Gendered Experience of Time in Georgia: Motherhood, Care Work and the Life Beyond

By

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ABSTRACT

First, associated with the cycles of nature, later with the emergence of capitalism, the perception of time became associated with the linearity of the production process and became commodified. Time as a resource, reflecting the power relations, is distributed unequally within the groups of people, with some spending most of the time working to ensure survival, while others are enjoying vast amounts of discretionary time. In contemporary society, the lack of time is especially acute in the lives of working mothers. The persistent essentialist understanding of motherhood still requires women to devote most of their time beyond paid employment to caregiving, and the standard working hours not taking the time needed for care responsibilities into account. This thesis explores the time poverty experienced by working mothers in Georgia who, due to unregulated working hours and the demands of motherhood, enjoy little to no temporal autonomy. The aim of the research is to analyze the perceptions of time for them and study the ways in which they distribute their time between paid labor, unpaid labor, and leisure and the reasoning behind this arrangement.

I argue that the perception of time for working mothers in Georgia, shaped by the essentialist understanding of motherhood, is malleable and adaptable to immediate circumstances, different from the rigidity of capitalist temporality. The data collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews suggest that women perceive time poverty as their individual problem instead of questioning structural inequality leading to this condition; respondents assume that they have more control over their time than they actually do. Over the years, they have adopted different time management and time-saving strategies in order to utilize their time beyond paid employment and meet the contradictory standards of a good employee and a good mother. For this, they often have to juggle several tasks at a time, seek paid or unpaid help from other females, sacrifice their professional growth and leisure time, and put extensive effort into scheduling every minute of their days.

DECLARATION OF THE ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND THE WORD COUNT

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of original research; it contains no materials accepted for any other degree in any other institution and no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where the appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference.

I further declare that the following word count for this thesis are accurate:

Body of thesis (all chapters excluding notes, references, appendices, etc.): 15,098 words Entire manuscript: 16,450 words

Signed: Ani Gogberashvili

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The importance of addressing the temporal dimension of gender inequality is gradually getting more recognition. Nowadays, women's effective economic empowerment is recognized to occur when women enjoy their rights to control their own time (Oxfam's Conceptual Framework on Women's Economic Empowerment, 2017). There are a number of studies available that address temporal dimensions of gender inequality in various contexts. However, there is a significant lack of qualitative material on temporal inequality in the Georgian context, which is especially acute in the lives of mothers who work full-time.

Working on a different research project a few years ago, I interviewed single mothers of disabled children. Despite the focus of the research being different, the issue that stood out in all the interviews was the lack of discretionary time and subsequent effects on the mental/physical health of the respondents. I spotted the same tendency while studying the working conditions of women employed in the service sector in Georgia. The issue of time poverty came up repeatedly in private conversations with working mothers. This experience made me realize that one of the most critical issues nowadays for women in Georgia is time. The current arrangement deprives them of the chance of self-development, economic empowerment, and political activity. As I was unable at the time to explore the problem of time further due to the different aims of the research projects that I was involved in, I decided that I would choose this topic for the master's thesis at the Gender Studies Program at Central European University.

The research process proved to be more difficult than I anticipated, as the COVID-19 outbreak, both in Hungary and Georgia prevented me from traveling back home for the fieldwork. I only managed to travel to Georgia in mid-April, after which I had to spend two weeks in quarantine in complete isolation. Nevertheless, I decided to stick to my research plan, and as for obvious

reasons, I was unable to meet the interviewees face to face; I scheduled all of my interviews on the phone. Of course, I would have been able to get more out of the research process and find a more diverse research sample in normal circumstances, but despite these disruptions, the interviews proved to be very insightful and interesting. I learned a lot about how women rationalize their distribution of time on paid and unpaid employment and the existing "leisure gap" between themselves and their partners (Bakhturidze, Chabukiani, Jibladze, & Ubilava, 2017, p. 8).

The aim of my research is to study the perceptions of time spent on paid labor, unpaid labor, and leisure for working mothers in dual-earner families living in Georgia. For this, I explored the literature regarding the changing perceptions of time in relation to work and leisure and its effects on women. In the following subchapter, I examined the feminist literature on motherhood and also the work that addressed the temporal dimension of motherhood. In the third subchapter of the literature review, I discuss the Georgian context regarding women's place in the labor market, the distribution of unpaid labor, and dominant perceptions of motherhood, all shaping respondents' temporal experiences. I tried to position my research sample within this larger context to prepare the ground for the analytical chapter. In the third chapter, I describe my research methodology and my position as a researcher in detail. I also discuss the difficulties I encountered while conducting the research in extraordinary circumstances, the way this affected my research process, and the limitation of the study.

