Religious trends in Georgia:
How unique are they on a global scale?

Overview

We know the mantra across the western world: young people are less religious than older generations and church attendance is falling. And these features can be expected from 'modernisation' (according to sociologists from Marx onwards). To summarise the situation, according to Steve Bruce (2002): 'God is dead'. But in Georgia the religious landscape is quite different: young people attend church more than older people, and there is a religious revival in the Georgian Orthodox church affecting all ages. This paper does not try to explain the trends but does dissect them in some detail and assesses just how unique they are, using comparisons with countries in western and eastern Europe, and across the globe.

Several correlations with personal religiosity are well-known. The more religious are commonly less educated than the secular; they have more children, live in rural backwaters – and are happier in life. Women attend church more than men. But what is the case in Georgia, where the normal age differentials are reversed? Are these associations also reversed? This paper investigates that question.

Clearly there is a vast range of questions that could be investigated with respect to the religious trends in Georgia, not least the causes and effects of the religious revival. This paper seeks to give an overview of the current situation, to set the scene for further research to tackle the deeper issues.

Data sources

There are several good data sources now available for investigating religiosity in Georgia, each with their own specificities and so each able to cast a slightly different light on the religious trends in Georgia.

The earliest freely available social science survey with available data is the World Values Survey (WVS) from 1996. The relevant questions include religious affiliation, attendance and whether or not the respondent considered themselves to be religious. This was followed up with another World Values Survey round in 2008. The sample sizes are rather small in these surveys (2008 and 1500 respondents respectively in the 1996 and 2008 waves), but the results appear to be consistent with results from other surveys.

A much larger survey, with 10,000 respondents, was carried out in 2006. This is the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS), again a multi-country study. Its main focus of interest is in family and fertility behaviour across cohorts. It is a 3-wave longitudinal survey, with the second wave having taken place in 2009 and the third wave planned for 2012. Only a few questions relating to religiosity were included in the first two waves (affiliation and attendance), but more will be included in the third wave of 2012.

Another multi-country social survey, the European Values Study (EVS), was carried out in Georgia in 2008. This included rather more questions on religion and opinions.

The number of respondents was 1437. Again, the results are consistent with the other surveys.

Finally, the Caucasus Barometer, which focuses on social and religious trends in the Caucasian countries of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, carried out surveys in 2009 and 2010, with 1991 and 2089 respondents respectively. This survey included several questions relating to religious beliefs and practice.

Although Georgia has not been included in the European Social Survey (ESS) as yet, comparative results from other countries, derived from this set of 5 survey waves (2002, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010), have been included in this report.

This overview of the religious trends in Georgia looks specifically at attendance rates at religious services. There are pros and cons of this simplistic measure of religiosity. The main advantage, in this instance, is that data is available for this measure across all the surveys that have been carried out. It is also generally a fairly easily assessed variable, both from the point of view of the respondent and an outside observer. The accuracy can be questioned, as some respondents will say they attend more often than they actually do, if this is considered to be the societal norm; in other regimes, such as communist systems, where religious observance is actively discouraged, then under-responses are not uncommon (Eagle, 2011). An important question is whether any change in attendance rates actually reflects a change in people's beliefs or values; Voas and Crockett (2005) would tend to assert that a change (decline) in attendance tends to be closely linked to any change in (specifically retreat from) belief, while Davie (1990) would tend to assert that the currently western evolution is towards 'believing without belonging'. However, that question, as applied to Georgia, must await future in-depth research; this study simply describes the landscape of religious participation in Georgia (albeit some depth), and does not look at changes in depth of belief or the application of personal faith to behaviour and attitudes.

Religious attendance rates by age

In most countries across the world, older people are more devout than younger people. This is so much the norm that it is considered a defining feature of modernisation and secularisation - that each succeeding generation is less religious than its forebears (Voas 2009). However, as soon as we started to look at the association of religious attendance with age, we saw that Georgia has the exact opposite pattern: young people have higher attendance rates than older people (see Figure 1). Whereas only around 20-30 percent of the over 60s attend church services in that country, over 50 percent of the under-25s do so. This is unusual!

Figure 1: Proportion of each age group attending religious services at least once a month

Data source: GGS wave 1, 2006
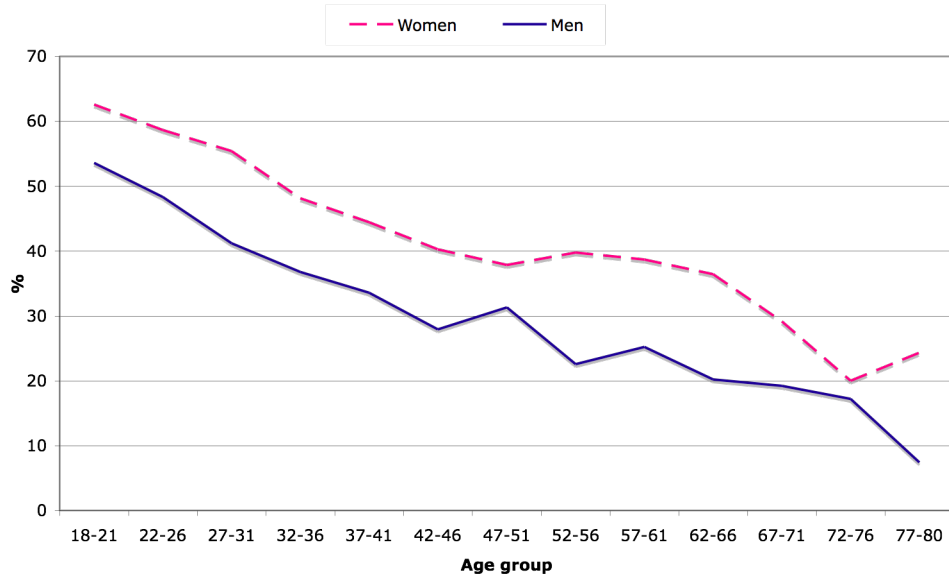
Let us investigate how unusual this pattern is on a global scale by examining similar data from the WVS for almost a hundred countries, where attendance rate by age group is available (Figure 2). From this plot we can see that the general pattern is for older people to be somewhat more religious than the younger generation – not by a large margin, but consistently so. In addition, in most developed countries the age differentials are considerably more marked; this is especially so in Europe, although Japan shows a similar pattern. In just a few countries, attendance rates of younger people are slightly higher than for older people: Bulgaria, Armenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina plus a few sub-Saharan African countries. Georgia, however, stands out as being in a completely different class from all other countries: young people's attendance rates are considerably higher than those for older people.

