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Gender norms, policies, and values in the Black Sea region

Dr. Vera Lomazzi

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Gender norms and values in the Black Sea region

- Chapter included in

“Social Values and Identities in the Black Sea Area”

Edited by M.Voicu, K. Kizilova, M. Zulean

Lexington (expected in early 2023)

Contributions on several topics (support for democracy, national identity, tolerance& xenophobia, religious change & secularization, transitional justice, demand for populism, voting, gender norms...)





A region hard to define

Different sources identify the borders/composition of the Black Sea region differently

- The Black Sea region comprises a heterogeneous group of countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey [<https://wiiw.ac.at/economic-developments-in-the-wider-black-sea-region-dlp-458.pdf>].
- The *wider Black Sea region* – understood in a broad sense and including Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey [<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14683857.2011.589149>]
- 12 countries of the Black Sea and Caspian Region: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey [<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-role-of-ngo-s-in-the-wider-black-sea-region-tr.mfa>]



In this contribution



BLACK SEA SYNERGY of the European Commission: the Black Sea region includes **Greece, Bulgaria, Romania** and *Moldova* in the west, **Ukraine** and **Russia** in the north, **Georgia, Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** in the east and **Turkey** in the south. Though Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Greece are not littoral states, history, proximity and close ties make them natural regional actors



Outline

- Gender equality in the region
- Gender norms
 - Institutional norms
 - National legislation, policies
 - International platforms (conventions, transnational programs)
 - Social norms
 - Individual level
- Overview of gender norms in the region
- Current challenges (some examples)