The analytical chapter (4) is divided into two subchapters organized according to the themes of the interviews: the first one concerning the widespread essentialist understandings of motherhood and its temporal consequences for the women interviewed. I discuss the expectations placed on mothers by society, overemphasis of the importance of mother-child bond, and the feelings that working mothers have not been able to spend "enough time" with their children. In the second subchapter, I try to provide an analysis of time management and

time-saving strategies used by interviewees and the impact these strategies have on their perception of time. More specifically, I discuss how interviewees juggle different tasks trying to keep a work-life balance, pay other women for help or receive free help from other female members of the family, which frees up some time for them. I also describe how some women were forced to leave their jobs for a few years after the birth of their first child. I analyze the practices of overscheduling and sacrificing leisure time and its consequences. While describing all of these time management and time-saving strategies, I also discuss how they affect the perception of time for the respondents and whether the use of these techniques improves their quality of life and quality of time in any way. Before moving onto the analytical chapter, I will first present the literature review and methodology chapters.

2. Literature Review

The literature review is constructed around the concepts of time, motherhood, and work-life balance. The body of literature that this research draws on consists of different articles and books, both recent and more dated. In the first part of the chapter, there is a brief historical overview of the changing conception of time over the centuries. The notions of "free time," "discretionary time," "necessity," and "temporal autonomy" that are important for developing the discussion in the analytical chapter are introduced and explained. The second subchapter is devoted to the different theories on motherhood and its temporal dimensions. In the third section, the neoliberal concepts of "self-management" and "work-life balance" are questioned, discussing women's disadvantaged position both in the realm of the home as well as work. The aim is to prepare the grounds for discussion based on the interviews in the analytical chapter, where I translate these concepts into the reality of working mothers in contemporary Georgia, shaping their temporal experiences. The fourth subchapter is devoted to the description of the context in Georgia regarding women's place in paid and unpaid labor. I also try to position the interviewees within this larger context. This section mostly relies on research reports of different organizations as well as theories regarding time and motherhood penalty. It also contains some excerpts from the interviews, which help connect respondents to the information presented.

2.1. Changing Perceptions of Time

Traditionally time was measured according to the cycles of work and chores to be completed in any given season. Such a conception of time is also known as task-orientation and is still relevant in many rural societies. It is characterized by the less clear distinction between work time and free time as social life and work are largely interweaved (Thompson E. P., 1982, pp.

301-303). Eliade (1959) describes the cycle as the primary time metaphor for "pre-Christian man" or "archaic man." For "archaic man," the conception of time was shaped by the "myth of the eternal return," as he struggled with seasons in recurring cycles (Hassard, 1996, p. 582). He claims that for "Christian man," the perception of time-shifted from recurrent cycles to direct and linear path: from the sins on earth to the eternal redemption and salvation in the afterlife (Hassard, 1996, p. 582). With this change, the history of humankind started to be seen as a linear progression.

The human relationship with time shifted significantly in Western societies in the period between the 15th and 19th centuries with the emergence of capitalism and factory production (Bryson, 2007, p. 25). The linearity of time got associated with the value; therefore, time and money became exchangeable commodities. In other words, traditional time was gradually substituted with the modern time with waged laborers paid according to the number of hours they worked (Bryson, 2007, p. 25). Employees started experiencing a stark distinction between employer's time and their own time (Thompson E. P., 1982, p. 304). Therefore, time began to be perceived in relation to money - it could be invested, wasted, or saved, and thus it was measured strictly with the use of mechanical clock (Bryson, 2007, pp. 25-26).

John Hassard develops the concept of linear time further to what he calls "linear quantitative tradition." According to him, a linear time perspective sees the past as unrepeatable, present as fleeting, and the future as exploitable. Time becomes measurable, divisible, transient, and quantitative (Hassard, 1996, p. 583). If the theological linearity of time saw it as eternal, industrial time is finite and often scarce, which raises its value (Hassard, 1996, p. 583). The dominant image of time is overly commodified and quantitative, it is centered on production with other aspects of human life built around paid employment; however, the perception of time as linear and quantitative, although powerful, overlooks the qualitative aspects of temporality (Hassard, 1996, p. 584). Instead, Hassard suggests emphasizing the cyclical and qualitative side

