

# Azerbaijan National Survey of Voters

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## Methodology

Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates is pleased to present the International Republican Institute (IRI) with the key findings of a survey of voter attitudes in Azerbaijan. Interviews were conducted among N=1,100 registered voters throughout the country February 15-March 5, 2003. Each interview was administered via person-to-person by a trained interviewer subcontracted through an Azeri research firm. Actual respondent selection for the study was at random using an “Nth” selection format.

The number of interviews was distributed geographically using a pre-determined selection process to accurately reflect actual voter proportionality by zones throughout the country. The margin of error associated with a sample of this type is  $\pm 2.9\%$  at the 95% confidence interval. Meaning that if we conducted this same study administered in the same fashion that in 95 cases out of 100 the results would fall within  $\pm 2.9\%$  of these results.

## Project Objectives

Most political survey projects are undertaken with multiple objectives or purposes. The Azeri project is no different in that the study was constructed to address three (3) primary objectives:

1. **Gauge Political Landscape.** Azerbaijan not receiving the healthy diet of surveys we do in the U.S. it was important to see how voters view their government; how voters receive the opposition parties; and where the issue matrix of voters is focused.
2. **Aid the Opposition Parties.** Anyone in Azerbaijan who decides to actively take part as a member of an opposition party has an extremely difficult road ahead of him. Resources are limited to a catastrophic level; few opportunities exist to better position themselves among a wide audience; and from a broader perspective it is simply difficult for the opposition parties to engage in the political debate on a meaningful level. In this vein it was important to at least attempt to offer the opposition parties with some perspective and guidance in how they move forward.
3. **What the short term political landscape holds.** Surveys represent a “picture in time” as they are a static measure of a dynamic entity. Therefore it was important to try to glean a sense of what could be the political environment in the near term in looking at the survey.

## Overall Findings

As far as the major objectives of the project are concerned the findings from the survey can be summarized quite succinctly in that more times than there is consensus among Azeri voters on many important issues. What's more it would be difficult to look at the survey and reasonably surmise that the political landscape is likely to significantly change in the near term. As a result more than anything this consensus of opinion spells more trouble for opposition parties than it does for the President.

For the most part, the opposition parties we met with, in country, were selective about the findings they were willing to accept. More precisely they were receptive to the notion that the government receives relatively poor ratings on the important issues. Conversely, they were unwilling to accept that President Aliyev is as strong politically as the survey suggests. What was in some ways rightly viewed by the opposition parties as a disconnect between the government's poor ratings on important issues versus deep political strength was certainly the cause for much of their collective skepticism of the survey.

In response to this general skepticism or disconnect the survey is fairly clear as to why this is. Which is to say that, overall, President Aliyev represents stability to the voting public. And while voters may have some questions about his government's performance on some key issues, the opposition parties are not viewed as a credible alternative right now.

Overall, we have a fairly lock-step electorate with respect to political matters. President Aliyev is very well received. Eighty-six percent (86%) of voters in the country have a favorable impression of him. More importantly two-thirds (64%) say they have a strongly favorable impression of him. He is the only potential presidential candidate tested who has any foundation or base to truly speak of. Just about two-thirds (63%) of voters identify Aliyev as the person they "most trust to address their concerns and problems."

Subsequently, it follows that the President would begin this campaign in very solid shape; which he does. Fully two-thirds (64%) of the voters in the country say they would support him if the election were held "today." What's more he possesses an intensity of support that would suggest it is not likely to significantly waver. Eighty-two percent (82%) of voters supporting the President indicate they are "definitely voting for him and not likely to change." This translates to just about 53% of the overall electorate who right now say they're definitely voting to re-elect him and unlikely to change their minds -- 82% of 64% = 53%.

All of these factors, however, don't truly convey the extent of the political strength the President brings to the table.

