Georgia at the Crossroads: East or West?

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Summer 2012

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Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Dr. Stephen Jones and Dr. Enze Han for their comments on previous drafts of this paper. The paper was originally written in Spring 2012 for presentation at the Association for the Study of Nationalities annual conference at Columbia University in April 2012.

Abstract: This paper examines political and social attitudes in Georgia—a country located between Russia, Turkey and Iran and on the crossroads between East and West. The analysis employs survey data from the 2010 Caucasus Barometer, 2008 World Values Survey, 2011 Survey on Knowledge and Attitudes towards the EU, and two 2011 Surveys on Voting and Political Attitudes, all conducted in Georgia. The data shows that while both the Georgian government and population have a strong desire for the country to be part of the West along with close political and economic cooperation (including strong support for EU membership), there is a clear divide between common European social values and Georgian traditional social values. Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, Georgia has sought to politically align itself with the West as a member of the Council of Europe, World Trade Organization, and as a member of the European Neighborhood Policy. Yet, while Georgia aspires to become a part of Europe, its Western-leaning political ideals are at odds with social values that set the country apart. Georgians have a strong desire to protect their way of life from European influences. Georgians also have overwhelmingly conservative attitudes towards sensitive social issues such as homosexuality, euthanasia, suicide and divorce, in addition to several gender-related issues including women having children or living separately from their parents before marriage. This makes the Georgian population dissimilar from many of those found in EU member states. Moreover, in line with a more traditional outlook, religion continues to play an important role not only in Georgian society, but also in Georgian political life.

Georgia is forever yoked to Europe. We are joined by a common and unbreakable bond—one based on culture—on our shared history and identity—and on a common set of values that has at its heart, the celebration of peace, and the establishment of fair and prosperous societies.

Mikheil Saakashvili, 2008

Introduction: Georgia and the West

Since the Rose Revolution in 2003 and subsequent presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili in 2004, Georgia has looked west and sought to build a strong relationship with the European Union. The country has thus joined the Council of Europe (1999), European Neighbourhood Policy (2004), Eastern Partnership (2009), and the Black Sea Synergy (2007).[1] Although the EU has no plans to extend membership to Georgia, the hope of future membership has motivated the Georgian government to undergo a variety of economic and political reforms towards European integration.[2] These include the promotion of economic growth and foreign investment, measures to decrease corruption, large infrastructure projects, and on-going judicial reform.[3]

Despite the fact that Georgia has not been given a promise of future talks for EU accession, public enthusiasm for membership is far greater than other participants of the Eastern Partnership including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine (White et al., 2008; White et al. 2002), as well as other countries that actually have a membership prospect (the Western Balkan states and Turkey). This degree of enthusiasm has encouraged political and economic reforms to an extent. But how does Georgia compare to EU member states with regard to shared social values and attitudes?

This paper examines political and social attitudes in Georgia—a country located between Russia, Turkey and Iran and on the crossroads between East and West. The analysis employs nationwide survey data in Georgia to show that while the Georgian government and population

have a strong desire for the country to be part of the West with regard to international institutions (NATO and the EU), there is a clear divide between common European social values and Georgian conservative social values.

Although Georgia aspires to become a part of Europe, its Western-leaning desires are at odds with a wide range of social values on religion, gender and attitudes towards minority groups that set the country apart from EU member states. Survey data shows that Georgians have a strong desire to protect their way of life from European influences and are also the least likely of the South Caucasian peoples to desire temporary or permanent emigration to Europe. Additionally, the data shows that attitudes toward gender-related issues in Georgia are dissimilar to many of those found in the EU as the majority of the population believes it is never justified for a woman to have a child outside of marriage or live separately from her parents before getting married. Also in line with this traditional outlook, a majority of Georgians prefer religion to play an important role in both society and political life. Finally, the data demonstrates overwhelmingly conservative views towards sensitive social issues such as homosexuality, euthanasia, suicide, divorce, and AIDS.

The first section of this article discusses literature related to the relationship between Eastern and post-Soviet Europe and the EU. This is followed by an examination of empirical data on political beliefs and socio-cultural values and attitudes in Georgia using five nationwide surveys conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC):[4] the 2010 Caucasus Barometer, 2005-2008 World Values Survey wave (WVS), 2011 Survey on Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia, and the March 2011 and September 2011 surveys on Voting and Political Attitudes in Georgia conducted by CRRC for the National Democratic Institute-

Georgia (NDI).[5] The third section briefly discusses the potential impact of the survey results and what they mean for the Georgia-EU relationship. The final section concludes.

Eastern and Post-Soviet Europe and the EU

Numerous scholars have sought to understand whether or not the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc would have the necessary political culture needed to integrate with Western Europe and the European Union (Jowitt 1992, Brzezinski 2002). After almost seven decades with the invasive political, economic and social system that existed during the Soviet Union, the countries in this region have undergone varying degrees of transformation within the last twenty years since independence. Arguably, Georgia belongs to the most isolated sub-region of this area tucked between the successor states (Turkey, Russia and Iran) of three former empires. With the extensive changes that have occurred throughout the region, one wonders how each of the post-communist countries would match up to a Europe in which democracy, market economy, respect for individual liberties, and tolerance for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities are accepted as the norm (of course these are continuing processes within the EU as well). Is there a meeting point for the countries of this region such as Georgia and those already in the European Union?

According to Urban (2003), there is a pan-European culture across both Western and Eastern Europe that exists alongside national cultures. She employs data from the International Social Survey Program's religious surveys in some of the ten Eastern European countries that eventually signed the treaty of EU accession in 2004 (Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), as well as the original six members of the European Economic Community (Belgium, France, West Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, the

Netherlands). Urban shows that this pan-European cosmopolitan culture is exhibited in part by use of a lingua franca (English) alongside state languages, as well as an accepted European norm to support secular Christianity while having identities that are connected to dominant or historical religions (with respect for minority religious groups). Specifically, Urban maintains that beliefs, norms and values concerning a separation of religion and political life are one of the hallmarks of a growing secular religious culture that is found across Europe. This is one of the meeting points between the older EU states and newer members from Eastern Europe.

Similarly, Laitin (2002) finds that a transcendent cosmopolitan European culture exists alongside national cultures, and that culturally, the incorporation of Eastern European states into the EU has had the potential to deepen integration. He examines language, religion and popular culture to ask whether or not the separate paths of Western and Eastern Europe (from the Great Schism of 1054 to the different modes of secularization during the twentieth century) over time have created a cultural divide that inhibits political and economic integration.[6] Laitin also asks if the Eastern applicant states (pre-2011) have forged antithetical political cultures with regard to the relationships between religion and the individual, nation and state, or between ethnic, religious, racial or sexual minorities. In conclusion, he asserts that there are two religious cultures throughout Europe that exist simultaneously:1) a secular religious culture where religion is seen as inconsequential for political life, and 2) a high level of membership in and identification with nationally based churches.[7] He also argues that the populations of the Eastern European applicant states were part of an emerging continental European culture, and that it was the younger generations, in particular, that were driving this change.