of time and highlighting temporal heterogeneity (Hassard, 1996, p. 596). According to this view, both primitive and modern societies have diverse "time-reckoning systems," which are not uniform or quantitatively divisible, nor a combination of units, instead "the emphasis is on cultural experience and sense-making, on creating temporal meanings rather than responding to temporal structures" (Hassard, 1996, p. 586). Linear and quantitative conception of time neglect the gendered experience of time, which is the reflection of the unequal distribution of time as a resource. Moreover, some authors suggest that overwhelming digitalization is creating whole new kinds of time characterized by instantaneity, defying linear logic of clock-time (Wajcman, 2015, p. 6). Certain groups of people have access to free time, while the lives of others are mostly occupied with paid and unpaid labor. In other words, their lives are overdetermined by necessity.

Aristotle is one of the central figures in the conversation about the fight for a time as he emphasized the importance of leisure as a precondition of a good life and recognized political-economic conditions that made leisure possible (Shippen, 2014, p. 17). Aristotle's theoretical framework of associating time beyond necessity to freedom is shared by Karl Marx; However, Marx criticizes the "parasitic freedom" in Greek society that is based on the exploitation of slaves, servant and women and demands freedom for everyone (Shippen, 2014, p. 8). Similarly, in capitalist societies, freedom of the privileged is only possible through the unfair distribution of necessity and the racial, sexual, and global division of labor (Shippen, 2014, p. 8). Marx offered the examination of the ways in which industrial capitalism dominated the "necessary labor time" in order to extract "surplus labor time" from the workers (Shippen, 2014, p. 8).

Robert E. Goodin and his collaborators in the book *Discretionary Time: A New Measure of Freedom* elaborate on the Marxian concept of "the realm of necessity" as the things which simply need to be done no matter what: satisfying bodily necessities: eating, sleeping, caring for the body; satisfying financial necessities: securing enough money to survive; and satisfying

household necessities: cooking, taking care of the children, cleaning, etc. (Goodin, Rice, Parpo, & Eriksson, 2008, pp. 4-5). Time beyond these necessities belongs to an individual and is used according to one's wishes. This is what Goodin and others call "discretionary time" and "temporal autonomy."

Similarly, Nichole Marie Shippen defines necessity as "the minimum amount of time that must be spent on the basic biological, household, and financial needs" (Shippen, 2014, p. 16). Throughout Shippen's work, time beyond necessity is also referred to as "discretionary time" rather than "free time." The usage of "discretionary time" emphasizes the significance of having control over one's time, or exercising "temporal autonomy" (Shippen, 2014, p. 18). The above operationalization is different from Marx's "free/disposable time," as it emphasizes one's control over the time beyond paid employment. Women all over the world are disproportionately engaged in the work for necessity, a big part of which is not even recognized as work, especially for working mothers, who, despite their contribution to the economy, are held up to the essentialist standards of motherhood.

Unequal distribution of discretionary time is increasingly visible in the contemporary world where people live at progressively high speeds, and the busy work life is glorified without acknowledging unpaid work. Judy Wajcman, in her book *Pressed for Time – the Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism* claims that the increasing pace of life is not new and has been present all throughout the processes of big technological and social transformations tracing back to the early 20th century (Wajcman, 2015, p. 58). People have been becoming more and more reliant on technology for every aspect of their lives, seeking instant results and moving from one task to another at insane speeds. Living at such high speed, overcrowding both work and non-work time with a number of activities have been considered as a symbol of high status. According to Shippen, time poverty, in fact, benefits capitalism as individuals feel the need to purchase technologies and services to solve the problem of time deficiency by managing it,

instead of organizing for more humane politics of the time (Shippen, 2014, p. 2). Moreover, leisure has become devoid of political meaning as it is increasingly associated with consumption.

Another reason why political-economic arrangements remain unchallenged is high unemployment rates and desperation for work experienced by people all over the world. Peter Frase describes capitalism as a system that requires people to perform waged labor, often devoid of any meaning or value for survival. The alternative of meaningless labor is losing income and being thrown into desperation (Frase, 2016, p. 12). The fear of unemployment is even starker for working mothers who are under constant threat of being replaced by someone with fewer responsibilities outside of work. According to Judy Wajcman, the image of a contemporary mother has changed from the devoted housewife to a sleep-deprived working mom who juggles the roles of a primary caretaker and a worker (Wajcman, 2015, p. 63). Wajcman addresses gender differences in time pressure, supplementing her arguments with time-use data, which suggests that time poverty is experienced by working mothers disproportionately. According to her, it is mostly women who adjust their working hours according to the needs of their children. While women's employment starts to decrease from the birth of the first child, fathers mostly tend to increase their employment after the birth of a child; therefore, men and women make different decisions when it comes to allocating their time between work and family. Wajcman claims that while this difference has been declining over time, there still is a significant wage gap that comes with motherhood in all developed countries (Wajcman, 2015, p. 68). Therefore, the perception of time pressure and the ways of dealing with it is different for men and women as it is dictated by contrasting cultural expectations. While women in most developed countries can afford to shorten their working hours in order to adjust to the needs of motherhood, in Georgia, this is virtually impossible as a scarcity of work opportunities make women agree on

