PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN ARMENIA

Some findings from the Eurasia Barometer 2021

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Outline

• Democracy Index
• EAB survey in Armenia: some findings
  ✔ Methodology brief
  ✔ Description of the interviewees
  ✔ Perception of democracy in Armenia: the most essential characteristics
  ✔ Assessment of democracy in Armenia and selected countries
  ✔ Strong man style: is it demanded?
## Democracy Index 2021, EIU (1-10 scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Overall score</th>
<th>Rank (167)</th>
<th>Electoral process and pluralism</th>
<th>Functioning of government</th>
<th>Political participation</th>
<th>Political culture</th>
<th>Civil liberties</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>Hybrid regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hybrid regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>Hybrid regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit
[https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy/](https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy/)
Trends in Democracy Index 2021, EIU, Selected Countries

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit
https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy/

What is democracy?

• Fundamental to the restoration of democracy is a correct understanding of what it is. Misappropriation of the word is a testament to democracy’s widespread appeal that ... has generated confusion, allowing opponents to simultaneously claim democratic credentials and argue that actual democracies are ineffective or hypocritical.

• Moreover, it (misappropriation) has contributed to a misperception that all democracy requires is the regular occurrence of elections. ... In its ideal form, it is a governing system based on the will and consent of the governed, institutions that are accountable to all citizens, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for human rights. ...

• Democracy is also more than just an ideal. It is a practical engine of self-correction and improvement that empowers people to constantly, peacefully struggle toward that ideal. ... What they desire are the freedoms and the institutions that will allow them to create a better life and a more just society over time.

**Methodology Brief**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size, coverage</td>
<td>1207 adults in Armenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Random Digit Dialing (phone codes: +374 041/ 043/ 055/ 077/ 091/ 093/ 094/ 095/ 096/ 098/ 099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>+/- 2.82% for the total sample</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaire (89 questions): Provided by EAB**

**Fieldwork**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>23 October-3 November, 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>CATI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented</td>
<td>CRRC-Armenia (<a href="mailto:crrc@crrc.am">crrc@crrc.am</a>); coordinator: Lilit Yezekyan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in all following charts are shown as percentage of total (%) if not otherwise stated.
Description of the interviewees (distribution, share of total, %)

**By Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**By Settlement Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Other urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age (n=1198)**

- 18-35, 37%
- 36-55, 35%
- 56+, 27%

**Which one is the most important channel for you to find information about politics and government?**

- Television (airwaves, cable and online): 50.7%
- Newspaper (print and online): 0.5%
- Internet and social media (online chat rooms): 29.7%
- Radio (airwaves and online): 2.9%
- Face-to-face conversation: 10.8%
- Others (please specify): 0.2%
- Do not understand the question: 4.8%
- Can’t choose: 0.4%
The most important problems facing this country that government should address?

What is the most important problem facing this country that government should address? (top 7)

- War (international): 54.3%
- Unemployment: 7.9%
- Management of the economy: 5.6%
- Poverty/destitution: 5.0%
- Education: 2.8%
- Wages, incomes and salaries: 2.7%
- Political instability/political divisions/ethnic tensions: 2.2%

How likely is it that the government will solve the most important problem you identified within the next five years?

- Over half (50.8%) of those who mentioned war as a main issue facing Armenia (n=652) consider that the government will be able to solve the issue.

Very likely: 8.6%  
Likely: 42.2%  
Not very likely: 23.5%  
Not at all likely: 19.2%  
Can’t choose: 6.6%
### Perception of democracy in Armenia: most essential characteristics

One answer per bloc was accepted, %

**Bloc 1: Freedom of expression the first**

- Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor | 19.1
- People choose the government leaders in free and fair election | 20.6
- Government does not waste any public money | 16.2
- People are free to express their political views openly | 37.3
- Can't choose/Decline to answer | 6.8

**Bloc 2: Diverse; provision of quality public services relatively large**

- The legislature has oversight over the government | 12.3
- Basic necessities, like food, clothes and shelter, are provided for all | 23.8
- People are free to organize political groups | 23.6
- Government provides people with quality public services | 29.3
- Can't choose/Decline to answer | 11.0

**Bloc 3: Job opportunities for all the first**

- Government ensures law and order | 15.3
- Media is free to criticize the things government does | 22.0
- Government ensures job opportunities for all | 33.7
- Multiple parties compete fairly in the election | 19.8
- Can't choose/Decline to answer | 9.2

**Bloc 4: Freedom of demonstrations and protests the first**

- People are free to take part in demonstrations and protests | 32.8
- Politics is clean and free of corruption | 17.7
- The court protects the ordinary people from the abuse of government power | 16.5
- People receive state aid if they are unemployed | 24.4
- Can't choose/Decline to answer | 8.5
Assessment and satisfaction of democracy in Armenia

**In your opinion, to what extend is your country democratic?**

- A full democracy: 12.7%
- A democracy, but with minor problems: 27.8%
- A democracy, with major problems: 33.5%
- Not a democracy: 23.8%
- Can't choose: 2.2%
- Decline to answer: .2%

**How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country?**

- Very satisfied: 7.5%
- Fairly satisfied: 38.2%
- Not very satisfied: 27.3%
- Not at all satisfied: 23.4%
- Can't choose: 3.4%
- Decline to answer: .2%

57.5% of those that voted for the party in power (vs. 40.5% - all) believe that on average Armenia is more democratic (average score 2.7 compared with 2.3 for all, out of 4)
How suitable is democracy for Armenia? (1-10 scale)
Mean = 5.53

How suitable is democracy for Armenia?

Which of the following statements comes closest to your own opinion?

Those that supported the ruling party in the elections believe the democracy is more suitable for Armenia (mean score 6.5 vs. 5.5 for all, out of 10).
Democracy in Armenia vs. selected countries (1-10 scale)

Mean for: Armenia – 5.25, China - 4.47, Russia – 4.74, USA – 6.12 (out of 10)
Democracy as a value

Democracy may have its problems, but it is still the best form of government

Compared with other systems in the world, would you say our system of government works fine as it is, needs minor change, needs major change, or should be replaced?
**Strongman style**
(see more in the [Age of the Strongman by Gideon Rachman](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/705318/the-age-of-the-strongman-by-gideon-rachman/))

Some excerpts from the introduction of the book

• “strongman style” in politics – a style that, until recently, was thought to be alien to the mature democracies of the West;

• strongman template, encouraging a cult of personality and contempt for state institutions;

• The rise of strongman leaders across the world has fundamentally changed world politics;

• the technologies of the twenty-first century are also handing strongman leaders new ways of communicating directly with the masses, as well as dangerous new tools of social control;

• *Age of the Strongman* describes the rise of a new generation and type of nationalist and populist leader, linked by their contempt for liberalism and their embrace of new methods of authoritarian rule.

There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives?

Three statements to check how demanded the strongman style is

- We should get rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things
- This country needs a leader who can break the rules if necessary to get things done.
- The army (military) should govern the country

48% are in favor (strongly and somewhat agree) of getting rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things.
52.6% found that the country needs a leader who can break the rules if necessary to get things done.
29% accepted the alternative “The army (military) to govern the country”.

48% are in favor (strongly and somewhat agree) of getting rid of parliament and elections and have a strong leader decide things.
52.6% found that the country needs a leader who can break the rules if necessary to get things done.
29% accepted the alternative “The army (military) to govern the country”.
A higher share (~52%) of those with high economic status (n=147) are very and somewhat satisfied of the current government (vs. 46.9% for all).