Yet, data from Georgia shows that while the country has made some progress towards democracy and market economy, popular social values are different from both older and newer

EU member states. As the following section demonstrates, Georgia does not have a secular religious culture that views religion as inconsequential for political life. Also, while both the government and population respect the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) as the national church in Georgia, and there is a high level of membership in and identification with the GOC, respect for minority religious groups is tenuous and contrary to part of the pan-European cosmopolitan culture that Urban and Laitin describe. Finally, in contrast to the younger generations in Eastern Europe—which Laitin posits are the catalyst for these countries to become part of an emerging continental European culture in the new Eastern European member states of the EU—the younger generation in Georgia holds many of the same conservative social values as the older generation. Attitudes towards a host of other social issues including gender and tolerance for particular minority groups distinguish Georgia from EU member populations.

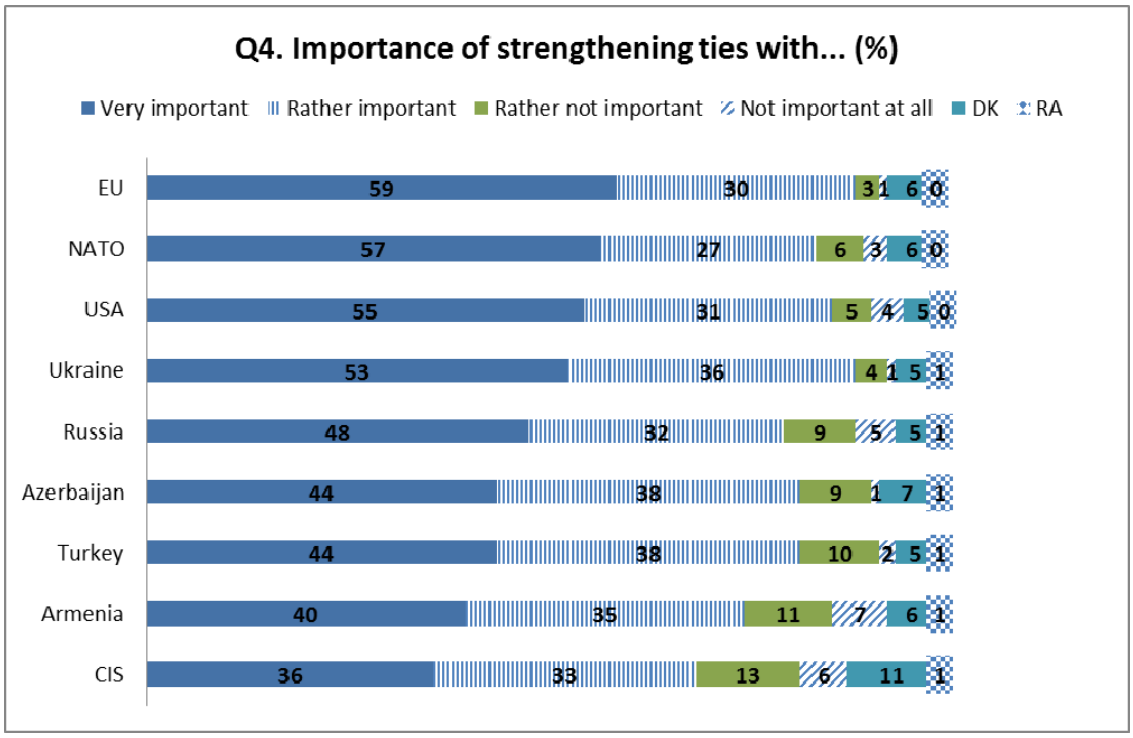
Evidence from Georgia

This section presents survey data on: 1) the high level of support for EU membership in Georgia and cooperation with the EU, 2) tendencies to protect the Georgian way of life from European influences and lack of desire to work or study in Europe, 3) religious issues including the high level of religiosity and significant role of the GOC in political and public life, 4) gender-related issues such as what the population considers to be acceptable behaviours for women, and 5) attitudes towards sensitive social issues such as homosexuality, euthanasia, suicide, divorce and AIDS.

Both the Georgian government and population overwhelmingly support cooperation with the EU, including eventual membership. 89% of Georgians consider EU support of Georgia to be important and 80% of Georgians say they would vote for EU membership.[8] The majority (89%)

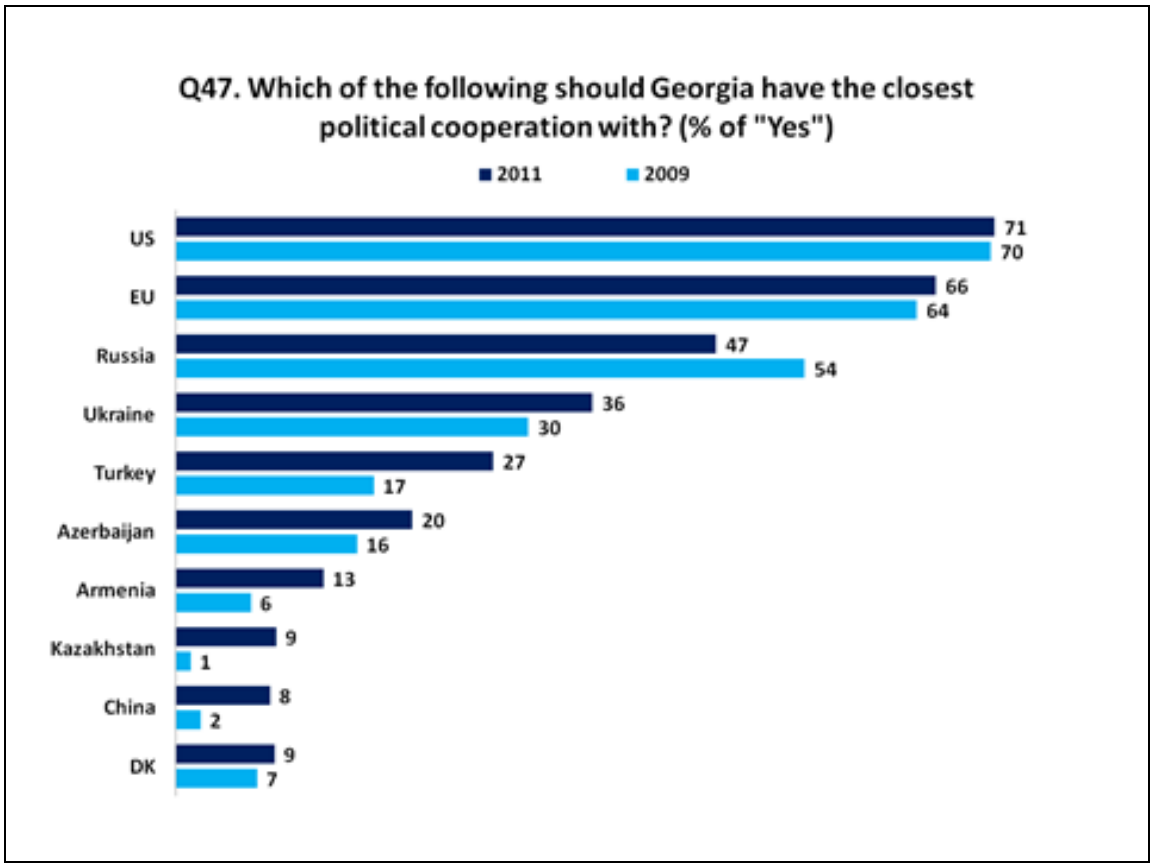
of the adult Georgian population also sees strengthening ties with the EU as important (Figure 1), and 66% thinks that Georgia should have closest political cooperation with the EU (only after the United States and above neighboring post-Soviet countries, Turkey and China, Figure 2).[9] 54% of Georgians also think strengthening economic cooperation with the EU is important.