- Undecided voters. Among the 4% of voters who are undecided on the first ballot test better than three-quarters (78%) have a favorable impression of the President. So not only is it highly unlikely that the undecided vote breaks away from the incumbent as is typical in the U.S., but assuming these "undecided voters" actually turn out there's no reason to think they won't support the President.
- Lack of a cohesive opposition. The President's political strength also is aptly evidenced by the lack of any defined opposition; collectively let alone party/candidate specific.

## Issue Environment

### Mood of the Country

	All Voters
Right direction	58%
Unsure	6%
Wrong track	35%

- Mood of the country tells us how voters, generally, see which direction the country is headed. More than anything this represents a vote of confidence (or lack thereof) for the incumbent.
- Someone could certainly look at this finding and see that most voters (58%) view Azerbaijan as generally heading in the right direction thus surmise that most voters are fairly optimistic. However, this is far too cursory a view of the situation in that better than a third (35%) actually think the country is "off on the wrong track." What's more, the segment of voters who would fall into the "optimistic" or "right direction" column is far too refined to make such a sweeping statement of all voters.
- As is usually the case this particular question goes a long way in distinguishing which voters can aptly be described as pro-incumbent and which cannot. In this case we see the formation of the President's hard-core base of support. Which is to say they tend to be . . .
  - Voters from outside of Baku
  - Much more likely to be male than female
  - Tend to be older - - particularly over the age of 55

- Voters from outside of Baku are more likely to be optimistic about the direction the country is headed than are voters from Baku - - 62% versus 54%, respectively. Conversely, Baku voters tend to be driving the percentage of voters who think the country is “off on the wrong track” in that 42% of Baku voters accept this view versus only 26% of voters from outside of Baku who agree.
- Male voters are considerably more likely to be optimistic than are women - - 61% to 53%, respectively. This is particularly true of men from outside of Baku among whom two-thirds (66%) think the country is headed in the right direction.
- More than anything, the opinions of voters as to the direction the country is headed is driven chiefly by how they rate the government’s performance and more specifically President Aliyev. It also should be noted that voters definitely make a distinction between government and President Aliyev; they are not one in the same. In that better than 70% of each of the voter groups view the country as heading the right direction:
  - Those who approve of the government’s performance - - 78%
  - Those voting for President Aliyev - - 71%
  - Those voters supporting YAP - - 70%
- Conversely the more pessimistic voters tend to be anchored by . . . . .
  - Those voters who disapprove of the government’s performance - - 60% wrong track
  - Voters supporting someone other than President Aliyev - - 67% wrong track
  - Voters supporting an opposition party - - 60% wrong track
- The cause and effect of voters’ mood is generally centered around personal security issues. Which is to say, for example, those voters who view Nagorno-Karabakh as stable (62% right direction) and those who think they were worse off when Azerbaijan was a Soviet Republic - - 70% right direction.
- By contrast voters who view the “standard of living” as the most important issue (44% wrong track), social issues as the most important issues (40%), and those who fear “losing their job” most (52% wrong track) tend to be driving the pessimism among voters.

- Having essentially identified the President’s core base of support as those who are optimistic or view the country as headed in the right direction we immediately see a considerable advantage for the President and YAP come October which is to say there is a strong correlation between a voter’s optimism and their likelihood to vote.
  - Those who indicate they’ve voted in every election - - 62% right direction
  - Those who indicate they’re definitely voting in October - - 68% right direction
  - Those who have rarely voted in the past - - 47% wrong track
  - Those who say there’s only a 50:50 chance of them voting in October - - 49% wrong track
- The logical implication being that the “protest vote” (those who think the country is off on the wrong track) are far less likely to vote than are those who approve of the government’s performance and support the President.

