

# Islamic Political and Economic Liberalism in Minority Setting in the South Caucasus

Valery Dzutsati  
Michael Wuthrich

University of Kansas  
Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

*dzutsati@ku.edu*  
*mwuthrich@ku.edu*

May 19, 2023

# Presentation Overview

## ① Research Question and Literature

Research Question

Previous Research

## ② The Case of Muslim Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan and Georgia

## ③ Theory and Hypotheses

Theory

Hypotheses

## ④ Data and Analysis

Data

Analysis

## ⑤ Conclusion and Future Research

## ⑥ Appendix

## Islam and political and economic preferences

What is the relationship between religiosity and attitudes regarding economic and political liberalism among Muslims?

## Islam and political and economic preferences

What is the relationship between religiosity and attitudes regarding economic and political liberalism among Muslims?

- Some studies suggest that religious Muslims tend to hold less liberal political preferences and are more communitarian in their economic views (Fish 2002; Davis and Robinson 2006)

## Islam and political and economic preferences

What is the relationship between religiosity and attitudes regarding economic and political liberalism among Muslims?

- Some studies suggest that religious Muslims tend to hold less liberal political preferences and are more communitarian in their economic views (Fish 2002; Davis and Robinson 2006)
- Others say that Islam is associated with greater economic and political liberalism (Chen and Lind 2007; Masoud 2014)

## Islam and political and economic preferences

What is the relationship between religiosity and attitudes regarding economic and political liberalism among Muslims?

- Some studies suggest that religious Muslims tend to hold less liberal political preferences and are more communitarian in their economic views (Fish 2002; Davis and Robinson 2006)
- Others say that Islam is associated with greater economic and political liberalism (Chen and Lind 2007; Masoud 2014)
- Still other scholars show that no clear connection between Muslims' piety and economic liberalism (redistribution) exists (Pepinsky and Welborne 2010)

# Muslim Religiosity and Social Attitudes

- Islam is antithetical to westernization and is trailing behind the West (Lewis 2002)

# Muslim Religiosity and Social Attitudes

- Islam is antithetical to westernization and is trailing behind the West (Lewis 2002)
- Muslim religiosity has no effect on support for democracy (Tessler 2002)



# Muslim Religiosity and Social Attitudes

- Islam is antithetical to westernization and is trailing behind the West (Lewis 2002)
- Muslim religiosity has no effect on support for democracy (Tessler 2002)
- The empirical linkage between religion and attitudes toward economic redistribution or inequality is hard to tease out (Pepinsky and Welborne 2010)

# Muslim Religiosity and Social Attitudes

- Islam is antithetical to westernization and is trailing behind the West (Lewis 2002)
- Muslim religiosity has no effect on support for democracy (Tessler 2002)
- The empirical linkage between religion and attitudes toward economic redistribution or inequality is hard to tease out (Pepinsky and Welborne 2010)
- However, the link between religion and support for government provision for the poor is stronger in Muslim-majority countries than it is among Christian majority populations (Scheve, Stasavage, et al. 2006; Stegmueller et al. 2012)

# Relational Effect of Religion

- Religiosity informs social and political attitudes through the relational effect of religious association rather than from the substance of doctrine (Çiftçi, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022)

# Relational Effect of Religion

- Religiosity informs social and political attitudes through the relational effect of religious association rather than from the substance of doctrine (Çiftçi, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022)
- In Egypt, where religious communities have had opportunities to engage in private and charitable social services, the support for state distributive policies has been significantly higher than in Tunisia where similar communities have not had such opportunities for private social service provision

# Relational Effect of Religion

- Religiosity informs social and political attitudes through the relational effect of religious association rather than from the substance of doctrine (Çiftçi, Wuthrich, and Shamaileh 2022)
- In Egypt, where religious communities have had opportunities to engage in private and charitable social services, the support for state distributive policies has been significantly higher than in Tunisia where similar communities have not had such opportunities for private social service provision
- Members of Christian communities in authoritarian states with Muslim majorities have less favorable attitudes toward democracy than Muslim members of those states (Belge and Karakoç 2015)

# Muslim Azerbaijanis

In Azerbaijan and Georgia

- Georgia is normally categorized as an “illiberal” democracy, while Azerbaijan is an authoritarian state

# Muslim Azerbaijanis

## In Azerbaijan and Georgia

- Georgia is normally categorized as an “illiberal” democracy, while Azerbaijan is an authoritarian state
- Both Azerbaijan and Georgia display tendencies of implementing repressive practices regarding Muslims

