



**INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES**  
**AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

**Women's Role in Transforming Traditional American Family Composition  
in Comparison with Changes of Georgian Family Structure (1960-2010)**

**Salome Gogberashvili**

**Extended Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation**

**Tbilisi, 2018**

**Scientific  
Supervisor:**

Irina Bakhtadze

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Professor, Doctor, at International Black Sea University)  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(supervisor's signature)

**Experts (full name & academic title):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Irma Mesiridze, Associate Professor, Doctor

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Tamar Kiknadze, Professor, Doctor

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
{full name & academic title}

(if any)

**Opponents (full name & academic title):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Ia Iashvili, Associate Professor, Doctor

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Erekle Astakhishvili, Professor, Doctor

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Milena Oganessian, Doctor



(if any)

## **Introduction**

Family has always been a significant institution in every country including the United States and Georgia. However, since the 1960s, once stable family institution in America has undergone through various alterations and is still continues to develop and reshape. Traditional American family of 1960s consisting of a mother, father and several kids with distinct role distribution of a breadwinner father and an obedient stay-at-home mother (Qian, *Divergent Paths of American families*, 2013) has notably changed providing completely different picture.

One of the significant changes of the last decades is the decline in marriage rate and its importance. Marriage has undergone a process of deinstitutionalization giving way to a new trend of relationship pattern such as cohabitation, when a man and a woman live together in an intimate relationship without wedlock, which in the contrary is becoming more and more institutionalized (Cherlin, 2004) Rise in separation and high divorce rates represents further great challenge in American family (Elliott & Simmons, 2011).

A sharp increase is noted in childbearing outside marriage which increased from about 5 percent in 1960s to 40 percent in 2012 (Rosegrant, 2014). Changes in strict division of gender roles within the family is also observed (Parke R. D., 2013). The Most radical change however, is connected with the decision of the U.S Supreme court on June 26 2015 allowing same sex couples to marry in all 50 states (Vogue & Diamond, 2015).

Changes in the family structure and in society's view towards family issues are noted in case of Georgia as well, however they are not as radical and eye-catching as in case of the Unites States. Historically Georgia was characterized by high marriage and very low cohabitation rate as marriage was considered to be the only accepted way of intimate relationship and childbearing. Although public attitude towards matrimony and unmarried intimate relationship has softened and marriage is not seen as an essential element for creating a family and having children, rate of marriage is still quite high in Georgia (Tsuladze & Sulamberidze, 2016). Notable increase is observed in divorce rate and childbearing outside registered marriage (GEOSTAT, 2018).

**Problem Statement:** Recently scientists, scholars and media representatives started openly talking about the failure of marriage institution and its deinstitutionalization in the U.S. Statistics suggest

that number of marriages have decreased, as well as childbearing causing demographic problems in the country. Increase is noted in cohabitation, divorce and single parent families. Transforming family composition and failure of the traditional family causes many problems such as stress and psychological disorders among children, depression of couples, rise in abortion, increase of single parent families, etc. As a result large number of researchers, writers, artists, public figures and politicians try to focus public attention on this urgent problem.

**Goal Statement:** The Purpose of the research is to analyze the problem of American traditional family deinstitutionalization, trace the changes which have emerged in the period of 1960s-2010s, and find out possible reasons for this change. Alongside with the American families, the changes in Traditional Georgian family types are presented and compared with the American family types, focusing on the analysis of transformation process during the same period of time.

One of the main goals of the present research is to find cause and effect relation between the women empowerment and social economic advancement and alteration of traditional American and Georgian family model.

### **Research Questions**

The present thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- Q1. What changes have traditional American Family undergone since 1960s
- Q2. What changes have traditional Georgian Family undergone since 1960s and how do those changes resemble with the changes in the US.
- Q3. How does American society respond to the ongoing changes in traditional American family model?
- Q4. What is Georgian public attitude towards the change of traditional family institution?

**Hypothesis:** The on-going global political and socio-economic changes accompanied by women liberalization and empowerment in the last 50 years have had a significant impact on traditional family model and changed it considerably. women, gaining more and more political, economic and social independence advancing in almost every spheres, have become an important driving force of the modern family, but at the same time appeared as agents pushing the process of traditional family deinstitutionalization in both target countries, the United States and Georgia.

**Novelty:** No particular research, which studies the problem of family transformation in the United States and compares it with the Georgian case, has been done so far. The research presents the holistic picture of American Family in historical development (synchrony), views the changes from the angle of modern gender theories and socio-economic development and compares it with the composition of Georgian family and its transformation. The dissertation compares the data from the two countries, identifies the similar changes, comparable modern tendencies and presents the similarity in family patterns, structure and composition in America and Georgia. For the first time in Georgian scientific literature women advancement in all spheres of public and social life is described, analyzed and connected to the changes in the family structure.