**Most Important Issue**

<b>Most Important Issue</b>	<b>All Voters</b>	<b>Most important Issue</b>	<b>All Voters</b>
Job creation	39%	Attracting foreign investment	1%
Resolving Nagorno-Karabakh	33%	Cleaning streets	1%
Standard of living	5%	Promoting traditional values	1%
Providing basic services	4%	Promoting Islam	1%
Government corruption	3%	Promoting democratic values	1%
Access to health care	3%	Addressing elections fraud	1%
Improving education	2%	Managing the Azeri oil supply	0%
		Expanding college opportunities	0%

- More than anything, what jumps out in this question is that the issue focus of almost three-in-four (72%) voters is contained in just two issues: job creation and resolving N-K.
- Job creation, as one might presume, is more likely to be mentioned by younger voters; particularly those between the ages of 18 and 34. This is also an issue that is likely to be cited by President Aliyev’s voters (34%) more so than even those supporting either Isa Gambar or Etibar Mamedov - - 31% to 30%, respectively.
- With respect to the President’s voters, job creation is much more likely to be mentioned by his soft support than his hard support (45% to 36%). Suggesting that for the president to shore up this support he still needs to focus on the issue.

- Resolving N-K is an issue that is more likely to be focused on by older voters. Whereas the President's voters are more likely to mention "job creation" as the #1 issue than the leading opposition candidates' voters, resolving N-K is more likely to be mentioned by the Gambar and Mamedov voters than the President's voters - - 36% and 37% versus 34%, respectively.

**What Voters Fear Most**

<b>Fear the Most</b>	<b>All Voters</b>
Breakout of war	46%
Government destabilization	20%
Losing their job	8%
Losing their home	8%
Failure of democracy	4%
Loss of social status	3%
No free/fair elections	3%
Losing foreign aid	0%
Don't know	1%

- The first thing one is likely to notice here is that almost half (46%) of the voters say what they fear most is the "breakout of war." However, it is important to point out that this is being driven largely by women among whom 63% say they fear this the most compared with 31% of men who would agree.
- In addition to women, the breakout of war is also more likely to be mentioned by the pro-government voters: those who approve of government's performance; voters supporting YAP; and those who are voting for the President among whom a majority say the "breakout of war" is what they fear most.
- Still the "destabilization of government" is not an arbitrary fear among voters as one-in-five say this is what they fear the most. Destabilization of government is what male voters are likely to cite as 25% indicate this is their greatest fear compared with just 14% of women.

**Better/Worse Off As Soviet Republic**

	<b>Respondents Themselves</b>	<b>Friends Neighbors</b>
Better off	76%	72%
Unsure	5%	10%
Worse off	19%	18%

- We asked this question in two ways in a deliberate attempt to see if there was any inconsistency in how voters respond. An inconsistency in these responses would suggest there is a “politically correct” response. Which in this case there isn’t an inconsistency in that about three-quarters of voters say they were “better off” as a Soviet Republic.
- That the consensus view is that voters were “better off” as a Soviet Republic is certainly not a knock at the President’s performance. In fact, not only are the pro-government voters among the most likely to say they were “better off” they are among the most likely to have an intensity of opinion as well. No less than 44% of any of the pro-government subgroups indicate they were “strongly better off” as a Soviet Republic:
  - Approve of government’s performance - - 44% strongly better off
  - Voters supporting YAP - - 45% strongly better off
  - Voters supporting the President - - 45% strongly better off

**Country Prefer to Live in**

**Scoopystan** is defined by a strong central government where the citizenry relies on government for just about every need they have.

<b>Defined by:</b>	<b>By the same token</b>
- No freedom of the press - No role for citizens in policy decisions - Limited ability for citizens to achieve financial success unless they’re born into it - Serious human rights abuses are common & not looked as oppressive	- There is relative peace & stability - Standard of living is fair but no better

**Shagastan** is defined by a less centralized government where outside of basic services citizens largely control their own destinies.

<b>Defined by:</b>	<b>By the same token</b>
- Complete independent press with no connections to government. - Not only are citizens allowed to question government, it is their responsibility to ensure government is being responsive to their needs. - Every citizen would have an equal chance to achieve financial success. - The rare incidences of human rights abuses - are well documented and the abusers punished.	- There is a constant undercurrent of instability in society. Crime is more common. Basic government services are not being provided. - Because everyone has the same chance to succeed some people may achieve great success while most will not and others will be poor.