Figure 2: Religious attendance rates of young people (aged 16-29) versus older people (aged 50+)

Data source: WVS 1999-2001 (mostly). Georgia data from WVS 2008
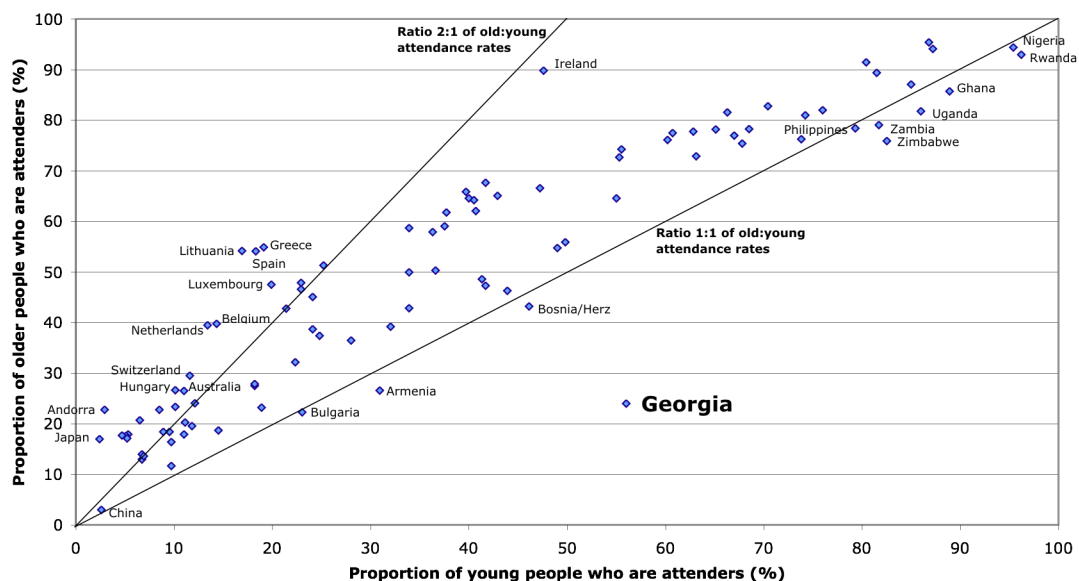
As another demonstration of the uniqueness of Georgia's religious age differentials, we compared the average attendance rates of the cohorts born in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s for 26 countries across Europe (Figure 3). In all of the cases (except for the minor anomaly of Bulgaria in which those born in the 1940s have slightly higher attendance rates than those born in the 1930s), the cohorts born in the 1940s were less religious than those born in the 1930s, and those born in the 1950s were less religious than those born in the 1940s – except for the glaring exception of Georgia. Although Voas (2009) has a more complex explanation for this pattern of decline, the author favours the explanation that the Second World War had a profound effect on religious adherence across Europe. Those born before the War had reason to cling more closely to their faith than those born during, and particularly after the war; this would resonate with the explanation offered by Norris and Inglehart (2004) of lack of security being a driving force towards greater religiosity, while security tends to favour the rise in secularism. However, for Georgia, other factors are obviously at work.

Figure 3: Cohort differentials in attendance rates of older cohorts
Data sources: The cohort values are the mean for all the different surveys and waves available
Data from the WVS and ESS were used for most countries, plus EVS for Italy
For Georgia, data from the WVS and EVS were used
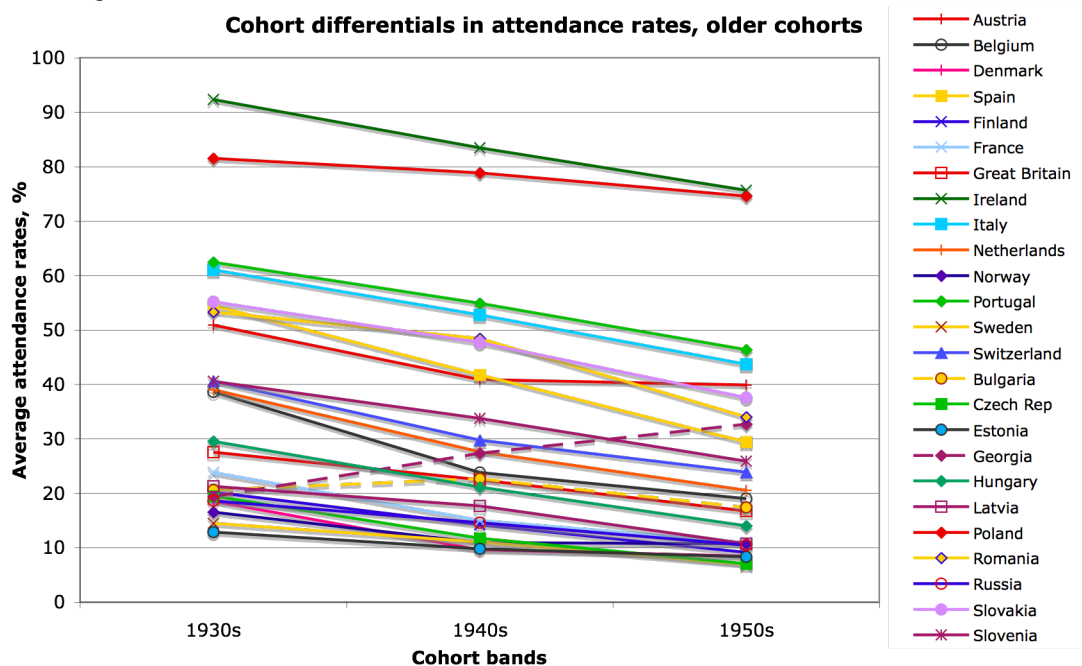
Cohort religiosity trends