Figure 1



Source: 2011 Survey on Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia (CRRC)

Figure 2



Source: 2011 Survey on Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia (CRRC)

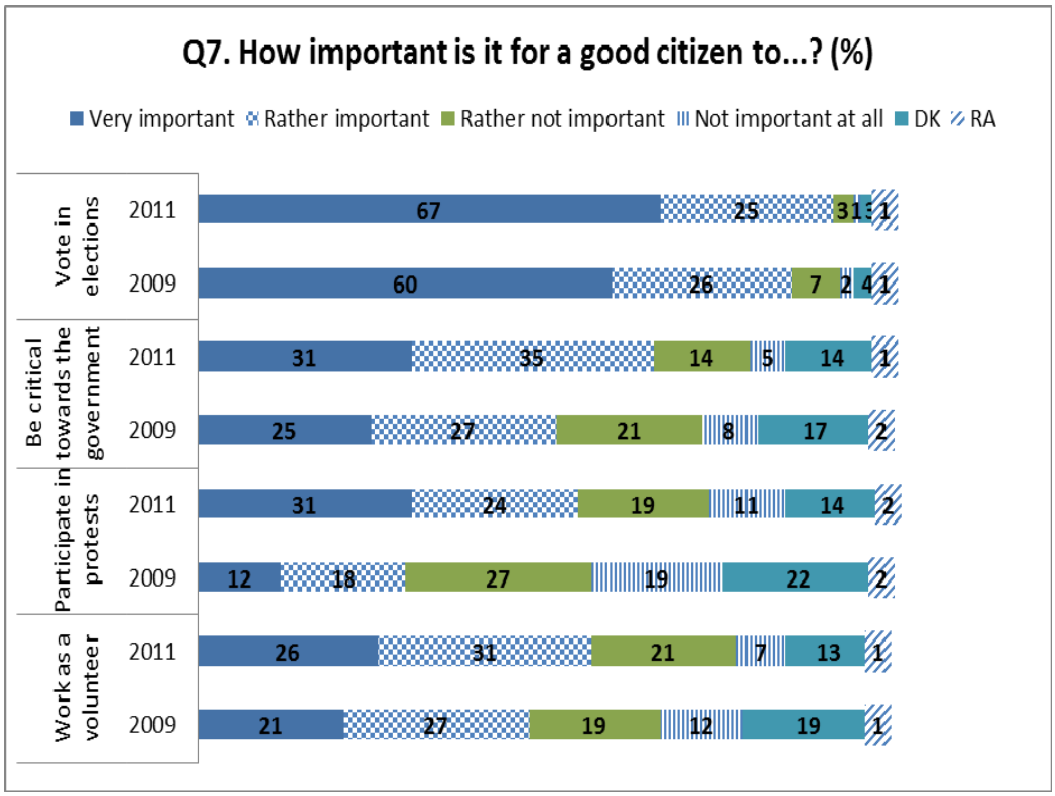
There is also a feeling of genuine connection with the West as just over half of the Georgian adult population identify as European. 59% of Georgians agree with the words of late Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania during his speech at the Council of Europe in 1999—"I am Georgian, and therefore I am European". Additionally, 84% of Georgians believe that every Georgian student should know a Western European language. This seems to indicate that a shared cultural identity would be a prime motivator for the support moving west. However, as Müller (2011) asserts, the expected gains from EU membership is a stronger predictor for EU support than a believed common European identity or declared cultural affinity. For example,

just over half of the population believes that national security, territorial integrity, and numerous political issues such as fair elections and freedom of speech would increase upon membership.[10]

In addition to widespread support for EU membership and cooperation, just over half the population thinks the country will be prepared to join the EU (58%), and will actually join the EU (52%), within the next 10 years or less. That is, there is a general optimism within the population that Georgia is heading in a western direction and sooner rather than later.

Many Georgians recognize that unresolved conflicts and political instability are significant issues that may hinder Georgia becoming an EU member state, as well as the fact that continuing problems with widespread unemployment, judicial independence and media independence, are hindrances to membership. Yet, despite arguments that Georgia is not a real democracy due to these concerns,[11] 42% of Georgians think the country is a democracy that still needs improvement.[12] In addition, survey data shows a very slight increase in positive attitudes towards active citizenship as more Georgians believe it is important for a good citizen to be critical of government, participate in protests and vote in elections (Figure 3).[13] Thus, although the country still has much progress to make, the population desires democracy and more positive attitudes towards active citizenship—similar to the European "model"—are growing over time.

Figure 3



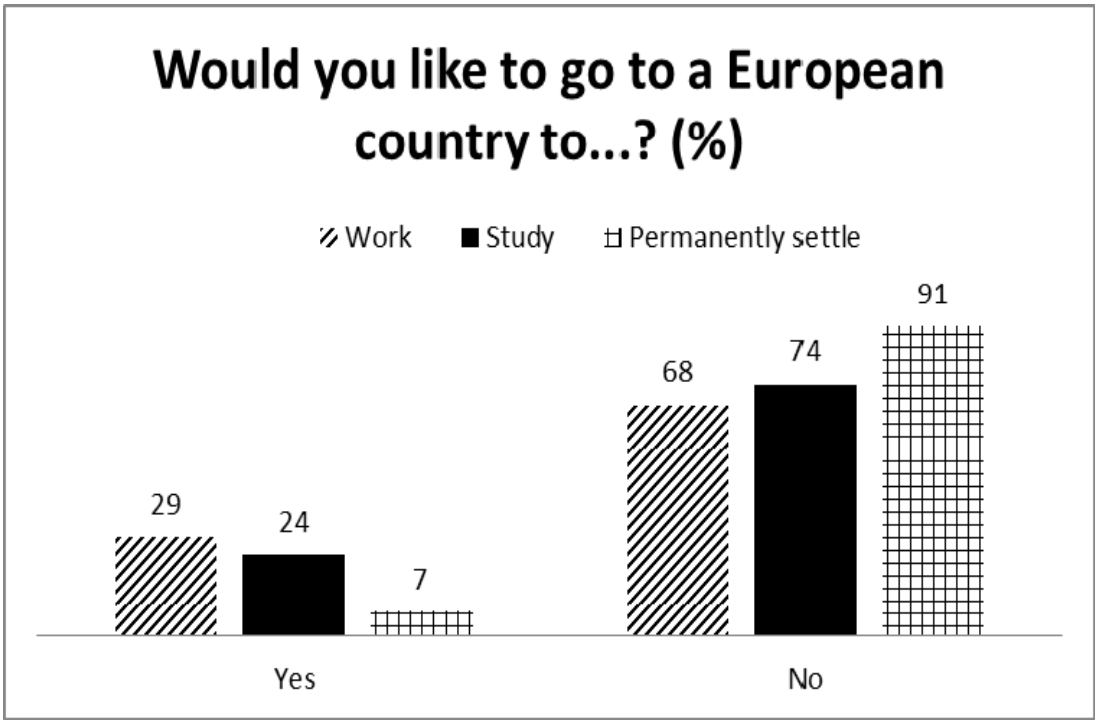
Source: 2011 Survey on Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia (CRRC)