- More than perhaps any other question, these findings were the greatest surprise in the survey. Still it's important to not exaggerate the significance of this juxtaposition and rather to temper the extrapolation to nothing more than a slim majority of voters are "open" or "receptive" to the notion of a more democratic society.
- In this question we see many of the same dynamics we have seen throughout. Which is to say the greatest correlation in voter opinion tends to be with both region (Baku versus Outside of Baku) and gender. Subsequently one could make the argument that where "right direction" voters represent the President's base of support, voters who say they would prefer to live in "Shagastan" represent the pool of voters at least open to an opposition party message.
- Having said this, it is important again to temper the significance of this statement about opposition voters. This 51% who say they would prefer to live in "Shagastan" essentially represent the pool of voters who are even open to an opposition party message. This is a far different statement than saying this 51% represents the opposition parties' base of support.
- With respect to the correlations in voter opinion, voters from Baku are not only more likely to cite a preference for "Shagastan" than are those from outside of Baku, but are far more decisive in this view. Fifty-four percent (54%) of Baku voters say they would prefer "Shagastan" versus 42% who cite a preference for "Scoobystan." Conversely, voters from outside Baku are very torn on this juxtaposition as 49% cite a preference for "Scoobystan" versus 48% who say they would prefer to live in "Shagastan."
- Gender is another demographic where there is a distinct variance of opinion. Women (51%) are far more likely to say they'd prefer "Shagastan" than are men - - 41%. Conversely a majority (56%) of men say they would prefer "Scoobystan."
- Why those preferring "Shagastan" represent the pool of potential opposition voters can be seen in the issue concerns of these same voters. That is those who would prefer to live in "Shagastan" tend to be:
  - Those who think they were "worse off" as a Soviet Republic - - 71%
  - Those who view "standard of living" as most important issue - - 56%
  - Those who fear the "destabilization of government" most - - 61%

## Nagorno-Karabakh

### Current Assessment

	<b>All Voters</b>
Stable but not resolved	65%
Peaceful and not likely to erupt in violence	17%
On the brink of violence	17%
Ethnic tensions have been fully resolved	0%
Don't know	0%

- Nagorno-Karabakh is another area where Azeri opinion is pretty much in consensus. Two-thirds (65%) of the voters accept the view that the situation is “stable but not yet resolved.” However, the key phrase in the statement to which two-in-three voters accept is that N-K is “not yet resolved” rather than simply “stable.” You will remember that a third (33%) of the voters identify this as the “most important issue.” The clear inference being that a third of voters wouldn't identify a simply “stable” situation as the most important problem.
- And while most voters view the situation as stable, there is a reasonably significant segment (17%) who think N-K is on the “brink of violence.” Largely, voters who accept this view are more likely to be receptive to the opposition parties or more precisely not among the pro-government or President's base of support. These voters tend to be among those who disapprove of the government's performance. They tend to include younger voters (under 55) and particularly men from Baku. In addition undecided voters are among the most likely to view the situation as on the brink of violence as well.

### Who Do you Credit/Blame for Situation

	<b>Deserves Credit</b>	<b>Deserves Blame</b>
President Aliyev	79%	15%
Armenians	3%	42%
International community	8%	8%
Russians	6%	22%
The U.S.	1%	4%
Don't know	1%	3%

## Still Needs to be Done

	<b>All Voters</b>
Bring in the international community to negotiate	34%
Military response	29%
Increase the military presence on the borders	15%
Bring in peace-keeping troops from the UN	8%
Don't know	2%

- Obviously what voters see as still needed to resolve the issue depends largely on how they assess the situation as is. A plurality (34%) of voters think international community leading negotiations is what's needed. However, as we saw in our focus groups there are many voters who think negotiations have failed to resolve the issue and that a more assertive, i.e. military, option is called for.
- We did not venture beyond the term "military response" which obviously allows for a wide variance of interpretation among respondents. However, we know that whatever interpretation they make it's something more than simply posting military around the borders (15%).

