



Caucasus Research Resource Centers
A Program of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation

DATA INITIATIVE – 2007

Fieldwork Report

Introduction

In fall of 2007, wave 4 of the annual Data Initiative survey was conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (a program of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation) in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. This report outlines the development of the fieldwork stage of this survey, while other documents¹ available at the CRRC regional website (www.crrccenters.org) cover other aspects of the survey.

The Data Initiative survey (DI) was designed in 2003 in order to collect reliable representative information about a wide range of social attitudes among the populations of the South Caucasus. From the very beginning, the data collected by CRRC was meant to be open to all interested researchers and/or policymakers both from the region and from other parts of the world.

Wave 1 of DI was conducted in 2004, in the capital cities of the South Caucasus countries. In 2005, one region was added to the capital. The survey was conducted in Yerevan and the Kotayk region in Armenia, Baku and the Aran region (the Mugan zone) in Azerbaijan, and Tbilisi and the Shida Kartli region in Georgia. In 2006, a country-wide representative sample was polled for the first time in all three countries. From 2004 to 2006, there was an attempt to keep a panel of respondents, but this effort was discontinued in 2007.

DI 2007 was characterized by a number of innovations aimed at increasing the quality of the data obtained. Nonetheless, from the very beginning, the best possible balance was sought after in order to ensure data comparability over time. Three major differences between the 2007 and previous DI waves are related to (1) a new approach to sampling; (2) significant editing of the questionnaire; and (3) management of fieldwork by CRRC offices in all three countries instead of a contracted polling company. Additionally, special attention was paid to accurate documentation at every step of the survey.

The DI 2007 [Unified Sampling Methodology](#) document explains, in detail, the multistage cluster sampling with preliminary stratification used in 2007, as well as basic calculations on the basis of which DI 2007 sampling was finalized. The present report covers the principles

¹ Major documents describing various stages of the 2007 Data Initiative are: DI 2007 Unified Sampling Methodology; DI 2007 Block-listing instructions and Block-listing form (both used in Georgia only); DI 2007 Questionnaires: Household questionnaire and Individual questionnaire (in 5 languages: English, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Russian); DI 2007 Questionnaire Translation Strategy; and DI 2007 Instructions for the Interviewers. All these documents are available at the CRRC regional website.

governing design of the 2007 DI questionnaire and the process and results of the fieldwork.

1. DI 2007 questionnaire

In contrast with previous waves of the survey, the 2007 DI questionnaire was split into two parts- household and individual. Each part had a separate cover sheet, where information on the interviewer's attempts to conduct the interview, the respondent's choice of language for the interview and information on non-response (if registered) were recorded.

The household questionnaire included questions on general characteristics of the household (including the so-called "Household Passport" where basic demographic information about all household members was recorded) as well as the household's economic conditions and behavior. The latter section was composed of questions on household possessions, access to utilities, assessments of the household's economic conditions, and consumption. In this part of the questionnaire, information about household member migration was also collected.

The individual questionnaire included a broad set of questions on ethnic and religious identity, the respondent's employment, education, health (as well as assessment of the challenges in the healthcare sector of the respective country), opinions about the political situation, crime, issues related to social capital and respondents' trust/attitudes to various social institutions, and representatives of different ethnic groups and other groups of people.

We had two types of individual questionnaire, with the only difference between questionnaires, being question **S12**. This question asked about the age from which, according to the respondent, it is acceptable for a person to drink alcohol, smoke, get married, live separately from their parents, and have children among other activities. Since the answers to this question would differ significantly depending on whether the question was asked about males or females; one half of the sample was asked this question about females (questionnaire Type F), and the other half of the sample – about males (questionnaire Type M).

The household interview was of primary importance for the survey – no individual interview would have been accepted without the household interview filled in the given household, while we accepted household interviews without an individual interview filled in for the given household.

It is important to note that we might have had different respondents in the same household filling in two different parts of the questionnaire.² The household questionnaire respondent was the household member who was best informed about the conditions of the household, while the respondent for the individual questionnaire was selected based on the most recent birthday method.

Both parts of the questionnaire finish with an Interviewer Assessment Form, where the interviewer evaluated the process of the interview as well as the sincerity and openness of the respondent.

Source questionnaires were developed by the members of the DI 2007 Questionnaire Working Group in English, based on the DI 2006 questionnaire. Dr. Cynthia Buckley (University of Texas) and her PhD student Erin Hoffman provided significant support at this stage.

² This is true only for the 2007 wave. This practice was used neither before nor after the 2007 DI.

Questionnaire development involved a number of consultations with regional and international experts, as well as analysis of the data collected in 2004-2006, in order to determine how the questions worked in the past, as well as to see how much change is to be expected from one wave of the survey to another in respect to the questions used. New questions (e.g., questions used in the World Value Survey) were also added to the 2007 questionnaire, in order to be able to collect comparable data about the South Caucasus.

