

**Religiosity and Trust in Religious Institutions:
Tales from the South Caucasus
(Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia)**

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Abstract: The paper examines the determinants of trust in religious institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia—three countries with low levels of religiosity as measured by attendance, prayer and fasting, yet high levels of trust in religious institutions. The analysis employs individual-level survey data from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers' (CRRC) 2007 Data Initiative and uses OLS regression to show that while religious practices do not determine trust in religious institutions, the importance of religion in one's daily life is a strong indicator of trust in religious institutions in each country. However, the results show some differences between the three countries with regard to two types of control variables—trust in secular institutions and socioeconomic factors. Georgia is the only country in which interpersonal trust is a significant indicator of trust in religious institutions. Residence in the capital is only significant in Azerbaijan. Armenia is the only country in which both education and age are significant. In addition, two theories of trust in institutions are tested: a cultural theory of interpersonal trust and secularization theory relating to declining religious authority. The results show that secularization theory has inadequately operationalized the concept of religiosity overwhelmingly as practice and as declining religious authority. The paper maintains that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are considered secular under earlier secularization theories that viewed declining religious practices as a form of secularization. However, these countries are non-secular with respect to more recent adaptations of the theory that regard declining religious authority—measured by trust in religious institutions—as a form of secularization. Thus, the presence of both low religious practice and high trust in religious institutions challenges more recent reformulated secularization theories. Additionally, cultural theories of interpersonal trust prove ambiguous in the region. The paper is one of few analyses to employ a multidimensional view of *religiosity* that takes into account the “privatization of religion” and also to test theories of trust in religious institutions in the South Caucasus—an often neglected area and frequently the second most trusted type of institution in the post-communist region after the military.

Religiosity and Trust in Religious Institutions: An Introduction

This paper examines religiosity and trust in religious institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Specifically, it seeks to understand the determinants of trust in religious institutions among societies with low levels of religiosity. The analysis employs data from the Data Initiative (2007)—a nation-wide survey conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) regarding an array of social, political and economic issues in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.ⁱ The paper differs from more common literature regarding trust in political and democratic institutions in post-communist countries. Rather, it explores trust in religious institutions—an often neglected area, and frequently the second most trusted type of institution in the post-communist region after the army. In addition, the paper tests a cultural theory of interpersonal trust and evaluates recent reformulated secularization theories related to trust in institutions.

Does a high level of religiosity within a society imply that that the society also has high trust in religious institutions? This analysis will show that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia exhibit low levels of religiosity as measured by attendance, prayer and fasting, similar to many countries in Western Europe. However, all three countries have high levels of trust in religious institutions although they experienced peculiar forms of assertive state-sponsored modernization and secularization during the Soviet Union.

This peculiarity may be one of the reasons why Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia present an unusual puzzle for two different forms of secularization theory.ⁱⁱ These are all countries that would be considered secular under earlier versions of secularization theory that focused on declining religious practices. However, these countries would be considered non-secular with respect to the more recent adaptations of secularization theory that concentrate on declining religious authority (sometimes measured by trust in religious institutions).

The fact that trust in religious institutions is not a function of religiosity as measured by religious practice in the South Caucasus also indicates that we need to better understand the explanatory value of the term *religiosity*. This study uses two different measures of this multidimensional concept. First, religious practice is defined by attendance at religious services, prayer and fasting. Second, we consider the subjective importance of religion in daily life.

Similarly, the European Values Survey (EVS) characterizes religiosity in two dimensions: intrinsic and external religiosity.ⁱⁱⁱ External religiosity refers to an individual's adherence to a particular religious denomination or religious beliefs and practices. This includes attendance at religious services and participation in religious rituals. Intrinsic religiosity refers to self-identified religiosity such as a belief in God, regular prayer, the subjective importance of God and whether or not religion is considered to provide comfort and strength. This paper, however, will classify prayer as religious practice and include it as a form of external religiosity because it is a form of outward behavior such as attendance at religious services and participation in religious rituals.

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, it is one of few analyses to test theories of institutional trust specifically in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. While the military is often the most trusted institution in many post-communist countries, no work has been done on the oft-most second trusted institution in this region—religious institutions. Second, the article utilizes a different view of religiosity that takes into account the “privatization of religion.” Therefore, it seeks to shift the focus of much of the literature on politics and religion from religiosity as defined by religious practice to a more nuanced understanding of religiosity. Third, this paper will argue that secularization theory has inadequately operationalized religiosity as practice and as declining religious authority.

The first section discusses literature related to religiosity and secularization. The second examines trust and religiosity in the South Caucasus. The third section provides theoretical perspectives relevant to trust in religious institutions as well as the operationalization of included variables and their associated hypotheses. The fourth segment explains the methodology of the DI survey and includes an analysis and discussion of the findings.

Religiosity and Secularization

Since the 1960s, the religious landscape of many countries has undergone a variety of changes. Western Europe experienced declining levels of church attendance and religious affiliation. The first wave of autochthonous leaders of many post-colonial states was composed of self-proclaimed secularists. These developments, among others, seemed to provide support for secularization theorists such as Dobbelaere (1985) and Wilson (1982), who, despite their different interpretations of secularization theory, argued that the process of secularization was indeed taking place and that religious practices, beliefs and institutions were losing their social significance.

Nevertheless, global developments that demonstrated the durability of religion as a social force overshadowed these ostensible successes of secularization theory. These include, among other events, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the rise of the religious right in the United States particularly since the mid-1980s, the increasing political prominence of the Hindutva movement in India, and the religiously-infused political violence of the early Twenty-first Century.

Moreover, the nature of religiosity itself appears to have changed in many societies over time. Much of Europe has transformed toward more individualized religious beliefs with a concomitant decline of religious practice and attendance. Increasing numbers of

people who ‘believe without belonging’ or claim membership in a religious faith without practicing any of its rituals evinces this shift towards “privatized religion”.^{iv} For example, the level of “privatized religion” (e.g., the subjective importance of religion and denominational membership) is quite high in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia although levels of attendance, prayer and fasting in these countries are similar to those found in many Western European states.^v

This shift in the nature of religiosity demonstrates that religion and its influence would not disappear, but rather transform. These changes motivated many secularization theorists to modify the concentration of their theories from a decline in religious attendance, practices and beliefs (Bruce 1995; Greeley 1989) to a decline in religious authority (Chaves 1989; Dobbelaere 1989).^{vi} Moreover, this shift has enabled some of these theorists to account for societies in which religious practice and adherence have not dwindled, yet religious authority has (e.g., the United States).

Chaves (1994) is one of the main proponents of the notion that secularization is better understood as diminishing religious authority, rather than declining religion (i.e. practice).^{vii} In his view, trust is a measure of legitimacy in religious authority and there are three key ways in which secularization affects religious authority. First, societal institutions become disjoint from religious institutions. Second, the structure and nature of religious institutions approaches that of secular institutions. Third, religious practices and beliefs decline. Hoffmann (1998) remarks that this reformulation of secularization theory helps to reshape the traditional monolithic view of secularization and allows for a more complex interpretation in which secularization can occur in many different ways. Similar to Chaves, Wilson (1985) argues that secularization is a process in which religion has “lost its presidency over other institutions”.^{viii} Thus, this reformulation of secularization theory helps to account for

societies with high levels of religiosity including prayer and attendance, but low levels of religious authority.

This brand of secularization theory; however, does not account for the existence of societies with low religious practice and high legitimacy in religious authority as measured by trust. In the traditional view, the three main populations of the South Caucasus could possibly be considered secular due to similar rates of religious practice as in Western Europe. However, the burden of proof would be placed on the level of legitimacy of religious authorities in the more recent versions of secularization theory described here. A high level of trust in religious institutions would not indicate secularization.

In order to explore the determinants of trust in religious institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, we must understand that religiosity is both a multidimensional and complex concept such that religious practice does not necessarily translate into trust in religious institutions. Figure 1 shows a typology of religiosity in selected countries as measured by attendance at religious services once a week or more and trust in religious institutions.

The high religiosity—high trust category shows a few countries in which the percentages of both church attendance at least once a week and trust in religious institutions are both high (i.e. over 50% of the population). The high religiosity—low trust group presents select countries with a high percentage of church attendance at least once a week, but a significantly lower percentage of trust in religious institutions. The low religiosity—low trust set of countries are those in which a small percentage of the population attends religious services at least once a week and a small percentage trusts in religious institutions. Finally, the low religiosity—high trust category displays some countries in which a small percentage of the population attends religious services at least once a week or more, yet a large percentage has trust in religious institutions.