## National Institutions

### Trust in National Institutions

	<b>Trust</b>	<b>No opinion/ Don't know</b>	<b>Do not Trust</b>
Azeri media	60%	3%	38%
Parliament	32%	6%	62%
Court System	29%	10%	61%
International organizations	50%	11%	40%
Elections process	41%	6%	53%

- This chart probably raised the most questions about the survey among the opposition parties. In particular the "trust" percentages for both the Azeri media and the elections process were seen as far too high.
- With respect to the Azeri media certainly one thing we may have tried, in retrospect, is to break out media by print and electronic. The consistent anecdotal response we received during the presentations was that if voters trust "the media" they're much more inclined to trust television and far less likely to trust newspapers.

- However, with the elections process the opposition parties' inability to accept it speaks to at least one reason why they're in the minority. Fighting public opinion is rarely a fruitful proposition. Rather understanding public opinion and attempting to affect it within it's current parameters can be a difference maker.
- In this case, how we responded to their cynicism is that most voters in the country support YAP and President Aliyev; there's little argument in that. A majority (51%) of YAP's supporters say they "trust" the elections process; which of course stands to reason. Subsequently, there is a disproportionate percentage of the voters in the country supporting YAP; YAP wins; these same voters obviously "trust" the process.
- The more precise question the opposition parties should be asking is what percentage of voters who are not supporting YAP "trust" the elections process. In this case it's a completely different story in that it's fewer than 20% who actually "trust" the elections process in Azerbaijan.

**Government Approval Rating**

	<b>Respondents Themselves</b>	<b>Friends Neighbors</b>
Approve	57%	45%
	21% strongly*	
Unsure	3%	4%
Disapprove	40%	40%

\*NOTE: We probed for intensity of opinion (strongly/somewhat approve) only in this question not when asked as their "friends and neighbors."

- Here again we asked the same question in two different ways in an effort to see if there was any inconsistency of opinion. Unlike the first time we did this (better/worse off as Soviet Republic) juxtaposition we do see a significant disparity in the responses.
- More than anything, this disparity would suggest the "truth" probably lies somewhere in the middle between 57% and 45% of voters who approve of the government's performance. What's more there is a lack of any real intensity of approval among voters in that only 21% indicate they "strongly approve" of the job government is doing versus 36% who "somewhat approve."
- Still the profile of the pro-government voter is cemented here as voters who tend to approve of the government's performance tend to be those from outside of Baku - - 62% approve. They are more likely to be male than female (25% to 16%, respectively, strongly approve) and the older voters are the more likely they are to strongly approve of the job government is doing.

### **Issue Importance vs. Government Performance**

	<b>Most important Issue</b>	<b>Government has Done “best” on</b>
Job creation	39%	1%
Handling Nagorno-Karabakh	33%	8%
Standard of living	10%	2%
Basic utilities	5%	3%
Government corruption	4%	1%
Foreign investment	1%	10%
Promoting democracy	1%	2%
Protecting the environment	1%	7%
Azeri oil supply	0%	33%

- President Aliyev may be far in front on the opposition parties, but to suggest that YAP has a stranglehold on voter support is nothing but shortsighted. The President is unlikely to be challenged by the opposition parties THIS year, but if there were one thing in this survey for the opposition parties to coalesce around it would probably be the above table.
- More than anything, what this table shows is that voters largely make a distinction between President Aliyev and government. Whereas Aliyev may be beyond their reach in the short term taking on the government with its track record certainly is not in the longer term.
- However the opposition leaders have to keep their focus on the future and set their sights on highlighting where public opinion shows the government has failed. Case in point the most important issues to voters are “job creation” and “N-K” yet only 8% of voters think “N-K” is the issue government has done the “best” with and even fewer (1%) say the same of job creation. Conversely, the issue voters think government has done the “best” (33%) with (State oil company) is an issue no one cares about.