**Actuality:** Marriage represented a valuable and significant institution in both target countries and was considered to be an integral part of family. However, partial failure of marriage institution and its replacement by other types of intimate relationship in the US is openly admitted by scholars, media and government representatives and represents a hot issue. Many scholars and government representatives reveal their concern towards such issues as decrease in marriage and childbearing rates and increase in divorce and childbearing outside wedlock. Great concern is expressed towards the rise of same-sex couples in case of Georgia.

One of the social problems is an increase of unmarried mums who in some cases need social and financial help from relatives, society and government. Georgian family, like an American one, has considerably changed in the last decades. As similar trends in changes of Georgian family to American household are observed, studying American family, in order to see a possible picture of future Georgian family, seems to be interesting and useful to identify possible problems and probable outcome.

There is an acute need in both American and Georgian academic literature to highlight the family problems and find the reasons for its change.

**Theoretical Value:** Women advancement in socio-economic and political life is discussed within the framework of gender theories, mainly feminism theory. Based on the analysis of primary data (which were obtained by questionnaire) the thesis expends the existing theory focusing on the advancement of women's roles within the family.

**Practical significance:** Present thesis will be a valuable piece of work for sociologists, government and NGO representatives, as well as scholars, teachers and students working on demographic problems of the country (both in the US and Georgia). It will help them to get reliable demographic data from two target countries in order to see a real picture of modern demographic condition and tendencies, to identify and focus on existing problems, such as decrease of marriage level and number of children per families. The research might also be productively used by NGOs or a scholars working on such minority issues as sexual minorities, especially in case of Georgia where sexual minorities are still discriminated, as problems of accepting and integrating those people in the society in the past and the way to acceptance and full integration of those people in modern US society is described. NGOs working on women issues might also find the dissertation helpful as women participation in socio-economic and political life of the countries is described and analyzed.

Theoretical background of the research is gender studies and feminist theories.

**Research methods:** The present research is based on mixed method which means that both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation have been used. **Qualitative** research is used to analyze the changes of the traditional family and show the connection of women factor in the alteration process by analyzing works of various scholars, researchers and experts. **Quantitative** approach is used in order to give a clear picture of the changes that took place in the family structure since the 1960s in both target countries, the United States and Georgia. Statistical data has been widely applied throughout the research to observe the ongoing changes in American and Georgian families. The statistical data extracted from US Census Bureau and National Statistics Office of Georgia, as well as data provided by researchers, scholars and experts have been a valuable source based on which the theoretical analysis has been provided. At the same time statistical data is used to show the correlation between women's advancement and the alteration of traditional family type, structure and content.

Besides secondary data, the research analysis is based on primary data, obtained from the results of the survey. Both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from US and Georgian respondents through online surveys managed by Google Drive. An online questionnaire was sent to 92 respondents (46 American and 46 Georgian) to find out the statistical demographic data and explore the participant's attitude towards some family issues.

Present thesis is a **comparative research** as it compares American and Georgian families of the 19th centuries to modern ones as well as Georgian family to an American one and identifies the similar changes and comparable modern tendencies

It can also be considered as a **historical research** (as it focuses on historical dynamics of family) as well as **descriptive research** as it describes American and Georgian families in the past and in the modern era.

**Framework and Limitations of the research:** The research concentrates on the change of traditional families in the United States and Georgia in the time period of 1960s-2010s with strong emphasis on the role of women in the transformation process.

Due to the length and depth of the issue the paper mainly concentrates on white mainstream families and women. A lot of alterations took place during the mentioned period but paper mainly concentrates on the family issues such as marriage institution, cohabitation, divorce, childbearing outside marriage and gender roles within the family. Same sex relationship is also mentioned but not highlighted. The thesis does not concentrate on the effect of family transformation on the children or its psychological consequences.

**Structure of the Dissertation:** The present dissertation consists of the following parts: Introduction, 4 chapters, conclusion and recommendations and appendix. It also involves 43 figures and 2 tables.

## **Chapter 1: literature review of feminism and feminist theories; Traditional American and Georgian families in the 1960s.**

### **Literature review of feminism and feminist theories;**

For centuries American women experienced discrimination based on gender. They were restricted the right to choose their carrier, work, study, have their own property, control their finances and vote. They were stereotyped as housewives and weak creatures who needed support and care of strong gender representatives-men. However, Feminists and their dedicated fight for freedom and equality could liberate women from the established norms and make America more democratic country.