Figure 1: Religiosity and Trust in Religious Institutions (% church attendance, % trust in religious institutions)

	HIGH TRUST	LOW TRUST
HIGH RELIGIOSITY	Columbia (46, 55) Mali (70, 71) Ghana (83, 69) Indonesia (66, 69)	Poland (58, 33) Ethiopia (77, 32) Brazil (48, 29) Rwanda (94, 30)
LOW RELIGIOSITY	Moldova (13, 31) Armenia (10, 35) Romania (27, 59) Georgia (21, 71)	Sweden (3,9) France (7, 11) Japan (3,2) Serbia (11, 16) Germany (8,8)

Source: WVS 2005-2008 wave.

Church attendance (i.e. religious service attendance) was selected as a form of religiosity to compare across countries rather than rates of prayer and fasting because WVS includes both rates of church attendance and levels of confidence in religious institutions for more countries in the world. Church attendance is measured by percentage of attendance once a week or more. A few countries were selected to illustrate ideal types in each category.

Low trust is defined as or less than 30-33% trust in religious institutions.

High trust is defined as more than 30% trust in religious institutions.

Low religiosity is defined as 30% or less religious service attendance once a week or more.

High religiosity is defined as 40% or more religious service attendance once a week or more.

This sinuous relationship between religiosity and trust in religious institutions indicates that we need to better understand why the latter is important and what this means for the legitimacy and authority of those bodies.

Religiosity and Trust in Institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

This paper is particularly interested in countries where trust in religious institutions is much higher than trust in any political or democratic institution. Trust is important for many types of institutions to function and consistent levels of low trust in political and democratic institutions can easily challenge regime legitimacy (Miller and Listhaug 1999). Moreover, sustained high trust in religious institutions indicates that these types of institutions are considered more legitimate than political institutions. This has political implications for any

type of regime, especially those that are transitioning, newly democratic or “hybrid democracies” such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.^{ix}

Examining trust in religious institutions is a difficult enterprise, especially in a region where religion and ethnicity are closely associated and the term *religious institutions* can have various meanings. In Armenia, 94.7% of the population belongs to the Armenian Apostolic Church.^x In Azerbaijan, approximately 93.4% of the population identifies as Muslim out of which 65% are Shi’a and 35% are Sunni.^{xi} In Georgia, approximately 83.9% of the population identifies as a member of the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) and roughly 10% of the population identifies as Muslim.^{xii}

The association between religion and ethnicity in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia is also evident in the relationship between religion and each state. The constitutions of these countries provide for the separation of church and state, yet each of these states has a high level of engagement with religion which includes the existence of government ministries that oversee religious affairs.^{xiii} Thus, the term *religious institution* can have multiple meanings in each country. First, this phrase could refer to governmental ministries such as the Department of Religious Affairs and National Minorities in Armenia or the Caucasian Muslim Board (CMB) in Azerbaijan.

The CMB is a hierarchical state body and Soviet-era institution that deals with religious issues.^{xiv} For Sunni Muslims the term *religious institution* may best refer to their specific mosque, masjid or madrasa.

The term *religious institution* may also refer to the religious denominations and associated institutions to which Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians specifically belong. These include the Armenian Apostolic Church, mosques, masjids or madrasas, or the Georgian Orthodox Church, respectively. To a certain extent, the states of the South Caucasus strengthen the position of these religious institutions by providing privileges

exclusively to these groups and by creating religious monopolies. For example, although both the Armenian constitution and the 1991 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (amended in 1997 and 2001) provide for the freedom of religion and establish a separation of church and state, the constitution recognizes "the exclusive mission of the Armenian Church as a national church in the spiritual life, development of the national culture, and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia." Moreover, the document gives the Armenian Church official status as the *national* church.^{xv} In addition to the constitution and the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, the Law on Relations of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Church (2007) functions as a concordat between the state and the Armenian Church and provides benefits exclusively to the Armenian Church.^{xvi}

Similarly, the Georgian constitution guarantees the freedom of religion and religious practice while recognizing the unique role of the GOC in the country's history. The 2002 concordat between the government and the GOC gives the patriarch immunity, provides GOC clergy exemption from military service, allows only the GOC the right to staff the military chaplaincy, and grants the GOC a consultative role in government.

In Azerbaijan, the state and Islam arguably have a more intricate relationship than the state and religion in Armenia and Georgia. The purpose of this paper is certainly not to explain Islam with regard to the state of Azerbaijan, but partially to examine determinants of high trust in religious institutions in the country. The CMB in Azerbaijan is a state-created muftiate inherited from the Soviet era that monitors sermons, appoints clerics to mosques and administers Islamic education. The board is predominantly composed of Shia members; however, there are a few seats allotted for Sunni participants. In fact, the existence of the CMB helps to continue the ambiguous boundary between the Soviet peculiarity of "parallel Islam" in which there is a theoretical division between state-sanctioned "official Islam", and

unsanctioned "unofficial Islam" such as popular Muslim rituals and activities.^{xvii} Thus, in Azerbaijan the term *religious institution* may refer to 1. The CMB, 2. specific mosques, masjids or madrasas, or 3. Islam as a whole.

Trust in religious institutions is high despite low rates of religiosity (as measured by religious practice) in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia regardless of whether the term *religious institution* refers to government-established bodies or Christian and Muslim places of worship. Table 1 displays rates of attendance, fasting, prayer as well as the percentage of people who consider religion to be important in their daily lives for each of these countries.

Table 1: Religious Practice and the Importance of Religion (%)

	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia
Attendance			
more than once a week	4.2	6.2	7.6
once a week	6.0	2.6	13.4
at least once a month	14.0	10.0	17.9
only on special holidays or less often	53.9	54.1	48.6
never	21.9	27.1	12.5
Fasting			
always	1.2	14.4	6.5
often	2.8	8.5	5.7
sometimes	5.5	25.1	10.0
rarely	7.8	17.5	19.3
never	82.6	34.5	58.5
Prayer			
more than once a week	35.9	16.9	40.7
once a week	7.3	1.5	9.1
at least once a month	5.6	4.9	7.2
only on special holidays or less often	25.4	51.6	31.6
never	25.8	25.2	11.4
Importance of religion in life			
very important	28.7	26.3	48.7
more important	18.6	25.4	23.4
Neutral	26.0	26.1	20.5
less important	11.9	11.6	5.9
not at all important	14.8	10.6	1.5

Source: DI 2007.

The DI measures attendance, prayer and fasting using the following questions: “Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?” “Apart from when you are at religious services, how often, if at all, do you pray?” Both of these questions were measured on a 1 to 7 scale from ‘every day’ to ‘never’. The scale was reversed so that lower scores connote lower attendance and higher scores indicate higher attendance in order to provide a more intuitive understanding of the variable. The DI question for fasting reads: “How often do you fast when required by your religious traditions?” Frequency of fasting was measured on a 1 to 5 scale from ‘always fast’ to ‘never fast’. This scale was also reversed.

The presented levels of religious practice are similar to those in Western Europe and much of the industrialized world.^{xviii} For example, 10.2% of people in Armenia, 8.8% in Azerbaijan and 21% in Georgia attend religious services once a week or more, compared to 12.1% in Switzerland, 17.3% in Great Britain and 24.6% in Canada.^{xix} The frequency of fasting is similarly low, while rates of prayer once a week or more are somewhat higher. In contrast, most respondents in all three countries claimed that religion was ‘more’ or ‘very’ important in their daily lives (47.3% in Armenia, 51.7% in Azerbaijan and 72.1% in Georgia). It seems that while religiosity as measured by religious practice is low throughout the region, the subjective importance of religion is quite high. This incongruity between religious practice and the subjective importance of religion suggests that the former is not strongly correlated with trust in religious institutions. Therefore, different aspects of religiosity are important to examine and understand.

To more easily compare rates of religious practice with trust in religious institutions in the region, a religiosity index was created using an average of individual scores for attendance, fasting and prayer.^{xx} The index captures the participatory aspect of religiosity. The original seven-point scale used to measure attendance and prayer was collapsed into a

five-point scale to make these two variables amenable to indexing with fasting which was coded on a 5-point scale. The religiosity index ranges from lowest average participation at 1 to highest average participation at 5.^{xxi}

Table 2 shows percentages of high, medium and low religious participation compared to percentages of distrust, neutrality and trust in religious institutions in the three countries. What is striking is that while the results show low levels of religiosity in all three countries, over half of the groups also trust their religious institutions in each country. For example, 13.2% of people have a high level of religiosity in Georgia, yet 83% of them trust their religious institution. Even in Azerbaijan, which Gallup listed as one of the top eleven *least* religious countries in the world in 2009, 42.2% of people trust their religious institution although only 13.1% of respondents have a high level of religiosity.^{xxii} Similarly, only 3.8% of people have high religious practice in Armenia, while 54.3% of them trust their religious institution.