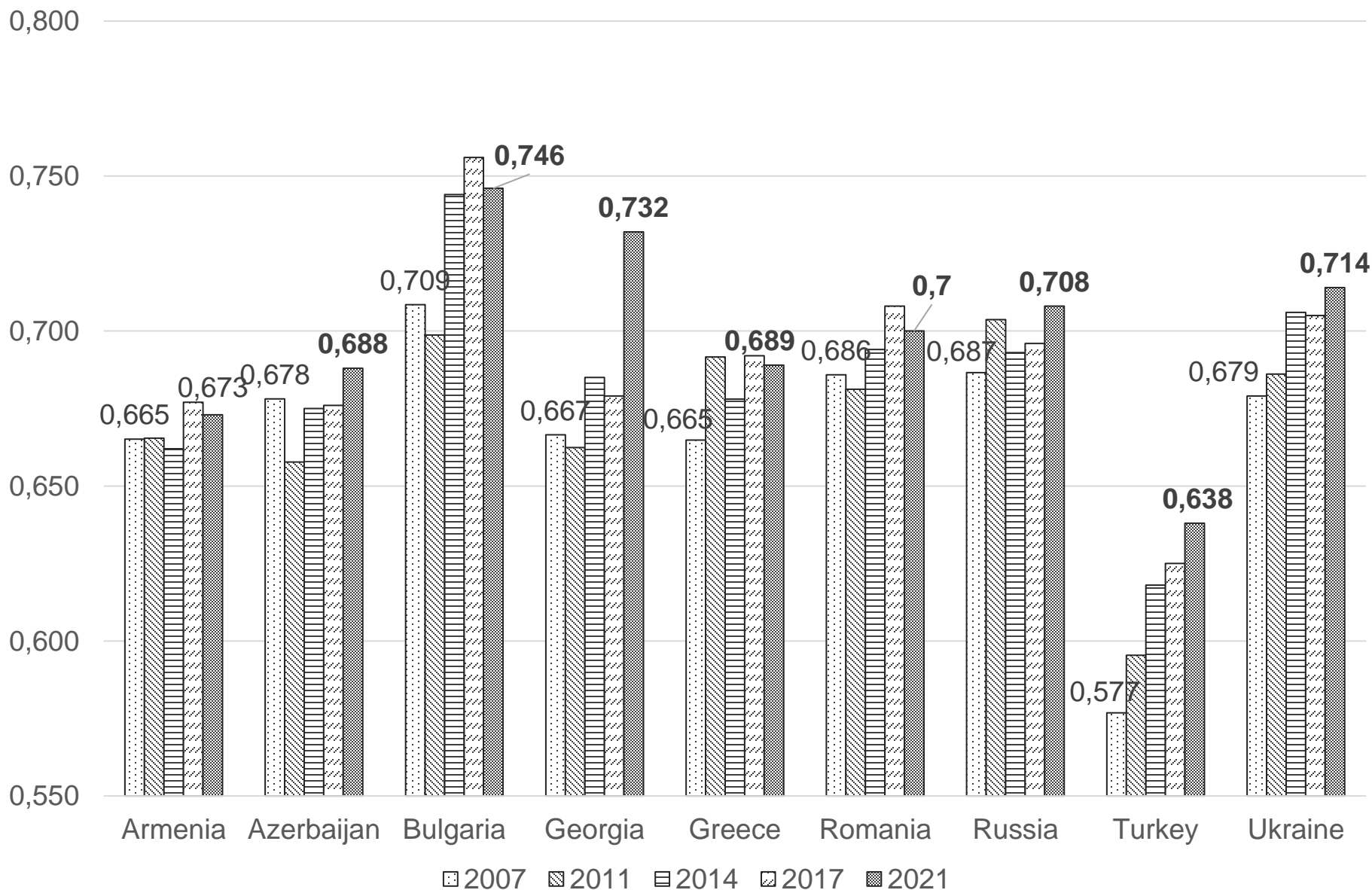


Measuring gender equality

- Gender Equality
„Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys”
- Several approaches to measure gender equality
- Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum)
 - Economic participation and opportunity
 - Educational attainment
 - Health and survival
 - Political empowerment
- 0.00 = imparity ← Score → 1.00 = parity



Global Gender Gap Index in the Black Sea Region from 2007 to 2021 by country. Global Gender Gap (WEF, 2007, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021).



Gender (in)equality & Gender norms

- A reflection on gender norms can offer cultural explanation to this variety.
- EIGE: *“Gender norms are prescriptive norms that refer to standards and expectations to which women and men generally **conform**, within **a range** that defines a **particular** society, culture and community at that point in time”*
 - Gender norms are situated
 - Socialization to gender roles builds on conformity to gender norms and social control mechanisms (Exposure: When individuals are exposed to a social norm, they will tend to take on that norm into their own value system)
 - Alongside prevailing gender norms, alternative and competing gender beliefs coexist



Gender cultures

- “Gender cultures” refer to the uniform normative assumptions existing in society about the proper form of gender relations and of the division of work between men and women.
- These norms and values guide people in their behavior about gender relations and provide gender role expectations.
- Societies differ in the way they define the proper roles for women and men, according to different economic, political, and social historical pathways, which led societies to develop different gender cultures (Pfau-Effinger 2004).

How do gender cultures develop?

- The way gender cultures develop is a very complicated process: it refers to the intertwined relation between individual, relational and institutional levels of gender relations.
- The individual values, showed for example in supporting egalitarian gender roles, cannot be explained only from an individual perspective, because they also result from the socialization process and the daily negotiations.
- Furthermore, this ongoing process takes place in a societal context, made of laws, social norms, and institutional structures that are part of the society's gender culture and affect the individuals' values and behaviors.

(Lomazzi & Crespi 2019; Wharton 2005)

Processes

- Primary socialization and daily negotiations („doing gender“)
- Societal context
 - Exposure to more (or less) egalitarian contexts contribute to the development of individual gender role attitudes (Banaszak and Plutzer, 1993; Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004).
 - People’s beliefs can be shaped by the context where the individuals live, made of *laws and norms, policies and practices* also expressed through the welfare regimes, societal orientations and values which are the fruit of the cultural heritage of their society (Wharton, 2005).

contextual gender norms



Structural component

Cultural dimension

provides an organized system of opportunities which allows individuals to reach their goals, by introducing legislative framework, policies and practices

societal value orientations enshrine shared opinions and beliefs and culturally define the legitimized social roles for men and women.