long working hours. This issue is addressed more thoroughly in the following chapters of the research.

2.2. Motherhood and Time

The lack of discretionary time is especially visible in the lives of working mothers. Essentialist views on motherhood, which misrepresent women's actual experiences and reduce their identities to the traditional image of mothers, serve as a foundation to most patriarchal societies. Adrienne Rich, in her book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, claims that patriarchy would be unable to survive without institutional forms of motherhood and heterosexuality; therefore, these institutions are treated as axioms and are rarely questioned (Rich, 1995, p. 43). Rich characterizes this ideal form of motherhood as continuous and unconditional, devoid of anger and dissatisfaction, as expressing these feelings could threaten the institution of motherhood (Rich, 1995, p. 46). Most of the women participating in this research refrained from openly expressing their discontent regarding the uneven distribution of care work within their families. Nevertheless, both physical and psychic weight of responsibility placed on women is enormous, and the mother's whole character and status depend on fulfilling the role of the mother and not "failing" her children (Rich, 1995, p. 52). This sort of thinking often leads to unrealistic standards set for mothers demanding an unreasonably large amount of time and effort.

The Second Wave liberal feminism prescribed careers for women as an alternative to "culturally mandated domesticity," largely ignoring the realities of labor market, racial and gendered division of labor, and the persistent gendered division of labor in heterosexual families (Weeks, 2009, p. 102). This attitude results in women living under constant strain, having little to no

discretionary time. When the current standard of full-time work, meaning an eight-hour day five-days a week, was established, it was presumed that the worker, typically imagined to be a man, was supported by a woman in the home (Weeks, 2009, p. 114). As Weeks points out: "Had the male worker been held responsible for unwaged domestic labor, it is difficult to imagine that he could credibly be expected to work a minimum of eight hours a day."

There are different theories regarding the nature of time in the workplace and in the realm of home. Edward Hall argues that temporality in the contemporary workplace is "monochronic," which means scheduling tasks and events separately and dealing with "one thing at a time" (Bryson, 2007, p. 130). He brings the concept of "polychromic time" in the discussion, a more people-oriented organization of time, in which several tasks are completed concurrently. Hall frames these two conceptions of time as distinct, attributing monochronic time to males and polychromic time to females, which according to him, is especially true for traditional families in which "women are the core around which everything revolves" (Bryson, 2007, p. 130). Similarly, E.P. Thompson claims that rhythms of women's work at home is not in accordance with the clock-time: "the mother of young children has an imperfect sense of time and attends to other human tides" (Thompson E. P., 1967, p. 79). Although somewhat essentialist, dichotomizing "male and female time," these approaches highlight the fact that capitalist conception of time is focused solely on productivity and efficiency and completely ignores human needs beyond work. Women's increased participation in the labor market changes the ways time is disciplined within families (Bryson, 2007, p. 132). Since paid employment takes up most of the day, the after-work hours need to be used efficiently; therefore, time management techniques are applied at home, altering human relationships significantly. According to Valerie Bryson, this process comes down to "personal life, and the emotional and physical needs of partners, family and friends being organized into a tick list of tasks to be performed in pre-allocated time slots" (Bryson, 2007, p. 132). However, this type of thinking does not always

work as it is impossible to predict the needs of other people, especially children; therefore, women are usually the ones who have to adapt to changing circumstances and build their lives beyond paid employment around care work.