Table 2: Religiosity and Trust in Religious Institutions

	Religiosity (%)			Trust in Religious Institutions (%)			
	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia	
Low	52.1	52.4	41.9	Distrust	23.1	25.4	5.5
Medium	44.1	34.5	44.9	Neutral	22.6	32.4	11.5
High	3.8	13.1	13.2	Trust	54.3	42.2	83.1

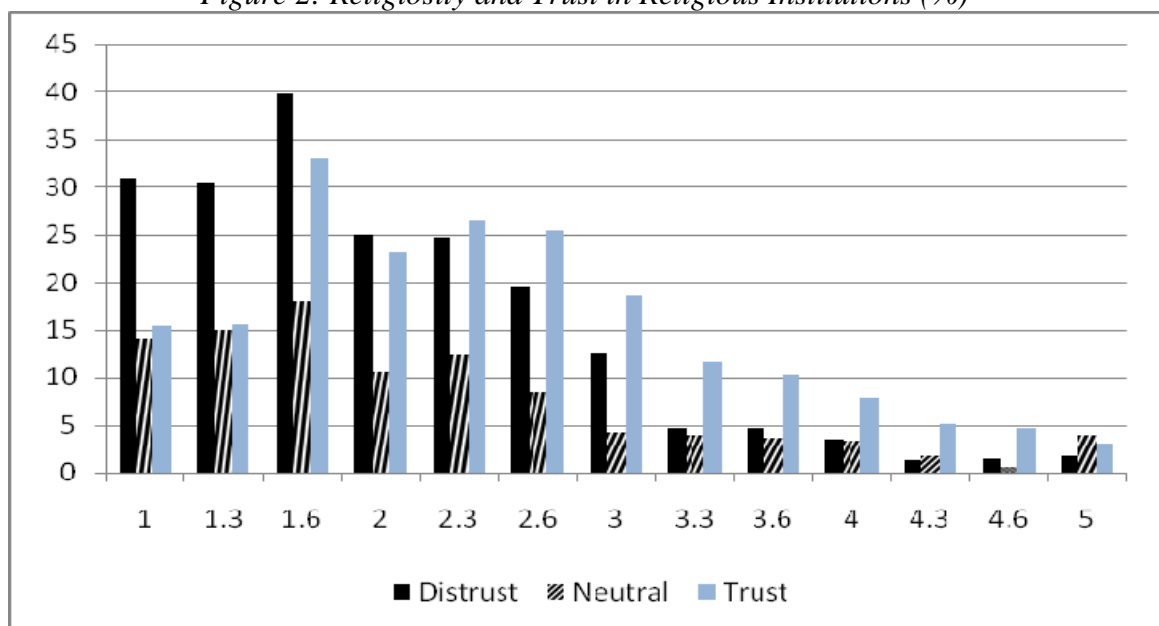
Source: DI 2007. The 5-point religiosity index was collapsed to a 3-point scale. ‘Very religious’ (5) and ‘somewhat religious’ (4) was assigned 3 for high religiosity. ‘Neutral’ became 2 indicating medium religiosity. ‘Less religious’ (2) and ‘not religious at all’ (1) were assigned 1 for ‘low religiosity’. Trust in religious institutions is originally measured in the DI using a 5-point scale where ‘1’ means ‘fully distrust,’ and ‘5’ means ‘fully trust’. The original 5-point scale has been collapsed to 3 categories in a similar manner as the religiosity index to provide a more straightforward illustration of trust, neutrality and distrust.^{xxiii}

Figure 2 presents a crosstab of religiosity (indexed) and trust in religious institutions. As the figure shows, both the level of distrust and trust decrease as the level of religiosity increases. Lower levels of religious practice are more commonly associated with lower levels of trust in religious institutions in many other countries, while higher levels of religious

practice are associated with higher levels of trust in religious institutions.^{xxiv} This more familiar pattern results in an x-shaped figure that is quite different than the one obtained from the South Caucasian data. Appendix A provides a list of 54 countries by religious attendance and trust in religious institutions from the 2005-2008 World Values Survey (WVS).^{xxv}

The table illustrates that rates of attendance and trust are relatively similar for most countries in Western Europe and elsewhere. However, as noted in Figure 1 Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (in bold) are members of a small group of countries throughout the world in which there is low religiosity, yet high trust in religious institutions (e.g., Romania, Chile, Ukraine, Moldova). Moreover, the European Social Survey and European Commission's Eurobarometer Survey (2004) also indicates that there is a small group of countries with extremely high levels of trust in religious institutions and low levels of weekly church attendance (e.g., Denmark, 74% trust and 3% weekly attendance) although both religiosity (i.e. church attendance) and trust in religious institutions are low in most of EU member states.^{xxvi}

Figure 2: Religiosity and Trust in Religious Institutions (%)



Source: DI 2007.

In addition to this seemingly odd relationship, religious institutions have an unusual status in post-communist region. They are often among the three most trusted institutions in the region, while political institutions are frequently the least trusted. For example, Sapsford and Abbott's (2006) examination of trust in government and societal institutions in eight post-communist countries reveals that respondents expressed least trust in governmental institutions such as the national government, parliament, regional governors and political parties.^{xxvii}

This result is consistent with findings from the South Caucasus. Table 3 provides the percentage of trust in different types of institutions for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Similar to many other post-communist countries, the army, religious institutions and the president are the most trusted institutions in these three countries. State institutions such as the parliament, legal system and executive are the least trusted.^{xxviii} This finding is also graphically displayed in Figure 3. Azerbaijan has the highest trust in legal institutions, parliament, executive, president and police out of the three countries.^{xxix} Moreover, it also has the lowest trust in religious institutions (42.4%) in the region, while Georgia stands out with 83.1% trust in this institution. Armenia stands in between these two countries with 54.3% trust in religious institutions.^{xxx}

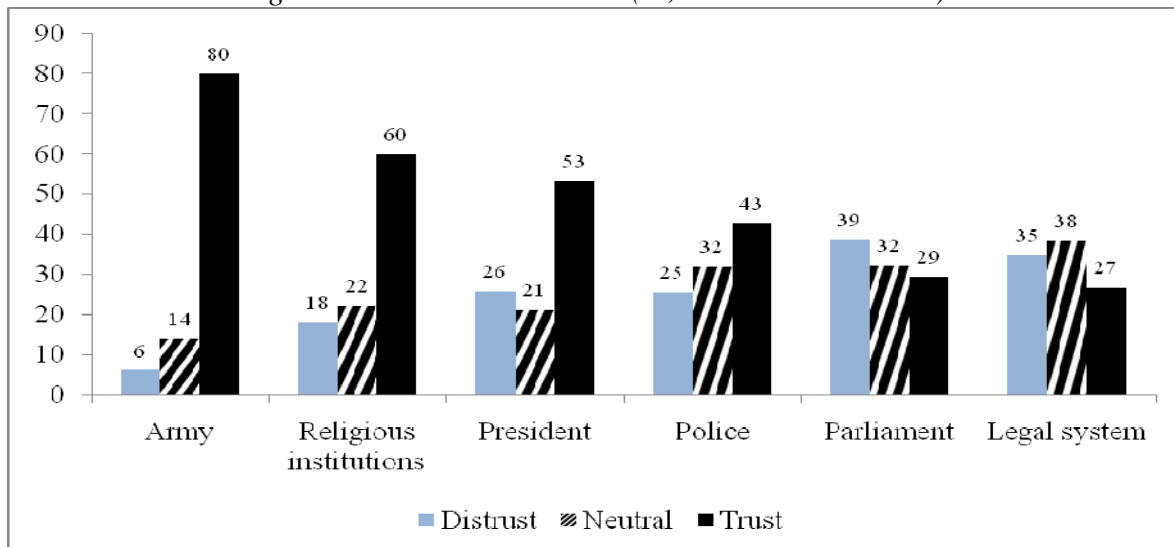
Table 3: Trust in Institutions (%)

