

How Does Gender Determine Roles and Behaviors of Women in and outside of Georgian Families?

June 27

2011

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The views expressed in this report are solely those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the views of CRRC, its staff or partner organizations.

Introduction

Only 1 percent of Georgians say that the main decision maker at home should be a woman, and only 2 percent consider a female an ideal breadwinner. A majority of the Georgian population do not expect a woman to drink strong alcohol, smoke tobacco, have premarital sex, or live separately from her parents, according to data from the 2010 Caucasus Barometer Survey conducted by CRRC. Clearly, Georgia is a traditional society where normative roles are strongly attached to gender, and there are quite different forms of behavior expected of males and females. However, the situation is much more complex than it first appears, with more women than men being seen as the primary breadwinners in Georgian families, and some 60 percent of Georgians being comfortable with the idea of having a woman as an immediate boss. This report analyses these complex gender attitudes, and seeks to explore the profile of those who hold the most conservative views regarding how women should and should not behave.

In the first part of the report we examine attitudes to women in the family and in the workplace, showing that while traditional gender roles are still held to be ‘ideal’, the realities of life supersede this, and strong majorities of Georgians say that women should not face obstacles receiving an education or finding work. In the second part of the report we look at social mores, what women are allowed to do in terms of smoking, drinking and sex, and when it is acceptable for them to do it. The majority of Georgians say these activities are ‘unacceptable at any age’, so we have analyzed these groups to try and discern what type of person is more likely to respond this way. The people that hold these most conservative views are more likely to live outside Tbilisi, to have lower educational attainment and to be older. Surprisingly, women are just as likely to hold these views as men.

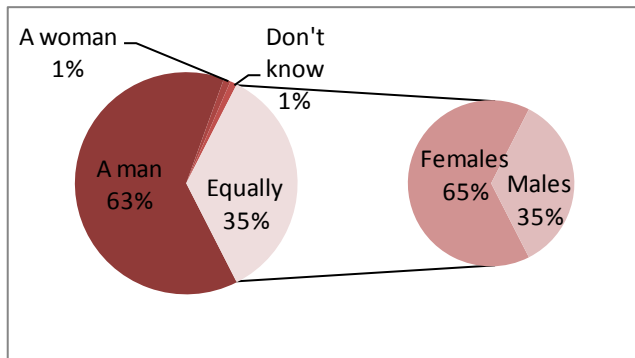
In and outside the family

While generally, females are not expected to make decisions inside the family or be breadwinners, the majority of Georgians think that women are as entitled to education and work as men. Furthermore, a majority would feel comfortable if their immediate boss was female. It is also evident that women are more supportive to the idea of educational and professional equality than men are.

Table #1: How comfortable would you feel with a woman as your immediate boss? (percent)

| | Somewhat comfortable | Completely Comfortable | Somewhat Uncomfortable | Completely Uncomfortable | Don't know |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Totally | 32 | 28 | 13 | 9 | 17 |
| Females | 65 | 50 | 59 | 57 | 50 |
| Males | 35 | 50 | 41 | 43 | 50 |

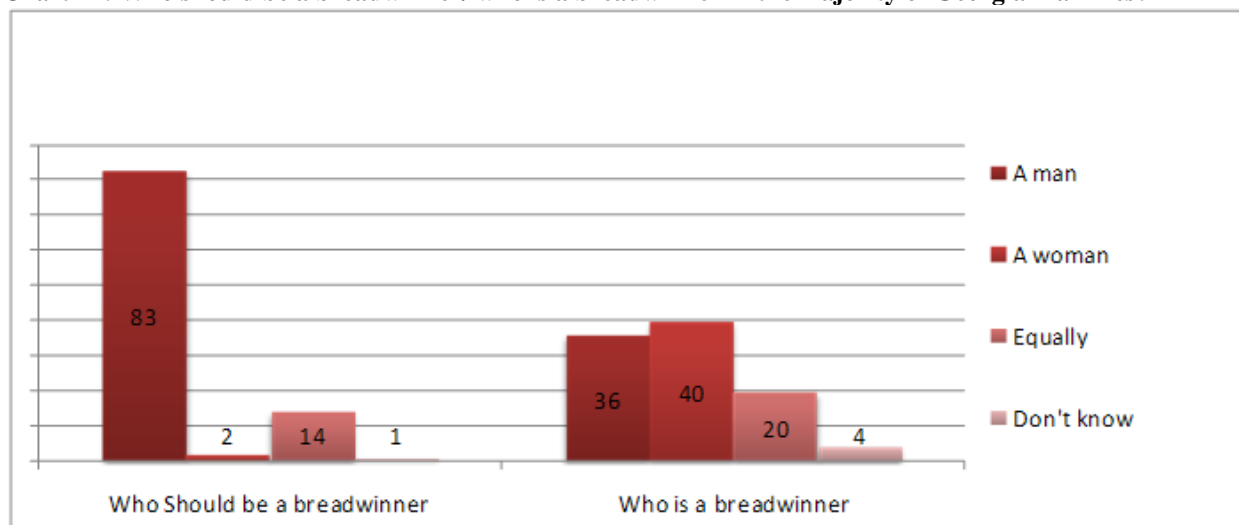
A significant majority of Georgians, some 60 percent, would feel somewhat or completely comfortable with a female as their immediate boss. Yet, while an equal proportion of males and females (50 percent) would feel somewhat comfortable with a woman as their immediate boss, only 35 percent of men answered that they would feel completely comfortable compared to 65 percent of women.