As a result of feminist's devoted fight for the better life of women, American women can vote and even be voted as a presidential candidate, study and work in the field they are interested in, keep and control the money they earned, play sports on school as well as community teams, enter the contracts, live without the protection of a husband or a male guardian, decide to create a family or not, in what age and with whom, make a decision of being a single mother by choice, etc. American women can sue a person for sexual harassment and if raped, can call to hot lines and they will be declared as victims instead of be blamed of what happened.

### **Traditional American family and the role of women within the family and society in the 1960s**

Traditional American family was considered to be a family created as a result of matrimony between a man and a woman, raising their biological children and sharing distinct gender roles within the family. From the colonial period till 1960s the men worked outside to support the family while women were performing domestic chores. In 1960s more than 70 percent of all American households were made up of dad the breadwinner, mom the home-maker, and their biological children.

Family life of American family in the middle of the twentieth century used to be relatively stable with only about 2.2 divorce rates (number of divorces per 1,000 married women). People married at fairly young age with estimate median age of 20 for women and 23 for men. About 72% of adults were married and marriage rate among young people aged from 18 to 32 represented 65%.

The only accepted way for initiating sexual relationship, having children and creating a new household was associated with marriage thus cohabitation was so low that Census bureau could not get any statistics of cohabiting couples in the 1960s and statistical data on cohabiting couples starts only from 1990s with only 2.5 million. AS for premarital relationship, it represented only 11 percent in the 1960s. AS far as the statistics of childbearing outside wedlock is concerned, it represented only 5 percent.



## **Traditional Georgian family and the role of women within the family and society**

For Georgians family has always been of an immense value and was named as the most important and valuable institution. For Georgians family was, and even now is, associated with the relationship of a married couple, a man and a woman, with several children based on love and respect. Georgian society has always been very critical towards non-marital relationship, thus vast majority of intimate relationship and childbearing was based on matrimony. As a result historically Georgia was characterized by high marriage and low divorce rate, representing only 0.4 percent in 1960s.

Traditionally Georgian family was characterized by strict gender division. A man played the role of a family finance generator and thus was considered to be the main decision maker and the head of the family. As for a woman, the main role and destination was to get married, raise children and run the house.

## **Chapter 2: Alteration of American family since the 1960s up to now, advancement of women and the role of women in the changes of American family**

Traditional American family of a breadwinner father and stay-at-home mother with several biological children, which celebrated its “golden age” in the 1950s and early 1960s, has dramatically transformed during the last several decades. Young people do not hurry to create a family and have children thus median marriage age has upraised for both men (from 23 to 27) and women (from 20 to 25). At the same time more and more Americans consider marriage institution as obsolete. Dramatically has increased cohabitation practice, divorce, childbearing outside wedlock and same-gender relationship. According to studies conducted in the USA pre-marital cohabitation has increased from 11 percent in 1960/70s up to 56 percent in 1990s and the number of unmarried cohabiting couples has dramatically increased from 2.5 million in 1994 to 7.9 million in 2014. Notable rise is observed in divorce rate from 2.2 in 1960s up to 9.2 in 2009 and childbearing outside marriage from 5 percent in 1960s up to 40 percent in 2012. Moreover, if in the 1960s same gender relationship was criminalized, since 2015 same-sex marriages became legal in all states.

Remarkably has changed gender roles within the family and participation of females in social, economic and political life. More and more women have got higher education and entered the paid workforce since the 1960s. Participation of women in the workforce has doubled since the 1960s. Notable increase is observed in the participation of females in politics and legislative bodies. Today moms spend more time at work and less time on homemaking and childcare while dads spend less time at work and more time on housework and childcare.

But what are the driving forces of such radical transformation of American family? Due to the complexity of the issue it can be assumed that multiple driving forces are to be blamed however together with many other reasons women, advancing in almost all the fields of political, economic and social life could be assumed to be one of the driving forces for the transformation of American family. Two main arguments could be brought to support the possible blame of females in the changes of American family composition:

First assumption is based on facts and figures. As soon as women started to advance the family composition started to change. The more educated females, women at paid work, business, legislature or politics the more divorces, cohabitation, the age of creating families, single mothers, same gender couples, breadwinner mothers and the less marriages, breadwinner fathers and children. Secondly, women, gaining more education, financial independence and participation in socio-economic and political life, became more self-confident and self-sufficient. Not depending on others, women easily enter in cohabiting relationships, end unhappy marriages, have children outside wedlock, enter same-sex relationship and thus could be claimed became one of the driving factors of changing the structure of traditional American family.