It is a commonly held precept that the level of religiosity of a cohort stays quite steady over time, and that any trends of secularisation or revival are generally due to inter-generational losses or gains (Voas 2009). The usual case is that any flux of individuals of a particular generation leaving the church is generally balanced by others who join the church. We have investigated this in more detail for countries across Europe and found that, indeed, stable cohort religiosity levels are the usual case. However, some countries do show more marked period trends, either for decline of religiosity within cohorts (as is the case in Ireland, Spain and Poland most noticeably), or for increased attendance rates in a few other countries. Perhaps not

surprisingly, Georgia falls into the latter category (Figure 4). As for the other countries where growth has been observed, this is quite marked in Romania, whilst in Russia and Latvia it has been more modest, but sustained. However, the growth of religious attendance in Georgia for the cohorts born in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s is pronounced.

Figure 4: Trends in religious attendance rates over time for specific cohort bands
Data sources:
Georgia: WVS 1996, GGS 2006, EVS 2008
Romania: WVS 1993, 1993, ESS 2008
Russia: WVS 1990, 1999, ESS 2006, 2008, 2010
Latvia: WVS 1990, 1999, ESS 2008
Solid lines are for the 1950s cohort band
Dashed lines are for the 1960s cohort band
Dotted lines are for the 1970s cohort band
The apparent dip in religiosity from 2006 to 2008 in Georgia is not statistically significant and probably indicates different sampling procedures between the GGS and EVS
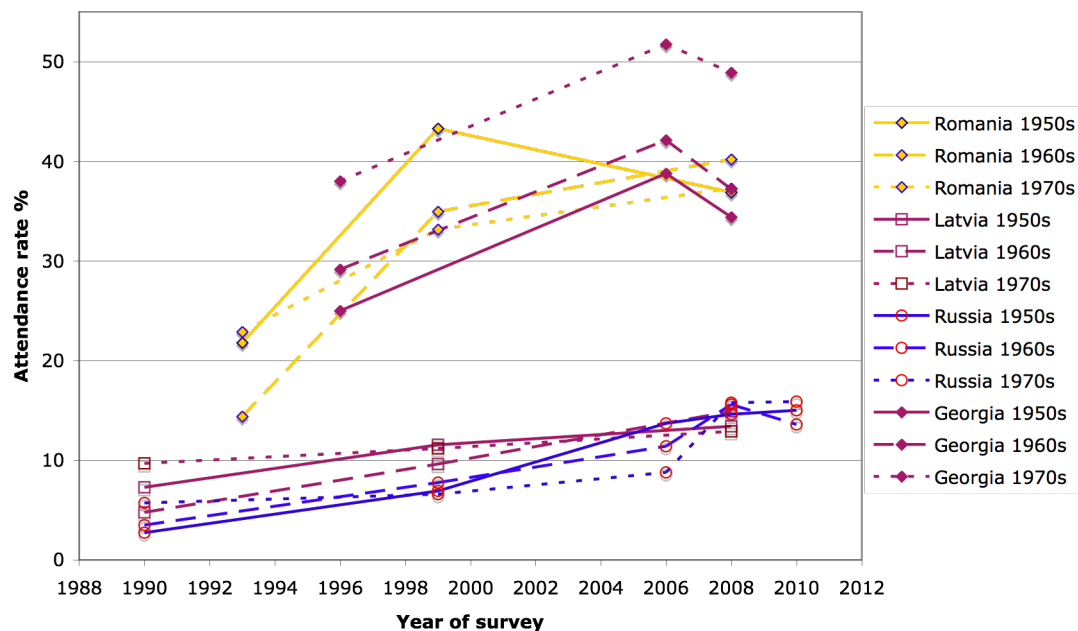
In the countries shown in Figure 4, other than Georgia, the cohort differentials in religiosity are small; younger people are not significantly more religious than older people (or vice versa). Therefore, Georgia's most novel feature of its religious landscape is that young people are more religious than older people. As for the growth in attendance rates over time within cohorts, Georgia's trend is quite pronounced compared to most other countries, although it is on a par with Romania's.

Trends in religious attendance rates of young people

The previous section has looked at the change in attendance rates of particular generations, as this method can best pinpoint whether period influences are truly having an impact on changing attendance rates, and are not simply due to the changing structure of the population over time, in the case where young people and older people have different religious behaviour. We can, however, also look at the change over time of single age groups (as opposed to cohorts). In particular, if we

look at the trends in religious participation of young people (those under 30) then we can determine where revival - or secularisation - is starting to occur. Figure 5 plots the different trajectories of young people's attendance rates across the ex-communist countries of eastern Europe.