		Distrust	Neutral	Trust	Total
Army	Armenia	5.8	8.9	85.3	100
	Azerbaijan	5.9	10.0	84.0	100
	Georgia	6.4	22.7	70.9	100
	Total	6.1	13.9	80.1	100
Religious institutions	Armenia	23.1	22.6	54.3	100
	Azerbaijan	25.4	32.4	42.2	100
	Georgia	5.5	11.5	83.1	100
	Total	18.0	22.2	59.8	100
President	Armenia	34.7	22.8	42.4	100
	Azerbaijan	3.4	9.8	86.8	100
	Georgia	38.9	30.4	30.8	100
	Total	25.7	21.0	53.3	100
European Union	Armenia	16.0	37.6	46.4	100
	Azerbaijan	24.9	34.1	41.0	100
	Georgia	9.4	42.7	47.9	100
	Total	16.8	38.1	45.1	100
Police	Armenia	41.1	32.5	26.4	100
	Azerbaijan	12.2	27.8	59.9	100
	Georgia	23.1	35.2	41.7	100
	Total	25.5	31.8	42.7	100
Banks	Armenia	29.5	31.7	38.8	100
	Azerbaijan	27.8	35.6	36.6	100
	Georgia	12.2	37.7	50.2	100
	Total	23.1	35.0	41.8	100
United Nations	Azerbaijan	32.1	32.0	36.0	100
	Georgia	11.6	46.3	42.1	100
	Total	20.8	39.2	40.0	100
Media	Armenia	34.6	39.6	25.8	100
	Azerbaijan	26.2	35.2	38.6	100
	Georgia	10.1	41.5	48.4	100
	Total	23.6	38.8	37.6	100
Executive*	Armenia	45.1	28.3	26.6	100
	Azerbaijan	18.5	31.6	49.9	100
	Georgia	48.3	35.1	16.6	100
	Total	37.3	31.7	31.0	100
Parliament	Armenia	51.6	28.9	19.5	100
	Azerbaijan	17.2	31.7	51.1	100
	Georgia	47.0	36.0	17.1	100
	Total	38.6	32.2	29.2	100
Legal system	Armenia	40.6	36.6	22.8	100
	Azerbaijan	18.8	38.3	42.9	100
	Georgia	45.0	40.2	14.9	100
	Total	34.8	38.4	26.8	100

Source: DI 2007.

*Executive refers to the prime minister and ministers.

Figure 3: Trust in Institutions (% , countries combined)



Source DI 2007.

Why would these three post-Soviet countries have such low levels of trust in state and political institutions in favour of religious institutions? Sapsford and Abbott (2006) put forth three arguments to explain the lack of trust in state institutions in post-communist countries. First, they claim that the political oppression of the Soviet regime delegitimized state institutions among the populace resulting in low levels of trust. Second, they maintain that general low levels of trust are due to the tumultuous nature of post-communist transition.^{xxxii} Finally, Sapsford and Abbott contend that low levels of trust in state institutions resulting from the breakdown of communist institutions have been replaced by a resurgence of traditional cultural values.

This hypothesized resurgence of cultural values may help to explain why religious institutions have frequently garnered such a high level of trust in a region generally considered heavily secularized due to the modernization policies and official anti-religious ideology of the former Soviet regime.^{xxxiii} Analysis of the data is needed to evaluate the determinants of trust in religious institutions in these countries.

Theories, Variables and Hypotheses^{xxxiii}

The dependent variable is *trust in religious institutions*. The DI 2007 measures trust in the religious institutions that the respondent specifically belongs to with the following question: “I will read out a list of social institutions. Please, assess your trust toward them [e.g., the religious institution that you belong to] on a 5-point scale, where ‘1’ means “fully distrust,” and ‘5’ means “fully trust.”^{xxxiv}

Mishler and Rose (2001) identify two key theoretical perspectives to explain differing levels of trust in institutions. The performance-based theory maintains that trust in institutions is determined by how well individuals think institutions perform. For political institutions specifically, individual-level trust in institutions will be higher the better individuals think institutions perform economically and politically.

The culture-based theory supposes that higher levels of interpersonal trust translate into higher levels of trust in other spheres (e.g., institutions). Mishler and Rose (2001) find support for the notion that trust in people is an indicator of trust in institutions using data from the New Democracies Barometer for ten post-communist countries.^{xxxv} Similarly, several other scholars (Lane 1969; Almond and Verba 1963; Inglehart 1997; Putnam 1992, 2000) have used cultural explanations to argue that individuals who trust each other more tend to have more trust in institutions.^{xxxvi}

This paper only considers the role of the cultural-based theory because there are no tangible factors that measure performance of religious institutions which lend themselves to quantitative analysis. To measure interpersonal trust, the DI posed the following question: “People have different opinions whether others are trying to take advantage of them or whether they try to be fair. Using this scale, please tell me which of the opinions expressed here do you agree with, and to what extent?” The scale provided ranges from 1 to 10 where 1

denotes “people would try to take advantage of me” and 10 denotes “most people would try to be fair”.

Hypothesis 1: The more an individual trusts other people, the more he/she will trust religious institutions.

In addition to interpersonal trust, trust in state institutions may have an important relationship with trust in religious institutions. Similar to Chaves and Wilson, Sommerville (1998) argues that secularization assumes a loss of religious authority since it must share (or yield) authority with secular entities. That is, less trust in religious institutions implies less legitimacy in religious authority and thus higher trust in secular (e.g., state) institutions.

I assess the relationship between trust in religious institutions and trust in five different state institutions: army, police, parliament, legal apparatus and the president. The DI measures trust in state institutions with the following question: “I will read out a list of social institutions. Please, assess your trust toward them on a 5-point scale, where ‘1’ means “fully distrust,” and ‘5’ means “fully trust.””

Hypothesis 2: Individuals who have high trust in the army will have low trust in religious institutions.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals who have high trust in the police will have low trust in religious institutions.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals who have high trust in parliament will have low trust in religious institutions.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals who have high trust in the legal apparatus will have low trust in religious institutions.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals who have high trust in the president will have low trust in religious institutions.

Socioeconomic Control Variables^{xxxvii}

In addition to trust between individuals and trust in state institutions, several socioeconomic control variables often associated with institutional trust have been added to the study. I use dummy variables to include religious denomination and account for people who identify as Armenian Apostolic, Orthodox or Muslim.^{xxxviii}

Hypothesis 7: Members of religious denominations will have more trust in religious institutions than individuals who are not members of specific denominations.

Similar to religious denomination, age, sex, location, education, monthly household expenditure, and perceived economic rung have also been included. While there is no common understanding of the impact of age and education on trust in institutions, these two variables have been associated with trust in institutions in many different contexts (Cole 1973; Norris 1999; Mishler and Rose 2001). Age is measured in years and age squared has been entered into the model in order to induce linearity.

Usually older individuals are expected to be more religious and have higher trust in religious institutions than younger individuals. However, in the post-communist context older individuals may have less trust in religious institutions if they were socialized in the Soviet Union and experienced the varying Soviet policies towards religion over time. Norris and Inglehart (2004) argue that if the policies of Soviet atheism were effective, then religiosity should be higher in younger generations that grew up after the collapse of the Soviet Union and in older generations that grew up in pre-Communist societies. Thus, middle-aged individuals would exhibit the lowest levels of religiosity. However, Need and Evans' (2001) comparison of age groups in ten post-communist countries finds that younger people displayed lower levels of religiosity (i.e. attendance) due to more urbanization and higher levels of education.

Hypothesis 8: Older individuals will have more trust in religious institutions than younger individuals.

Education is measured using a 1 to 9 scale that captures increasing levels of education from 'no primary education' to a 'post-graduate degree'. This variable is treated as a continuous variable in the model since it has many levels and is measured on an increasing scale.

Hypothesis 9: More educated individuals will have less trust in religious institutions than less educated individuals.

Sex is included as a dummy variable with male coded 1 and female coded 0. Location is also included as a series of dummy variables with residence in the capital or urban area, each coded 1 and 0 for otherwise.^{xxxix} Here rural residence is the baseline category. Monthly household expenditure has been included as a proxy for income since respondents often give more accurate responses regarding household expenditure than personal income. Monthly household expenditure was measured using the relevant national currency.^{xl} I converted these currencies to dollars using the average exchange rate for 2007 in order to compare across countries. Finally, to measure subjective economic status (i.e. perceived economic rung), the DI asked respondents to rank their perceived economic position relative to the rest of their society on a 1 to 10 scale where 1 denoted “lowest rung” and 10 denoted “highest rung”. This is also treated as a continuous variable.

Hypothesis 10: Women will have more trust in religious institutions than men.

Hypothesis 11: Individuals who reside in the capital or urban locations will have less trust in religious institutions than those living in rural areas.

Hypothesis 12: Individuals with higher household expenditures will have less trust in religious institutions.

Hypothesis 13: Individuals who rank themselves high on the perceived economic rung will have less trust in religious institutions.

Religiosity Indicator

In addition to theories of trust and socioeconomic determinants, both modernization and older secularization theories have maintained that the significance of religion would fade due to changes brought about by education, literacy, urbanization and economic growth.^{xli}

This paper questions the notion that traditional measures of religiosity (e.g., attendance, fasting or prayer) are sufficient for measuring the impact of religiosity on political and social phenomena. Furthermore, it refrains from assuming that low religious practice is proof of secularization and modernization. Therefore, I have included another variable used to exemplify a different dimension of religiosity—the subjective importance of religion.