Chart #1: Who should be a main decision maker in a family?

While a moderate majority of people consider it acceptable for females to give orders at their work, the picture changes dramatically when it comes to the home. Only 1 percent of Georgians think that a woman should be the one who makes decisions at home. Almost two-thirds of Georgians say this is a man's role, while only one third thinks that decisions should be made equally. Among those who support equal decision making, two-thirds are females.

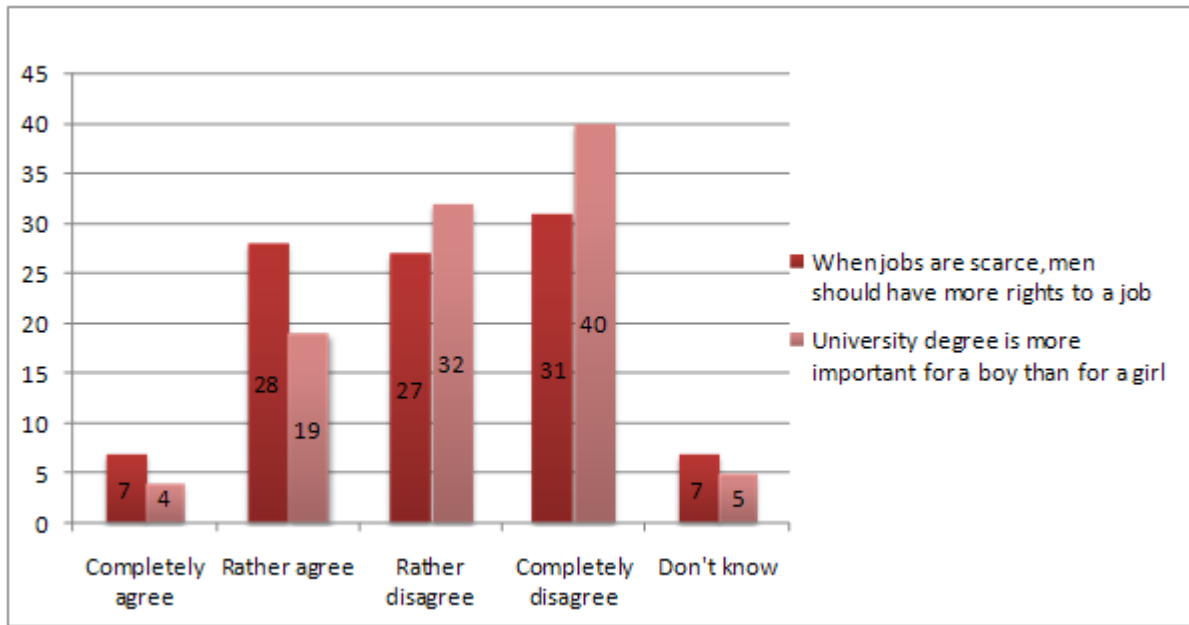
The same trend is seen when it comes to the question of who should be the main wage earner in the family. As illustrated in chart #2, a vast majority consider that, ideally, a man should be the main breadwinner in a family (83 percent), while only 2 percent of population thinks that this should fall to a woman, 14 percent think both men and women should contribute equally. In this case as well, among those who support the idea of equality, the majority is female (62 percent).