The dramatic changes in the family composition and gender roles within the family, as well as the advancement of women in almost all fields of socio-economic and political life, could be explained on the background of various theories, among them feminist, mainly liberal and radical feminism, theories. Theories of liberal and radical feminism not only agreed on the fact that women were oppressed and needed to be liberated, via different activities, such as marches, demonstrations, lobbying, etc. feminist could achieve their goal and embodied the theory into practice. Liberal feminists' believe in the need and support for the economic opportunities was embodied in the

dramatic increase of women in education and workforce, giving women financial independence. Their believe in sexual freedom and civil liberties was realized in the increase of premarital cohabitation/cohabiting couples, divorce, childbearing outside wedlock, entering same-gender families as well as growth of females in politics and legislature. It was also reflected in the changing pattern of gender roles within the family with moms spending more time at work and less time at home with children and in dads contra versa. Some of the radical changes however, could be explained better by radical than liberal feminism. Increase in childbearing outside marriage by single-mothers by choice, who openly announce no need in fathers, same-gender relationship and reversed gender roles in the family, with breadwinner mother and stay-at-home father, could be considered to be the offspring of radical feminism who aimed at eliminating patriarchal system. In other words, it can be said that changes in the traditional American family reflects and mirrors the main aims and goals of feminist theories and represents it embodiment in the real word.

### **Chapter 3 Changes in Georgian family since the 1960s and advancement of women;**

Georgian family, like an American one, has undergone through various changes during the last five decades. Alteration is noticed not only in the structure and composition of family but in the public view towards family issues as well.

Public attitude towards matrimony and unmarried intimate relationship has softened and marriage is not seen as an essential element for creating a family and having children any more. Although marriage rate has undergone some changes during the last five decade it came to almost the same level as it was in 1970 which represented 7.8 (per 1000 persons). Marriage rate picked in 1979 representing 10.5 and radically fell down to 2.9 in 2002, yet rising again reaching 8.5 in 2014 and falling down to only 6.7 in 2016.

Notable increase is noted in case of divorce rate. Again with some increase and decrease divorce rate was notable up to 2.6 in 2016 from 0.4 in 1960s.

Alteration is noted in general birth rate as well. With some falls and downs, general birth rate represented 15.2 in 2016 down from 24.7 in 1960s. As a result of rising passion towards religious marriages, radical increase of births outside registered marriages is noted from 4 percent in 1980s up to 54 percent in 2002 and 33 percent in 2016. Although vast majority of those births were recorded in religious marriages, some were recorded in cohabiting couples and in single mothers as well, especially during the last decades. As far as single mothers are concerned, the approximate percentage can be calculated according to the births recorded by only mothers, which represented 4.5 in 1990s, 5.1 in 2006 and 2.4 in 2016. Although marriage is not considered to be the essential element of childbearing any more, it can be assumed that Georgian women still avoid having children without a partner and a status of at least a cohabiting household.

As far as same gender relationship is concerned, Georgians still have very negative and conservative attitude towards homosexuality, considering it as a sin, immoral and devastating for Georgian family.

Changes are observed towards the attitudes of gender roles within the family as well. In modern family men is not seen as the main decision maker any more and majority of Georgians believe that both spouses should be involved in the decision-making process. However, breadwinner role is still associated with men.

Notable changes are observed in the participation of females in social, economic and political life. Increase of women participation in education, work and politics is observed in the last decades. More than that, during the economic crisis of 1990s, many women migrated abroad in order to financially support their families, and in many cases became the main breadwinners.

As it can be seen from the statistics, changes in Georgian family share some similarities with the alteration in American household. Rise in cohabitation and divorce number, a sharp decline in marriage rate and life births is noted in both cases, however changes in case of Georgian household is not as radical as in case of the US. Similarities are observed in socio-economic and political empowerment of women in the last decades as well. However, it is interesting to mention that in the US women advancement started in the 1960s as a result of feminist women's active fight for better

life of women and for equality. What contributed to financial independence of women in Georgia however was quite surprisingly, an economic crisis of the 1990s as a result of which many women migrated abroad often leaving behind unemployed husbands and children. As a result of working migration, women became, in majority of the cases, the only breadwinners of the family. After gaining financial independence they started to prize their breadwinner positions and stereotype of a breadwinner father-the head and a main decision-maker and a home-maker wife started to crash down.