# Muslim Azerbaijanis

## In Azerbaijan and Georgia

- Georgia is normally categorized as an “illiberal” democracy, while Azerbaijan is an authoritarian state
- Both Azerbaijan and Georgia display tendencies of implementing repressive practices regarding Muslims
- In Azerbaijan, the state tries to co-opt Islamic leaders into the construct “Traditional Islam”



# Muslim Azerbaijanis

## In Azerbaijan and Georgia

- Georgia is normally categorized as an “illiberal” democracy, while Azerbaijan is an authoritarian state
- Both Azerbaijan and Georgia display tendencies of implementing repressive practices regarding Muslims
- In Azerbaijan, the state tries to co-opt Islamic leaders into the construct “Traditional Islam”
- In Georgia, the influential Georgian Orthodox Church is associated with Georgian nationalism and repression of minorities

- Under repressive regimes, the political behavior of religious Muslims will be best explained by demographic factors

- Under repressive regimes, the political behavior of religious Muslims will be best explained by demographic factors
- Religious Muslims will seek the optimal survival strategy depending on their assessment of state policies and the anticipation of possible changes

# Hypotheses on Economic Liberalism

In Muslim-minority context (i.e., Azerbaijanis in Georgia)

Religious Muslims will seek greater economic liberalization

Muslim-majority context (i.e., Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan)

Religious Muslims will seek lower economic liberalization

# Hypotheses on Political Liberalism

In Muslim-minority context (i.e., Azerbaijanis in Georgia)

Religious Muslims will seek lower political liberalization

In Muslim-majority context (i.e., Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan)

Religious Muslims will seek greater political liberalization

- 2010–2013 Caucasus Barometer survey data from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers

- 2010–2013 Caucasus Barometer survey data from the Caucasus Research Resource Centers
- N – 7,286. Muslim-majority: 6,773 (93%); Muslim-minority: 513 (7%)

# Dependent Variables

## Economic Liberalism

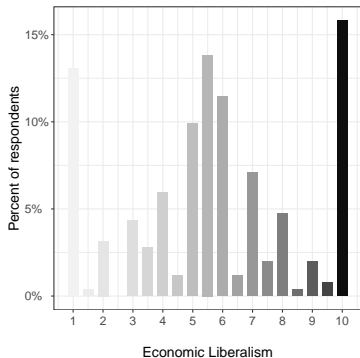
Support for private ownership of enterprises and competition: 1 to 10

## Political Liberalism

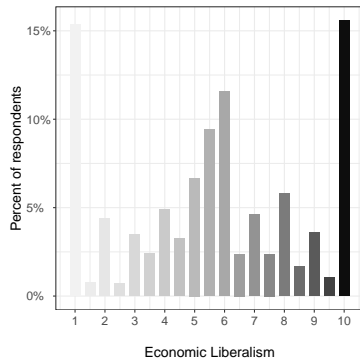
Government as a parent vs government as an employee: 1 to 4



# Distributions of Economic Liberalism by Country

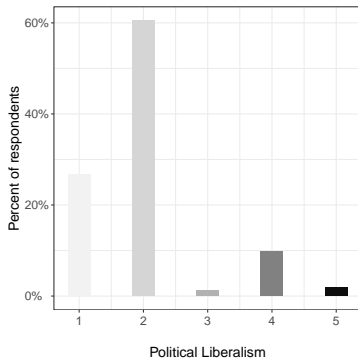


(a) Distribution of Economic Liberalism. Azerbaijanis in Georgia.

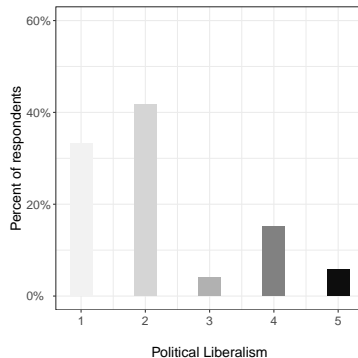


(b) Distribution of Economic Liberalism. Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan.

# Distributions of Political Liberalism by Country.



(c) Distribution of Political Liberalism. Azerbaijanis in Georgia.



(d) Distribution of Political Liberalism. Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan.