After the source questionnaire was finalized, it was translated into local languages according to the Questionnaire Translation Strategy.³ Two translators (one of which was the CRRC Program Manager in each of the countries) translated the questionnaire independently; back translation, although initially planned, was not possible in 2007. After both translations were ready, the two versions were adjudicated by the CRRC Country Director in each country.⁵

A total of 135 pilot interviews were conducted during the pretest – 45 per country (15 interviews in the capital, 15 in a small town at least 2 hours away from the capital, and 15 in a village). After editing the questionnaire, as a result of the pretest, four local-language versions of the questionnaire were finalized. These versions are absolutely identical,⁶ hence, we were able to use the Russian version of the questionnaire in all countries, as well as Armenian and Azerbaijani questionnaires in minority clusters in Georgia.

Although both parts of the questionnaire contained very detailed instructions for interviewers, a separate document – Instructions for Interviewers – was also prepared. It discussed potential challenges the interviewer could have faced during fieldwork. DI 2007 Instructions for interviewers were also translated into all of the local languages (except Russian), and all supervisors and interviewers were provided with these booklets.

2. Fieldwork

As mentioned in the introduction, Data Initiative fieldwork in 2007 was managed by the CRRC country offices instead of a polling company, because this provided better opportunities for quality control. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, DI Fieldwork managers were hired and directly supervised by CRRC Program Managers and the country office staff, while in Georgia the coordination of fieldwork was done by the country staff and led by the Program Manager.

Fieldwork supervisors were hired in all countries. All of them had significant experience in supervision of survey fieldwork and had a network of interviewers based in the regions where the interviews were to be conducted. We attempted to hire supervisors based in the regions, although this was not always possible.

Georgia was the only country where **block-listing** in the sampled clusters was performed as the first stage of the fieldwork. Lists of households and maps of the respective clusters (primary

³ The Questionnaire Translation Strategy was developed by Aaron Erlich, CRRC Regional Outreach Coordinator.

⁵ The Russian translation was completed by two independent translators in Moscow, and adjudicated by Anar Ahmadov, CRRC-Azerbaijan Country Director, and Tinatin Zurabishvili, DI 2007 Regional Coordinator. We did not translate Cover Sheets into Russian, since the Cover Sheets were only used in the titular languages of the countries.

⁶ Armenian and Georgian questionnaires had an extra Global Corruption Barometer section commissioned by Transparency International. This section was missing from the Azerbaijani questionnaires because of the high level of sensitivity of these questions in the country. The results of this section are the property of Transparency International and hence are not available on the CRRC website.

sampling units) were used by the interviewers during the block listing.⁷ As a result of block listing, we updated a list of households in each of the 81 sampled clusters, hence reducing possible non-response. Due to a different sampling frame being used in Armenia (lists of electricity users) we have decided not to perform block-listing in this country, because the lists were very accurate. In Azerbaijan, although the same sampling frame was used as in Georgia (census lists), it was not possible have block-listing there at this stage for organizational and political⁸ reasons.

A two-day training of supervisors was conducted in the capitals of the three countries from late September to early October, 2007 by the DI Regional Coordinator.⁹ Immediately after these trainings, the supervisors conducted trainings in the respective regions of the countries for the interviewers they were working with. CRRC staff attempted to visit all local trainings, in order to make sure that the process was sufficiently efficient. All trainings involved an “exercise” session during which the participants filled in the questionnaire either with each other or with an invited respondent.

The following table presents information about the results of the fieldwork in each of the three countries:

Table 1.

DI 2007 Fieldwork in Figures:

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia
Dates of Fieldwork	28.09.2007 – 10.11.2007	26.10.2007 – 26.12.2007	07.10.2007 – 31.10.2007
Targeted Sample Size	3,200	3,000	4,050
# of completed Household Interviews	2,513	2,148	3,389
# of completed Individual Interviews	2,481	2,139	3,341
Non-response for Household Interviews	21,47%	28,4%	16,32%
Non-response for Individual Interviews	22,47%	28,7%	17,51%
% of questionnaires completed in the titular language (Household interviews)	99,6	95,2	91,4

The average length of each part of the questionnaire was 40-45 minutes.

In 9% of the individual interviews completed, it was impossible to interview the respondent originally selected for the interview (i.e., household member who had the most recent birthday in the household) even after two attempts to conduct the interview, hence, the household member with the second most recent birthday was interviewed.

⁷ Detailed documentation of the block-listing process is available at the CRRC regional website.

⁸ Governmental permission is required in Azerbaijan in order to conduct any type of fieldwork; we did not have such permission for the block-listing phase.

⁹ Training in Tbilisi was conducted in Georgian, while trainings in Yerevan and Baku were conducted in Russian. Supervisor training was conducted in Georgia before block-listing on August 8-9, 2007.

A total of 2245 attempts resulted in non-response, the major causes of this being the following:

Table 2.

DI 2007 Causes of Non-Response of Household interviews (% per country)

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia
Address / Household does not exist	18	15	12
No one in the household was capable of being interviewed	23	3	8
Household refused to be interviewed	32	29	46
Unable to complete interview in applicable language	1	1	1
No contact made	25	10	33
No adult available	1	--	--
Interview terminated by state officials	--	30	--
Questionnaires canceled	--	12	--
N:	735	849	661

3. Challenges

The length of the interviews was claimed by the respondents to be a major obstacle they faced during the fieldwork. However, only 5 cases have been recorded in all countries when a respondent of an household interview halted the interview process.