To capture this the survey asks: “To what extent do your own religious beliefs help you to make decisions in daily life on a 5 point scale where ‘1’ means that your own religious beliefs are not at all an important influence on your decisions in daily life, and ‘5’ means that your own religious beliefs are a very important influence on decisions in your daily life.”

Whereas, traditional measures of religiosity often pertain to religious participation or a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, the subjective importance of religion presents a way to better examine “privatized religiosity” as an explanatory variable.

Hypothesis 14: Individuals who believe religion to be personally important in their lives have a higher level of trust in religious institutions.

Methodology

This study uses data from the 2007 DI which employed multistage cluster sampling with preliminary stratification on nine geographically defined units in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.^{xlii} The number of primary sampling units (PSUs) was defined in proportion to the number of households within each assigned stratum. Based on the sampling frame, the countries were divided into PSUs with an average PSU size of 500 households in Armenia, 400 in Georgia and 500 in Azerbaijan. Fifty households on average were randomly sampled in each PSU for an interview.^{xliii}

Both a household and individual interview were conducted in each household (HH) to obtain general HH data as well as information regarding individual social and political attitudes.^{xliv} In Armenia 2,514 HH and 2509 individual interviews were conducted. In Georgia 2,148 HH and 2,146 individual interviews were carried out. Finally, in Azerbaijan 3,392 HH and 3,354 individual interviews were completed. The unit of analysis for this paper is the individual since we are concerned with levels of trust at the individual level. Therefore, only data from the individual interviews has been examined.

Analysis and Discussion

Trust in religious institutions is an ordered categorical variable with a 5-point scale. However, it is treated as a continuous variable in this analysis and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is used. The regression uses the following model and the key independent variables are grouped into three categories: socioeconomic control variables, trust variables and a religiosity indicator.^{xlv}

$$\text{Trust in religious institutions} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{sex}) + \beta_2(\text{age}) + \beta_3(\text{educational level}) + \beta_4(\text{urban residence}) + \beta_5(\text{capital residence}) + \beta_6(\text{Orthodox religion}) + \beta_7(\text{Islam}) + \beta_8(\text{economic rung}) + \beta_9(\text{household expenditure}) + \beta_{10}(\text{interpersonal trust}) + \beta_{11}(\text{trust in army}) + \beta_{12}(\text{trust in police}) + \beta_{13}(\text{trust in parliament}) + \beta_{14}(\text{trust in legal}) + \beta_{15}(\text{trust in president}) + \beta_{16}(\text{importance of religion}) + \varepsilon.$$
^{xlvi}

Table 4 presents the multivariate analyses. The first column provides the fully specified model for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia combined. The other columns show results for each country separately. In the combined model, Orthodox religion, Islam, capital residence and household expenditure are significant socioeconomic control variables. The sign on the Orthodox coefficient indicates that individuals who proclaim Georgian, Russian or Ukrainian Orthodoxy as their religion have more trust in their religious institution than those who are Armenian Apostolic (i.e. the baseline category). In fact, this socioeconomic variable has the strongest impact on trust in religious institutions (Beta=.65) for the region as a whole. This implies that those who identify as Orthodox in the region have higher levels of trust in religious institutions than others in general.

In contrast to the Orthodox variable, the negative coefficient for Islam indicates that people who identify as Muslim have lower trust in their religious institution than Armenian Apostolics. This is consistent with the notion that Azerbaijanis are less “involved” with Islam and its associated “institutions” than the other two groups. The sign of the coefficient for household expenditure is in the expected direction.

Table 4: Trust in Religious Institutions Regressed on Hypothesized Determinants^a

Variable	Model 1	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Georgia
Constant	1.83 (0.21)	2.45 (0.33)	0.14 (0.62)	2.53 (0.37)
Socioeconomic Control Variables				
Sex	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.07)	-0.10 (0.07)	-0.10 (0.06)
Age	-2.6E-06 (1.5E-05)	-4.3E-05* (2.2E-05)	5.2E-05 (4.5E-05)	-7.4E-06 (1.7E-05)
Educational level	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.09** (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	0.03 (0.02)
Urban residence	0.04 (0.13)	0.09 (0.17)	0.26 (0.31)	-0.04 (0.13)
Capital residence	0.21* (0.11)	0.22 (0.16)	0.62* (0.25)	0.09 (0.12)
Orthodox	0.65*** (0.09)	0.40 (0.41)	-0.55 (0.47)	0.10 (0.23)
Islam	-0.32** (-0.14)		-0.06 (0.40)	0.02 (0.26)
Apostolic		-0.02 (0.24)		
Perceived economic rung	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.02)
Household expenditure	-6.1E-04** (1.2E-04)	-2.8E-04 (2.3E-04)	1.1E-04 (7.4E-05)	-1.6E-04 (2.3E-04)
Trust Variables				
Interpersonal trust	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.004 (0.03)	0.03** (0.01)
Trust in army	0.16*** (0.03)	0.09* (0.04)	0.26*** (0.07)	0.17*** (0.03)
Trust in police	0.09** (0.03)	0.09 (0.05)	0.13 (0.08)	0.04 (0.03)
Trust in president	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.08 (0.10)	0.04 (0.03)
Trust in parliament	0.11*** (0.03)	0.19*** (0.04)	0.15* (0.07)	-0.04 (0.03)
Trust in legal	0.005 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.05)	0.11* (0.05)	-0.02 (0.03)
Religiosity Indicator				
Subjective religious importance	0.24*** (0.03)	0.24*** (0.03)	0.21*** (0.06)	0.20*** (0.05)
R ²	0.23	0.13	0.21	0.12
N	6150	1929	1747	2474

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

^aEntries in this table are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

For a one unit increase in household expenditure, trust in religious institutions decreases when all other variables are held constant. Surprisingly, the coefficient for residence in the capital is positively significant while urban residence is not. This could possibly be explained in the Azerbaijan model below. Age, sex, educational level, location of residence and perceived economic rung have no significant impact.

With regard to the trust variables, interpersonal trust and trust in the army, police and president are significant predictors of trust in religious institutions. An increase in trust in these four variables indicates an increase in trust in religious institutions. Trust in the president is also a significant indicator of trust in religious institutions; however its negative coefficient indicates that trust in religious institutions decreases as trust in the president increases. Finally, for the region as a whole the subjective importance of religion is significant at the 99.90% confidence level and indicates that the more important individuals believe religion to be in their daily lives, the more trust they will have in religious institutions. This is the case even though levels of religiosity indicated by attendance, prayer and fasting are low throughout the region.

In Armenia alone, age and educational level are both negatively associated with trust in religious institutions. This indicates that younger people and individuals with higher levels of education have less trust in these types of institutions. The other socioeconomic variables are not significant. Unlike the combined model, the Armenia model shows that trust in other persons, the police, and president are not significant predictors in Armenia. However, similar to the combined model, trust in the army, parliament and the importance of religion in daily life also have a positive and significant impact on trust in religious institutions.

There may be two possible reasons for the connection between trust in the army and in religious institutions. First, perhaps the army in Armenia is viewed as an uncorrupt entity unlike the president, police and legal institutions. Second, the army may be viewed as a

protector of the Armenian nation in a similar way as the Armenian Apostolic Church.^{xlvi}

With respect to the importance of religion in one's daily life, the presence of a specific national and historic church that helps to set Armenians apart from many other nations may help to explain trust in religious institutions.^{xlvi} That is, trust in the Armenian Apostolic Church may be related to perceptions of the Armenian nation itself.

In Georgia, none of the socioeconomic control variables or other state institutions is significant. However, Georgia is the only country in which interpersonal trust is a significant indicator of trust in religious institutions. That is, the more people think others are trying to be fair, the more trust they have in religious institutions. Thus, Georgia is the only case that supports cultural theories of interpersonal trust. Similar to the other two countries, trust in the army and religious importance are both positively correlated with trust in religious institutions and at the 99.9% confidence level. Similar to Armenia, the Georgian army may be perceived as defender of the Georgian nation, especially in light of territorial and political disputes with Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia.

Besides the army, the nature of Orthodoxy itself may be one reason why the subjective importance of religion is a determinant of trust in religious institutions in Georgia even though religious practice is not. For example, Titarenko (2008) maintains that the nature of Orthodoxy in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine (similar to Georgian Orthodoxy) is related to low levels of church attendance. Similarly, other scholars such as Tomka (2006) claim that official Orthodox norms and practices are more disconnected with each other than in Western Christianity and that individuals who identify as Orthodox are not obliged to attend religious services. According to this argument, attendance should not be understood as an indicator of religiosity in the same way it is in the West because Orthodox religiosity is centered on self-identification rather than religious practice. This may help to explain why Georgians claim

that religion is important in their daily lives much more than they participate in religious practices.

