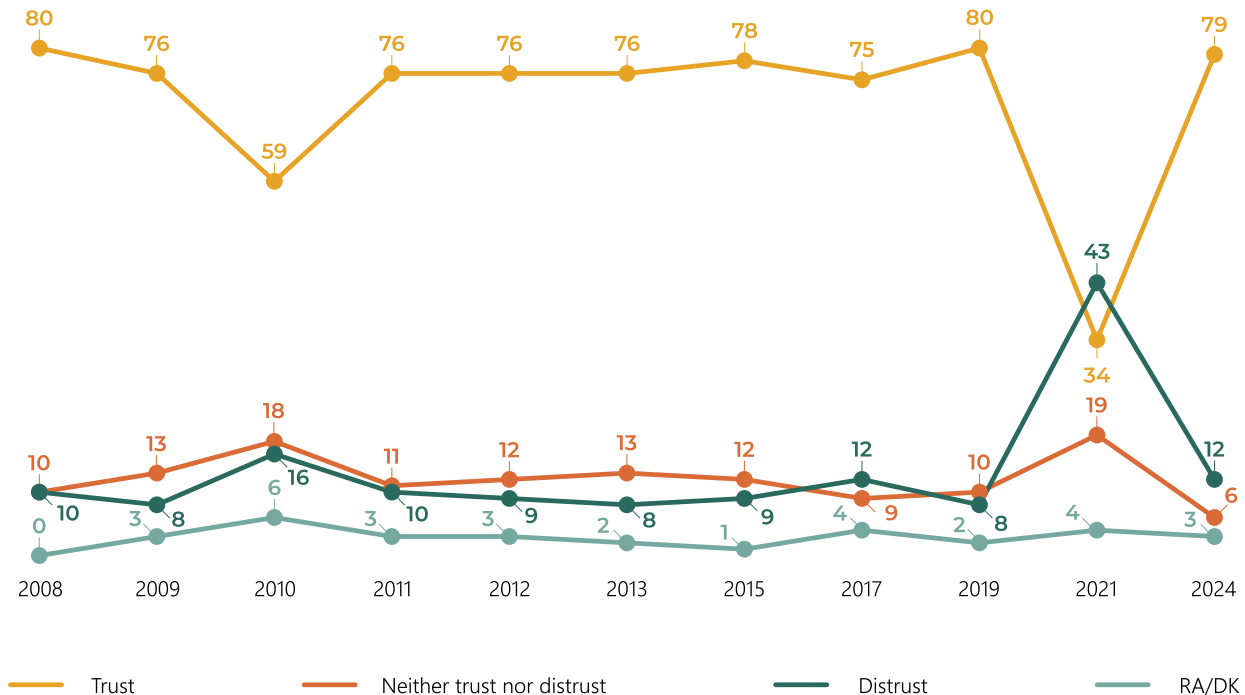


POLICY BRIEF

SEVEN MINUTES ABOUT THE CHURCH

The nationally representative [Caucasus Barometer](#) (CB) survey provides valuable data for assessing the performance of Armenian institutions. Public trust is measured on a 5-point scale. According to the 2024 CB data, only 12% of respondents distrust the religious institution they belong to, while **79%** express trust for the Church. Trust was rather stable between 2011-2019 (within the range of 75-80%), spiked downwards sharply in 2021 (34%), and then increased to 79% in 2024.

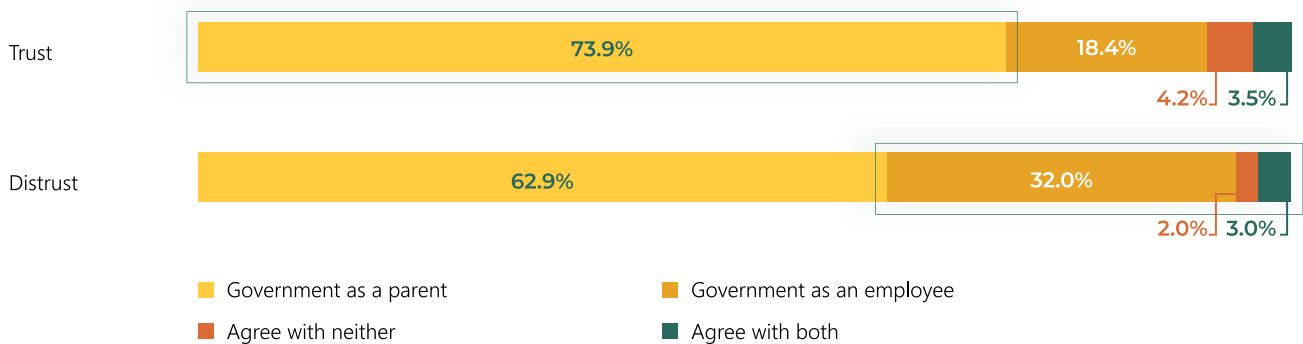
Trust towards the religious institution (%)