## **Chapter 4 Questionnaire analysis: Demographic data of respondents and their attitudes towards the family issues in both target countries: The United States of America and Georgia**

### **Introduction**

In the frame of the research quantitative and qualitative survey was conducted via software package Google Drive in order to be easily approachable for the participants. American and Georgian respondents were provided with separate questionnaires however, the questions were exactly the same. Vast majority of questions were general questions concerning the family issues with only two identical questions referring only to different nationality, Georgian and American.

**Research participants:** The questionnaire was distributed among randomly chosen 92 respondents, 46 American and 46 Georgian with only age restriction, which must have been 18 +. Getting responses from **American respondents** was a long and complicated process. With the active assistance of Georgian emigrants who live in the United States I was able to find 46 American respondents for my Questionnaire. I am personally acquainted with some of my American respondents and had communication with them through social network.

As far as **Georgian respondents** are concerned, there was a need to translate the questionnaire in Georgian as not all Georgian participants knew English Language.

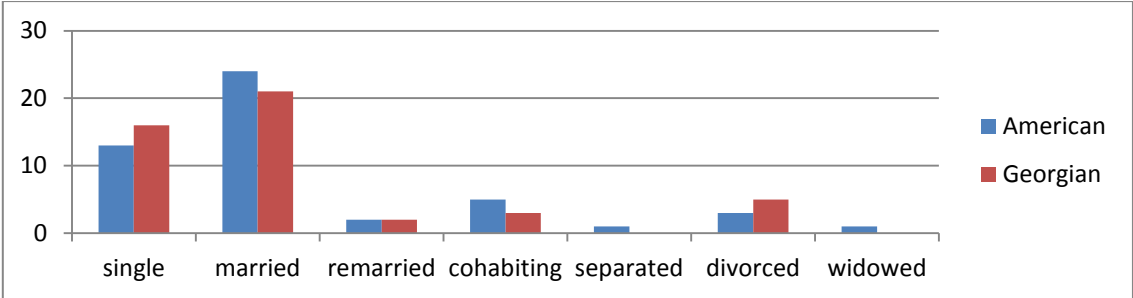
The **goal** of the first part of the survey is to attain demographic data of the respondents, concentrating on family issues, to get a general picture of American and Georgian family and the

changes that took place in family patterns in the last decades. The survey does not aim to segregate respondents according to race, religion or class. The second part of the survey aims at obtaining information about respondent's viewpoint regarding specific family issues, such as cohabitation, marriage institution, childbearing outside wedlock, same-gender relationship, etc. as well as about women's roles within the family and their perception of the ideal family.

**Method:** The research was conducted using an online questionnaire comprising mainly of close-ended questions as well as multiple choice and dichotomous questions. All respondents were provided with the electronic links to the questionnaire in order to ensure homogenous conditions for data gathering as the research involved not only Georgian respondents but American ones as well.

**Demographic data of the Research Audience**

The results of the survey showed that males were more reluctant than females to participate in the research in both countries. Majority of participants of both nationalities comprised the age group of 31-45. Majority of the respondents of both nationalities are married, however more cases of cohabitation and separation are observed in American respondents while more cases of divorce are noted among Georgians and the number of remarried persons were the same.



**Figure 1 Marital status of the survey participants**

In comparison with parent's marital status, rise in divorce, remarriage and cohabitation is noted in the marital status of the participants in both countries. From the participants responses it can be assumed that age of childbearing has increased as majority of respondents represent the age group of 31-46 and majority of participants have no kids at all. It can also be assumed that fewer children are born in modern families than in the past. At the same time, more cases of childbearing outside

marriage, in different types of families, are observed nowadays in case of both nationalities than several decades ago according to the survey.

As far as education level of respondents is concerned, vast majority of all participants hold higher educational degree, however with more Georgians having MA or PhD degrees than Americans. As for the employment level of participants, majority of them are full-time employed in both target countries and among those participants, who claimed to be married, vast majority represent dual income families in both countries. What is also interesting the practice of breadwinner- wife is observed in both nationalities, with tree times more cases in the U.S.A (about 9 percent) than in Georgia (about 3 percent

### **Respondent's attitude towards some family issues**

Results of the survey showed that vast majority of all respondents notice the alteration of traditional family of breadwinner father and home-maker mother since 1960s with more cohabiting and divorced families, more breadwinner mothers and same gender couples (in case of the USA) and less number of children. American participants also find marriage less important than in the past and consider that institution of marriage can be replaced by other types of intimate relationship, however majority of Georgian participants still find marriage institution as important and irreplaceable.