In addition to possible denominational differences, the presence of a religious figurehead may be another explanation for why the importance of religion is associated with trust in religious institutions. As in Armenia, Georgia has a national and historical church that is closely linked with Georgian national identity. The patriarch of the GOC, Ilya II, is and one of the most trusted and respected leaders in Georgia.^{xlix} He is viewed as the representative of the Church and above the disarray that confounds much of Georgian politics. Moreover, Ilya II has been a consistent source of power in much of Georgian society and politics. As confirmation of the patriarch's status, both president Saakashvili and major opposition leaders prayed together with the patriarch before mass demonstrations intended to oust the president on April 9, 2009. Moreover, recent negotiations between the Georgian government, opposition leaders and foreign diplomats have occurred at the behest and arbitration of the patriarch. Thus, Georgians may associate trust in their religious institution with trust specifically in the patriarch since Ilya II is perceived to be an uncorrupt leader whose personage is closely connected with the GOC.

In Azerbaijan, capital residence is the only significant socioeconomic control variable. This relationship between capital residence and trust in religious institutions may be related to demographics as well as the notion that the CMB is perceived to be a Shia-dominated organization.¹ Valiyev (2005) notes that Shi'a Muslims are predominantly located in the capital Baku and the suburbs; whereas, Sunni Muslims mostly reside in the northern and western regions of Azerbaijan.

Additionally, the relationship between residence location and trust in religious institutions may be related to ethnicity. Some ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan such as Lezgins and Avars who make up less than 3% of the total population are generally Sunni and live in

the northern part of the country bordering the North Caucasus. Therefore, the relationship between regional location, ethnicity and religion along with the notion that Sunnis do not have “religious institutions” in the same way that Shia Muslims or Christians do may help to explain the correlation between capital residence and trust in religious institutions in Azerbaijan.

As in the other models, trust in the army is positively associated with trust in religious institutions. The army may be seen as the protector of the Azeri nation within Azerbaijan, especially light of the protracted conflict over Nagorno Karabagh.^{li} Trust in the army and trust in religious institutions may be related because both are perceived as important forms of cultural identification with the Azeri nation within Azerbaijan. In addition to the army, trust in the parliament, and in legal institutions are also positively correlated with the dependent variable. Moreover, Azerbaijan is the only country in which the latter variable is significant. Finally, as in the other models, the subjective importance of religion is a significant indicator of trust in religious institutions.

Trust in the parliament is strongly associated with trust in religious institutions in all cases but Georgia. Finally, only trust in the army and the importance of religion in daily life are significant in all four models. Importance has the strongest impact on trust in religious institutions in all models (combined model Beta=.24, Armenian model Beta=.24, Georgia model Beta=.20) except in the Azerbaijan model where residence in the capital (Beta=.62) has the strongest impact.

The results of the analyses show mixed results for the culture-based theory of interpersonal trust since it is only significant in the combined model and in the Georgia model. In terms of the reformulated version of secularization theory, both the high level of trust in religious institutions and the amount of people who consider religion to be important in their daily lives show that religious institutions are considered legitimate in the South

Caucasus. This is most likely due to the fact that in all three countries, religion is an integral part of national identity, history, and cultural heritage as previously mentioned. Even in Azerbaijan, the association with Islam is based more on culture and ethnicity, rather than religion. Likewise, many of these religious institutions are seen as social institutions instead of strictly religious institutions.

The results also indicate that the two different measures of religiosity have different relationships with trust in religious institutions. The subjective importance of religion (i.e. intrinsic religiosity) is a significant determinant of trust in religious institutions, while religiosity as measured by religious practice (i.e. external religiosity) is not.^{lii} Moreover, high trust in religious institutions suggests that religious institutions are considered legitimate by society—much more than many state institutions. The fact that “privatized religiosity” has increased in many countries over time helps to discredit previous secularization theories which claimed that religion and its importance would diminish. Furthermore, the existence of high trust in religious institutions casts doubt on later secularization theories that predict a decline of religious authority.

Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the determinants of trust in religious institutions in the South Caucasus. It has moved from a discussion of religiosity based on religious practice to a more nuanced understanding of religiosity that incorporates the impact of “privatized religion.” The analysis has shown that although religious practice as measured by attendance, prayer and fasting are low in all three countries, religious institutions are the second most trusted in Armenia and Georgia after the army, and the third most trusted in Azerbaijan. The results demonstrate that religious practice does not determine trust in religious institutions, but rather how important people consider religion to be in their daily lives is a significant predictor of

trust in all three countries. There are also differences between countries. Georgia is the only country in which interpersonal trust is a significant indicator of trust in religious institutions. Residence in the capital is only significant in Azerbaijan and it provides the strongest impact on trust in religious institutions in this model. Additionally, Armenia is the only country in which both education and age are significant.

This analysis has used OLS regression to test two theories related to factors that constitute trust in religious institutions. First, cultural theories of interpersonal trust prove ambiguous in the region as a whole. Second, the relationship between religiosity and trust in religious institutions challenges reformulated secularization theories that predict a decrease in religious authority. The results of this analysis also reveal the involute status of religion in the South Caucasus. It is well known that Apostolism, Islam and Orthodoxy are closely associated with Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian national identity, respectively. As a result, the notion of religion clearly extends beyond religious feelings and practices in this region. Rather, many people in these countries think institutions associated with these religions play a positive role in society.^{liii} This is especially the case due to the failures of economic and political transition in the region and perhaps in this respect, Sapsford and Abbott's claim of a resurgence of cultural values in the post-communist world makes sense.

Appendix A: Religious Attendance and Confidence in Religious Organizations

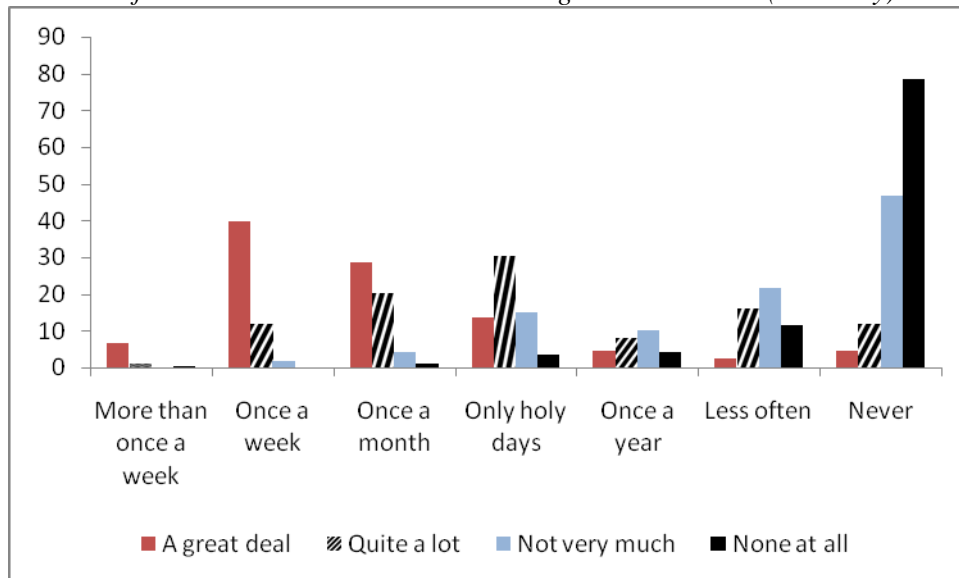
Attendance (Once a week or more)		Confidence in Churches ^a (A great deal)		Importance of God in life (Very important)	
Sweden	3.20%	Japan	1.60%	China	4.70%
Japan	3.30%	Australia	6.60%	Japan	5.80%
Russian Federation	4.50%	Germany	8.00%	Sweden	7.50%
Finland	6.70%	Netherlands	8.10%	Vietnam	8.40%
Bulgaria	7.00%	Switzerland	8.40%	Germany	9.80%
France	7.20%	Sweden	8.70%	Netherlands	10.30%
Vietnam	7.90%	China	8.90%	France	11.20%
Germany	8.10%	Spain	9.50%	Bulgaria	12.20%
Azerbaijan	8.80%	France	10.90%	South Korea	13.00%
Ukraine	9.40%	Finland	13.40%	Spain	13.40%
Armenia	10.20%	Great Britain	14.40%	Finland	18.00%
Serbia	11.10%	Serbia	16.40%	Thailand	18.20%
Netherlands	11.70%	South Korea	17.30%	Russian Federation	21.10%
Switzerland	12.10%	Canada	19.80%	Serbia	21.70%
Moldova	12.80%	Bulgaria	20.10%	Great Britain	23.30%
Australia	14.20%	Thailand	20.50%	Switzerland	23.90%
China	15.60%	Ukraine	22.40%	Azerbaijan	26.30%
Spain	15.80%	Azerbaijan	23.30%	Australia	28.00%
Great Britain	17.30%	Argentina	24.30%	Armenia	28.70%
Georgia	21.00%	Italy	24.40%	Ukraine	29.30%
Argentina	21.30%	United States	25.00%	Italy	33.80%
Canada	24.60%	Vietnam	25.50%	Canada	37.50%
Romania	27.20%	Russian Federation	27.50%	Moldova	41.20%
Chile	27.40%	Turkey	28.30%	Georgia	48.60%
South Korea	30.10%	Brazil	29.30%	Poland	56.00%
Italy	31.50%	Moldova	30.50%	India	57.40%
Turkey	34.20%	Chile	31.70%	United States	57.80%
Iran	35.50%	Ethiopia	31.90%	Argentina	58.40%
United States	36.00%	Peru	32.20%	Chile	61.10%
Peru	40.90%	Poland	33.40%	Peru	64.80%
Thailand	42.40%	Armenia	34.70%	Romania	66.30%
India	44.20%	Mexico	38.50%	Ethiopia	66.60%
Colombia	45.50%	Iran	43.90%	Mali	68.30%
Mexico	46.30%	India	54.30%	Zambia	70.50%
Brazil	47.90%	Colombia	54.50%	Turkey	76.20%
Poland	57.70%	Zambia	54.60%	Iran	79.70%
Indonesia	65.60%	Romania	59.10%	Mexico	80.10%
Mali	69.40%	Ghana	68.60%	Colombia	85.80%
Zambia	72.20%	Indonesia	69.20%	Indonesia	86.90%
Ethiopia	77.20%	Georgia	70.70%	Brazil	87.10%
Ghana	83.10%	Mali	71.00%	Ghana	87.40%
Jordan	92.8%+	Jordan	71.50%	Jordan	97.10%