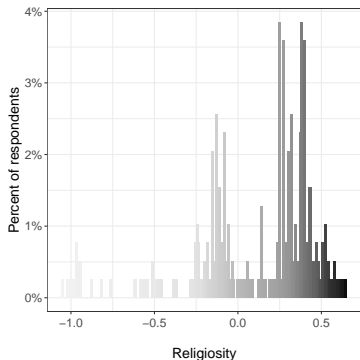
# Religiosity

- Religious services attendance, religious fasting, self-assessed religiosity, importance of religion to respondents, and trust in religious organizations

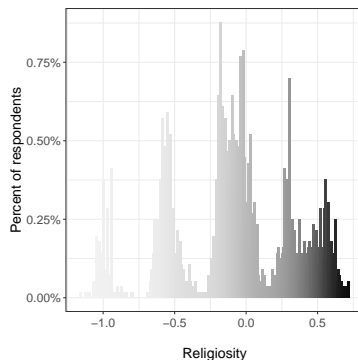
# Religiosity

- Religious services attendance, religious fasting, self-assessed religiosity, importance of religion to respondents, and trust in religious organizations
- Control variables: trust for the president of the country, age, gender, education, income level, type of settlement

# Distributions of Religiosity by Country.

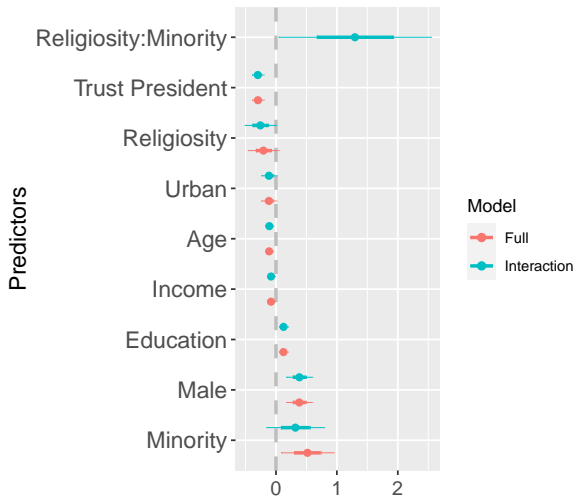


(e) Religiosity among Azerbaijani Muslims in Georgia.

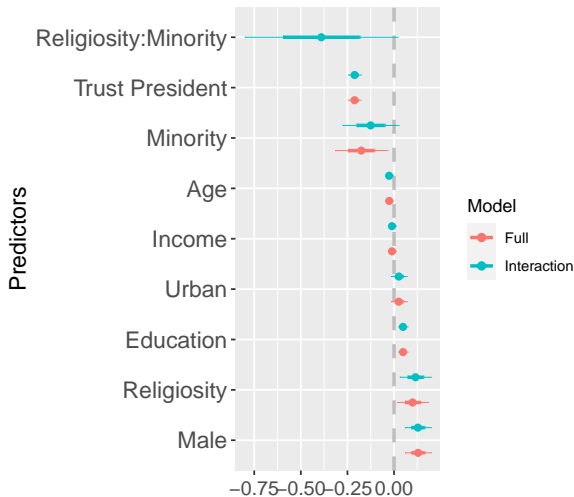


(f) Religiosity among Azerbaijani Muslims in Azerbaijan.

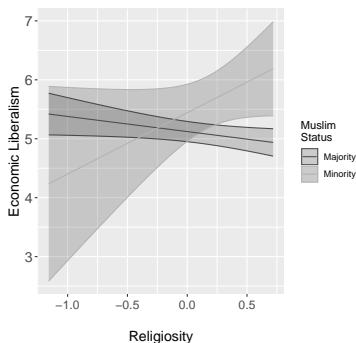
# Economic Liberalism and Islamic Religiosity in Minority Setting. OLS Models



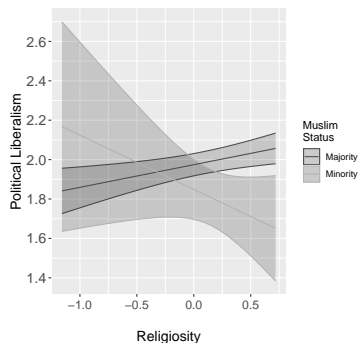
# Political Liberalism and Islamic Religiosity in Minority Setting. OLS Models



# Marginal Effects of Religiosity and Azerbaijani Muslim-Minority Status on Economic and Political Liberalism.



(g) Religiosity, Status, and Economic Liberalism



(h) Religiosity, Status, and Political Liberalism



# Conclusion and Future Research

- The connection between Muslim religiosity and political economic preferences is highly contextual