Figure 5: Trends in attendance rates of young people (under 30), 1990-2010
Data sources: WVS and ESS
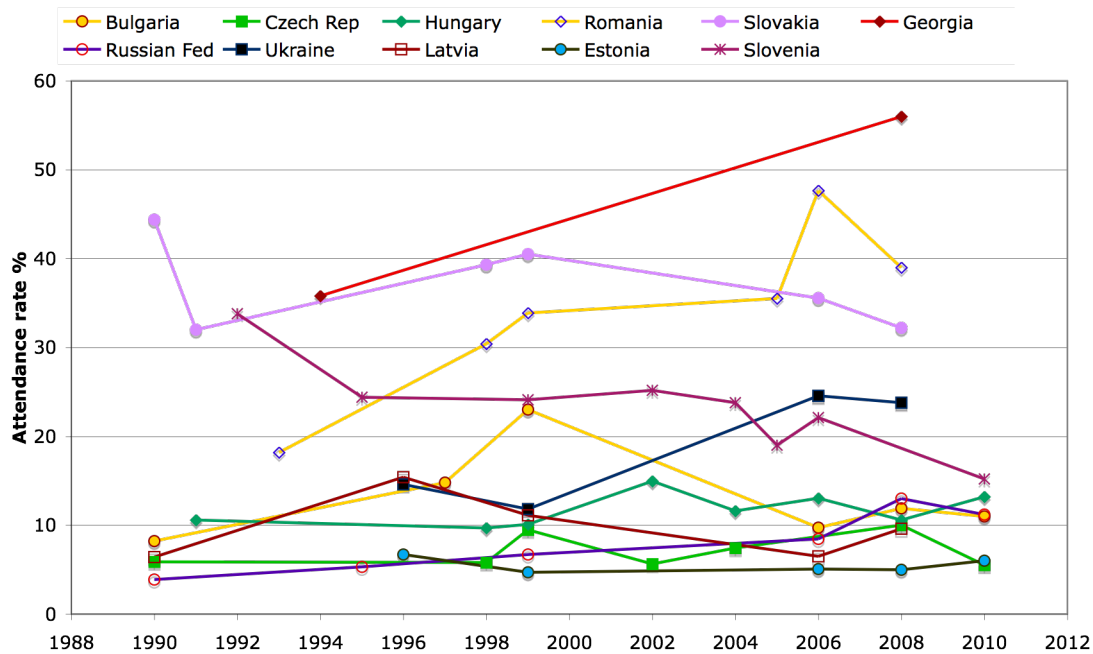
The plotted trends are not unexpected and generally reflect what has been previously reported in the literature ((Tomka 2010, Greeley 1994). In several countries, attendance rates of young people have stayed at a low level, even in the post-communist era (Estonia, Hungary, Czech Republic). In others there was a revival of interest in religion after 1989, reflected in higher attendance rates, but these have fallen away again in recent years (Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia). Slovenia, resembling its neighbour Austria, has seen ongoing decline. The countries that, on the other hand, have seen sustained growth in young people's church attendance are Russia, Ukraine, Romania and Georgia (going from low absolute attendance rates to higher ones).

Secularisation and modernisation

It has been a widely held notion that increased development – or 'modernisation' – leads to secularisation, as people move away from their need of supernatural support when increased security is offered by the state (Norris and Inglehart 2004). We have investigated this hypothesis and have found some evidence for it (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Religious attendance rates by Human Development Index

Data sources: WVS data for the whole population (not just young people)
The HDI is a composite measure of life expectancy, education and GDP per person (at PPP)
HDI values were interpolated as necessary to match the year when WVS surveys were carried out
The lines link point values by country, from one time point to another, when both religiosity values and HDI measures are known
All countries, except Russia (marked with arrow), moved from the left side of the graph to the right side over time; ie. they all increased in Human Development over the period in question
For Georgia, 2 different estimates of HDI were available: both the low and high values are plotted
The lines relating to most countries are named; in the bunch of highly developed countries on the bottom right, where there is not enough space to label the lines, most are Scandinavian, plus France
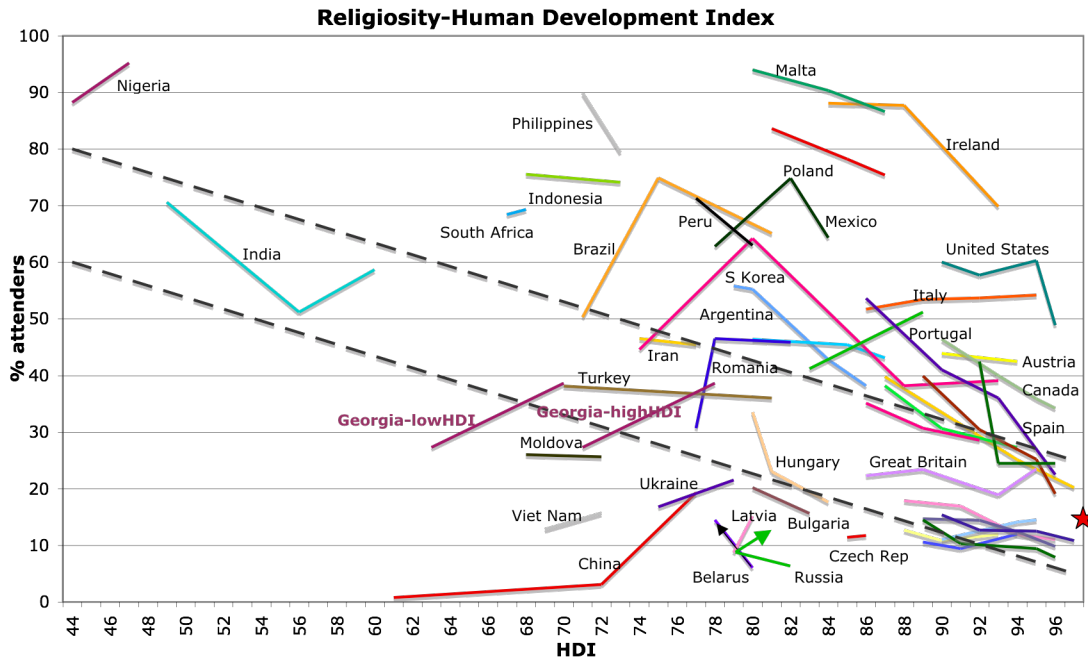
On first observation, this graph shows a wide spread of religiosity for countries around the world, and also a wide range of trends. However, when studied more closely, some significant conclusions can be drawn.