Notes for Appendix A:

^a*Source:* World Values Survey 2005-2008. Whereas the DI asks respondents about specific “trust” in institutions, WVS uses the term “confidence” to assess the same underlying concept. The WVS question regarding confidence in church institutions reads as follows: “I am going to name a number of organisations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence [1], quite a lot of confidence [2], not very much confidence [3] or none at all [4]? The churches.”

Appendix B

Crosstab of church attendance and trust in religious institutions (Germany)



Source: World Values Survey 2005-2008

The German case provides a classic example of a crosstab between church attendance and confidence in religious institutions in countries with low religious practice. The figure shows lower levels of church attendance associated with higher levels of confidence in religious institutions and higher levels of church attendance associated with lower levels of confidence in religious institutions.

Appendix C: Variable Coding

Religious Denomination	1 = Armenian Apostolic church; 2 = Roman Catholic church; 3 = Georgian, Russian or Greek Orthodox church; 4 = Baptist church; 5 = other Protestant church; 6 = other Christian church; 7 = Islam; 8 = Judaism; 9 = other
Age	Age in years
Gender (male)	1 = male; 0 = female
Location	1 = rural; 2 = urban; 3 = capital
Educational level	1 = no primary education; 2 = primary education (either complete or incomplete); 3 = incomplete secondary education; 4 = completed secondary education; 5 = secondary technical education; 6 = incomplete higher education; 7 = completed higher education; 8 = post-graduate degree
Perceived economic rung	10-point scale (1 to 10) 1 = lowest; 10 = highest
Household expenditure	In USD
Interpersonal trust	10-point scale (1 to 10) 1 = least trust; 10 = most trust
Trust in institutions	5-point scale (1 to 5) 1 = fully distrust; 5 = fully trust
Religious importance	5-point scale (1 to 5) 1 = not at all important; 5 = very important
Religious attendance ¹	5-point scale (1 to 5) 5 = more than once a week; 4 = once a week; 3 = at least once a month; 2 = only on special holidays or less often; 1 = never
Prayer	5-point scale (1 to 5) 5 = more than once a week; 4 = once a week; 3 = at least once a month; 2 = only on special holidays or less often; 1 = never
Fasting ²	5-point scale (1 to 5) 5 = always fast; 4 = often fast; 3 = sometimes fast; 2 = rarely fast; 1 = never fast
Religiosity Index	13-point scale additive index of religious attendance, prayer and fasting (3 = lowest; 15 = highest)

¹ Attendance and prayer were originally coded as follows: 1 = every day; 2 = more than once a week; 3 = once a week; 4 = at least once a month; 5 = only on special holidays; 6 = less often; 7 = never. Categories 1 and 2 were collapsed into one category 'once a week or more' and categories 5 and 6 were collapsed into one category 'only on special holidays or less often'. Then, the scale was reversed so that higher numbers indicate more frequent attendance and prayer.

² Fasting was originally coded as follows: 1 = always fast; 2 = often fast; 3 = sometimes fast; 4 = rarely fast; 5 = never fast. The scale was reversed.

Appendix D: Descriptive Statistics from the DI 2007

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Trust in religious institutions	7793	3.87	1.28	1	5
Gender	7909	0.36	0.48	0	1
Age	7898	47.33	17.33	19	101
Education	7909	4.88	1.48	1	8
Orthodox	7891	0.36	0.48	0	1
Armenian Apostolic	7891	0.32	0.47	0	1
Muslim	7891	0.29	0.45	0	1
Urban residence	7911	0.34	0.47	0	1
Capital residence	7911	0.31	0.46	0	1
Rural residence	7911	0.35	0.48	0	1
Perceived economic rung	7911	3.81	1.61	1	10
Household expenditure	6583	202.62	231.59	0	11622.09
Trust in army	7817	4.29	1.03	1	5
Trust in legal institutions	7806	2.82	1.17	1	5
Trust in president	7745	3.39	1.43	1	5
Trust in police	7795	3.23	1.24	1	5
Trust in parliament	7761	2.78	1.23	1	5
Interpersonal trust	7782	5.29	2.64	1	10
Importance of religion in daily life	7681	3.69	1.25	1	5

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Notes

ⁱ The DI is one of few high quality within-household nation-wide surveys conducted annually in the South Caucasus since 2004. It includes individuals with a permanent home address. Thus, it excludes homeless persons, active military officers and others without a permanent address.

ⁱⁱ This paper will use the singular term “secularization theory” in order to maintain a clear distinction between sub-literatures within the body of secularization theories that focuses on religious practices as opposed to religious authority. However, it is accepted that there are many different types of secularization theory such that this body of literature should be more accurately labeled in the plural.

ⁱⁱⁱ Allport (1950) uses the terms intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity in a different way. He writes that there are two types of religious commitments or orientations: intrinsic or extrinsic. For him, individuals with intrinsic religious orientations search for meaning in religion. In contrast, individuals with extrinsic religious orientations use religion and religious participation as a means to gain external rewards such as increasing social status.

^{iv} The expansion of new religious movements (NRMs) also provides support for the privatization of religion.

^v The percentage of people who claim a religion or denomination is 96.7% in Armenia, 99.6% in Azerbaijan and 98.7% in Georgia. CIA World Factbook 2000 (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s 2000). Diuk (2003) presents comparative data on youth in Azerbaijan, Russia and Ukraine to show that while the rate of religious attendance in Azerbaijan is similar to that in Russia and in Ukraine, the number of religious adherents in Azerbaijan is large (89.2% claimed Islam) relative to the number of adherents in Russia (25.5%) and Ukraine (18.9%).

^{vi} In fact, similar events led secularization theorists such as Martin (1991) and Berger (1997) to change their position on whether or not the process of secularization is taking place. The former became a sceptic, while the latter renounced his endorsement of secularization.

^{vii} According to Chaves (1994), the way the term religion is understood determines the way secularization will be interpreted. For example, Weberians view religion as a body of beliefs and practices concerning salvation. In this regard, secularization refers to a decline in religious beliefs and practices.

^{viii} B. Wilson, “Secularization: The Inherited Model,” in Philip Hammond (ed.), *The Sacred in a Secular Age. Toward Revision in the Scientific Study of Religion* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1985), pp.15.

^{ix} Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia can be classified as hybrid regimes at best. See Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky for a discussion of hybrid regimes in the post-Cold War world. *Journal of Democracy* 13.2 (2002) 51-65. Georgia made democratic inroads after the 2003 Rose revolution, but has since experienced democratic backsliding. Armenia is a full-fledged hybrid regime with democratic institutions and non-democratic practices. Azerbaijan is authoritarian with falsified elections, a rubber-stamp parliament and perfunctory political institutions. See Mishler and Rose, 1997, regarding the hardships new democratic regimes face with low levels of popular trust in political institutions.

