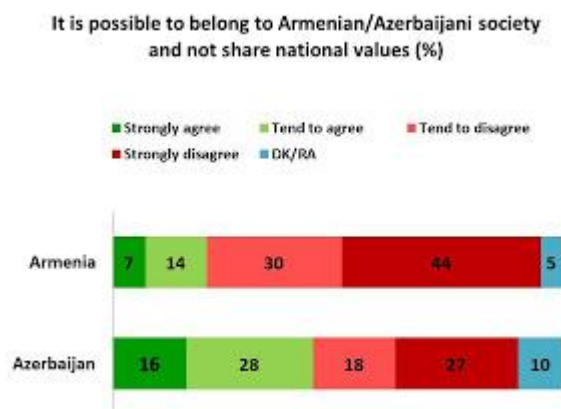


Thursday, November 29, 2012

[Armenia and Azerbaijan: Language, Ethnicity, Religion, and National Values](#)

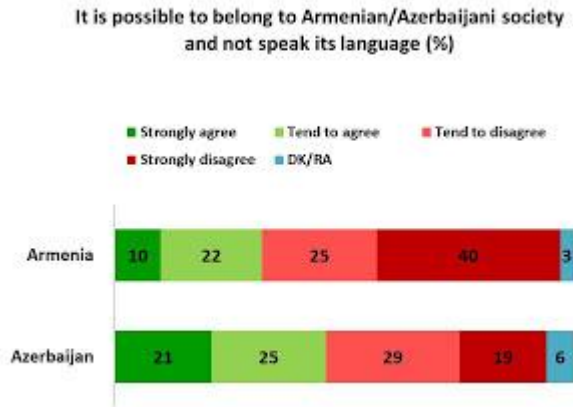
This blog looks at public attitudes on whether or not speaking the titular language, belonging to the predominant religion or sharing national values are perceived as necessary to be a member of Armenian or Azerbaijani society. Data from the 2012 survey on Social Capital, Media and Gender conducted in Azerbaijan and the 2011 survey on Social Cohesion conducted in Armenia show that sharing national values, belonging to the predominant religious group, and speaking the titular language are important for being considered members of Armenian or Azerbaijani society by much of these populations.

74% of Armenians think it is not possible to belong to Armenian society without sharing the national values, while a minority of Armenians (21%) think it is possible to belong to Armenian society if one does not share Armenian national values. Less than half of the Azerbaijani population (44%) believes that it is possible to belong to the Azerbaijani society without sharing national values.



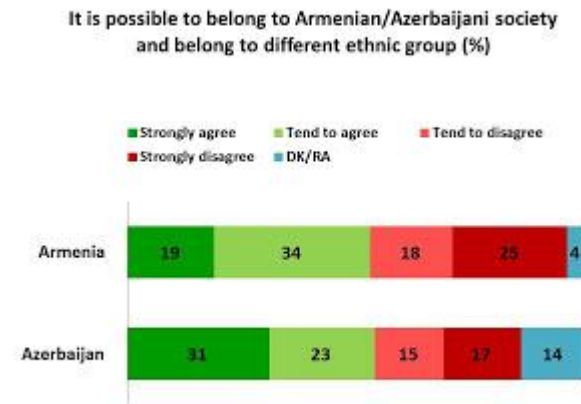
Figures may not sum to 100% due to “Don’t Know” and “Refuse to Answer” responses.

Language can play a functional role by bringing together or dividing social groups. In Armenia, 65% of the population believes it is not possible to belong to Armenian society if one does not speak the Armenian language. Similar to sharing national values, just under half (48%) of Azerbaijanis think it is not possible to belong to Azerbaijani society if one does not speak the Azerbaijani language.



Figures may not sum to 100% due to “Don’t Know” and “Refuse to Answer” responses.

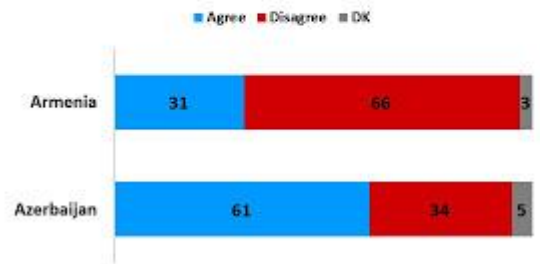
Public attitudes on ethnicity and belonging are similar in the two countries. In Armenia, which is the most ethnically homogenous country of the former Soviet Union ([98% ethnic Armenian](#)), more than half of the population (53%) thinks it is possible to belong to Armenian society as well as belong to an ethnic group other than the titular majority. Similarly, the 2012 survey in Azerbaijan shows that 54% agree that it is possible to belong to Azerbaijani society and to a different ethnic group at the same time.



Figures may not sum to 100% due to “Don’t Know” and “Refuse to Answer” responses.

While attitudes on ethnicity and belonging are similar in both countries, there is a striking difference in whether or not the populations believe a person can belong to their respective society if they do not belong to the predominant religion. Over half of Armenians (66%) say it is not possible to belong to Armenian society if a person does not belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church. In contrast, about one third of the Azerbaijani population (34%) says the same with respect to Azerbaijani society and being Muslim.

It is possible to belong to Armenian society and not belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church (%)
It is possible to belong to Azerbaijani society and not be Muslim (%)



Figures may not sum to 100% due to “Don’t Know” and “Refuse to Answer” responses.

These CRRC surveys show that there are strong opinions on the relationship between holding national values, speaking the titular language, belonging to the predominant religion, having a non-titular ethnicity, and belonging to Armenian or Azerbaijani society. To explore about these and related questions, please visit <http://www.crrc.ge/oda/> and <http://www.crrccenters.org/activities/research/?id=52>.