IRANIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: A 2021 SURVEY REPORT

The Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in IRAN (GAMAAN)

AMMAR MALEKI

Assistant Professor of Comparative Politics, Tilburg University

POOYAN TAMIMI ARAB

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Utrecht University

October 2021, The Netherlands

Website: www.gamaan.org   E-mail: info@gamaan.org   WhatsApp: +31-6-44860224
Twitter: @gamaanresearch   Telegram: /gamaanresearch   Instagram: /gamaanresearch

Survey Summary

- The survey titled "Iranians' Attitudes toward International Relations" was conducted September 21-30, 2021. Around 23 thousand respondents participated in the study. The final sample used in this report consisted of **20,097 Iranians living inside Iran**. This study's findings reflect the **views of literate Iranian residents aged above 19 or 85% of Iran's adult population**. The results can be generalized to the target population with a 95% credibility level and credibility intervals of 5%.

- According to this survey, 86% of the population believe that "domestic inefficiency and corruption" have had the worst impact on the Iranian economy's current state. On the other hand, about 10% believe that "foreign sanctions and pressures" are the main cause of the current state of Iran's economy.

- Over half of the population agree that disputed matters in addition to the nuclear program should be negotiated with the West to revive the JCPOA. About 42% of the population also think that the JCPOA agreement benefitted the Iranian people before the USA withdrew from it, while 37% disagree with this view.

- 56% agree with Iran having a nuclear program for exclusively peaceful purposes. About 11% agree with developing a nuclear weapon, while 27% entirely oppose a nuclear program.

- 55% agree with suspending uranium enrichment to lift sanctions. About 27%, on the other hand, believe that Iran should continue to enrich uranium, even if that entails the sanctions regime's continuation.

- 37% said to agree with Iran's ballistic-missile development program if it does not lead to sanctions. On the other hand, 26% agree with the missile program, even if sanctions are imposed in response. About 28% entirely oppose the missile development plan.

- Regarding other countries' and international institutions' favorability, 52% said to have a positive view of the USA while 39% have a negative view; 35% viewed Israel positively versus 48% negatively; 49% have a positive view of the EU and 38% have a negative view; 25% have a positive view of Russia and 27% of China, while respectively 65% and 66% have a negative view; 27% have a positive view of Saudi Arabia while 57% have a negative view; 25% expressed a positive view and 63% a negative view of the United Kingdom; respectively 47% and 62% expressed a positive view of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

- In response to the question, "Which USA president's foreign policy has most benefitted the Iranian people?", only 7% selected Joe Biden versus 29% who chose Donald Trump. 49% said neither president's foreign policy benefitted the Iranian people.

- 47% consider the USA's withdrawal from Afghanistan to be detrimental to regional security, while 26% have the opposite view.

- 71% oppose the "Iran-China 25-year Cooperation Program" and also 71% oppose the "agreement between Iran and Russia regarding the legal regime of the Caspian Sea", while 13% favor the latter. 66% oppose the "20-year Cooperation Treaty between Iran and Russia" and 15% support the agreement.

- 61% believe that world powers should monitor and, if necessary, take actions in response to the human rights situation in Iran. About 15% believe that world powers should not interfere in this matter, while 13% say that world powers should restrain themselves to monitoring and reporting.

- 57% evaluate Iran's role in Syria in recent years negatively and 26% evaluate it positively. About 34% believe that the IRGC's Quds Force's regional activity has increased Iran's security. In contrast, 32% think these measures reduce Iran's security, and 21% think they have had no effect on Iran's security.

- 73% express their opposition to the public chanting of "Death to America", while 18% favor it. 65% oppose "Death to Israel", while 23% favor it. 64% agree with "Neither Gaza, nor Lebanon, I sacrifice my life for Iran", while 24% oppose it. 73% agree with "Our enemy is right here, they lie that it's the USA", while 15% oppose it.

- About 70% of the population oppose the Islamic Republic of Iran's approach to Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, Al-Hashd al-Shaabi in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen, and Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, while about 21% agree with Iran's approach to these groups.

- Regarding the tension between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel, about 53% consider the probability of a direct military conflict between the two countries to be low, while 32% believe that the possibility of a direct military conflict is high.