## Political Environment

### Image Ratings for Opposition Leaders

	<b>Total Favorable</b>	<b>Total Unfavorable</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Total Aware</b>
Isa Gambar	31%	53%	13%	97%
Etibar Mamedov	28%	61%	10%	98%
Ali Karimli	32%	47%	10%	90%
Rasul Guliyev	22%	63%	12%	97%
Ayaz Mutalibov	24%	68%	7%	99%
Ilyas Ismailov	14%	38%	14%	66%

- Whereas the previous table should yield the opposition parties with hope in the longer term, the table above no doubt yields despair in the short term. If there is anything positive to glean from the opposition leaders, collectively, it is that they are all very well known. In fact, outside of Ismailov they're all universally known.
- However, in that the opposition leaders are known by voters, they are not well received. Each of them is strapped with a net negative image; meaning more voters have an unfavorable impression of them than have a favorable impression. If we were to apply what we've witnessed in U.S. politics barring an incumbent who is in even worse shape, a challenger with a net negative image is basically a non-starter.
- Unfortunately, even the above table does not do justice to the true situation the opposition leaders face in this political environment in the near term. Obviously the fact that the opposition leaders have net negative images is largely being driven by the pro-government segment: voters from outside of Baku, men, and voters over the age of 55.
- Of a more immediate concern to the opposition leaders is that each is grossly ill-positioned among what could be the persuadable voters. In other words, those voters who disapprove of the government's performance; the voters who view the country as "off on the wrong track;" and the undecided voters.

**Opposition Candidates' Unfavorables  
Among Persuadable Voters**

	<b>Wrong Track</b>	<b>Disapprove Govt.</b>	<b>Unified Voters *</b>
Gambar	46% net -8	50% net -12	19% net +51
Mamedov	60% net -30	63% net -37	41% net +8
Karimli	41% net -3	46% net -7	31% net +33
Guliyev	57% net -30	60% net -36	55% net -23
Mutalibov	61% net -29	63% net -34	57% net -21
Ismilov	40% net -24	42% net -27	38% net -12

**NOTE:** \* “Unified voter” determined as voter who supports one of the major opposition parties in the generic presidential ballot test and also indicates they would support a unified opposition candidate even if that particular candidate came from a party other than the one they chose.

**NOTE:** How to read table above - - the percentages listed are the candidates’ unfavorable percentages followed by their nets. In other words among those voters who say the country is “off on the wrong track” 46% have an unfavorable impression of Isa Gambar to 38% who have a favorable impression, i.e. net -8.

One thing worth noting in the table above is the relative strength Gambar would presumably be able to garner assuming the opposition could unify behind a single candidate. Among the “unified voters” fully 70% have a favorable impression of Gambar to only 19% who have an unfavorable impression. Of course “unified voters” represent only 6% of the electorate

**Opposition Candidates' Unfavorables  
Among Undecided Voters**

	<b>First Ballot Undecided Voters</b>	<b>Second Ballot Undecided Voters</b>	<b>Soft Aliyev Voters#</b>
Gambar	45% net -21	58% net -35	51% net -18
Mamedov	59% net -39	65% net -44	61% net -35
Karimli	41% net -21	50% net -20	54% net -27
Guliyev	49% net -31	68% net -54	66% net -44
Mutalibov	55% net -22	69% net -44	58% net -24
Ismilov	31% net +7	40% net -30	40% net -29

**NOTE:** # “Soft Aliyev” voters are those who indicate they are “probably voting for him but may still change their mind.”

**President Aliyev Image**

	<b>Total Favorable</b>	<b>Total Unfavorable</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Total Aware</b>
Heydar Aliyev	86%	13%	1%	100%
<b>Who do You Trust Most</b>	<b>All Voters</b>			
President Aliyev	63%			
Combined opposition	22%			