# Conclusion and Future Research

- The connection between Muslim religiosity and political economic preferences is highly contextual
- Repressiveness and demography appear to be significant factors associated with liberal attitudes

# Conclusion and Future Research

- The connection between Muslim religiosity and political economic preferences is highly contextual
- Repressiveness and demography appear to be significant factors associated with liberal attitudes
- The proposed relationships might hold in many other contexts, too

# Conclusion and Future Research

- The connection between Muslim religiosity and political economic preferences is highly contextual
- Repressiveness and demography appear to be significant factors associated with liberal attitudes
- The proposed relationships might hold in many other contexts, too
- How does the theory change when state repressiveness is low?

The End

# Economic Liberalism and Islamic Religiosity in Minority Setting. OLS Models.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	5.59*** (0.05)	5.58*** (0.05)	7.23*** (0.44)	7.21*** (0.44)
Religiosity	-0.42*** (0.12)	-0.47*** (0.12)	-0.21 (0.12)	-0.26** (0.13)
Minority		-0.03 (0.23)	0.52** (0.22)	0.32 (0.24)
Religiosity:Minority		1.18* (0.63)		1.30** (0.63)
Trust President			-0.30*** (0.05)	-0.30*** (0.05)
Male			0.38*** (0.11)	0.38*** (0.11)
Age			-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)
Education			0.12*** (0.04)	0.12*** (0.04)
Income			-0.08** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
Urban			-0.12* (0.06)	-0.11* (0.06)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03
Observations	3923	3923	3762	3762

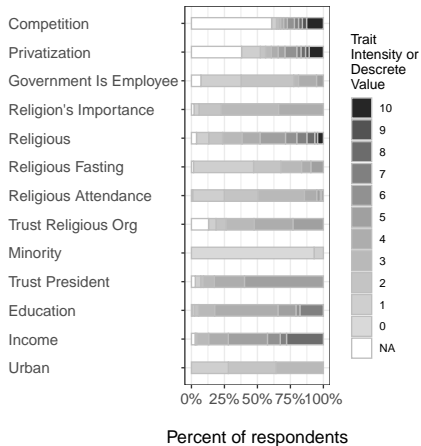
\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

# Political Liberalism and Islamic Religiosity in Minority Setting. OLS Models.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	2.17*** (0.02)	2.19*** (0.02)	2.95*** (0.15)	2.96*** (0.15)
Religiosity	-0.01 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.10** (0.04)	0.12*** (0.04)
Minority		-0.19*** (0.07)	-0.18** (0.07)	-0.13* (0.08)
Religiosity:Minority		-0.42** (0.21)		-0.39* (0.21)
Trust President			-0.21*** (0.02)	-0.21*** (0.02)
Male			0.13*** (0.03)	0.13*** (0.03)
Age			-0.03** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)
Education			0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.01)
Income			-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Urban			0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	-0.00	0.00	0.04	0.04
Num. obs.	5621	5621	5384	5384

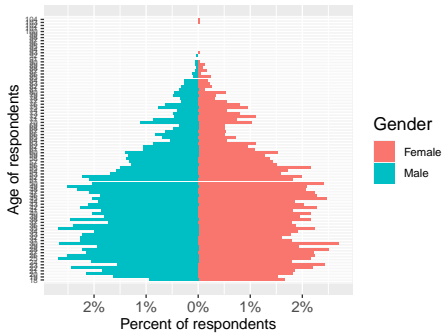
\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

# Distributions of Used Variables.

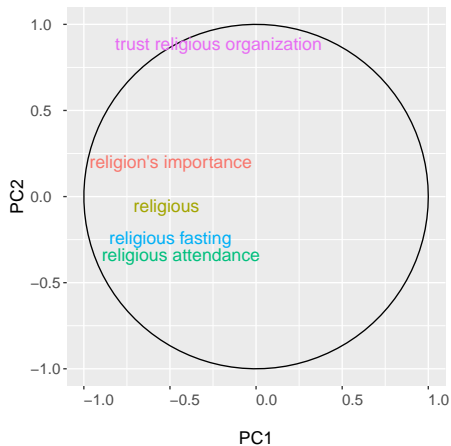




# Distributions of Gender and Age.



# Loading Plot.



# Scree Plot.