- The results of this poll show that about 32% participated in the June 2021 presidential election and that 23% of the eligible voters chose Ebrahim Raisi. Also, about 5% of eligible voters cast blank ballots.

- Regarding Iranians' political orientation, 35% want the overthrow of the Islamic Republic, 24% prefer structural changes and a transition from the Islamic Republic, while 16% want to preserve the principles and values of the revolution, and 12% seek reforms within the Islamic Republic. 13% selected none of these options.

Section 1: Sampling methods and sample characteristics

1.1 Survey and raw sample characteristics

- The Group for Analyzing and Measuring Attitudes in Iran (GAMAAN) conducted the survey titled "Iranians Attitudes toward International Relations" from September 21 to 30, 2021. This survey was conducted online using a specialized and secure platform.

- The sampling method was multiple chain-referral sampling through Psiphon VPN and social media (Telegram, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter). Around 23,000 respondents living inside and outside Iran participated in the study (see Section 3 for more methodological information).

- According to The World Bank, more than 84% of Iran's population used the Internet in 2020. According to the Iranian Students Polling Agency (ISPA), in August 2021 more than 75% of Iranians over 18 used at least one social media platform. It is therefore possible to reach a substantial percentage of Iranians through the Internet and ask about their views.

- The survey comprised 15 main questions about international relations as well as 8 demographic questions (sex, age group, education level, province, urban/rural region, employment status, household income level, and voting behavior). Two questions from the World Values Survey were also asked for verification purposes.

- Respondents took part in the survey anonymously, feeling safer to express their real opinions than in telephone surveys or surveys conducted at respondents' residence.

- Approximately 90% of the respondents reported that they live in Iran. Multiple verification methods showed that less than 5%, either intentionally or unintentionally, might give false information about being inside or outside Iran.

- Iranians living inside Iran who responded to the survey were from all provinces, all socioeconomic strata, and from both urban and rural areas (see Section 3 for sample characteristics).

1.2 Preparing the refined sample

- One survey question was designed to detect random responses and bot submissions. The forms with a wrong response to this question and forms with contradictory answers were excluded from the sample (for example, those who declared that they had not reached voting age in the 2017 presidential election but also chose their age as over 30, or those who declared that they live in Iran in one question but selected outside Iran in another question).

- Having taken into account the standard age groups as outlined in the 2016 Census report, the refined sample included only respondents above 19 years old who lived in Iran.

- The **refined sample size for respondents inside Iran was 20,097 respondents**. All results in this report are extracted from this refined sample.

- The target population consisted of literate Iranian residents above 19 years old (who were capable of using the Internet and reading the survey questions). As reported by the 2016 National Population and Housing Census, around 47 million Iranians are literate and above 19 years old. This accounts for 85% of the adult population of Iran.

- In this report, the term "sample" refers exclusively to the refined sample, not the original raw sample. The term "population" refers only to the "target population," not the total population of Iran.

- Samples obtained from online surveys generally do not properly overlap with the target population's characteristics. Weighting is used to obtain a representative sample. This technique balances the sample in accordance with characteristics of the target population in question. The results were also verified through the sample matching method. Section 3 discusses the employed sample balancing, weighting methods, and reliability checks as well as the characteristics of the sample demography and the target population.

Section 2: Main findings

All results and tables presented here are based on the "weighted sample" extracted from respondents inside Iran. The findings can be generalized to the whole population of literate Iranian residents above 19 years old, who account for 85% of the total adult population of Iran, with the respective credibility intervals and credibility level of 5% and 95% (which indicate this survey to be a non-probability survey and replace the *margin of error* and the *confidence level*).