- Fully 86% of voters in the country have a favorable impression of the President to only 13% who have an unfavorable impression. This gives him an impressive 6.6:1 image ratio or in other words there are almost seven (7) voters who have a favorable impression of him for every one who has an unfavorable impression of him. What's more, two-thirds (64%) of voters say they have a "strongly favorable" impression of him.
- We've included two tables here (President's image and "Who Do you Trust") to highlight a particular point which is that the President's core base of support is equal to about two-thirds of the voters in the country. A voter having a favorable impression of a candidate is a basic threshold and will many more times than not exceed the percentage who actually support that candidate on a ballot test. Generally, we refer to a candidate's favorable percentage as a leading indicator to his vote.
- A more stringent threshold for a voter is trust in a candidate to address his concerns and problems. Trust in a candidate will generally mirror a candidate's vote percentage; which in this case we see 63% of voters say they "trust" President Aliyev most to address their concerns and problems. This 63% of voters who say they "trust" the President most corresponds with the 64% of voters who have a "strongly favorable" impression of him and as we'll eventually see corresponds with the percentage of voters who are supporting him as their first choice for president.

**Likelihood to Vote in '03 Presidential**

	<b>All Voters</b>
Definitely voting	59%
Probably voting	17%
50:50 chance of voting	15%
Probably not voting	8%

- A solid majority (59%) of voters indicate they “definitely voting” in October compared with just 8% who say they’re “probably not voting.” If we contrast this with what we usually find in U.S. political surveys where 75% to 80% of voters indicate they’re “definitely voting” yet only 50-odd% actually turnout it is reasonable to presume that turnout in Azerbaijan will probably be about 65% to 70%.
- In this question, we see another indication of where the opposition parties might be lacking in that pro-government voters tend to be more likely to say they’re “definitely voting:”
  - Favorable impression of Aliyev 61% definitely voting
  - Voting for YAP 66% definitely voting
  - Approve of government’s performance 74% definitely voting
  - Voting for President Aliyev 66% definitely voting

**Most Important Candidate Characteristics**

	<b>All Voters</b>
Experience/professional background	33%
Knowledge/issue positions	27%
Personality	10%
Political Party	2%
Social Status	1%
Where they’re from	1%

- Generally, what we find is that the greatest correlation between demographics and important characteristics exists in the age of voters. A third (33%) of younger voters (18 to 34) view “issue positions” as what’s most important to them versus older voters (55+) who are among the most likely to say a candidate’s “experience and professional background” is what’s most important.
- If we were to compare these to our experience in U.S. politics we may find the complete opposite trend is true. True, more so in empirical evidence than in what a survey might find, which raises the question as to whether the same may not turn out to be true in Azerbaijan. That is, in U.S. politics, where a candidate is from is typically very much a top-tiered concern and a candidate’s “Political Party” and to a lesser degree “Social Status” almost go without saying as crucial characteristics.

**Generic Presidential Ballot Test**

	<b>All Voters</b>
YAP	69%
Combined opposition	17%
• Musavat	7%
• PFP	4%
• ANIP	3%
• ADP	3%
Other	7%
Undecided	5%

- The generic ballot is a “must have” question in every political survey as it attempts to remove personalities from the ballot equation in order to gauge base political party support. Here again we see the figure of about two-thirds (69%) of voters representing the President’s (or in this case YAP’s) core base of support.
- The true focus of this question, though, is those voters supporting an opposition party. We employed a skip pattern technique off the generic ballot so that respondents who choose an opposition party are asked a follow up question.
- Obviously it is not enough that voters support a candidate or party other than President Aliyev or YAP, but that the opposition can unify behind a single candidate whom voters support in order to be competitive this year. In this vein we had to try to see if it were possible for opposition party voters to unify:

*“How likely would you be to vote for a unified candidate from the opposition parties IF that candidate came from a party other than the one you just chose? Would you definitely vote for them, probably vote for them, it would depend, or probably not vote for them?”*

	<b>Opposition Party 17%</b>	<b>Supporting Musavat 7%</b>	<b>Supporting PFP 4%</b>	<b>Supporting ANIP 3%</b>	<b>Supporting ADP 4%</b>
Definitely vote for	30%	34%	28%	35%	25%
Probably vote for	17%	21%	14%	9%	25%
Depends	38%	36%	44%	49%	22%
Probably not	14%	8%	12%	9%	28%