However, in spite of these attitudes, most Georgians say that, in reality, women are more often than not the breadwinners in Georgian households. Only one-third of people think that men are the main source of income in the majority of Georgian families, while 40 percent (which is the biggest share of answers) think that most breadwinners are women, 20 percent of the population thinks that most households receive an equal contribution from men and women.

Chart #2: Who should be a breadwinner/ who is a breadwinner in the majority of Georgian families?

In spite of the fact that a huge majority of the population say that a man should be the breadwinner, only a small number of people support the idea that men should have privileges in getting a job. When Georgians are asked to what extent they agree to the statement: “When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job” only 7 percent completely agreed and 28 percent partially agreed. A similar pattern is seen regarding higher education, with only 23 percent saying that a university degree is more important for a boy than for a girl.

Chart #3: Importance of a job and education for males and females



It is interesting to note that while women are not expected or desired to be the primary breadwinners in households, most Georgians support their equal rights to find work and receive education.

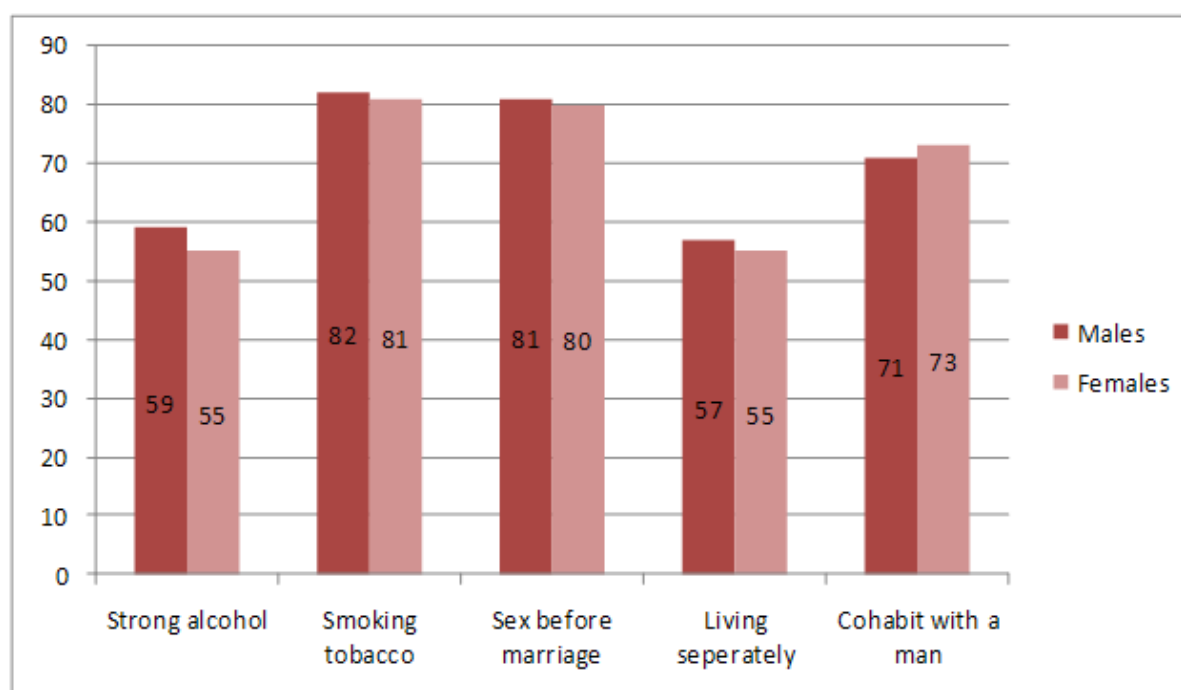
When and what are women allowed to do?

The data shows us that there remains a clear set of behaviors expected of women in Georgia. These attitudes concern things like from what age can women consume strong alcohol, smoke tobacco, have premarital sex, move out or get married. 80 percent of the population does not consider it acceptable for females to have sexual relations before marriage. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) consider improper for a women to cohabit with a man before of marriage and more than half of the Georgian population disapproves of women drinking strong alcohol or living separately from their parents at any age.