2.1 Iran's nuclear program

Table 1

	I agree with having a nuclear program for peaceful purposes	I agree with having a nuclear program for various purposes including atomic weapons	I entirely disagree with having a nuclear program	I have no opinion
Which of these statements best resemble your view on Iran's nuclear program?	56.0%	10.8%	26.9%	6.4%

Table 2

	Continuing uranium enrichment despite the sanctions	Suspending uranium enrichment to get the sanctions lifted	Don't know
Regarding the nuclear program and the sanctions, which of the following decisions is the right one?	27.4%	55.1%	17.5%

2.2 The JCPOA and the negotiations

Table 3

What is your view about the following statements?	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The joint agreement [JCPOA] benefitted the Iranian people until the United States withdrew from it	15.6%	26.9%	9.0%	28.3%	20.2%
In the negotiations for reviving the JCPOA, other topics of contention with the West besides the nuclear program should be included.	34.5%	17.2%	5.5%	20.1%	22.8%

2.3 Factors exerting influence on the economy

Table 4

	The sanctions and foreign pressures	Domestic inefficiency and corruption	Don't know
According to you, which of these factors have had the worst impact on the Iranian economy's current situation?	9.7%	86.2%	4.0%

2.4 The ballistic-missile development program

Table 5

	I agree with having the ballistic-missile development program, even if it leads to sanctions	I agree with having the ballistic-missile development program, but only if it doesn't lead to sanctions	I entirely disagree with having the ballistic-missile development program	No opinion
Which statement is the closest to your view about the Islamic Republic of Iran's ballistic-missile development program?	25.6%	37.1%	27.5%	9.8%

2.5 Views on countries and international organizations

Table 6

How do you view the following countries and institutions?	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
The United States	20.4%	31.7%	17.0%	22.5%	8.3%
Israel	13.3%	21.4%	15.3%	32.4%	17.7%
The United Kingdom	7.9%	17.3%	23.2%	39.7%	11.9%
The European Union	15.2%	33.4%	17.8%	20.4%	13.2%
Russia	6.0%	18.6%	18.0%	47.4%	9.9%
China	5.8%	21.2%	16.2%	49.4%	7.4%
Saudi Arabia	7.5%	19.9%	19.6%	37.3%	15.8%
The United Nations	15.1%	31.9%	19.7%	19.9%	13.3%
The World Health Organization	27.4%	34.4%	15.0%	12.2%	11.0%

2.6 American foreign policy

Table 7

	Joe Biden	Donald Trump	None of them	Don't know/ No opinion
According to you, which US president's foreign policy most benefitted the Iranian people?	7.4%	29.4%	48.6%	14.6%

Table 8

	Yes, it benefits regional security	No, it harms regional security	The withdrawal has no effect on regional security	Don't know
Do you think that the United States' withdrawal from Afghanistan benefits regional security?	25.8%	46.6%	11.4%	16.2%

2.7 Iran's agreements with other countries

Table 9

What is your view of the following treaties?	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
The Iran-China 25-year Cooperation Program	8.4%	9.5%	6.7%	64.2%	11.1%
The agreement between Iran and Russia regarding the legal regime of the Caspian Sea	5.0%	8.2%	7.0%	64.0%	15.8%
The 20-year Cooperation Treaty between Iran and Russia	5.4%	10.1%	6.4%	60.1%	18.0%

2.8 World powers and human rights in Iran

Table 10

	They should not interfere	They should only monitor and report	They should monitor and if necessary, also act	No opinion
[How should] world powers deal with the human rights situation in Iran[?]	14.7%	12.7%	60.9%	11.6%

2.9 Iran's regional policies

Table 11

	Positive	Negative	No opinion
How do you see Iran's role in the developments in Syria in recent years?	26.1%	57.1%	16.8%

Table 12

	Yes, it increases Iran's security	No, it decreases Iran's security	It has no effect on Iran's security	Don't know
Do you think that the IRGC's Quds Force's regional activity has increased Iran's security?	33.6%	31.6%	20.6%	14.3%

2.10 Public chants and Iran's foreign policy

Table 13

What is your view of the following chants?	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
Death to America	17.6%	73.0%	9.4%
Death to Israel	22.9%	65.5%	11.6%
Not Gaza, not Lebanon, I sacrifice my life for Iran	63.7%	23.6%	12.7%
Our enemy is right here, they lie that it's America	72.8%	15.5%	11.7%