Institutional norms:

transnational framework of gender norms

- In the intertwined context of political and economic relationship of the globalized world, the input from international legislative platforms is particularly relevant also for cultural aspects as gender equality issues.
- Impact on the national legislation
- Transnational platforms
 - Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
 - European Gender mainstreaming strategy
 - Istanbul Convention



Transnational framework: CEDAW

- (1979) UN Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- It covers discrimination in several domain of life
- It is the most important international treaty for gender equality legislation worldwide
- Signed by 189 countries (some with reservations, see Lomazzi 2020; Mir-Hosseini 2006)



Transnational framework: Gender Mainstreaming

- GM
 - Global perspective for gender equality (UN world conference 1995)
 - EU: first transnational strategy since 1997 (Amsterdam Treaty)
- Gender equality recognized in the values of the Union, included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- EU developed GM processes with a series of norms, recommendations and through the implementation of four-year action plans
- Impact on national legislation of EU MS; candidate MS
- GM in internal policies and institutions (Council of Europe) and external cooperation



Transnational framework: Istanbul Convention

- Human rights Treaty of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
- The Convention defines violence against women as a **violation of human rights** and it is the first comprehensive legally binding instrument aimed at preventing violence, protecting victims, ending the impunity of perpetrators.
- The Convention is open for signature since 2011. As for the CEDAW, countries can sign it, but it is only with ratification and then its entry into force that the adhesion is fully active.



Country	Transnational platforms		
	CoE (entry year)	CEDAW Ratification, Accession (a) Date	Istanbul Convention s= year of signature; r= year of ratification; e=year of entry into force; w= withdrawal
Armenia	2001	1993 (a)	2018 (s)
Azerbaijan	2001	1995 (a)	-
Bulgaria*	1992	1982	2016 (s)
Georgia	1999	1994 (a)	2014 (s); 2017 (r); 2017 (e)
Greece*	1949	1983	2011(s); 2018 (r); 2018 (e)
Romania*	1993	1982	2014 (s); 2016 (r); 2016 (e)
Russia	left on 16.032022	1981	-
Turkey	1950	1985(a)	[2011 (s); 2012 (r); 2014 (e)] 2021 (w)
Ukraine	1995	1981	2011 (s)



Gender norms at the national level

- National institutions are a source of diffusion and reinforcement of many value orientations, including attitudes towards gender roles.
- The Social Institutions and Gender Index (**SIGI**) designed by the **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development** (OECD) looks at the institutional basis of gender inequality.
 - It considers discrimination against women in four areas,
 - focusing on formal and informal, social norms and practices that limit the full participation of women to social life and restrict their access to human rights.
 - Levels of discrimination:

Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
SIGI < 20%	20% < SIGI < 30%	30% < SIGI < 40%	40% < SIGI < 50%	SIGI > 50%



Discrimination in the family



- Legal framework on child marriage
- Percentage of girls under 18 married
- Legal framework on household responsibilities
- Proportion of the population declaring that children will suffer if mothers are working outside home for a pay
- Female to male ratio of time spent on unpaid care work
- Legal framework on inheritance
- Legal framework on divorce

Restricted physical integrity



- Legal framework on violence against women
- Proportion of the female population justifying domestic violence
- Prevalence of domestic violence against women (lifetime)
- Sex ratio at birth (natural =105)
- Legal framework on reproductive rights
- Female population with unmet needs for family planning

Restricted access to productive and financial resources



Legal framework on working rights

Proportion of the population declaring this is not acceptable for a woman in their family to work outside home for a pay

Share of managers (male)

Legal framework on access to non-land assets

Share of house owners (male)

Legal framework on access to land assets

Share of agricultural land holders (male)

Legal framework on access to financial services

Share of account holders (male)

Restricted civil liberties



Legal framework on civil rights

Legal framework on freedom of movement

Percentage of women in the total number of persons not feeling safe walking alone at night

Legal framework on political participation

Share of the population that believes men are better political leaders than women

Percentage of male MP's

Legal framework on access to justice

Share of women declaring lack of confidence in the justice system

SIGI Overview

(0-100: Higher values indicate higher inequality)

Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
SIGI < 20%	20% < SIGI < 30%	30% < SIGI < 40%	40% < SIGI < 50%	SIGI > 50%

Country	SIGI	Discrimination in Family	Restricted physical integrity	Restricted access to productive and financial resources	Restricted civil liberties
Armenia	28	33	35	23	19
Azerbaijan	29	28	43	21	21
Bulgaria	23	27	16	30	20
Georgia	25	34	18	27	19
Greece	27	45	9	33	17
Romania	17	28	8	7	22
Russia	22	23	15	15	32
Turkey	25	33	8	37	20
Ukraine	21	23	14	18	29
Region	24,1	30,4	18,9	23,4	22,1