Despite the strong desire for cooperation and EU membership, and slight changes in views about active citizenship, social values and attitudes in Georgia toward cultural protectionism, the role of religion in political life, gender issues, and those views toward homosexuality, suicide, and AIDS set the country apart from many populations within the EU.

First, there is an inclination for Georgians to protect traditional social values and their way of life. The majority of those who do not desire EU membership feel that way because they think membership would harm Georgia's culture and traditions.[14] Moreover, although national security and territorial integrity are issues with which most Georgians think EU membership would help, about half of the population believes their way of life needs to be protected against European (50%) influences.[15]

Additionally, Georgians have very little interest in going to Europe for work, for study, or to permanently settle (Figure 4). They are also the least likely South Caucasian group to desire temporary or permanent travel from their country. Data from the 2010 Caucasus Barometer shows that 7% of Georgians, 17% of Azerbaijanis and 29% of Armenians are interested in permanent emigration from their countries. 47% of Georgians, 52% of Azerbaijanis and 64% of Armenians want to temporarily emigrate.

Figure 4



Source: 2011 Survey on Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia (CRRC)

An analysis using logistic regression shows that there are some differences with respect to sex, age, education, and geographic residence on whether or not Georgians want to work, study or permanently live in the EU.[16] The analysis (Table 1) shows that men, younger Georgians, capital residents and those with higher levels of education are more likely to want to work in the EU. Employment status was not significant. With respect to studying in the EU,

younger Georgians, capital residents, and those with higher levels of education are significant. Sex and employment status have no impact. In addition, younger Georgians, those with higher levels of education, and capital residents are more likely to desire to permanently live in the EU. Sex and employment status were not significant.

Table 1: Desire to Work, Study or Live in the EU Regressed on Hypothesized Determinants[a]

Variable	Work in EU	Study in EU	Live in EU
Constant	.54	.92	-1.6
	(.20)	(.26)	(.32)
Sex	.71***	-.12	.19
	(.09)	(.12)	(.15)
Age	-.05***	-.11***	-.04***
	(.003)	(.01)	(.004)
Educational level	.07**	.29***	.11*
	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)
Capital residence	.34***	.51***	.39**
	(.10)	(.13)	(.15)
Employed	.01	.22	.02
	(.09)	(.13)	(.15)
Pseudo R^2	0.15	0.32	0.07
N	3318	3337	3377

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

[a]Entries in this table are unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

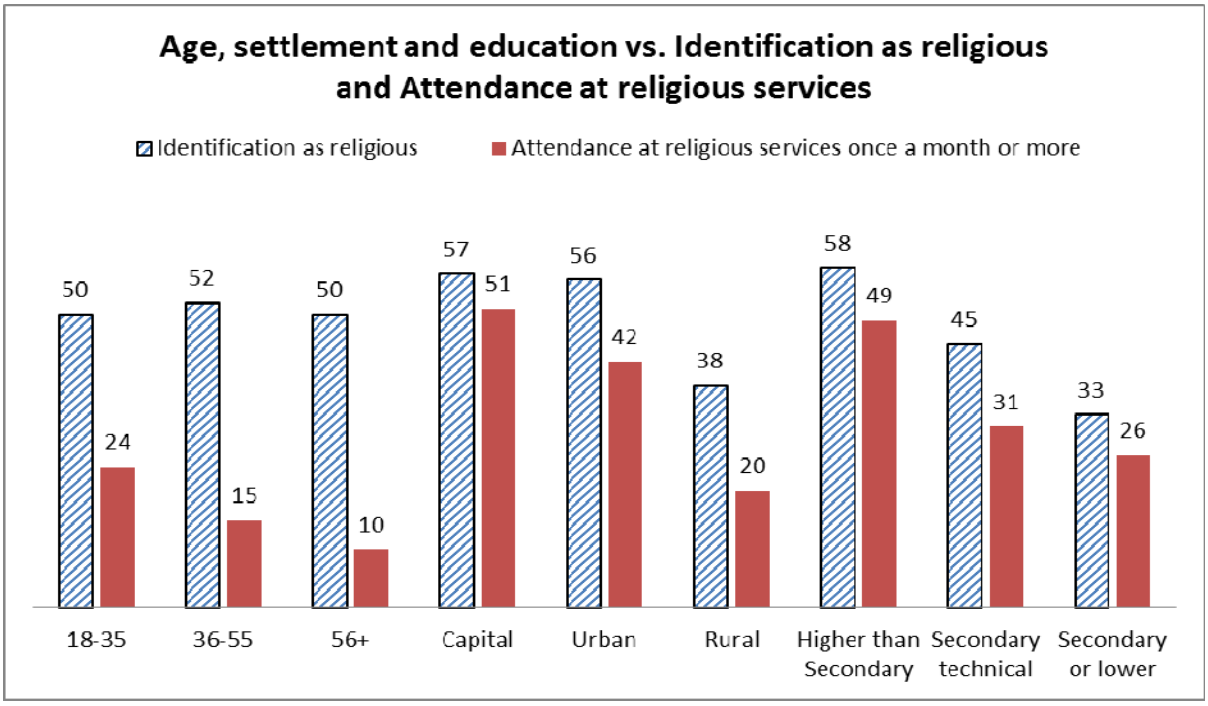
Nevertheless, the overall data on Georgia may indicate a general trend towards cultural protectionism and show a general desire to protect the Georgian "way of life" and preserve the country's traditions from American and European *cultural influences*—especially since the data show overwhelming positive attitudes toward Western security institutions specifically. However, further examination would be necessary.