Table #3: From what age is it acceptable for women to² (percent):

| Age ³ | Get Married | Smoke tobacco | Live separately from parents* | Drink strong alcohol | Have sexual relationships* | Cohabit with a man* |
|--|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Not acceptable at any age⁴ | | 81 | 56 | 57 | 80 | 72 |
| 15-19 | 22 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 2 |
| 20-23 | 54 | 4 | 13 | 13 | 4 | 3 |
| 24-27 | 20 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 28-50 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| Don't know | 3 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 10 |
| Refuse to answer | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

A majority of Georgians say it is unacceptable at any age for a woman to smoke tobacco, to live separately from parents before marriage, to drink strong alcohol, to have sexual relations before marriage or to cohabit with a man before marriage. While a majority of Georgians hold these conservative views, an analysis of the data shows that rural populations, older people and those with lower educational attainment are significantly more likely to answer “unacceptable at any age”.

Chart #4: Relationships between gender and expectation about women’s behavior (among those who answered “unacceptable at any age”)

² Categories with the sign of * are asking about the women who are not married yet, so question needs to be completed with: “before getting married”

³ Ages are grouped according to the significance of differences between groups (i.e. while from 15 to 25 years differences may be more evident while very few respondents named 28 or bigger age as a threshold for any category of the question.)

⁴ The minimal age category was varying from 15 to 18 years depending on the question.

Chart #4 divides those who answered “unacceptable at any age” by gender. Perhaps surprisingly, there is no significant difference in attitudes between men and women: both genders are equally conservative. Bearing this in mind, this report will try to unpack what parts of Georgian society are most likely to hold conservative, “unacceptable at any age” views.

Chart #5: Relationships between settlement types and expectations about women’s behavior (among those who answered “unacceptable at any age”)

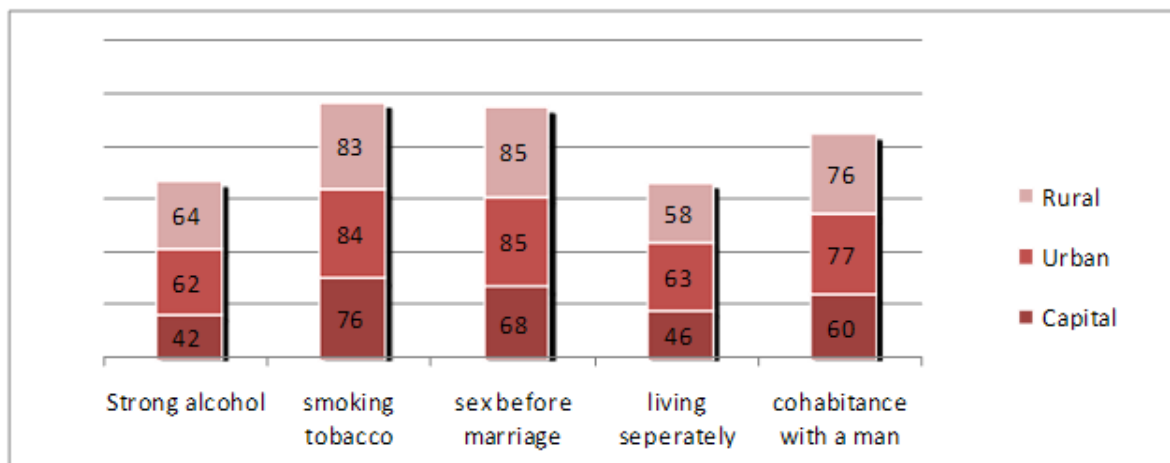


Chart #5 looks at how respondents who said “unacceptable at any age” are distributed among settlement types: Tbilisi, other cities and rural areas. The chart shows that 42 percent of those who live in Tbilisi consider it unacceptable for women to drink strong alcohol in any age, while this view is held by 62 percent of the urban and 64 percent of the rural population. This chart points to a relatively ‘open’ Tbilisi. It shows that while the population of Tbilisi is significantly less likely to express conservative views than those from other cities or rural areas, those populations are equally conservative. The one exception to this is over the issue of women living separately from their parents. In this case, more urban Georgians (63 percent) say that it is never acceptable for women to live separately from their parents than rural Georgians (58 percent). This relatively significant five percent gap might reflect the fact that rural parents understand that children need to live apart in order to pursue their studies or career in the cities.

It is also clear that as well as settlement type, educational attainment has a significant impact on people’s attitudes to what women should be allowed to do and when. Generally people with higher educational levels are more “open” about women’s behavior. Chart 6 shows that the lower the level of a respondent’s education, the more likely he or she is to answer “not acceptable at any age”.