Gender values

- Gender role attitudes (GRA): beliefs on the perceived appropriateness of social roles for men and women
- Last wave of EVS/WVS

GRA - Domestic domain

- When a mother works for pay, the children suffer

GRA – Public domain

- Men make better political leaders than women do
- University is more important for a boy than for a girl
- Men make better business executives than women do

Gender equality in the labor market

- When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women

1 Agree strongly

2 Agree

3 Disagree

4 Strongly disagree

Reversed score: higher values= higher traditionalism



Country	Individual values		
	Inequality in the labor market ^e	Traditional GRA in the public domain ^f	Traditional GRA in the domestic domain ^f
Armenia	58,1	2,59	2,94
Azerbaijan	55,4	2,6	2,82
Bulgaria	29,7	2,17	2,14
Georgia	49,6	2,35	3,01
Greece	37,9	1,91	2,36
Romania	42,1	2,08	2,28
Russia	40,3	2,51	2,42
Turkey	52,2	2,38	2,55
Ukraine	26,6	2,25	2,39
Black Sea region	43,5	2,33	2,53

^e % agreement with the statement: "If jobs are scarce, men should have priority"

^f Mean value, 1-4; 4= highest traditional view



A region in transition?

- Heterogeneity in the Black Sea region, not only regarding the current gender norms prevailing in each country, but also in the role that gender norms and values play in the process of nation building and in the international political scenario.
- While the Black Sea region displays a common trend towards greater gender equality, the situation appears fragmented and finding common traits across the whole region is hard.



Or a region with multiple transitions?

- Four situations with their specific challenges
 - EU MS
 - Aspiring Europeanization
 - Post-Soviet transition
 - Authoritarianism and traditional backlash



EU Member states

The region includes EU Member State (**Bulgaria, Greece, Romania**), where gender equality is affirmed as a value and implemented in national legislations.

- Compared with previous monitoring of gender values (Voicu and Tufiş 2012), it seems that the cultural shift towards a more egalitarian society is proceeding, especially in Romania.
- In Greece, traditional gender norms strongly persist, also because of the relevant role of the Orthodox Greek Church in transmitting moral norms and the consequences of the austerity that impacted both on women and on European affection (Dagkouli–Kyriakoglou 2021; Daskalaki, Fotaki, and Simosi 2021; Karamessini and Rubery 2013; Lomazzi and Crespi 2019)
- Despite indicators showing relatively progressive gender beliefs, the rise of anti-gender ideology and pro-traditional family values movements risk to limit Bulgaria in its achievement of gender equality and promotion of human rights (Darakchi 2019)



Aspiring EU

Georgia and **Ukraine** openly expressed their willingness to become a member of the European Union.

- Both countries, who suffered the Russian wars and the internal conflicts between pro-Europeans and filo-Russian movements, present a transition also in their gender norms, with progressive formal norms oriented towards the European GM that need to reconcile with social norms still anchored in tradition.
 - Georgia: still strong traditional gender norms versus progressive institutional gender norms
 - Ukraine: motherhood still a nation-building value (Tarkhanova 2021).

War and displacement increase women's vulnerability



Post-Soviet transition

Gender norms in **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan** appears to be united by a similar process of transition from the post-Soviet period and nation building where:

- motherhood is considered an expression of national identity and traditional gender norms, and
- relevant levels of discrimination in family rights and physical integration still represent a relevant concern for gender equality.
- Armenia: access to the international framework of gender norms

(Beukian 2014; Cavoukian and Shahnazaryan 2019)



Authoritarianism and traditional backlash

Despite their peculiar differences, **Russia** and **Turkey** share relevant similarities.

- They are both drifting towards authoritarianism regime, characterized by a narrative of cultural authenticity, anti-Western/European sentiments, anti-gender ideology, religious influence.
- Both countries are promoting a revival of traditional values and gender norms also in contrast to progressive views about sex and gender relationship that would dampen the “natural order” of society, with the result of restoring patriarchal norms, in their legislative and institutional framework and in the public opinion.
- Russia out of the CoE (2022); Turkey withdrawn Istanbul Convention (2021)

(Doğangün 2020; Muravyeva 2018; Skorniakova et al. 2020)



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