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# Traditional Families in Georgia and The Liberal Paradigm

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**Abstract:** Strong families are one of the foundations of the state's strength. Georgia is one of the countries with the oldest civilization, where traditional family values are preserved, because it is important for the majority of the country's population. Traditions in general, including family traditions, are valuable for most of the population in Georgia. Since Georgia is one of the oldest countries in the world, the preservation and conservation of family traditions is of particular importance. This happens not only among Georgians, but among all the ethnic groups, including Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Russians, and Ossetians, that have been living in this country for centuries. All of them protect family traditions, which is guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia, as "the family is the unity of a man and a woman." It was added to the Constitution of Georgia due to the challenges that traditional families may face. With advancing liberalization, traditional families are facing serious challenges in Georgia. The research will discuss the intersection of traditional family values and liberal ideologies in Georgia.

**Keywords:** family; tradition; liberalism; Georgia; propaganda; value; government; society

## 1. Introduction

Georgia is a unique, multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, and tolerant country. In addition to Georgians, who are the absolute majority of the population, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Russians live in this country. Absolute majority of the Georgia requires a strong state, for which strong families are necessary, because the strength of the country lies in a strong family. Georgians are traditional people, and therefore, this country stands on traditional values. One of the main traditional values is the family. It is in the interests of all people living in Georgia, i.e., Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and others, to have strong and traditional families for the strength of the common big family - Georgia (Verulava 2023).

Georgia, as one of the oldest countries in the world, has gone through many trials, including success, pain, wars, and many others throughout its long history. Georgia endured all this, passed through these periods, and now it is progressing. For the development of the country, traditional families are necessary. The family is the foundation of the society and it affects the development of society. Traditionally, family policy is considered as a part of social policy. The family is a social institution, which, in Georgia, as a country that defends traditions, functions equally with other institutions. In Georgian families, the prestige of parents is elevated and the rules of family life are strictly followed.

The transformation of public life that began in the last decades of the twentieth century has a significant impact on such important social institutions as the family and marriage.

The transformation of public life contributes to the formation of society's way of life, actively changing traditional values and lifestyle. In the lifestyle of the last three generations under globalization, there is an attempt to weaken the institution of the family and the role of religion. Current research will highlight the traditional family structures in Georgia, which oppose the principles of liberalism focusing the extent to which liberal ideologies influence the values of traditional families in Georgia. Further, the impact of the interaction of traditional and liberal ideology on gender roles in the family in Georgian reality will be analyzed (Avalishvili and Tushurashvili 2022).

## 2. Methods

Both primary and secondary sources were used during this qualitative research.

## 3. Results and Discussion

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In many sociological studies, children and the traditional family occupy the first place. In Georgia, families with many children deserve exceptional care and support from the state. The Georgian state encourages and popularizes family traditions and multiple children through the press, radio, cinema, and other mass media. This attention of government to the problems of large families is great. Special attention is paid to the well-being of the family, which is why the birth rate and the need for family values disputes are increasing in the country. The Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia made a great contribution to the growth of the birth rate. Religious leaders of other religions are also active in this regard. Family policy is one of the directions of social policy, which is focused on the harmonization of society, families, and inter-family relations. The state uses legal, economic, and propaganda tools for this. Family is naturally in the center of attention of family policy. The main social function of the family is the birth and upbringing of children. The population of Georgia is relatively small, and hence the state encourages citizens to have more children.

In 2018, the Government of Georgia adopted Resolution No. 517 on granting the status of parents with many children. The decree explains that a parent with many children is a person who has four or more children and/or adopted children under the age of 18. Such parents are granted the status of parents with many children in accordance with this law. There are also certain social benefits for a person with the status of a parent with many children (Javakhishvili 2020).

Several years ago, Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II, head of the Orthodox Church of Georgia, May 17 declared the day of sanctity of the family. This day is celebrated by representatives of all ethnic denominations living in this country. Hierarchy (senior-junior) is preserved in the traditional family in Georgia. The head of the family is a man (husband), but this does not mean that he is somehow superior to a woman. A man has more responsibility and is responsible for taking care of and protecting his family. Care implies not only material provision, but also commitment to God. Spouses should care for their spiritual as well as intellectual development. It is necessary to observe the golden mean in everything between the gnawers. It should be noted that in Georgia, several (three) generations (grandparents, parents and children) still live together in many families. Declaration of May 17 as the day of sanctity of the family by the Catholicos Patriarch is helping avoid provocations of the society and protection. Family sanctity day supports the importance of maintaining traditions in the family. (Being a liberal does not mean giving up national honor and traditions, which unfortunately happens. Uniting around national values, including the protection of family traditions, is one of the most effective and important ways to protect national honor from the threat of liberalism (Javakhishvili 2020). Georgian society and government are trying their best not to allow provocations planned with huge financial resources coming from outside the country. In Georgia, the traditional family is the most important and irreplaceable value on which the country's development and prosperity depend.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact sparked an unprecedented discussion in Western academic circles about the future political arrangement of post-Soviet states. Since 1991, liberalization in Georgia has been taking place in a qualitatively different manner. Specifically, liberal movements in Georgia in late 20th century focused on human rights and economic doctrine. New terms such as free society, free market, economic freedom, individual freedom, and religious tolerance appeared in everyday life. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the political and socio-economic situation in Georgia decreased the birth rate (Akhvlediani 2024).

To increase the birth rate, the Georgian government has developed an appropriate state policy for solving demographic problems and improving the demographic situation in the country. The goal of the existing family support policy in Georgia is to ensure the solution of demographic problems and appropriate conditions for social support of large families. The authorities are trying to implement all this considering the practices of the EU member states (Tsukhishvili 2016).