In other words, women are expected to work another shift at home for free. Arlie Hochschild, in the book *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home,* studies the double burden experienced by working women in the second half of the 20th century. Based on the studies on time use from the 1960s and 1970s, Hochschild notes that women worked approximately fifteen hours longer each week than men, and over a year, they worked an extra month of twenty-four-hour days (Hochschild & Machung, 2012, p. 4). Moreover, she emphasizes the existence of a "leisure gap" at home, similar to the "wage gap" at work (Hochschild & Machung, 2012, p. 4). According to Hochschild, men and women adopt different "gender strategies" while defining their roles as wives or husbands entail. These ideas of manhood and womanhood are deeply engrained in their consciousness from their childhood (Hochschild & Machung, 2012, p. 15). Hochschild identifies three types of the ideology of marital roles: traditional, egalitarian, and transitional. Traditional ideology places women in the position of a primary caretaker and men in the position of a sole breadwinner in the family. A person with an egalitarian belief expects equality in the marriage both in terms of paid employment and housework. There is a transitional ideology between these two types, which means any combination of the first two ideologies (Hochschild & Machung, 2012, pp. 15-16). Pressures of work and family are often viewed as individual struggles instead of a social problem, and personal characteristics and capabilities of women are overemphasized. For example, a working mother may be presented as "energetic" and "competent." (Hochschild & Machung, 2012, p. 25) Capitalizing on her personal capabilities disguises the unequal distribution of labor and intense time strain forcing women to be extra resourceful.

Different perceptions of time pressure and time strain were explored by Lyn Craig in 2007. She used large-scale quantitative time-use data to study how parents distribute their time between paid employment, unpaid labor, childcare, and leisure and revealed different time-saving strategies like "time squeezing" and "time-shifting" used by parents (Craig, 2016). In 2017, Judy Rose studied women's subjective experiences of time and time pressure, claiming that while time-saving strategies increase time efficiency, it does not reduce their perceptions of time pressure. Moreover, multitasking distorts women's temporal experiences and affects their quality of time negatively (Rose J. , 2017).

The neoliberal strand of feminism does not question and even encourages the time strain that women are subjected to. Catherine Rottenberg, in her 2013 article "The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism," argues that the bestsellers: *Lean in* by Sheryl Sandberg and *Why Women Still Can't Have It All* from Anne-Marie Slaughter provide an insight on how the neoliberal feminist subject is being constructed. According to her, this feminist subject is characterized by taking full responsibility for her life and having a flawless work-life balance (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 418). The popular concept of "work-life balance" values time management skills and time-saving technology over everything else. According to Rottenberg, framing feminism in such individualistic terms is informed by neoliberalism and is slowly taking the place of liberal feminism; therefore, instead of fighting for liberation, feminism nowadays is far from addressing social justice issues (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 419). Although it is out of touch with the reality of women not enjoying the same privileges as the authors of the abovementioned books, the effect of these ideas is obvious for most women. This way of thinking is particularly damaging to women who are traditionally expected to work a second shift at home as patriarchal society makes it the responsibility of individual women to allocate time efficiently and "have it all." Collective forms of action towards social justice are substituted with the emphasis on "self-reliance and efficiency." (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 421). Discussing individual experiences

separately from the social and economic circumstances shaping this experience gives an illusion that individuals have far more control over time than they actually do. Therefore, leisure is rarely recognized as a political issue, "let alone a salient political issue around which people might organize and make demands around." (Shippen, 2014, p. 18) Unequal distribution of necessities and leisure time is a major obstacle to the economic empowerment of women and gender justice. Nancy Frazer argues that gender equity needs to be reconceptualized as a "complex notion comprising a plurality of distinct normative principles" (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999). One of the seven fundamental principles she thinks is crucial to gender equity is concerned with the distribution of equal time.

Widespread conceptions of motherhood also contribute to women's increasing temporal vulnerability by exaggerating the role of motherhood in women's lives and presenting it as something every woman aspires to. Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels in the 2004 book *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Determined Women* discuss the rise of the trend in the media that they call "the new momism" (Douglas & Michaels , 2005, p. 5). "The new momism" is the idea that women cannot be fulfilled unless she has children and is a primary caretaker. Besides, in order to be seen as "a remotely decent mother," a woman has to direct all her physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual resources towards her children (Douglas & Michaels , 2005, p. 4). Michaels and Douglas note that the term "momism" was established by the journalist Philip Wylie in the 1942 bestseller *The Generation of Vipers* and was used as a derogatory, misogynist term. Basically, Wylie criticized American mothers for being overprotective and smothering their children, especially sons, to the extreme. According to him, this type of upbringing did not generate the type of militarist masculinity that was needed by the country (Douglas & Michaels , 2005, pp. 4-5). Douglas and Michaels reclaim this term and use it for naming the ideology which, according to them, originated and started spreading from the 1980s and aims to deprive women of the freedoms

they have gained over the decades (Douglas & Michaels , 2005, pp. 4-5). The term of "new momism," as described by Douglas and Michaels is quite relevant to this research as it addresses the contradictions rooted into the societal perceptions of modern motherhood. Although this notion has a lot in common with the 1960s *Feminine Mystique,* it is certainly more progressive and goes beyond the idea that women are subordinate to men. Instead, "new momism" insists that women have choices, and therefore, claims to be feminist; however, it only validates those women who choose to be mothers (Douglas & Michaels , 2005, p. 5). In other words, it creates the illusion of more freedom and choice, when in fact all it does is manipulating women into motherhood. The effect of this contradiction on the lives of women is very much visible throughout the interviews within this research, and each and every one of the respondents addresses this issue in their own words.