Majority of all respondents reveal soft and positive attitudes towards, childbearing outside marriage, divorce if problems arise and dual income families sharing household activities and child-raising responsibilities. American respondents also stated their positive attitude towards same-gender couples however Georgian respondents find same-gender partnership unacceptable.

### **Key findings**

- The results obtained from the research proved that raise in divorce, remarriage and cohabitation is noted in the marital status of the participants of both nationalities in comparison with their parents.

- Fewer children are born in modern families than in the middle of the twentieth century. However, according to the present survey Georgians have less number of children per family than Americans.
- At the same time, more cases of childbearing outside marriage, in different types of families, are observed nowadays in case of both nationalities than several decades ago according to the survey.
- The results also showed that general level of education is increased in both genders of both countries in the last decades. In case of The Unites States, more males than females hold MA and PhD degrees, however in case of Georgia More females than males have MA degrees and only slightly more males than females are the holders of PhD degrees.
- Vast majority of all respondents are employed and majority of those who are married represent dual income families.
- When comparing older generation's attitude (according to most scholars and researchers) towards family issues, dramatic change is observed in majority of the aspects in both nationalities. Majority of all respondents revealed acceptance towards childbearing outside, marriage, divorce if problems arise, more participation of women in generating family income and as well as more participation of men in household activities or child-raising responsibilities. Though, some differences in attitude are noticed towards the importance of marriage institution as well as same-gender relationship. Americans are far more tolerant towards the replacement of the institution of marriage by other types of intimate relationship, such as cohabitation, than Georgians, who still consider the institution of marriage as important and not replaceable. Furthermore, vast majority of Georgian participants revealed negative attitude toward the acceptance of same-gender marriage while majority of American respondents revealed the approval of same-sex marriages.
- Vast majority of all respondents admitted that increasing role of women in the families as breadwinner and decision-maker can be the result of women's higher education and financial independence as well as gender equality. Democratic changes in the country is also seen as the driving force for female's increased role by some but the least number of participants of both nationalities.



- The results of the study showed that vast majority of American respondents view a woman/spouse in modern era as mainly equal spouse sharing financial responsibilities, educated and companion of her husband. As for Georgian participants, vast majority see a woman spouse in modern times as educated equal spouse and successful in the carrier as well as companion of her husband.
- Although notable changes are observed in family relationship, vast majority of all respondents still consider a couple being in marriage based on mutual affection, understanding and respect as the ideal type of family.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMENTATIONS**

Family has always been an important institution in every country, including the United Sates and Georgia. However, since the 1960s, once stable family institution in America has undergone through various alterations and is still continues to develop and reshape. Traditional American family of the 1960s has remarkably changed during the last five decades, which has been proved by both primary and secondary sources obtained from the statistics provided mainly by the U.S Census Bureau, scholarly articles and various books as well as by the survey results conducted within the framework of the present research.

According to different primary and secondary sources, American family of the twenty-first century radically differs from the traditional American family of the 1950s and early 1960s comprising of a married couple and their biological children with the distinct gender roles of a breadwinner dad and stay-at home mom, therefore does not represent a mainstream family unit any more. Nor is seen marriage as an obligatory step for initiating intimate relationship and having children. Increase in the estimate median age at first marriage is noted in both males and females. At the same time dramatic increase is observed in pre-marital cohabitation and in cohabiting couples as well as. The rate of divorce has witnessed an astonishing growth. (2.2 in 1960s and 9.2 in 2009) More and more women have children outside wed-lock. Only about 5 percent of children were born outside marriage in the 1960s, while in 2012, about 40 percent of kids were born outside wedlock. More

than that, same sex couples, who were arrested according to sodomy law in 1960s, can legally get married creating same-gender families since 2015 in all the states of the United States.

What has also altered during the last decades is the strict division of gender roles within the family, division of labor between fathers and mothers, as well as society attitude towards family issues. More women work in a paid job nowadays spending more time at work and less time at home performing household chores and less men work in salaried jobs spending less time at work and more time at home, performing home-making and child-rising activities. Increase is noted in breadwinner mums and stay-at-home dads (from 1.1 million in 1989 up to 2 million in 2012) during the last several decades. What is also important to mention is American society's far more tolerant attitude towards such family issues as cohabitation, childbearing outside marriage, divorce and same-gender relationship.

It was also proved that women have advanced in all spheres of socio- economic and political life since the 1960s. Dramatically has increased women participation in higher education and at paid jobs as well as in legislative and constituent bodies.