A huge 83 percent of people who have no primary education say it is unacceptable for women to drink strong alcohol, while the number is cut in half (44 percent) among people with a post-graduate degree. This same trend is visible among all the behaviors under scrutiny with the exception of smoking: the lower the level of educational attainment, the less conservative. The smoking exception is interesting: 90 percent of those with post graduate degrees disapprove of women smoking, compared to just 64 percent of those who have incomplete

higher educations. This could reflect an increased awareness of the dangers of tobacco as opposed to conservative social views.

There is one more interesting trend: in all of the cases fewer people with incomplete higher education answered ‘unacceptable at any age’ than those with completed higher education. This phenomenon needs deeper research in order to make feasible conclusions.

Chart #6: Relationship between educational level and expectations about women’s behavior (among those who answered “unacceptable at any age”)

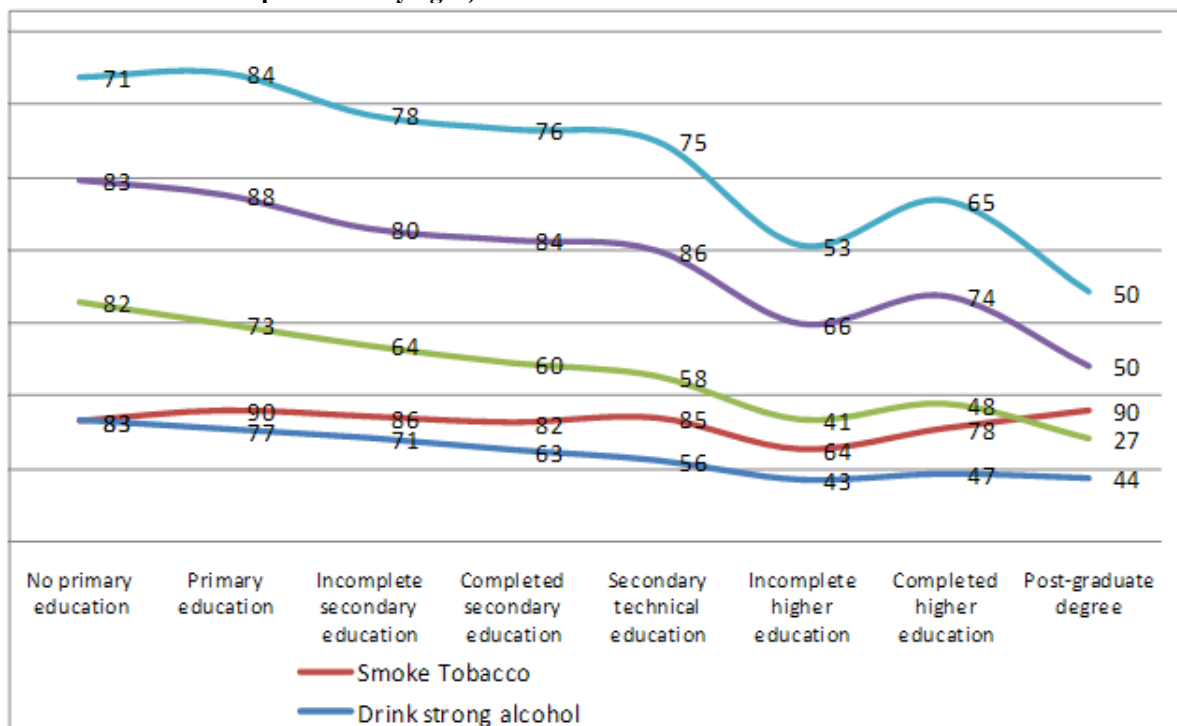


Chart #7 shows what impact age has on the likelihood of holding conservative views. As can be seen, young people are less significantly likely to hold conservative views about women than people from older age groups. The difference between share of conservative views of elder generation (starting from 56 years old) is only 10 percent compared to younger ones (from 18 to 35) when it comes to smoking tobacco, part of this could once again be explained by the impact of anti smoking awareness. The biggest ‘gap’ (23 percent) in opinions is about consuming strong alcohol.