2.11 Iran's allied militant groups and governments

Table 14

Do you agree with the Islamic Republic of Iran's approach to the following groups and rulers?	Agree	Disagree	Don't know/No opinion
Hezbollah in Lebanon	21.8%	70.7%	7.5%
Hamas in Palestine	20.4%	70.6%	9.0%
The Houthis in Yemen	20.8%	69.6%	9.6%
Al-Hashd al-Shaabi in Iraq	20.1%	69.2%	10.8%
Bashar al-Assad in Syria	20.2%	71.0%	8.9%
Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela	16.5%	67.1%	16.4%

2.12 Tensions between Iran and Israel

Table 15

	Yes, that is likely	No, that is unlikely	Don't know
Do you think that the tensions between Iran and Israel can lead to a direct military conflict?	31.8%	52.8%	15.4%

2.13 Electoral behavior and political orientations

Table 16

	Who did you vote for in the 2021 presidential elections?
Ibrahim Raisi	22.6%
Mohsen Rezaee	1.9%
Abdolnaser Hemmati	1.7%
A.H. Ghazizadeh Hashemi	1.3%
Blank vote	4.7%
Did not vote	67.9%

Table 17

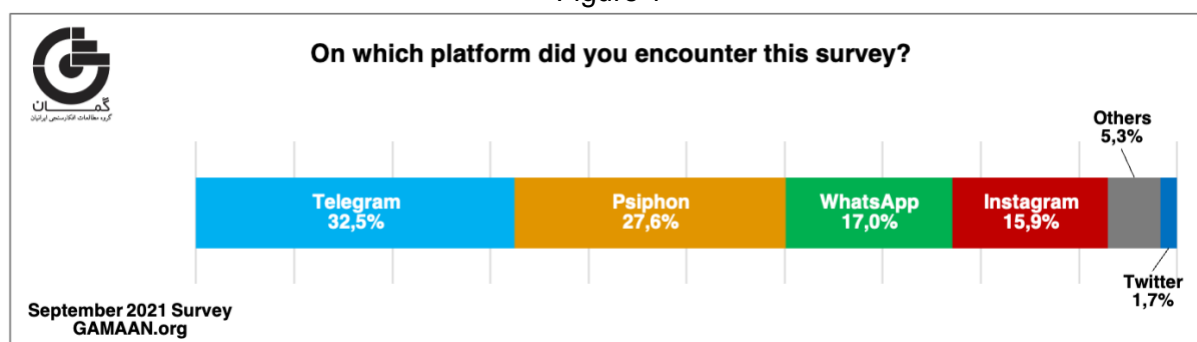| Which of the following options come closest to your political orientation?	
Proponent of regime change as a precondition for change	34.7%
Proponent of structural transformation and transition from the Islamic Republic	24.5%
Proponent of gradual reform within the framework of the Islamic Republic	11.9%
Proponent of the principles of the Islamic Revolution and the Supreme Leader	15.9%
None of them	13.1%

Section 3: Methodology

3.1 Sampling method

This study aimed to measure and document attitudes and opinions in a closed society, which cannot be obtained using conventional methods. Studies employing opt-in online surveys face methodical challenges that are inherent to online sampling methods, which are nevertheless becoming the norm. These shortcomings include the so-called network effect, which means that the survey is more likely to reach respondents who hold beliefs similar to those held by the organizers, as well as self-selection, which means that those with a special interest in the survey topic are more likely to participate.

To reduce these effects, the survey was spread through Psiphon VPN as well as social-media groups, channels, and pages representing radically diverse social layers of society and political perspectives (Figure 1 shows on which social-media platform respondents encountered the survey). Using multiple chain-referral sampling to reach a diverse audience, the survey was shared with and by online pages and channels belonging to specific groups, such as minorities' and pro-regime groups' networks, as well as a mass audience consuming social, political, and entertainment contents. The targeted Instagram pages and Telegram channels ranged between 10 and 100 thousand followers, while those with a general audience ranged up to 1 or several million followers. These measures also increased the sample size, further minimizing bias.

Figure 1

In response to one of the survey questions, about 23% said they participated in GAMAAN's previous surveys. This is a promising indication that the survey circulation strategy among diverse groups has reached individuals outside GAMAAN's social network.

