that allows inaction

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Key Themes – Desire For Cooperation

- Strong belief that no one group / entity can solve problems
- Strong desire for all – especially domestic parties to put aside differences and work together
- Not seen to have been a strength of parties to date

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Key Themes – Belief In A Better Tomorrow

- Participants simply believe it will get better
- Unable to give a thoughtful, rational answer as to how or why or what needs to happen beyond Final Status
- Deeply held belief which allows a lot of emotions to be kept in check

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Key Themes – Disconnect With Leaders

- Orchestra is missing its conductor
- Prime Minister's March intervention very well received
- Desire to have leaders
 - Walk the streets
 - Visit schools
 - Visit victims of War
 - Answer questions directly

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Key Negative Attributes

- Corrupt; practices nepotism
- Puts own interests first
- Old; set in ways
- Divisive; does not act together with others
- Does not deliver promises
- Not professional / unqualified given jobs

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Key Themes – Study For A Better Day

- Many students had no short term hope of getting any job; much less one in their field
- They are preparing themselves for a better day
- Continue to believe that it is an investment worth making

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Key Themes – Contributions To Final Status

- Understand this is in the hands of others
- Uncertain as to process; certain about outcome
- Develop local competencies
 - In other words, be ready
 - Across all aspects of life
- Linked to working together

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Topline Impressions -- International

- Deterioration in performance approval
- Seen as an impediment to progress; not a driver of it
- Not using the power they have taken to make things happen
- Rampant nepotism / favouritism
- May not actually be competent afterall

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Opportunities and Risks

- Significant risk if Final Status not delivered as expected
- Opinion is decided but not hardened
- Opportunity for parties to connect with voters by focusing on key issues and developing relevant campaign tactics
- Positioning available to LDK, PDK, ORA
- Risk / opportunity to define ORA

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Support Team

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 - Mjellma Hapciu, *National Program Officer, NDI Kosovo*
 - Kushtrim Shehu, *Director of Operations, NDI Kosovo*
- External
 - Reinvest

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