First, we should note that there is some level of correlation of higher development being associated with lower religiosity. It would appear that there could be a 'natural level of religiosity' related to a country's level of development; this is plotted as the wide band between the black dashed lines and is roughly the trendline through all the plotted points +/- 10%. Over time there appears to be convergence towards this 'natural level' of religiosity. The following 21 countries have been in the 'normal band' at some point: India, Turkey, Brazil, Iran, Romania, South Korea, Hungary, Slovenia, Great Britain, Belgium, Australia, Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, France, Finland, Norway, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland. Sixteen countries have been above the 'normal band', and their most recent trend has been downwards, hence convergence towards the normal band. However, five countries above the normal band have not seen recent falls (South Africa, Nigeria, South Korea, Italy, Portugal); perhaps they are temporary exceptions to the rule. Some countries have had a period of revival, which has then been followed by renewed secularisation if that revival took them above the 'normal band', eg. South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, Romania.

The following eleven countries were initially below the 'normal band' but are now closer to it or have moved within it (most have seen rises in attendance rates):

Georgia, Moldova, Viet Nam, China, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Iceland, Finland. Only Bulgaria is the exception to this pattern, having moved a little further away from the 'normal band'.

For Georgia, the revival that is taking place (whether we take the lower or higher HDI measures) will simply bring the country up into the 'normal band' from having been 'too low' beforehand. Therefore, in this respect, Georgia's religious trends are not particularly exceptional, and could even have been predictable.

Correlations of religiosity with other variables

The correlation of an individual's religious attendance (or non-attendance) with a wide variety of variables has been carried out over many years and across many countries. One suspicion we have is that where older people are more religiously committed than younger people, then these cross-correlations are not actually measuring the association with religiosity, but this is simply acting as a descriptor of age and/or traditionalism. Georgia provides an excellent counter-example to test these correlations to discover which hold true and which do not.

Only five variables are tested, but these provide an interesting taster for further research. They are gender, education, place of residence (urban/rural), fertility and happiness/satisfaction.

1. Gender

Figure 7: Proportion of cohort groups who attended a religious service at least once a month in 1996 and 2006
Data sources: WVS 1996, GGS 2006
The greater irregularity in the WVS data lines are probably caused by smaller samples and are not significant
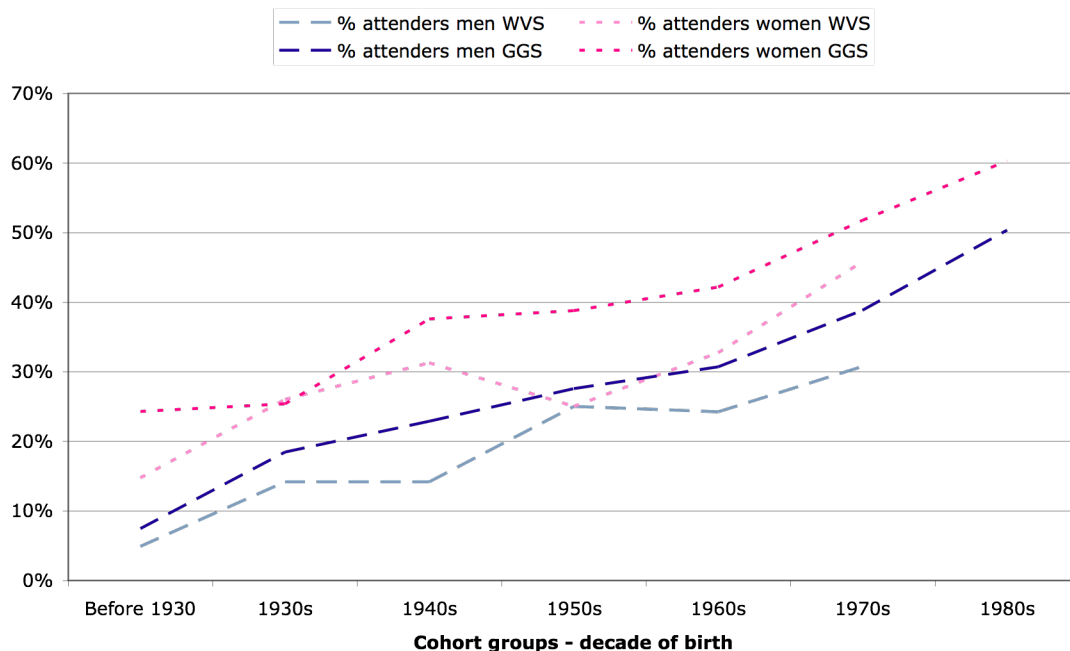
In most Christian (heritage) countries, women tend to be more committed to church attendance than men. For Georgia, this pattern holds true (see Figures 1 and 7). The opposite is the case, however, in Muslim cultures.

From Figure 7, it would appear that both genders have seen similar growth in attendance rates over the decade 1996-2006; the religious revival has touched both genders equally, but has not significantly closed the gap in attendance rates between men and women.