The research is based on gender theories; hence it discusses three waves of feminists, movement in American which started in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While discussing the advancement of women in socio-economic and political life one cannot exclude the role of feminist movement in the process. As a result of feminists' devoted fight for the socio-economic and political rights of women, today American women are fully involved in the political processes and even be voted as a presidential candidate. Also they can study and work in the field they are interested in, decide whether to create a family or not, in what age and with whom, make a decision of being a single mother by choice. American women can sue a person for sexual harassment and if raped, can call to hot lines and they will be declared as victims instead of be blamed of what happened.

Change of the traditional American family, advancement of women and softened attitude toward family issues was also revealed by the survey results, which was done online using Google drive and which surveyed 46 Americans. Questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The **goal** of the first part of the survey was to attain statistical data about family linked issues. The second part of the survey aims at obtaining information about respondent's viewpoint regarding family issues and

gender roles.

The results of the survey showed that, according to family status, modern families, represented by respondents, have revealed much more diversity than the families of the several decades ago, represented by the respondent's parents. In recent years more cases of separation, divorce, remarriages and cohabitation is revealed thus proving the changes in the traditional family structure of American family.

As can be observed from the data, modern families, represented by respondents, have revealed much more diversity than the families of the several decades ago, represented by the respondent's parents. In recent years more cases of separation, divorce, remarriages and cohabitation is revealed thus proving the changes in the traditional family structure of American family.

Results of the survey also proved high participation of women in higher education and employment. Absolute majority of female respondents are the holders of Bachelor's degree, 22 percent have MA degree and 3 percent is the holder of PhD degree. At the same time, vast majority of females are occupied in a paid job.

It can be claimed that women, whose advancement have been proved by both primary and secondary sources and the present research, gaining more financial independence became one of the driving forces of the transformation of traditional American family thus testifying our hypothesis. Firstly, as soon as women started to advance in social, economic and political life American family composition started to change. Statistics are genuine and reliable and cannot be ignored or rejected. Secondly, Women do not tolerate unbearable and undesirable marriages any more as they are not afraid of judgment, or providing themselves/ their kids with the main needs, as they can support themselves and their children financially as a result of good education and working possibilities. After gaining liberation women cohabit more and even enter same gender relationship as they have more support from the government, less judgment from the society and what is more important more financial independence.

Also it was also interesting to observe difference in attitude towards family issues between males and females in both in American and Georgian respondents. According to survey results American

women revealed more loyal attitude towards divorce and childbearing outside marriage than American men. In case of Georgia, however males revealed more tolerant attitude towards childbearing outside wedlock than females while women turned out to be more loyal towards divorce than men. As for same-sex marriage, males were more tolerant than females in both target countries.

Based on comparative studies, the similarities as well as differences between American and Georgian family transformation have been identified. Similar, but not the same, trends are noted in case of Georgian family according to both primary and secondary data, as well as present research. Although traditional Georgian family has undergone through notable changes in the last several decades, alteration does not have as radical forms as in case of American household. In contrast to American family, where changes mainly have diagonal shape characterized mostly by radical rise or fall, in case of Georgian household changes predominantly resemble the cardiogram characterized by ups and downs or downs and ups.

Like traditional American household, traditional Georgian family was associated with a married heterosexual couple raising their biological children. Georgian society has always been very critical towards non-marital relationship, thus vast majority of intimate relationship and childbearing was based on marriage. As a result historically Georgia was characterized by high marriage and birth and very low divorce rates. Traditionally Georgian family, like an American one, was characterized by strict gender division where a man played the role of a family finance generator and thus was considered to be the main decision maker and the head of the family. As for a woman, the main role and destination was to get married, raise children and run the house.

However, during the last several decades Georgian family, like an American household, has undergone through various changes. According to primary and secondary data, Alteration is noticed not only in the structure of household but in the public view towards family issues as well.

Public attitude towards matrimony and unmarried intimate relationship has softened and marriage is not seen as an essential element for creating a family and having children any more. Although marriage rate has undergone some changes during the last five decade it came to almost the same

level as it was in 1970 which represented 7.8 (per 1000 persons) and 6.7 in 2016.

Notable increase is noted in case of divorce rate. Again with some increase and decrease divorce rate was notable up to 2.6 in 2016 from 0.4 in 1960s.