3.2 Balancing and weighting methods

A weighting method, raking, was employed to generate a representative sample from the refined sample. As a study conducted by the PEW Research Center shows, this weighting method is among the most effective and reliable for samples derived from online surveys. As suggested by PEW, a variable reflecting respondents' political orientation/behavior was introduced in the survey and used for weighting. This decreases the sampling bias while increasing generalizability. Sample balancing and weighting were carried out using the tools of the Dutch company, Spinnaker Research.

To obtain a representative sample, the refined sample drawn from respondents living inside Iran was weighted based on seven factors of sex, age group, education level, province, urban/rural areas, respondents' voting behavior and "importance of politics". The data from the Islamic Republic of Iran's reports, Selected Findings of the 2016 National Population and Housing Census and A Selection of Labor Force Survey Results – Summer 2021, were used to extract the target population characteristics. The World Value Survey's 2020 results were used for the distribution of "importance of politics".

Having run the weighting computations based on the mentioned variables, **a satisfactory effective sample size of 1,025** was estimated.

3.3 Weighting results

The target population of this survey is literate Iranian residents above 19 years old. As the data from the 2016 National Population and Housing Census shows, this population comprise 85% of the adult population of Iran.

The following tables compare the demographic variables of the refined sample and the target population. The demographic characteristics of the weighted sample are consistent with those of the target population.

Table 18: Sex Distribution

Sex	Refined sample (number of samples)	Weighted sample	Population of literate individuals above 19 years old (from the 2016 Census)
Female	17% (3,416)	47%	47%
Male	83% (16,681)	53%	53%

Table 19: Age Group Distribution

Age groups	Refined sample (number of samples)	Weighted sample	Population of literate individuals above 19 years old (from the 2016 Census)
Between 20 and 29 years old	14.5% (2,915)	30.1%	30.1%
Between 30 and 49 years old	63.4% (12,741)	51.1%	51.1%
At least 50 years old	22.1% (4,441)	18.8%	18.8%

Table 20: Province Distribution

Province of Residence	Refined sample (number of samples)	Weighted sample	Population of literate individuals above 19 years old (from the 2016 Census)
East Azerbaijan	3.3% (663)	4.8%	4.8%
West Azerbaijan	2.1% (422)	3.6%	3.6%
Ardabil	0.9% (181)	1.5%	1.5%
Isfahan	6.5% (1,306)	6.9%	6.9%
Alborz	4.9% (985)	3.8%	3.8%
Ilam	0.6% (121)	0.7%	0.7%
Bushehr	0.9% (181)	1.5%	1.5%
Tehran	39.3% (7,898)	19.1%	19.1%
Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari	0.6% (121)	1.1%	1.1%
South Khorasan	0.6% (121)	0.9%	0.9%
Razavi Khorasan	7.1% (1,427)	7.8%	7.8%
North Khorasan	0.7% (141)	0.9%	0.9%
Khuzestan	3.5% (703)	5.4%	5.4%
Zanjan	0.8% (161)	1.3%	1.3%
Semnan	0.9% (181)	1.0%	1.0%
Sistan and Baluchistan	1.1% (221)	2.1%	2.1%
Fars	4.4% (884)	6.3%	6.3%
Ghazvin	1.2% (241)	1.6%	1.6%
Qom	1.5% (301)	1.6%	1.6%
Kurdistan	1.5% (301)	1.8%	1.8%
Kerman	1.4% (281)	3.6%	3.6%
Kermanshah	1.9% (382)	2.4%	2.4%
Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad	0.5% (100)	0.8%	0.8%
Golestan	1.2% (241)	2.2%	2.2%
Gilan	2.9% (583)	3.5%	3.5%
Lorestan	1.4% (281)	2.0%	2.0%
Mazandaran	3.7% (744)	4.5%	4.5%
Markazi	1.3% (261)	1.8%	1.8%
Hormozgan	0.9% (181)	2.0%	2.0%
Hamadan	1.5% (301)	2.1%	2.1%
Yazd	1.2% (241)	1.4%	1.4%