2. Education

The general consensus has commonly been that higher educational levels are related to lower religious observance (eg. Stolz 2009). However, other researchers have indicated that the relationship may be more complex. Halman and Draulans (2006), in looking at EVS data for thirty counties, concluded that whilst those with higher education are less likely to be religious believers, they are also more likely to be religious attenders than those in the middle educational levels. Davie (1990) first pointed out this paradox based on British data. To quote her: "It is at one and the same time true that higher social groupings are on average more inclined to belief and practice than lower ones, and that increased educational levels (normally associated with higher social class) have a negative effect on religious belief… In a middle-class environment people are more likely to make conscious choices abut both belief and practice; if they do one they do the other".

Table 1: Percentage of young people who are religious attenders by educational level and country

Data source: ESS waves 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. Young people are those under 30.
Bold type indicates the group with maximum religiosity for each country; bold italic indicates the second most religious group

	No. waves	Low	Secondary	Tertiary
Countries where tertiary educated have highest attendance				
UK	3	11.4	*12.7*	**20.3**
Czech Republic	3	9.9	*6.5*	**14.9**
Slovakia	3	*34.9*	32.8	**38.9**
Estonia	3	3.8	*5.3*	**7.3**
Netherlands	4	*17.4*	14.3	**19.3**
Hungary	4	10.0	*16.3*	**17.5**
France	4	*8.1*	5.4	**8.5**
Portugal	4	*31.5*	29.3	**31.7**
Norway	4	8.9	*9.0*	**9.1**
Countries where low educated have highest attendance				
Ireland	3	**52.7**	*44.0*	42.5
Slovenia	4	**26.0**	19.8	19.8
Switzerland	4	**20.3**	*15.0*	14.8
Poland	4	**73.5**	67.1	*68.9*
Germany	4	**14.5**	10.8	*12.4*
Finland	4	**12.8**	8.4	*11.0*
Sweden	4	**8.1**	*7.0*	6.6
Spain	4	**13.0**	11.2	*12.1*
Ukraine	3	**27.5**	*26.6*	24.8
Countries where secondary educated have highest attendance				
Belgium	4	*9.1*	**9.5**	5.7
Denmark	4	5.4	**6.3**	*6.2*

In many countries, the difference in attendance levels by educational level is not significant, but in others it is quite marked. The analysis of Halman and Draulans (2006), which suggested that those of middle educational attainment level were the least likely to attend religious services, was supported by our data (Table 1). In nine countries, the respondents with the highest educational level were the most religious; whilst in nine other countries, those with the lowest educational attainment were the most religious. In only two countries was the middle group the most religious.

And so where does Georgia fit into this pattern? Because of the changing levels of education between older people and younger, as well as the difference in religious attendance rates between the two, then attendance rates were tabulated by age group as well as by educational level (Table 2). One can probably discount the proportion of the youngest age group with only low educational attainment as the numbers recorded in the WVS survey were extremely low. If we do this, then we can see that attendance rates in Georgia are noticeably higher for those with some tertiary education than those without, and across all age groups. This finding would support the opinion of Tomka (2010), that religious participation has become a matter of lifestyle choice, particularly of the more highly educated. The difference in attendance rate in Georgia amongst the highly educated young compared to the poorly educated older generation is, perhaps, remarkable: 60 percent versus 17 percent.

Table 2: Proportion of attenders by educational level and age group - Georgia
Data source: WVS 2008

Age group		% attenders
15-29	High ed	60%
	Mid ed	52%
	Low ed	67%
30-49	High ed	52%
	Mid ed	39%
	Low ed	37%
50+	High ed	33%
	Mid ed	22%
	Low ed	17%

3. Urban/rural

Whether religion is adhered to by the 'traditional' population – old women with little education living in the villages – or by the 'modern' – young well-educated people living in the cities – has important consequences on a religion's vitality and image in a country. Tomka (2010) asserts that in the post-communist transition, religion's observance has moved from the former bastion to the latter, more dynamic one. The previous section confirmed that in Georgia (and the other ex-communist countries of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia and Hungary), then amongst the young it is the highly educated who have the highest attendance rates. We now look at the rural / urban question (Table 3). Here we see that in Georgia, the higher attendance rates are, indeed, in the towns and cities rather than in the 'traditional' rural areas.

Table 3: Attendance rate by age group and population size of place of residence
Data source: WVS 2008
Rural = villages up to 5000 inhabitants
Town = towns 5000-500,000 inhabitants
City = 500,000+ inhabitants (Tbilisi)
Highest attendance rates for each age group in **bold**

Age group		% attenders
15-29	Rural	45%
	Town	**75%**
	City	60%
30-49	Rural	37%
	Town	44%
	City	**56%**
50+	Rural	17%
	Town	24%
	City	**38%**

4. Fertility

In western countries it has commonly been observed that more religious individuals have more children (Frejka and Westoff 2008). This may be directly associated with the directives of their faith, for instance by the Catholic church or by Orthodox Judaism. In more pluralistic societies, then the ongoing association of larger families with church-going has been attributed to the effect of their social networks – from aiding in the process of finding a life partner to providing social support for starting and raising a family.

Table 4 shows the average family size for young adults across 23 European countries. From that summary it can be seen that in western Europe the model of higher fertility for the more religious holds true. However, in the eastern European countries with available data in the ESS, the differentials are small or non-existent.