Family plays a major role in personal well-being. It is important for a person to have a good relationship with his parents. A child raised in a harmonious family finds it easier to manage other relationships, such as friendships, romantic relationships, work relationships, and more (https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4356707?publication=0).

According to Georgian legislation, marriage is a voluntary union of a man and a woman for the purpose of creating a family, which is registered in the territorial service of the State Services Development Agency, a legal entity of public law operating in the sphere of governance of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia (Liberal 2023).

Getting married for the purpose of creating a family means by itself the equality of the spouses -which is essentially important in marriage, as their equality both in terms of rights, social status and public affiliation. Married people live together and dispose of common property by joint decisions. Equality is actually implemented in the family through equal distribution of domestic work between the spouses and important decisions are made jointly. The state promotes the well-being of the family and believes that marriage should be based only on the free will of the spouses to create a family. The decision to get married should be made by two people themselves. Forcing or compulsion by parents, grandparents, friends or relatives is restricted and not permitted while creating the family.

The state of Georgia recognizes religious marriage, but does not equate it with marriage registered in the civil registry. Therefore, a couple in a religious marriage alone does not have legal rights and duties towards each other. Many matters are important during a divorce, since property rights are regulated differently. If the property is purchased by a couple in a registered marriage, the property is divided in half between them. If the couple is in an unregistered relationship, then the property is not divided in half. Therefore, it is desirable that the marriage be registered. The legal age for marriage in Georgia is 18 years for both men and women (Sulaberidze 2018).

In Georgia since 2014 May 17 is celebrated as the "*day of family integrity and strength*". This day was the initiative of the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia, which was also supported by state institutions. To protect the well-being of the family, it is important to recognize the rights and capabilities of each of its members (Menabdishvili 2014).

In Georgia, as a country with an ancient civilization, there is a family cult. Even in the era of liberalism, the attitude towards the traditional family has not changed in Georgia. (http://www.geostat.ge).

Liberalism is being actively propagated in Georgia, as well as in other countries of the world. Modern liberalism is an ideology that, like all ideologies, seeks to spread and embrace all of humanity. Like all ideologies, it considers itself to be right. Liberals in many countries are trying to legalize abortion, drug use, pornography, prostitution and surrogacy. In liberalism, traditional family is believed to prevent from getting the maximum pleasure from life - which implies moral obligations and responsibilities. Hence

followers of liberal ideology either do not create a family at all, or destroy it, or try to have a family relationship free of a number of moral obligations with a partner of their own views, which is usually ends with the destruction of the relationship (Kviris 2024).

Liberal ideology aims at the complete destruction of moral norms. The LGBT community is the most liberal ideology. Their goal is to introduce their LBGT ideology in a particular country, and proudly celebrate the victory, through parades. LGBT leaders want to spread their ideology around the world. They actively establish and finance various non-governmental organizations, which act as dissemination centers of their ideology. They manage mass media, social media, culture, art and education actively promoting their ideology. Hence the auspices of freedom of speech and tolerance of dissent, they spread immorality and promote their ideology. People who are undesirable for liberals, their votes are actively blocked. They invent the terms such as homophobia, and transphobia equipped with negative content and intimidate and silence those members of society who don't support or agree (Relationships 2022).

They also actively fight against such moral institutions like family, traditions and religion. Liberals try to influence the children through mass media and social networks and use them again against their fellow children and their family. Mostly the defenders of the rights of children and the LGBT community are the same persons. Since liberals are not fans and supporters of traditional family relationships, they introduce their ideology in schools and even kindergartens. Liberals and LGBT are advocating for the legal rights of same-sex marriage, which would automatically grant them the right to adopt children. Today, liberalism is trying to get it established in Georgia. Accordingly, those who value morals and traditions, including protection in the family, are trying to protect national values. The promotion of the LGBT community and the protection of human rights must be separated and differentiated from each other (Belch Michael and Belch Judith 2014).

The government of Georgia has drafted a law, to limit and prohibit the propaganda of the LGBT community, especially among teenagers. The rights of all social groups especially the rights of the majority must be fully protected. Family values and protection of under-ages should be added to this draft amendment to the Constitution of Georgia, Article XXX which deals with the rights of marriage, mothers and children. This constitutional draft law consists of eight points and provides for issues that, according to the record of the project, aim at strengthening the mechanism of family values and protection of the interests of under-ages. The general public discussion of this new draft law is underway. The absolute majority of the population of Georgia likes and supports it, indicating that the protection of traditional family values is very important in Georgia (https://forum.ge/?f=29&showtopic=35206681).

## 4. Conclusions

The majority of the population of Georgia is conservative, which does not accept liberal ideology in family traditions. Gender equality is protected. In most cases, several generations live together in the house (grandparents, mother and father and children) - this is the norm and pattern in Georgia. Traditional marriage rules are preserved in Georgia; however, global challenges are big threat to traditional families. Hence the above measures of the Georgian government, will guarantee the strengthening of traditional families. This research will explore this issue closely with family traditions that are valuable and important for all ethnic groups living in Georgia. LGBT propaganda has brought serious challenges for traditional families. Despite this propaganda against traditional family values, traditional family values are important for the majority of the Georgian population. Georgian government, as per interests of the society wants to protect traditional family values in Georgia from liberal ideology. Current government has banned the promotion of the LGBT community in Georgia and is trying to ensure the protection of family values by law.

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