## First Choice Presidential Ballot Test

	<b>All Voters</b>	<b>Unified Voters</b>
Heydar Aliyev	64%	3%
Isa Gambar	7%	40%
Etibar Mamedov	4%	16%
Ali Karimli	3%	14%
Rasul Guliyev	3%	15%
Ayaz Mutalibov	3%	7%
Ilyas Ismilov	0%	1%
Other	10%	5%
Undecided	4%	- -

- President Aliyev’s core base of support accounting for about two-thirds of the electorate is again evidenced in voters’ first choice for president. Two-in-three voters (64%) choose the President as their first choice. There are not too many other ways to describe the ballot test other than not even collectively are the opposition parties able to truly compete with the President.
- However, if we focus in on those voters who are likely to unify behind a single opposition candidate (represented by far right column) we see that far and away Isa Gambar shows the greatest potential of unifying opposition voters. Therefore the move on the part of the opposition parties that met in late March to unify behind Gambar was the best one they could make.
- We also measured the intensity of voters’ support for their first choice. For those respondents who chose a candidate (i.e. not responding “other” or “undecided”) were asked a question to determine how solid their support for that candidate is.

*“For the candidate you’re supporting for president - - Would you say you’re definitely voting for him and there’s no reason to think you’ll change, or are you’re probably voting for him, but there’s still a chance you may change your mind?”*

- Clearly we’re primarily focused on the President’s support in this respect as he is the only candidate who has a large enough base to distinguish between “hard” and “soft” support. Not only does the President far out distance the rest of the field in terms of support, but his vote is committed. Eighty-two percent (82%) of voters who support the President say they’re ‘definitely voting for him and not likely to change.’
- Drawing out the President’s vote we’ll see that if the election were held “today” his vote floor would be 53% - -  $82\% \text{ of } 64\% = 52.5\%$ .

## **Second Choice Presidential Ballot Test**

	<b>All Voters</b>	<b>Aliyev's Voters</b>
Heydar Aliyev	7%	--
Isa Gambar	4%	4%
Etibar Mamedov	3%	3%
Ali Karimli	4%	3%
Rasul Guliyev	4%	2%
Ayaz Mutalibov	5%	5%
Ilyas Ismilov	1%	--
Other	49%	61%
Undecided	20%	22%

- Voters' second choice doesn't present much hope for the major opposition leaders either. Almost half (49%) the voters say their second choice would be someone other than the candidates listed, while another 20% say they're "undecided." Difficulties in the administration of the survey prohibited us from recording the specific candidates respondents named as "other." However, it is reasonable to presume that much of this voter support would go to the President's son, Ilham.

## **Most Effective Campaign Tactic**

	<b>All Voters</b>	<b>Unified Voters</b>
TV commercials	63%	67%
Contact from Party Member they don't know	13%	12%
Demonstrations & protests	7%	4%
Contact from neighbor/friend	5%	4%
Brochure	3%	3%
Posters & billboards	2%	6%
Radio commercials	0%	1%
Boycotts	0%	2%
Don't know	1%	2%

- If the political hurdles for the opposition leaders weren't difficult enough, the above table would suggest they face a financial hurdle in impacting the presidential race as well. Similar to an axiom we follow in U.S. politics, Azeri voters appear to be saying a political campaign isn't for real unless or until it gets on TV. This is even more likely to be the case among the "unified voters" among whom 67% view TV commercials as the "most effective campaign tactic."

### **Most/Least Effective Messages**

<b>Top 3 Most Effective</b>	<b>All Voters</b>
Stability	25%
Social	18%
Oil industry	16%

<b>Top 3 Least Effective</b>	<b>All Voters</b>
Tyrant (Opposition)	21%
Social	19%
Corruption (Opposition)	15%

- In these messages we see a microcosm of the entire political landscape as it exists in Azerbaijan, currently. That is that the most important factor to voters is stability; consistent with that a plurality (25%) of voters identify the “stability” message as the most effective of the eight (8) tested. Conversely the message most voters see as the “least effective” is simply calling the President a tyrant. In voters’ minds this does nothing to help their plight and improve their standard of living and therefore is basically a wasted effort.