Table 4: Mean number of children per woman/man aged 25-40 by religiosity for different countries

Data source: ESS 2006
Attenders = attend religious services at least once a month
Fuzzies = those who do not fall in the "attender" or "non-religious" categories, ie. passive affiliates
Non-religious = those who said they did not belong to any religion or denomination

	Female			Male		
	Attenders	**Fuzzies**	**Non-religious**	**Attenders**	**Fuzzies**	**Non-religious**
Scandinavia						
Norway	1.37	1.43	1.30	1.50	1.17	0.93
Sweden	1.60	1.17	1.23	1.63	1.19	0.82
Finland	1.52	1.33	0.91	1.70	1.19	0.84
Denmark	1.69	1.56	1.04	1.50	1.38	0.63
Estonia	1.56	1.11	1.27	1.13	0.73	1.00
Mean	**1.55**	**1.32**	**1.15**	**1.49**	**1.13**	**0.84**
Catholic						
Cyprus	1.71	1.92	2.55	0.66	0.78	1.47
Ireland	1.68	1.30	1.65	1.14	0.80	0.94
Poland	1.41	1.04	0.85	1.12	0.94	0.73
Portugal	1.24	1.12	0.98	0.69	0.83	0.51
Mean (not inc Cyprus)	**1.44**	**1.15**	**1.16**	**0.98**	**0.86**	**0.73**
Secular						
Belgium	1.83	1.37	1.41	1.06	1.32	1.05
Germany	1.38	1.04	0.75	0.72	0.75	0.69
France	1.93	1.37	1.35	1.44	1.05	1.18
Netherlands	1.58	1.42	1.09	1.20	1.04	0.77
United Kingdom	1.61	1.20	1.34	1.56	1.12	0.86
Spain	1.31	0.83	0.65	1.00	0.70	0.42
Mean	**1.61**	**1.21**	**1.10**	**1.17**	**1.00**	**0.83**
Diverse						
Austria	1.74	1.16	0.98	1.26	0.89	0.43
Slovenia	1.67	0.93	1.15	1.00	1.03	0.60
Slovakia	1.60	1.38	1.20	1.36	0.86	0.79
Switzerland	2.08	1.27	0.97	1.44	1.01	0.67
Ukraine	1.75	1.24	1.18	1.74	1.26	0.83
Mean	**1.77**	**1.20**	**1.10**	**1.36**	**1.01**	**0.67**
Ex-communist						
Bulgaria	1.02	1.46	1.29	0.85	1.27	0.65
Hungary	1.86	1.61	1.32	0.56	0.82	0.91
Russian Federation	1.20	1.17	1.31	1.03	0.98	0.92
Mean	**1.36**	**1.41**	**1.31**	**0.81**	**1.02**	**0.83**

If we look now at the situation in Georgia (Figure 8), we find that the reverse pattern to 'normal' is true. Across all cohorts, the fertility of religious attenders is <u>lower</u> than for non-attenders. This is another example of the uniqueness of the socio-religious landscape in Georgia. Could the reason simply be that religious attenders are more commonly higher-educated city-dwellers, who generally have lower fertility in any

case? Could it be that the 'modern' behaviour of church-attending (for the specific case of Georgia) is reflected in the 'modern' fertility behaviour of having smaller families? For the older generations, could the cause of lower fertility in the more religiously active be explained by the state's repression or persecution in the communist era? There is clearly much further exploration of these questions waiting to be done.

Figure 8: Mean number of children per woman by cohort of birth and religious practice in Georgia
Data source: GGS 2006
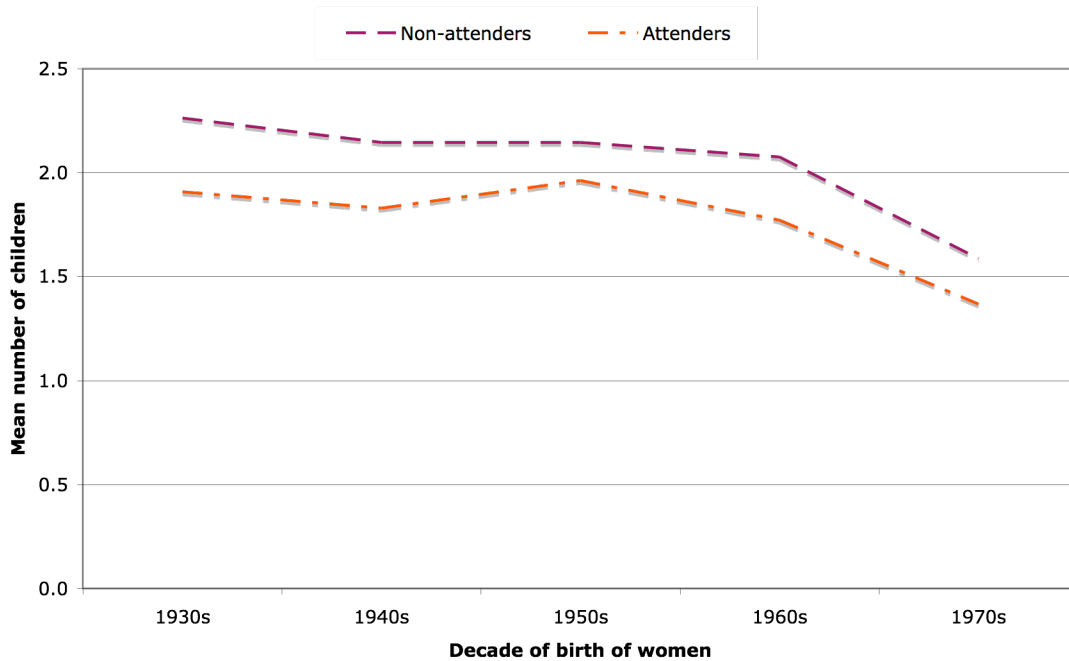
5. Happiness / life satisfaction

Happiness and life satisfaction are not quite the same, although there is a fair degree of correlation between the two. Happiness tends to be a rather fleeting emotion – most people tend to a steady neutral state of mood, although the actual level may be different from one individual to another depending on their genetic make-up, state of health, etc. Several factors, including religious faith, have been found to have some correlation with happiness (income, number of friends, intelligence, education, etc) (Diener 2000; Campbell, Converse and Rodgers 1976). The opposite of happiness is sadness, and Diener (2000) notes that happiness and sadness correlate with quite different variables. Older people and the young tend to be happier than those in their middle years, while women tend to be more emotional – both more likely to be happy and more likely to be sad than men. Significant differences in average levels of happiness are seen over time and from one country to another.

