METHODOLOGICAL REPORT

Caucasus Barometer 2022, Armenia and Georgia

June 2022

CRRC Armenia

CRRC GEORGIA

What is Caucasus Barometer?

The Caucasus Barometer (CB) is a bi-annual nationwide household survey conducted by CRRC offices in the South Caucasus. It is the longest-running continuous survey data collection in the region that makes all its data available for public use. Since 2004, CRRC has interviewed around 45,000 Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia residents on socio-economic issues, values, beliefs, and political attitudes. Starting from 2015, Caucasus Barometer has been administered in Armenia and Georgia.

The purpose of the Caucasus Barometer survey is to provide the general public, researchers, journalists, and policymakers with high-quality data on socio-political and economic trends in the South Caucasus. As for mid-2020, Caucasus Barometer, and its predecessor, CRRC Data Initiative, have been cited in about 3,600 scholarly publications, according to Google Scholar. CB data has been used in dozens of regional and international policy documents.

Since its inception, Caucasus Barometer has been supported by generous funding from the Carnegie Corporation in New York. In the 2019 and 2021 waves, the study in Armenia was supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The 2021 wave of the survey in Georgia was self-funded by CRRC-Georgia

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The Caucasus Research Resource Centers. (dataset year) "[dataset name - e.g. Caucasus Barometer]". *Retrieved from http://www.caucasusbarometer.org/ on {date of accessing the database here}*

Geographical and population coverage

The 2021 wave of the Caucasus Barometer survey was conducted in late 2021 and early 2022 by CRRC-Armenia and CRRC-Georgia. Surveys cover the adult (18+) population of Armenia and Georgia, excluding those residing in the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia that are not currently under Tbilisi's control. Interviews were conducted in Armenian in Armenia; and in Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian in Georgia. All interviews were administered face-to-face, using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method.

Sampling design

Respondents in both countries were selected using the Multi-stage Stratified Cluster sampling method. CRRC offices used lists of electoral precincts as primary sampling units (PSUs). Sampling frames were prepared based on electoral division for the 2018 Armenian Snap Parliamentary Elections and the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia.

Primary sampling units of each country were allocated into three strata: precincts located in capital cities, other urban settlements, and rural settlements. Urban and rural strata were further divided by four geographic regions ('quadrants'): north-east, north-west, south-east, and south-west. The factors that influenced the sample size include the number of population subgroups to be represented, the targeted margin of error, and available resources. In each stratum, the sample size was adjusted based on expected nonresponse. Hence, the interviewers contacted more households to get the targeted number of completed interviews. The sample size was independently calculated at a 95% confidence level for each stratum.

In the first stage, the sample of primary sampling units from each geographic substratum using a probability proportional to size (PPS) method was drawn.

Next, selected PSUs were visited, and households (Secondary Sampling Units) were sampled via Random Walk protocol using a predefined starting point, directions for a walk, and step size.

At the final stage, respondents were selected using a Kish grid. Interviewers were strictly instructed to interview only selected respondents and not replace them.

Questionnaire design and a pilot survey

The survey instrument for the 2021 Caucasus Barometer survey was developed by CRRC-Georgia and CRRC-Armenia offices. Along with new questions, the instrument contained a number of questions that were asked in the survey's previous waves.

The source questionnaire was developed in English. The initial instrument was piloted by CRRC-Georgia's office. The instrument was tested using 30 interviews conducted in Tbilisi between December 9 and 10, 2021. In Armenia, the questionnaire was pretested among a small group of respondents (30 interviews) in Yerevan and urban and rural communities in Kotayk and Armavir regions between December 10 and 15. After the pilot, CRRC offices adjusted the questionnaire and translated the final instrument into Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian.

Fieldwork

In Armenia and Georgia, there are no regulations requiring permission from the government in order to conduct a survey. Still, CRRC offices in both countries prepared formal letters, describing the aims and procedures of the survey. The interviewers were instructed to show these letters to visited households and selected respondents.

The CB 2021 fieldwork was conducted based on CAPI face-to-face interviews. All interviews in Armenia were conducted in Armenian. As for Georgia, 94.4% of the interviews were conducted in Georgian, 4.6% in Azerbaijani, and 0.97% in Armenian.

CRRC offices used ODK software to program questionnaires for tablet forms. ODK is a free and open-source survey data collection toolkit that allows implementing in-form logical checks, automatized advances in forms, collecting multimedia data, and complex resources for questionnaire auditing. CRRC offices used their encrypted and secure data servers to upload and store collected interviews.

Experienced CRRC interviewers and fieldwork supervisors were involved in CB 2019 data collection. Most of them have worked with CRRC offices for several years.

CB 2021 fieldwork was supervised by one Fieldwork Coordinator and a Fieldwork Supervisor in Armenia and eight Supervisors in Georgia. Thirty-eight interviewers were involved in the fieldwork in Armenia, and 106 interviewers were involved in the fieldwork in Georgia.

Intensive trainings were carried out for fieldwork supervisors and interviewers before the fieldwork. Prior to the training, all interviewers received paper versions of the questionnaire, show cards, and sampling instructions. During the training, interviewers practiced the questionnaire and sampling instructions (including random walk, step size, and respondent selection), and discussed possible problems or challenges that could arise during fieldwork.