Table 21: Education Level Distribution

Education level	Refined sample (Number of samples)	Weighted sample	Population of literate individuals above 19 years old (from the 2016 Census)
High school diploma and lower education	16,9% (3,396)	72.3%	72.3%
University degree	83,1% (16,701)	27.7%	27.7%

Table 22: Urban/Rural Distribution

Region	Refined sample (Number of samples)	Weighted sample	Population of literate individuals above 19 years old (from the 2016 Census)
Rural Areas	4.2% (844)	21.2%	21.2%
Urban Areas	95.8% (19,253)	78.8%	78.8%

Apart from demographic variables, the respondents' voting behavior in the 2017 Iranian presidential election was also used for sample weighting (considering that this election's results were not controversial and the reliability of the final, formally declared numbers).

Table 23: Political Voting Behavior Distribution

Voted for candidate in the 2017 presidential election	Refined sample (Number of samples)	Weighted sample	Official results of the 2017 presidential election
Hassan Rouhani (+ Hashemitaba)	59.3% (11,918)	42.2%	42.2%
Ebrahim Raisi (+ Mir-Salim)	5.5% (1,105)	28.8%	28.8%
I did not vote (+ blank vote)	35.2% (7,074)	29.0%	29.0%

To balance the final sample and make it more representative, the factor "importance of politics" was also used for weighting, based on the results of the WVS 2020 survey conducted in Iran (Table 24).

Table 24: Importance of Politics Distribution

For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life.		Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Do not Know
Politics	WVS	22.4%	36.2%	19.6%	21.6%	0.2%
	Weighted sample	22.4%	36.2%	19.6%	21.6%	0.2%
	Refined sample	60.4%	32.7%	4.8%	1.7%	0.4%

3.4 Reliability checks

3.4.1 Comparing distributions of socio-economic factors

One of the methods for examining the reliability and generalizability of a weighted sample is to compare the results from the weighted sample against external evidence. Table 25 compares the status of economic activity (percentage of employed individuals) in the weighted sample with that of the target population on both urban and rural levels. While the weighted sample includes only literate individuals above 19 years old, the recent statistic of those formally employed reflects both literate and illiterate individuals above 15.

As reported, the employment rates of illiterate people and the age group between 15 and 19 are lower than that of the literate population. Taking this into account, Table 7 shows that the employment rate of the weighted sample is consistent with that of the target population.

Table 25: Employment Rate Distribution

Employment status	Refined sample	Weighted sample (literate individuals above 19 years old)	Workforce statistics for individuals above 15 years old (Summer 2021)
Whole country	64.1%	41.2%	37.2%
Urban areas	64.7%	41.6%	36.1%
Rural areas	49.9%	39.4%	40.7%

The respondents were also surveyed with respect to their household income. This facilitates a comparison between the respondents' economic situation and that of the target population. Table 26 shows the household income distribution of the weighted sample. By definition, ten percent of the Iranian households belong to each income decile. As shown in the following table, the household income distribution of the weighted sample highly overlaps with that of the target population. Each income decile of the target population is covered by the weighted sample.

Table 26: Household Income Distribution (based on the official exchange rate)

Income level of different deciles according to the Statistical Center of Iran in 2020	Refined sample	Weighted sample	Distribution of wealth in the society
First decile (household monthly income below USD 380)	4.6%	15.2%	10%
Second decile (household monthly income between USD 380 and USD 499)	3.7%	8.9%	10%
Third decile (household monthly income between USD 499 and USD 618)	3.4%	7.7%	10%
Fourth decile (household monthly income between USD 618 and USD 736)	4.7%	9.3%	10%
Fifth decile (household monthly income between USD 736 and USD 879)	5.5%	9.5%	10%
Sixth decile (household monthly income between USD 879 and USD 1022)	7.0%	9.1%	10%
Seventh decile (household monthly income between USD 1022 and USD 1211)	12.2%	12.5%	10%
Eight, ninth, or tenth decile (household monthly income above USD 1211)	58.8%	27.8%	30%

In this survey, participants were also asked what language they usually speak at home. As Table 27 shows, the distribution of colloquial languages in the weighted sample is highly consistent with the statistics published by Ethnologue.