Alteration is noted in general birth rate as well. With some falls and downs, general birth rate represented 15.2 in 2016 down from 24.7 in 1960s. As a result of rising passion towards religious marriages, radical increase of births outside registered marriages is noted from 4 percent in 1980s up to 54 percent in 2002 and 33 percent in 2016. Although vast majority of those births were recorded in religious marriages, some were recorded in cohabiting couples and in single mothers as well, especially during the last decades. As far as single mothers are concerned, the approximate percentage can be calculated according to the births recorded by only mothers, which represented 4.5 in 1990s, 5.1 in 2006 and 2.4 in 2016. Although marriage is not considered to be the essential element of childbearing any more, it can be assumed that Georgian women still avoid having children without a partner and a status of at least a cohabiting household.

As far as same gender relationship is concerned, Georgians still have very negative and conservative attitude towards homosexuality, considering it as a sin, immoral and devastating for Georgian family. Though, it should be noted that men, both American and Georgian seem to be more tolerant towards the problem according to survey.

Changes are observed towards the attitudes of gender roles within the family as well. In modern family men is not seen as the main decision maker any more and majority of Georgians believe that both spouses should be involved in the decision-making process. However, breadwinner role is still associated with men.

Notable changes are observed in the participation of females in social, economic and political life. Increase of women participation in education, work and politics is observed in the last decades. More than that, during the economic crisis of 1990s, many women migrated abroad in order to financially support their families, and in many cases became the main breadwinners.

Changes in traditional family composition and society attitude towards family issues, as well as the

role of women within the family and society are also observed in the present research. According to the results of the survey, majority of the respondents are married or single. In contrast to their parent's families, diversity of family types is observed in the marital status of participants and their parents. More cases of separation, divorce, single motherhood, remarriages and cohabitation is observed in modern families in comparison to the families created several decades ago. At the same time the results of the survey showed that Georgians have less children and as well as less number of children per family thus proving the alteration of traditional Family composition in Georgia.

Changes are also observed in public attitude towards some family issues. Although majority of Georgian respondents still consider marriage as an important institution, more tolerance is noted towards single motherhood, divorce and cohabitation. However, vast majority of Georgian participants still view same-gender marriage as unacceptable and immoral.

It is also interesting to mention that vast majority of female respondents have higher education, BA and MA degrees. More than that, more females than males hold PhD degree. At the same time vast majority of females are full time employed thus breaking the traditional view of breadwinner father and home-maker mother which was so deeply rooted in the society.

Based on data and arguments provided in the present research as well as the results obtained through survey it can be concluded that the advancement of women in socio- economic life of the country gave them financial independence and consequently reduced their dependence on husbands or other family members. More than that, as secondary data showed (see chapter 3) as a result of female working migration in the 1990s, many women became the main breadwinners. Accordingly it can be claimed that financially independent women, able to support themselves and their children, began to free themselves from the established stereotypes and formed the family types more suitable to their needs and will. Ignoring social stigmas, self-sufficient Georgian women now denounce unhappy matrimony and create the type of relationship which meets their and their children's needs better.

To sum up, advancement of women in socio-economic and political life, changes in family patterns, such as rise in cohabitation and divorce rate (and childbearing outside wedlock in case of the US) and decrease in marriage and general birth rates, and far more softened and loyal attitude of public

towards family issues has been proved by both, primary and secondary data and present research in both target countries. Women **impact** on the changes of family patterns in both target countries has been also shown testifying our hypothesis that women, gaining more and more political, economic and social independence advancing in almost every spheres, have become an important driving force of the modern family, but at the same time appeared as agents pushing the process of traditional family deinstitutionalization in both target countries, the United States and Georgia.

**Recommendations:** Not sufficient data is available in regard to cohabitation, single mothers-by-choice and same-gender couples in case of Georgia thus further research is recommended in this direction to see the clear picture of modern trends in family structure in Georgia.

### **The list of Publications on the present research**

1. Gogberashvili, S. (2016). How Has American Family Changed During the Last Five Decades. *Journal in Humanities*; ISSN: 2298-0245; e-ISSN: 2346-8289, Volume 5, Issue 1, 2016, pp. 33-36.
2. Gogberashvili, S. (2015). Unmarried Cohabitation as a “Socially Sanctioned” Replacement of Marriage? *Journal in Humanities*; ISSN 2298-0245; Volume 4, Issue 2, 2015; pp.27-30
3. Gogberashvili, S. (2014). The Role of a Woman in the Family and Society in Mona Lisa Smile. *Journal in Humanities*; ISSN 2298-0245; Volume 3, Issue 2, 2014; pp.15-17
4. Gogberashvili, S. (2014) Changing parental Roles in American Family. 7th International Conference on American Studies; pp.16-22
5. Gogberashvili, S. (2013) Power of Women Voters in American Politics in the Last Decade. 6th International Conference on American Studies; pp. 80-86