Second, besides an inclination to protect traditional social values and a way of life, religion is important in Georgia and maintains more of a significant position in political life in the country than in EU member countries. According to the 2002 census, 83% of the population identifies as Georgian Orthodox, 10% as Muslim, 4% as Armenian Apostolic and .8% as Catholic. There are smaller religious minority groups such as Jewish communities, the Baptist

church, Seventh-day Adventist, Lutheran church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others. A rather large proportion of the population considers themselves to be religious (48%) and views religion as important in daily life (90%).[17]

Also, contrary to many other countries in the world, in Georgia those who are younger, educated and capital residents tend to have higher levels of religiosity as measured by their identification as religious and attendance at religious services (Figure 5). This is important both with regards to theories on secularization and religiosity that view older, rural populations as being more religious, and with regard to the role that younger generations can play in moving their society towards an emerging continental European culture.[18]

Figure 5



Source: 2010 Caucasus Barometer

There are a variety of reasons why the older generation may deem religion to be less important in their daily lives or attend religious services less often. These can include the fact that older generations were socialized during the Soviet Union and remember the union's formal

emphasis on atheism, while Georgians who were born at least a few years before the dissolution do not have the same set of experiences. However, it is important to note that the relationship between the Soviet state and different religious groups was complex and varied over time, and policies on religion were subordinate to constantly changing political, social and economic considerations.[19] An examination of the factors that have led to an increase in various indicators of religiosity among the younger generation in Georgia is a topic for a separate in-depth analysis which cannot be addressed here.

In addition to the significant position of religion in social life as presented above, religious institutions are also the most trusted institution in the country (84%), followed by the army (80%).[20] The patriarch of the GOC, Ilia II, is understood to be the most trusted person in Georgia and both he and the GOC have a large amount of influence in Georgian society. This has been recognized by the state. Georgia is a secular state as declared in Article 9 of the Georgian constitution, which "recognizes the special importance of the Georgian Orthodox Church in Georgian history but simultaneously declares complete freedom of religious belief and confessions, as well as independence of the church from the state."[21] However, there is a strong relationship between the Georgian government and GOC as evidenced by Article 9 of the constitution, as well as a 2002 constitutional agreement between the state of Georgia and Georgian Apostolic Autocephaly Orthodox Church that grants the patriarch immunity (Article 1.5), exempts GOC clergy from military service (Article 4), gives the church a consultative role in government, and declares the GOC the only religious group with a right to staff the military chaplaincy (Article 4.2).[22]

Having a complete separation of church and state is not an empirical reality within Western Europe either.[23] Nevertheless, while both the Georgian government and population

respect the GOC as the national church, and there is a high level of membership in and identification with the GOC, Georgia's respect for minority religious groups is weak.

Religious tolerance and relationships between the Georgian government, GOC and minority religious groups in Georgia are an important topic, which this paper can only briefly address. The Georgian constitution protects religious freedom and the criminal code prohibits interference with religious services or persecution based on religious faith or belief. Yet, as the most ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse country of the South Caucasus, Georgia has had an issue with intolerance toward minority religious groups in the past few years.[24]

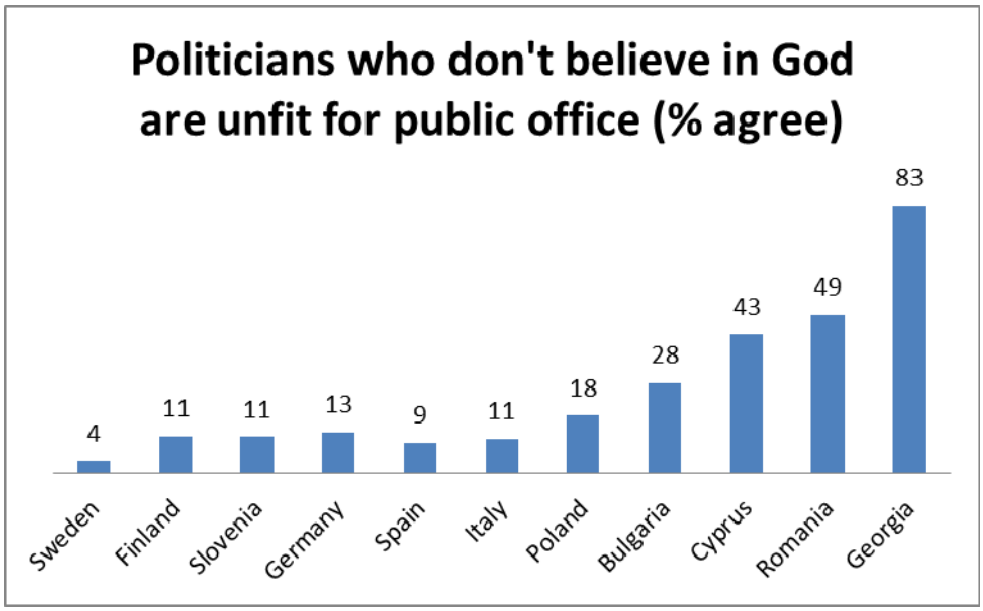
In general, the government respects religious freedom and according to a statement issued by the public defender of Georgia in November 2010, within the past year the number of attacks on religious minorities has decreased.[25] A few Muslim organizations in Adjara were able to register, the Catholic Church received permission to restore works on an old temple in Rabati, and Jehovah Witnesses obtained several permissions to construct new religious buildings. Moreover, in 2010 the president also made the Novruz holiday of Georgia's ethnic Azeri community a public holiday. The president has also spoken publically about the need to respect all citizens of Georgia regardless of their religious beliefs.

Nevertheless, tolerance towards religious minority groups remains tenuous, and in 2010 both the United Nations and Council of Europe urged the country to do more to protect religious minorities and effectively deal with cases of incitement.[26] Some minority groups have had difficulties receiving licenses and permits to construct buildings or have experienced inadequate reactions by law enforcement bodies toward intolerance. There is also an uneven tax structure for the dominant and minority religious groups, and only the dominant group receives state assistance.

In addition to these structural issues, there has been some discrimination toward religious minority groups from societal organizations such as the Union of Orthodox Parents—a religious extremist group that believes the traditional and "territorial realm" of Orthodoxy (i.e. all of Georgia) is encroached upon by other religious groups.[27] These include both religious groups that are considered "traditional" (Armenian Apostolic Church, Islam, Jewish groups, Catholic) and "non-traditional" (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals). The repertoire of groups such as the Union of Orthodox Parents includes staging protests, distributing pamphlets with hate speech, blocking entrances to religious centers, and other forms of harassment. Although these groups exist in Georgia, it is difficult to gauge their level of appeal within Georgian society. In addition to these issues, confiscated property from particular religious groups during the Soviet period remains a contentious issue, especially between the GOC and Armenian Apostolic church.[28]