Chart #7: Relationship between age categories and expectations about women's behavior (among those who answered "unacceptable at any age")

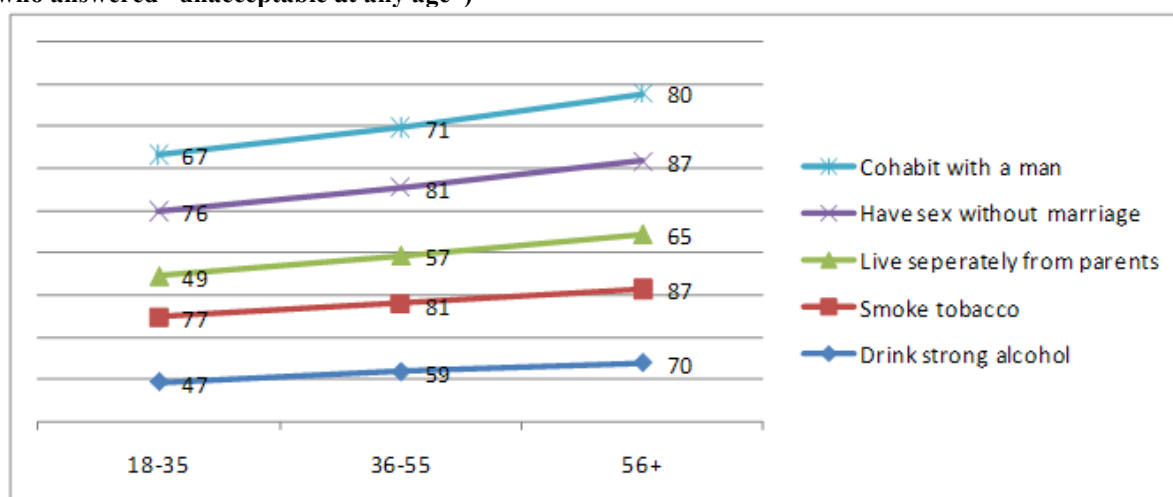
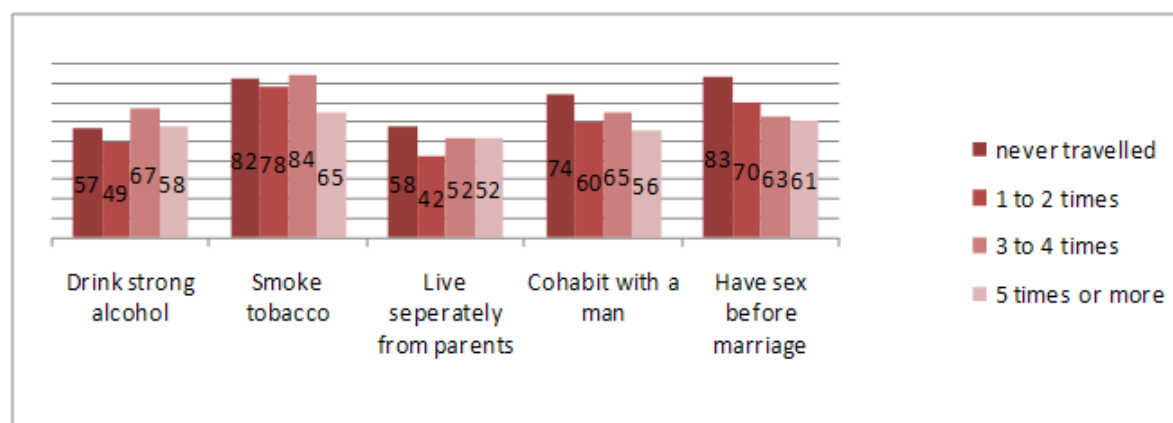


Chart #8 examines the impact of foreign travel on conservative views of women. While it might be expected that those with greater exposure to the outside world would be less likely to express conservative views, this is only the case when it comes to sexual relations before marriage. While 83 percent of those who have not travelled outside of Georgia in the last five years say it is unacceptable at any age; that number drops to 61 percent among those who have travelled abroad more than five times.

Chart #8: Relationship between the number of trips outside the country and expectations about women's behavior (among those who answered "unacceptable at any age")



Summary

While a man is still seen as an ideal breadwinner, and as the one who should make decisions inside the family, Georgia is not as straightforwardly conservative as it first appears when it comes to gender. With women being seen by most as the real breadwinner, and a large majority having no problem with a woman as a boss, to a certain extent the realities of Georgian life appear to trump the ideal gender stereotypes.

When it comes to social mores, it is clear that Georgia does remain a conservative place, with large majorities of people saying it is never acceptable for women to have sex before marriage. However, Georgia is not

monolithic: young Georgians are less conservative, as are those who live in Tbilisi, and those who are more educated. It is possible that these seemingly deeply entrenched attitudes may be changing.