Table 27: Home Language Distribution

What language do you normally speak at home?	Refined sample	Weighted sample	Ethnologue statistics (2021, 24th ed.)
Farsi	77.2%	66.2%	63.3%
Azerbaijani / Turkic	8.5%	11.7%	13,6%
Kurdish	4.2%	4.9%	5,8%
Luri	3.4%	4.7%	3,6%
Arabic	0.5%	1.8%	3,5%
Balochi	0.5%	1.7%	1.5%
Mazandarani	1.3%	1.6%	2.8%
Gilaki	1.0%	1.3%	3.0%
Turkmeni	0.3%	0.7%	0.9%
Laki	0.5%	0.4%	1.5%
Armeni	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Tati	0.1%	0.05%	0.1%
Other	2.4%	4.75%	0.3%

3.4.2 Reliability check using questions of the World Values Survey

In 2020, the World Values Survey (WVS), which is an international research program, released a new survey of Iran which had been conducted through on-site interviews. Several WVS questions were incorporated in this survey by GAMAAN. The aim was to evaluate the measurement method and weighted sample validity by comparing the results from both (probability and non-probability, on-site and online) surveys. Both "non-sensitive" and "sensitive" questions were asked to test the hypothesis that there should be a discrepancy with the latter and an overlap with the former.

As shown in Table 28, a comparison of both surveys shows the low difference between responses to non-sensitive questions (such as the importance of family, friends, and occupation), while, given the current political and social situations in Iran, the responses to a sensitive question, in this case about religion, are significantly different. This comparison shows the validity of GAMAAN's weighted sample. It also confirms the hypothesis that measuring people's real opinions regarding sensitive questions using conventional polling methods (such as telephone or in-person interviewing) faces serious challenges in closed societies like Iran.

Table 28: Comparison of "importance in life" questions in WVS and GAMAAN surveys

For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life.		Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Do not Know
Family	WVS	93.9%	5.2%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%
	Weighted sample	86.2%	9.0%	1.7%	2.4%	0.6%
Friends	WVS	28.6%	54.4%	11.2%	5.7%	0.0%
	Weighted sample	21.7%	55.6%	15.3%	6.2%	1.2%
Work	WVS	78.0%	18.6%	1.9%	1.3%	0.2%
	Weighted sample	78.0%	17.1%	2.3%	1.8%	0.8%
Religion	WVS	69.4%	22.8%	3.5%	4.2%	0.1%
	Weighted sample	28.5%	18.4%	14.0%	37.0%	2.1%

The survey also asked another WVS survey question about how much people in the society trust each other. A comparison of the results of the two surveys in Table 29 shows that the results of the weighted sample are close to the results of the WVS survey.

Table 29: Comparison responses to similar questions on societal trust in WVS and GAMAAN surveys

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?	Refined sample	Weighted sample	WVS
Most people can be trusted	22.4%	17.3%	14.1%
Need to be very careful	75.6%	82.7%	85.9%

3.4.3 Replicating results using the sample matching method

To estimate the reliability of the results drawn from the weighted sample, computations were run once again using the matching method, and the results were compared against the original results. A random sample including 700 respondents was extracted from the refined sample of 20,097 respondents. This sample was extracted so that it complied with the seven demographic and political variables of the target population – namely sex, age group, education level, province, urban or rural region, voting behavior, and importance of politics. Having carried out a comparative analysis, the results obtained from this new sample were consistent with those obtained from the weighted sample, with less than 2.5% differences in estimates.

On balance, the weighted sample adequately represents the target population (literate individuals above 19 years old) and the results obtained can be generalized to a substantial majority of the Iranian population (that is, 85% of the adult population) with a 95% credibility level and credibility intervals of 5%.

* * *

We at the non-profit research foundation GAMAAN would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of those who took their time to contribute to this survey.

GAMAAN commits itself to ethical guidelines with regard to protecting respondents' submitted data. We are professionally committed to sparing no effort in collecting the opinions and attitudes of Iranians from all levels of society and all walks of life.

GAMAAN strives to employ scientific methods in extracting representative samples. We pledge to be transparent to the public and in explaining probable error levels.

Our team gladly receives any comments, suggestions, and criticisms at info@gamaan.org.