In Armenia, fieldwork was conducted between December 18, 2021, and February 6, 2022. Interviews in Georgia were administered between December 17, 2021, and January 30, 2022. Notably, fieldwork was finalized before the start of Russia's war against Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

During the fieldwork, interviewers were instructed to follow protocols for random walk protocol respondent selection. After selecting a target household, interviewers were instructed to make at least three attempts to contact the household. After entering the household, interviewers explained the goals of the survey to household members and selected the respondent using a Kish grid. If the selected member of the household was not at home, interviewers made at least three follow-up visits to interview the respondent. Household and interviewer level refusals were carefully marked down on interviewer forms and entered in tablets.

	Armenia		Georgia		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Complete response	1,648	35%	1,540	23%	3,188	28%
Partial response	84	2%	121	2%	205	2%
Miscellaneous	14	0%	251	4%	265	2%
No eligible respondent	52	1%	19	0%	71	1%
Respondent unavailable	329	7%	86	1%	415	4%
Physically or mentally incapable	14	0%	74	1%	88	1%
No screener completed	476	10%	1236	18%	1,712	15%
Household-level refusal	1980	42%	3152	46%	5,132	44%
Known-respondent refusal	109	2%	167	2%	276	2%
Household-level language problem	36	1%	154	2%	190	2%
Respondent-level language problem	3	0%	4	0%	7	0%

Table 1: AAPOR Disposition Codes by country

Overall, 1,648 complete interviews were collected in Armenia, and 1,540 full interviews were administered in Georgia. The minimum response rate (AAPOR RR1) of 35% was achieved in Armenia and 23% in Georgia. Table 2 shows a detailed breakdown of responses by country and strata.

		Capital		Urban		Rural	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Armenia	Non-response	1,665	73%	868	65%	564	50%
	Complete interviews	622	27%	469	35%	557	50%
Georgia	Non-response	3,405	92%	1,002	68%	857	53%
	Complete interviews	313	8%	468	32%	759	47%

Table 2: Completed interviews by strata

In Armenia, 1,596 interviews were done during the first contact, 44 were administered during the second contact, and 8 interviews were done during the third attempt. In Georgia, 1,228 interviews were completed during the first contact, 226 interviews were done during the second attempt, and 46 interviews were administered during the third attempt. On average, interviews lasted for 43 minutes in Armenia and 41 minutes in Georgia.

After the end of the fieldwork, CRRC-Georgia conducted a face-to-face fieldwork check of the 9.4% of interviews (232 cases). Back-check calls among 14% of the interviews (232 cases) were conducted in Armenia in parallel with the main fieldwork.

Data management and analysis

Data cleaning was carried out to identify and, where possible, correct inconsistencies. In addition, open-ended questions with textual responses were recoded so that these answers matched numeric codes. It should be noted that, with CAPI, the cleaning process was straightforward: pre-programmed questionnaire

forms helped to eliminate ambiguous codes from being entered into the dataset. Also, the form did not accept errors related to selecting more values than permitted in the questionnaire. Additional protocols for data cleaning are summarized in Table 3:

Issue	Protocol
Responses were typed ambiguously, but the data cleaning specialist could determine the intended response.	The value was changed to the response identified by the data cleaning specialist.
Responses were typed ambiguously, but the data cleaning specialist could not determine the intended response.	The value was changed to an interviewer error code.

Table 3: Additional protocols for data cleaning

Sampling weights account for the fact that different members of the population have different probabilities of being selected for an interview and thus represent different numbers of people than within the overall population. Sampling weights are necessary when estimating the proportion of the population that would choose a particular response if interviewed. For calculating sampling weights, CRRC offices used precinct-level information; specifically, the number of voters.

Next, sampling weights are adjusted for nonresponse; for example, if 80% of the interview attempts in a voting precinct resulted in interviews, then the weight of that 20% who did respond would be adjusted upwards by a factor of 1.25.

Finally, the respondents are binned into gender, age, and geographic categories (e.g., females in Tbilisi aged 18-34, males in rural areas or Armenia aged 35-54, etc.), and weights are adjusted so that the weighted age and gender ratios of the sample matched that of the population. CRRC-Georgia used the results of the 2014 National Census of Georgia to calculate demographic bins, while CRRC-Armenia referred to the official estimates of the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia for 2021.

As Caucasus Barometer has a complex survey design, it is highly recommended that users take into consideration survey design when analyzing the dataset. Below is a recommended syntax for survey settings in STATA:

Household-level analysis: `svyset PSU [pweight=HHWT], strata(SUBSTRATUM) fpc(NPSUSS) singleunit(certainty) || ID, fpc(NHHPSU)`

Individual-level analysis: `svyset PSU [pweight=INDWT], strata(SUBSTRATUM) fpc(NPSUSS) singleunit(certainty) || ID, fpc(NHHPSU) || _n, fpc(NADHH)`

A recommended syntax for survey settings in R when using the `survey` package:

`options(survey.lonely.psu="certainty")`

Household-level analysis: `svydesign(id=~PSU+ID, weights=~HHWT, strat=~SUBSTRATUM, fpc = ~NPSUSS+NHHPSU, data=survey data object name)`

Individual-level analysis: `svydesign(id=~PSU+ID, weights=~INDWT, strat=~SUBSTRATUM, fpc = ~NPSUSS+NHHPSU, data=survey data object name)`

Dataset and documentation

CB Dataset in SPSS and STATA formats, survey instruments, and information on previous waves are available via Caucasusbarometer.org