^x CIA World Factbook 2009 (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s 2009).

^{xi} Ibid.

^{xii} Ibid. There are three main ethnic Muslim populations: Azeris (7% of the population) compose a majority in the southeastern region of Kvemo-Kartli, Georgian Muslims in Ajara, and Chechen Kists in the northeastern region. Additionally, Apostolic Armenians (6% of the population) constitute the majority of the population in the southern Samtskhe-Javakheti region. U.S. Department of State International Religious Freedom Report 2008 (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108447.htm>, accessed May 25, 2009).

^{xiii} Article 9 of the constitution states that, “The state recognizes the special importance of the Georgian Orthodox Church in Georgian history but simultaneously announces complete freedom in religious belief and the independence of the church from the state.” Note this is not *independence of the state from the church*.

^{xiv} Azerbaijan also has a State Committee on Work with Religious Associations (SCWRA) that is primarily responsible for registering religious groups and publishing, distributing and monitoring religious literature.

^{xv} Article 8.1 of the amended 2005 constitution.

^{xvi} Here the term *nation* refers to the Armenian people as opposed to the Armenian state, although they are closely linked.

^{xvii} See Mark Saroyan for a discussion of the unclear distinction between “official” and “parallel” Islam in the Soviet Union. Mark Saroyan *Minorities, Mullahs, and Modernity: Reshaping Community in the Former Soviet Union*, ed. Edward Walker (University of California, Berkeley International and Area Studies, 1997).

^{xviii} See Appendix A for comparisons of religious attendance between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and 50 other countries from the 2005-2008 WVS.

^{xix} WVS 2005-2008.

^{xx} The index combining attendance, prayer and fasting is particularly important because attendance is not a commonly accepted measure of religiosity in many Muslim societies such as Azerbaijan. However, fasting and prayer are commonly used.

^{xxi} The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of items in this scale is .83 which indicates a good level of internal consistency. See Joseph A. Gliem, Rosemary R. Gliem, "Calculating, Interpreting, and Reporting Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient for Likert-Type Scales," *Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education* (The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, 2003).

^{xxii} See S. Crabtree and Brett Pelham, "What Alabamians and Iranians Have in Common," *GALLUP World Poll* (February 9, 2009) (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/114211/Alabamians-Iranians-Common.aspx>, accessed on May 1 2009). In this poll, religiosity was measured by how important people considered religion to be in their daily lives.

^{xxiii} Categories 1 (fully distrust) and 2 (somewhat distrust) were collapsed into a first category (distrust). Category 3 remained neutral as a second category. Categories 4 (somewhat trust) and 5 (fully trust) were combined to make a third category (trust).

^{xxiv} Appendix B shows a crosstab of religious practice (i.e. attendance) and confidence in religious institutions in Germany which also has low levels of religious practice. The figure shows the usual x-shaped pattern where higher rates of religiosity are associated with higher rates of trust and vice versa.

^{xxv} This list includes Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia from the DI.

^{xxvi} Robert Manchin, "Religion in Europe: Trust not Filling in the Pews," *Gallup.com*, (2004), (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/13117/Religion-Europe-Trust-Filling-Pews.aspx>, accessed May 1, 2009).

^{xxvii} The eight post-communist countries included were Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

^{xxviii} High trust in the president is a common feature in the post-Soviet region where personalism is a familiar form of rule due to the post-Soviet legacy of institutional weakness. Presidents are often not formally held accountable to institutions that can act as a system of checks and balances. See George W. Breslauer, *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

^{xxix} Sapsford and Abbott find that Belarus also has high trust in many state institutions such as the courts, parliament, executive, president and police, relative to other countries in the post-communist region. One possible reason for this could be that Belarus and Azerbaijan, both authoritarian states, have undergone fewer political and economic transformations than their post-communist neighbours and have maintained a certain level of stability.

^{xxx} Another interesting result is that trust in the EU is fairly even among the three countries. It is not higher in EU-aspirant Georgia or lower in Azerbaijan which often has low trust in international and western organizations including NATO and the United Nations.

^{xxxi} Marc Morjé Howard makes a similar argument when seeking to explain the weakness of civil society in the post-communist region. He maintains that, in addition to other factors, "postcommunist disappointment" resulted in the aftermath of unfulfilled expectations regarding capitalism and democracy immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. See Marc Morjé Howard, *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-communist Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

^{xxxii} One can argue that Soviet policies were not entirely anti-religion especially due to the use of religiously-based slogans used during WWII. See the following works for state policies towards religion in the Soviet Union and successor states. John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (Cambridge University Press, 1994); Sabrina Ramet, *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

^{xxxiii} See Appendix C for more information regarding variable coding and Appendix D for descriptive statistics on all variables in the model as well as age, sex, education and religious denomination information for the DI 2007.

^{xxxiv} 'Religious institutions' is one of 15 social institutions listed.

^{xxxv} The countries included in this analysis were Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

^{xxxvi} This line of reasoning has been particularly employed in social capital literature to examine trust as an exogenous factor learned through socialization. Additionally, interpersonal trust is considered a feature of civic virtue in which people who possess a higher level of trust are considered to be more politically engaged and have more trust in political institutions.

^{xxxviii} Membership in the Armenian Apostolic Church, Orthodox Church, or Islam was each coded 1 and 'otherwise' was coded 0. Ethnicity has not been included as an independent variable because ethnicity and religion are highly correlated in the Caucasus. Including both religious denomination and ethnicity would have introduced a high level of multicollinearity into the models.

^{xxxix} In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the government assigns each settlement to a rural (villages) or urban (cities and towns) type. In Georgia, a *daba* is a third type of settlement that is in neither rural nor urban. The DI 2007 classifies *dabas* as urban settlements because they have administrative functions characteristic of urban settlements. See the DI Methodological Handbook at <http://www.crrcenters.org/index.php/en/12/18>.

^{xl} Armenian Dram, Georgian Lari or Azerbaijani Manat

^{xli} See the following for classical interpretations of modernization theory. D. E. Apter, *Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); K. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1953); W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

^{xlii} The nine units are the capital, urban-North-East, urban-North-West, urban-South-East, urban-South-West, rural-North-East, rural-North-West, rural-South-East and rural-South-West.

^{xliii} Fifty households were selected in order better calculate inter and intra-cluster effects regardless of the actual PSU size. The number of PSUs selected in each stratum was proportionate to the total number households in each quadrant. The initial sample size was calculated based on a 95% Confidence Interval, 5% Error Margin and 0.5 population proportion. Individual weights were used in the analysis to make population inferences based on the samples. A database of electricity users provided by the Armenian Electricity Networks Company (AENC) was used to select PSUs in Armenia because census data from the Armenian National Statistical Service (NSS) was unavailable. In Azerbaijan, data from the latest census in 1999 was provided by the State Statistical Committee (SSC), and similarly census data from 2002 was used to select PSUs in Georgia. See the DI Methodological Handbook at <http://www.crrcenters.org/index.php/en/12/18>.

^{xliv} Households were randomly selected in all regions from census districts. The respondent for the individual interview was selected among adult HH members using the *last birthday* method. Therefore, occasionally the HH and individual interviews coincided.

^{xlv} I have omitted the religiosity index as a second religiosity indicator to prevent possible endogeneity and reverse causation.

^{xlvi} The Armenian Apostolic variable is omitted in the combined, Azerbaijan and Georgia models because it is used as a baseline category. In the Armenia model, Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic are included and Islam is used as the baseline category.

^{xlvii} The perception of the army as protector of the Armenian nation is strengthened by both the demographic majority of Armenians in Armenia and the dispute over Nagorno Karabagh.

^{xlviii} This may be true despite the fact that many other old religious communities exist in Armenia.

^{xlix} Regarding Ilya II's legitimacy and widespread respect in Georgia, see Molly Corso, "Georgia: Faith is the Fashion, as Church Influence Soars," *Eurasianet.org*, (2009).

(<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav021109.shtml>, accessed April 27, 2009).

^l Felix Corley, Forum 18 News Service, 2008 (<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4869d9703.pdf> accessed on May 1, 2009).

^{li} Here I note the Azeri nation within Azerbaijan specifically in order to focus on this population rather than the population of Azeris living in Iran as well.

^{lii} In her analysis of religion in the post-communist Baltic and primarily Slavic states, Titarenko (2008) found that the level of external religiosity was higher in the Baltic states than in the Slavic states. However, the level of intrinsic religiosity was higher in the Slavic states than in the Baltics.

^{liii} Similarly Shlapentokh (2006) notes that Russian's trust in the Orthodox Church is not due to their religious feelings or religiosity. Instead, religious institutions are viewed positively for their role in society. This is also one of the reasons that Russians, similar to Americans, want their leaders to have strong religious beliefs.