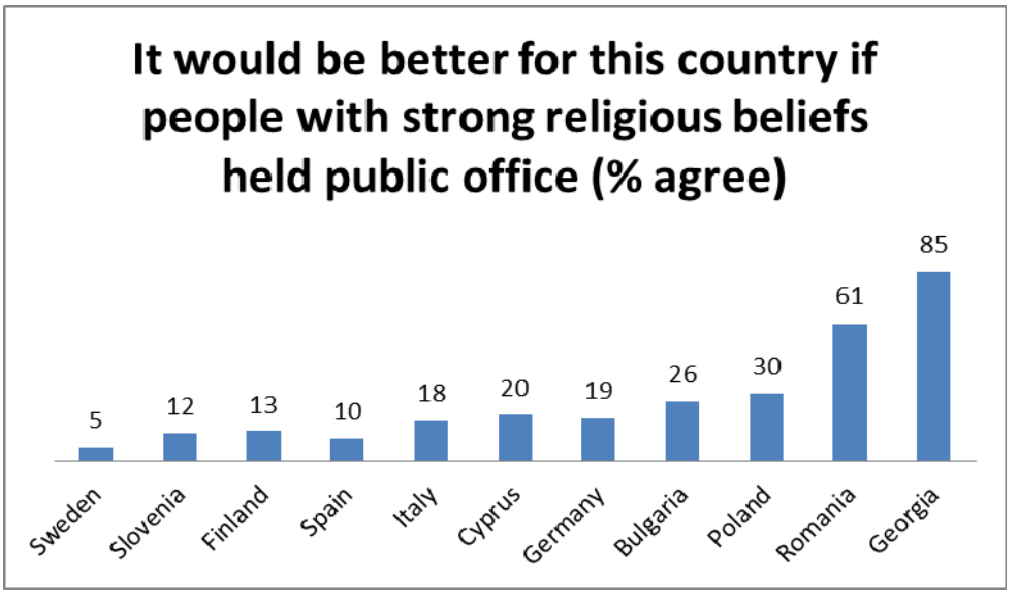
Aside from tolerance toward religious minority groups, the role of religion in public and political life differentiates Georgia from EU member states. Most Georgians see a dominant role for religion in politics in comparison to many populations of EU member states. Figures 6 and 7 show that the majority of the Georgian population agrees with the statement that politicians who don't believe in God are unfit for public office (83%), and 85% believe it would be better if there were more people with strong religious beliefs in public office.[29] These percentages stand in stark contrast to the secular religious culture that both Urban and Laitin see as growing across Europe, which advocates religion as separate from political life.

Figure 6



Source: WVS 2005-2008

Figure 7

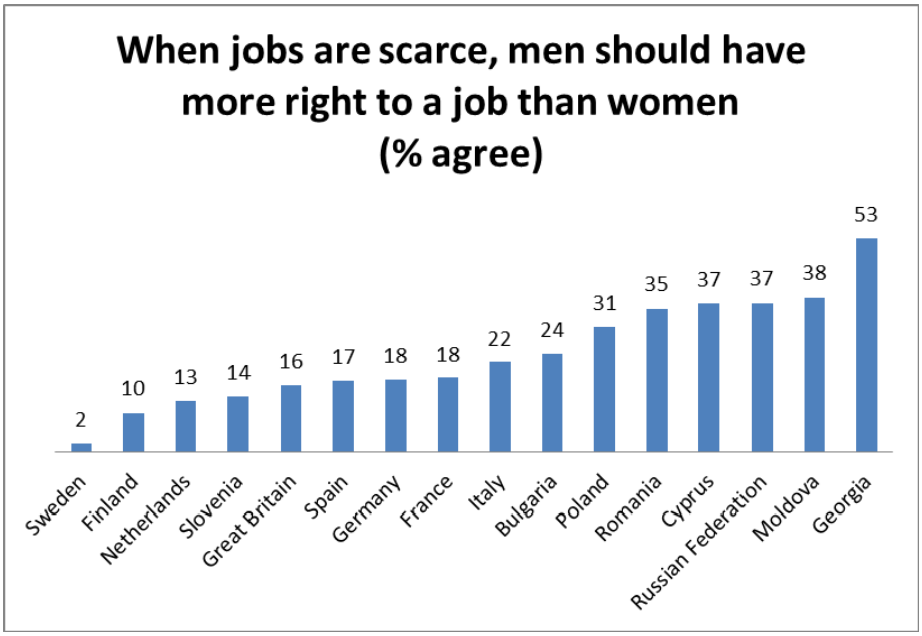


Source: WVS 2005-2008

Third, besides religious issues and a desire to protect traditional social values, popular attitudes related to gender in Georgia diverge from many of those found within the EU. Just over half of the population thinks men should have more right to a job when jobs are scarce (Figure

8). This is much higher than the EU member countries included in the WVS 2005-2008 wave below, as well as Russia and Moldova—two other post-Soviet countries that are not in the EU.

Figure 8



Source: WVS 2005-2008

Moreover, a considerable proportion of the adult Georgian population thinks it is not acceptable for a woman to be a single parent if she does not want a stable relationship with a man (61%), it is never acceptable for a women to have a child outside of marriage (50%), and it is never justified for a woman to have sex before marriage (64%). Thus, again it is shown that Georgia has more conservative attitudes toward these issues than the EU member countries in the WVS 2005-2008 wave.[30]

Fourth, Georgian attitudes towards other sensitive social issues such as homosexuality, euthanasia, suicide, and divorce also differ (Table 2). Over 90% of the population views suicide and homosexuality as "never justifiable," which is well above the average of 48% and 29%, respectively, for EU member states.[31] Georgia also has the highest percentage of people who think euthanasia is never justified. However, while Georgia is also on the high end for the

percentage of people that think abortion and divorce are never justified, the numbers are much less skewed.[32]

Table 2

It is never justifiable to…(%)					
	Suicide	Homosexuality	Euthanasia	Abortion	Divorce
Sweden	25	4	7	2	1
Great Britain	33	20	13	20	7
Germany	35	11	22	15	5
France	35	15	10	14	9
Finland	36	20	14	14	5
Netherlands	37	16	14	20	11
Spain	51	10	20	17	7
Bulgaria	56	33	19	17	12
Poland	60	53	47	51	23
Cyprus	63	38	46	39	18
Italy	70	51	37	39	19
Romania	83	73	56	48	35
Georgia	93	91	68	54	32

Source: WVS 2005-2008

When asked which groups of people Georgians would not like to have as neighbors, the results show that Georgians overwhelmingly have the highest rates of disapproval for homosexuals and people living with AIDS (Table 3). The results are also high for Georgia in the

other categories, except for France which has the highest rate of disapproval for people who speak a different language, immigrants/foreign workers, and people of a different race.

Table 3

Groups of people you would not like as neighbours (%)									
	Drug addicts	People of a different race	People who have AIDS	Immigrants/foreign workers	Homosexuals	People of a different religion	Heavy drinkers	Unmarried couples living together	People who speak a different language
Sweden	96	2	6	2	4	2	67	1	2
Netherlands	96	9	11	10	5	3	82	1	11
Spain	82	9	21	8	9	7	49	4	4
Germany	74	9	18	16	17	5	79	3	10
Great Britain	94	5	14	16	19	2	68	2	6
Finland	89	12	20	17	24	10	74	9	9
Italy	72	13	36	16	25	12	59	5	8
France	89	27	37	43	34	30	85	13	28
Slovenia	82	18	37	21	42	16	77	10	11
Cyprus	81	17	47	23	50	17	62	17	11
Bulgaria	85	21	54	19	53	16	69	12	13
Poland	85	14	42	15	56	12	80	10	9
Romania	85	20	43	19	68	17	76	17	13
Georgia	97	25	85	24	93	37	84	23	14

Source: WVS 2005-2008

Georgia-EU relationship

So what do the survey results mean for the Georgia-EU relationship? The results show that there are significant attitudinal differences between the populations of Georgia and EU member states that go beyond variations in strength of democracy, rule of law, level of corruption, media independence, and other issues. Some of these differences could make possible future integration with the European Union and its members difficult.