Life satisfaction usually encompasses a more slowly reacting state of mind than 'happiness'. It also varies markedly between countries, although there is not a close relationship between a country's wealth and the level of contentedness of its citizens. The ex-communist states of eastern Europe rate particularly poorly, while China and India fare well in comparison to their income. The role of individualism, community

support, inequalities and other society-level variables have been investigated (Veenhoven, 1993).

For Georgia, we looked at the most recent WVS data on both 'happiness' and 'life satisfaction', again splitting the results by age group.

Looking first at whether there is any correlation in Georgia for individual religious attendance with happiness (Table 5), we find little of significance. Those actively involved with their faith were not more likely to be happy than those who were not across all age groups; and those who were religiously inactive were not significantly more unhappy – except for the middle aged group.

Table 5: Happiness levels by age and religious observance, Georgia
Data source: WVS 2008
Question: Taking all things together, would you say you are:
1 Very happy
2 Quite happy
3 Not very happy
4 Not at all happy
In the following table those scoring 3 and 4 were combined and classified as 'unhappy'

Age group		% Very happy	% Quite Happy	% Unhappy
15-29	Attenders	19%	61%	20%
	Non-attenders	17%	66%	18%
30-49	Attenders	11%	65%	24%
	Non-attenders	11%	56%	33%
50+	Attenders	12%	44%	44%
	Non-attenders	10%	45%	45%

Looking at whether individuals who were more religiously active felt they were more satisfied with their life as a whole, we find, perhaps surprisingly, a different picture emerging (Table 6). Across all age groups, religious attenders were more satisfied with their lives than non-attenders; and the corollary also holds true, that religious non-attenders are more dissatisfied with their lives than attenders.

Table 6: Life satisfaction by age and religious observance, Georgia
Data source: WVS 2008
Question: All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? (scale 1-10)
Satisfied = those giving a score of 7-10
So-so = those giving a score of 5-6
Dissatisfied = those giving a score of 1-4

Age group		% Satisfied	% So-so	% Dissatisfied
15-29	Attenders	37%	40%	23%
	Non-attenders	28%	41%	31%
30-49	Attenders	28%	40%	32%
	Non-attenders	23%	37%	40%
50+	Attenders	17%	39%	44%
	Non-attenders	20%	30%	50%

One unusual feature that these measures show concerning Georgia is that the older generation are much more unhappy and also much more dissatisfied with life than the

younger generation, with the middle aged bracket occupying an intermediate position. This is quite different from the age differentials seen in most of the western world, and one must wonder whether the growth in religiosity of the younger generation has anything to do with it. Other factors, such as greater freedom and opportunities for self-fulfilment and self-expression may, however, be the underlying explanation for both the increase in religious observance and greater positive outlook of the young.

Conclusions

The aim of this overview of the religious patterns in Georgia was to highlight the novelties of the religious trends of that country. The most unique feature is that young people are attending religious services much more than older people, and this is unique in the world. Secondly, there is growth in attendance rates across all cohorts and age groups; similar revivals are happening in a few other countries in the world; particularly, although not exclusively, in several ex-communist countries, presumably as greater freedom of religious expression is being granted and exercised.

If we look, however, at the level of religiosity one could expect for Georgia related to its level of development, then the growth in religious observance could perhaps be expected. The level of religious observance could be considered to have been kept artificially 'too low' during the communist regime, and the current growth is a natural response. If development progresses rapidly, then the revival may well slow in the coming years.

As for the correlates with individual religiosity, some are similar to other countries, while others are reversed. Of the more unusual traits of Georgia, the return to religious observance is particularly touching young, well-educated, city dwellers, but this demographic group also have fewer children than non-attenders of a similar age group. Religious practice is rather more common among women than men, and is generally associated with more life satisfaction; these could be considered 'normal' associations, seen widely across the traditionally Christian countries.

This paper has given a brief outline of the current landscape of religious attendance in Georgia. There is ample scope for exploring more deeply the unique features and trends in Georgia, and it is hoped that this overview will stimulate further research interest.

Data sources

The **World Values Survey** data base is available online from the World Values Survey Association, a non-profit association with its seat in Stockholm, Sweden – see http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

The Generation and Gender Programme was initiated by the UNECE, and the main databases (**Generation and Gender Survey** results and Contextual database) are now maintained by NIDI. See http://www.ggp-i.org/

The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) maintains the data archive and is distributor of the **European Social Survey** data – see http://ess.nsd.uib.no

The **European Values Study** is managed by Tilburg University; its website is
http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/

The **Caucasus Barometer** and online analysis of the surveys from 2009 and 2010 can be obtained from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers website:
http://www.crrc.ge

The website of the European Social Survey is http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/
The data for the European Social Survey Rounds 1-5 is supplied by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway as Data Archive and distributor of ESS data.

Human Development Index data was extracted from the online database
hdr.undp.org/en/media/**HDI_trends_**components_2007_rev.xls
The second (low) estimate of HDI in Georgia also came from the UNDP website, which revises HDI estimates for past years from time to time:
http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GEO.html

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