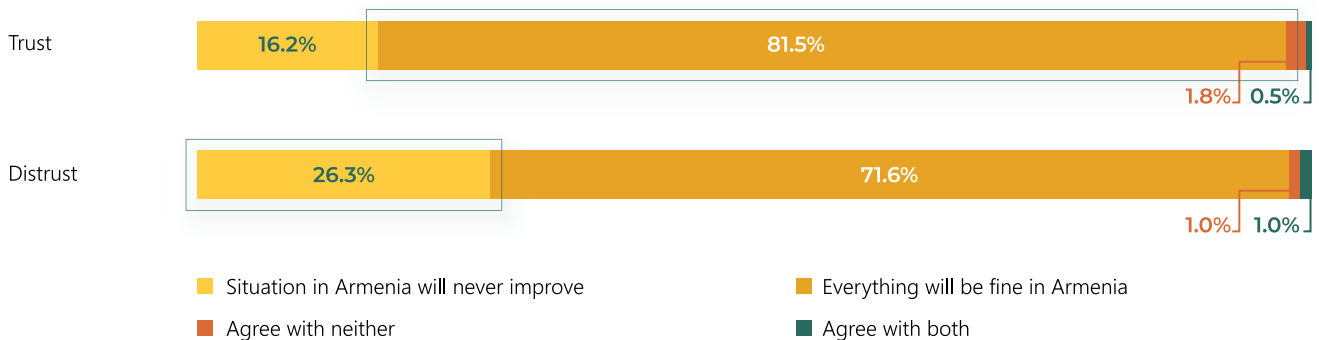
We decided to take a closer look at how people differ on the trust-distrust spectrum, not in socio-demographic terms, but rather in terms of **value orientations and expectations** that tend to accompany the trust manifestations.

What did we find?

Those who **trust** religious institutions are more likely to endorse a **parental/guardian** understanding of government (73.9%). Those who **distrust** are comparatively more likely to endorse a **citizen-accountability model** (32.0% among distrusters vs 18.4% among trusters), viewing government as an “employee” accountable to citizens.



Moreover, those who **distrust** religious institutions are more likely to agree that the **country’s situation will never improve** (26.3% among distrusters vs 16.2% among trusters). They are also **less likely to agree** with the more optimistic statement that **everything will be fine** (71.6% among distrusters vs 81.5% among trusters).



What is going on?

The data suggest that trust in the Church (more broadly, in one’s religious institution) is **not only a religious attitude**. It also reflects deeper orientations toward **authority, responsibility, and social order**. Trusters are more likely to accept authority as protective and stabilizing, while distrusters lean more toward accountability-driven, contract-like expectations of how power should work.

This same divide shows up in how uncertainty is processed: **trust** aligns with **higher optimism**, while **distrust** aligns with comparatively **higher pessimism**. In practical terms, the Church's public legitimacy is intertwined with a wider societal tension between hierarchical moral authority and liberal-democratic expectations of accountability. Where this tension is not managed carefully, trust becomes more volatile and more easily politicized.

Disclaimer

Given the current socio-political dynamics, as well as the ambiguous and at times manipulative narratives in the information space on this topic, CRRC-Armenia Foundation duly deems it reasonable to refrain from advancing specific policy recommendations or tips within the scope of this brief. Instead, we encourage a evidence-informed, balanced, and constructive dialogue among the public, the state, and social institutions, including the Church.