This is especially the case with respect to tolerance towards religious and sexual minorities, attitudes toward gender-related issues, and a strong desire for religion to play a large role in the political sphere.

At the same time, the Georgian government has undertaken extensive political and economic reforms since 2004 and has a desire for democracy and to cooperate with the west. The government and much of the population agree in the importance of learning English and other Western European languages, and recognize Georgia as part of Europe. Thus, while Georgia is making strides in certain arenas to match up to a Europe in which democracy and a market economy is the norm, the country will also have to improve its level of respect and equality for individual liberties and tolerance for religious and other minorities.

That said, on the value patterns identified, conservative Georgians seem to have much more in common with conservative Americans, and there are many Europeans, such as Le Pen voters in France, Berlusconi supporters in Italy, and Christian Democrats in Germany, who may hold very similar views as many Georgians. Yet, the survey results may indicate that Georgians have a particular way of understanding democracy that is different from most EU member populations. That is, the Georgian understanding of democracy may focus on its constitutional or legal aspects such as free and fair elections or rule of law, rather than as a group of organizing principles that include tolerance for minority rights and the expression of those individual liberties. Therefore, support for democracy in Georgia does not necessarily imply support for the free expression of all minority rights. The question is whether these different value systems pose an obstacle to Georgia integrating with Europe.

Conclusion

This article has examined political and social attitudes in Georgia and used nationwide survey data to show that while both the Georgian government and population desire economic and political cooperation with the West, and to be part of Europe and the EU, there are significant differences between common European and Georgian social values. That is, Georgian society has Western-leaning ideals, but also social values that are not a part of many European social norms.

The data has shown a desire for Georgians to protect their traditions and way of life, as well as little interest to work or study in Europe. Religion continues to play a strong role both in Georgian society and politics, and the population has conservative views on acceptable behaviors for women, as well as on sensitive social issues such as homosexuality, euthanasia, suicide, divorce, and people living with AIDS.

This paper has also shown that there are differences in social attitudes and values between the former satellite states of Eastern Europe that are now in the EU and particular sub-regions of the post-Soviet sphere such as Georgia in the South Caucasus. The results thus present a different way to think about the cultural boundaries of a diverse Europe and the characteristics or qualities that can be defined as European.

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[1] See the EU–Georgia Cooperation Council's EU–Georgia Action Plan (2006) available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enlarg/pdf/enp_action_plan_georgia.pdf and the European Commission's European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument in Georgia (2006).

[2] See Papava and Tokmazishvili (2006) and Gogolashvili (2009).

[3] See the 2011 Corruptions Perceptions Index by Transparency International Georgia.

[4] The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) is a program of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation and is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It is a network of resource, research and training centers established in 2003 in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia with the goal to strengthen social science research and public policy analysis in the region. Learn more about CRRC at http://www.crrccenters.org/.

[5] On certain questions and when possible, data from Georgia will be compared to EU member states that were included in the WVS 2005-2008 wave: Sweden, Finland, Slovenia, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Romania.

[6] Laitin notes that the Great Schism of 1054, which bifurcated Christianity into Roman and Byzantine versions and thereby divided the Euro-Atlantic community from the Euro-Asian community, has commonly been viewed as a hindrance to Eastern European-EU integration. Thus, according to him the levels of secularization indicated by the data can have different meanings in Western and Eastern Europe, especially since the Eastern version of Christianity did not experience the Enlightenment, and secularization in the East was not impacted by "individual agnosticism". Instead, secularization in Eastern Europe came from Soviet agents and communism from above. Laitin concludes that despite this difference, "applicant" Eastern Europe does not appear to have been subsumed by half a century of anti-liberal Leninism.

[7] See Laitin (2002). He measures the level at which religion is seen as inconsequential for political life using five indicators: whether people agree that politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office, whether people agree that religious leaders should have no influence on how people vote in elections, whether people agree

that there ought to be more people with religious beliefs in public office, whether people agree that religious leaders ought to have no influence in government decisions, whether people agree that religious organizations have too little power.

[8] The percentages in this article come from the 2011 survey on Knowledge and Attitudes toward the EU in Georgia unless otherwise stated. Only 3% of Georgians say they would vote against EU membership. Out of these, more than half (65%) say that membership would harm Georgia's culture and traditions. This is followed by 36% of those who say membership would raise Russian aggression towards Georgia, 29% who think it would harm relations with Russia, and 22% who believe EU membership would restrict Georgia's independence. 71% of Georgians would vote for NATO membership (7% would vote no).

[9] Throughout this article the abbreviation DK stands for "don't know" and RA stands for "refuse to answer". Some of the percentages in the figures do not add to 100% because the percentages for DK or RA may have been removed if very low.

[10] See Caucasus Research Resource Centers. Knowledge and Attitudes towards the EU in Georgia [survey report]. (2011). Retrieved from http://www.crrc.ge/store/downloads/projects/EU_Report_FINAL_Jan25.2012_ENG.pdf on {February 1, 2012}.

[11] See Fish (2008) for a discussion of popularly assumed fallacies of Georgian democracy.

[12] In addition, 2% of the population said yes Georgia is a democracy that needs no further improvement, 32% said Georgia was not a democracy but that it is developing in that direction, and 4% said the country is not a democracy and never will be. Besides these numbers, several studies (Pridham, 2005; Schimmelfennig et al., 2006; Schimmelfennig 2008;Vachudova, 2005) have shown that EU political conditionality for accession has had a positive impact on democracy and democratic change in neighboring non-member countries; however, the effects are weaker in the European Neighbourhood if the EU offers less than membership or possible future membership.

[13]Of course data comparing 2011 and 2009 are not enough to see discernible differences. The data still shows a general movement in attitudes towards active citizenship based on these indicators although the change in the percentages from 2009 to 2011 is slight. It is too early to tell whether these attitudes will increase over time and approximate those similar to EU member states. However, the data presents an interesting starting point for those interested in examining Jowitt's (1992) discussion of a Leninist culture which he argues built upon traditional cultures in Eastern Europe and poses significant cultural limits to democratization. According to Jowitt, the Leninist legacy includes a separation between public and private spheres, low trust, and a suspicion of politics.

[14] Out of the 3% of Georgians who would vote against EU membership, more than half (65%) say that membership would harm Georgia's culture and traditions.

[15] 2010 Caucasus Barometer. 31% disagree with this statement regarding European influences, 50% agree with this statement with regard to American influences (50% disagree), 53% agree for Russian influences (30% disagree).

[16] The dependent variables are "Would you like to go to an EU country to study?", "Would you like to permanently settle in an EU country?" and "Would you like to go to an EU country to work?" Each variable is dichotomously measured where yes=1 and no=0, thus logistic regression was employed. Logistic regression is an appropriate technique to use when the dependent variable is binary. See J.S. Long (1997) Regression Models for categorical and limited dependent variables. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. F.C. Pampel (2000) Logistic regression: A primer. Sage University Papers Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 07-132. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Sex (male=1 and female =0), capital residence (capital=1, urban and rural areas=0), and employment status (has a job=1 and has no job=0) were also dichotomous. Age is treated as a continuous variable and education is measured on a 9-point scale where 1=no education, 2=primary education, 3=incomplete secondary education, 4=completed secondary education, 5=secondary technical education, 6=incomplete higher education, 7=Bachelor's degree, 8=Master's degree and 9=Doctoral degree.

[17] 2010 Caucasus Barometer. Also see Charles (2010) for a discussion of religiosity in Georgia. She argues that Georgians display low levels of religious practice such as attendance at religious services and fasting on par with several Western European countries. Yet, Georgians display a high level of subjective religiosity, including affiliation, importance of religion in daily life, trust in religious institutions, and how religious people consider themselves to be. It is also important to note that attendance at religious services or the perceived importance of religion in daily life is strongly connected to national-cultural allegiance, peer pressure, and display in addition to being a sign of religious commitment.

[18] Numerous sociological theories since the19th century have theorized that societies will become more secular and less religious through modernization with higher levels of education and standards of living. Inglehart and Norris show use survey data to show that poorer societies seem to be religious because people seem to live with greater

vulnerability and forces that threaten their existence. Socio-economic inequality is also connected to this, and as the authors argue, religion is relied upon for hope. See Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. Sacred and Secular: Politics and Religion Worldwide. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[19] See Philip Walters (1993) A survey of Soviet religious policy. In *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*. Cambridge University Press.

[20] 2010 Caucasus Barometer.

[21] Constitution of Georgia Art. 9.

[22] See 2002 Constitutional Agreement between State of Georgia and Georgian Apostolic Autocephaly Orthodox Church. The GOC also does not pay tax on salaries, property, or the sale of religious paraphernalia, and no other religion in Georgia receives state funding or government support.

[23] For example, Malta, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and the United Kingdom all have official state religions, and Germany and Hungary are just two EU member states that levy taxes for certain religious groups. It is also important to note that in some countries, such as Germany, citizens have the right to opt-out of paying church taxes. Some other countries such as Bulgaria have constitutions that recognize a specific religion (Eastern Orthodox Christianity) as the "traditional religion" of the country. See Article 13 of the Bulgarian constitution.

[24] For a detailed account of issues related to religious minority groups in Georgia see Vischioni (2006). Religious Minorities in Georgia. Report for UNHCR and UNAG and the United States Department of State, *September 13, 2011 Report on International Religious Freedom – Georgia*. Retrieved from http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/168312.htm on {February 1, 2012}.

[25] See Tolerance in Georgia – Achievements and Challenges. (2010). Speech of the Public Defender of Georgia. Retrieved from http://www.tolerantoba.ge/index.php?id=1317643976 on {February 1, 2012}.

[26] In July 2011, the parliament created a legislative amendment to the Georgian civil code allowing religious associations "that have historical ties or those religious groups that are regarded as a religion under the law of Council of Europe member states" the right to register as public legal entities. Prior to the passing of this amendment, minorty religious groups had to register as non profit organizations. The passing of this amendment unleashed a watershed of opposition from the GOC, oppositionist political parties and leaders, and much of the Georgian population, with subsequent protests by people, who see the amendment as a threat to the constitutional agreement between the state and the church or fear that other churches will become equal to the Orthodox Church. 69% of those who were aware of the passage of the amendment did not support it. See *Civil Georgia*. Bill on Legal Status of Religious Minorities is Passed with Final Reading (2011). See *Civil Georgia.* Thousands Protest Law on Religious Minorities Legal Status (2011). National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), September 2011 Survey on Voting and Political Attitudes in Georgia.

[27] Other radical Georgian Orthodox groups include the Society of Saint David the Builder, the Union of Orthodox Parents, and the People's Orthodox Christian Movement. Some Orthodox clergy are members of these groups, but the patriarchy has officially stated that these groups are not affiliated with the GOC. See United States Department of State, *2010 Report on International Religious Freedom – Georgia*.
Retrieved from http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148936.htm on {February 1, 2012}.

[28] See Abhrahamyan. (2011). Armenia: Property Disputes Fueling Church Tension between Yerevan and Tbilisi. *Eurasianet.org*. Retrieved from http://www.eurasianet.org/node/64025 on {February 1, 2012}.

[29] The importance of religion and affiliation with the GOC and patriarch is visible in Georgian political life. For example, president Saakashvili and major opposition leaders prayed with the patriarch before the April 9, 2009, mass demonstrations intended to oust the president. The patriarch played a visible and active role in peace-building negotiations with the Russian Orthodox Church after the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008. Moreover, one of the latest demonstrations of the patriarch's legitimacy and political clout occurred when Bidzina Ivanishvili—a Georgian oligarch who was listed as the 153rd richest person in the world by Forbes in 2012—appealed to the patriarch to restore his Georgian citizenship after the government rescinded his citizenship when he declared to form a political party, participate in the 2012 parliamentary elections, and admitted to also holding French citizenship.

[30] There is still room for improvement in other arenas regarding gender-related issues in Georgia. While there is a low political participation rate for women in elected bodies (only 6% of MPs are women 9 of 150), women are extremely active in civil society institutions and NGOs. Moreover, in the March 2011 NDI poll, 67% of Georgians said they would vote for a woman in the next parliamentary elections all things being equal (18% said they would not vote for a woman). 59% also said that men and women perform equally in elected office, while 17% said women perform better and 14% said men perform better (11% said they didn't know).

[31]As a result, many activities on LGBT issues and tolerance have been unwelcomed. For example, On March 17, 2012, a march was held in Tbilisi to mark the annual International Day Against Homophobia. It was disrupted by Orthodox priests. See "Christian activists attack Georgia gay pride parade." (2012). *Ottawa Citizen News*. Retrieved from http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Christian+activists+attack+Georgia+pride+parade/6637564/story.html on {January 1, 2012}.

[32] It is interesting to note that Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have the second, third, and fourth highest rates of sex-selective abortion in the world, respectively, and only after China and just before South Korea and India. For information on how the use of sex-detection technology, declining fertility and preference for male children have impacted these countries, see Gendercide: The worldwide ware on baby girls. (2010). *The Economist*. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/node/15636231 on {March 1, 2012}. Also see Institute for War and Peace Reporting, *South Caucasus: Selective Abortion Means Fewer Girls Born*, 30 September 2011, CRS Issue 611. Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e8aba542.html on {March 1, 2012}.