In her influential book about mothering: *Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood,* Sharon Hays explains how the cultural model of intensive mothering exists in contradiction with the cultural model of rationalized market (Hays, 1998, p. 97). Hays discusses the examples of actual women to illustrate her point and analyzes their struggles with opposing demands of the paid work and child care. According to her, in the time of women's increased participation in the labor force, individual women have "contradictory cultural images of mothers who selflessly nurture their children and businessmen who selfishly compete in the labor force" (Hays, 1998, p. 3). Hays notes that the cultural perceptions of home and world have always been different, however, until recently, it was possible to keep the domestic and public realms separate with women being responsible for the family and men of the public sphere. As women's participation in the labor force increased, the contradiction became more obvious (Hays, 1998, p. 3). Intensive mothering involves spending extensive amounts of time, energy, and money on child's physical and emotional well-being, and more importantly, the mother must be there for her child on every stage of their development in order to provide the necessary care and attention (Hays, 1998, p.

8). According to her, this type of child rearing approach is "child centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive" (Hays, 1998, p. 8). Nevertheless, it is clear from the interviews that women continue intensive mothering at the expense of their own well-being. This approach of motherhood swallows most of the women's time outside the work and leaves them with no discretionary time. The approach to mothering does not change even though the employment rates of women are increasing. They are still expected to prioritize motherhood over professional life and make enormous efforts to spend as much time as possible with the children.

2.3. Problematizing "Self-Management" and Work-Life Balance

The simultaneous focus on child rearing and paid employment by increasing women's fertility and involvement in the labor force is a form of biopolitical regulation, according to Jemima Repo in her article "Gender Equality as Biopolitical Governmentality in a Neoliberal European Union." Repo claims that gender equality policy is a powerful tool for adjusting human behavior with neoliberal governmentality (Repo, 2016, p. 308). Moreover, gender is "an invisible hand," encouraging subjects "self-manage and self-govern by making reproductive choices based on cost-benefit analyses of their personal and working lives (Repo, 2016, p. 307). Nikolas Rose in the 1990 article "Governing the Enterprising Self" looks into the relationship between individuals' "self" and the power and analyses the ways in which human subjectivity has become a central object of regulations (Rose N. , 1992, p. 3). Rose discusses that in the works of authors like Hayek and Friedman, the well-being is ensured not by centralized bureaucracy but by governing the individual activities and choices (Rose N. , 1992, p. 5). Modern individuals often see themselves as projects, they are striving to work on every aspect of their lives in order to enhance it and as formulated by Rose: "maximize the worth of their existence to themselves"

(Rose N. , 1992, p. 9). The neoliberal feminist subject who individualizes structural problems, assumes that the mere investment in a certain aspect of one's life can lead to self-development and improvement. Mothers, who overemphasize the importance of keeping a perfect work-life balance in order to achieve professional success while also continue the practice of intensive mothering, often rationalize their actions following this exact logic. Naturally, this kind of attitude leads to overwork and has many unpleasant long-term side effects. The perception these women have about their time resources and the illusion of control over these resources is in fact, a tool that governs their reproductive and productive lives.

The concept of work-life balance is problematized by Raewyn Connel in her article "Work/life Balance, Gender Equity and Social Change," where she examines the link between gender justice and work-life balance policies. She starts the article by exploring the work/home division in a historical context (Connell, 2005, p. 370). According to her, the physical separation of work and non-work spaces in the 18th and 19th centuries gave rise to ideological shifts. The public world became associated with "market relations, calculation of profit, and accumulation." (Connell, 2005, p. 371), while the family sphere was characterized by personal relations and care. More importantly, the domestic sphere was subordinated to the public (Connell, 2005, p. 371); therefore, Connel sees the modern capitalist society as inherently marked with structural inequality, where masculinities and femininities are constructed with women's and men's relationships with the respective economies (Connell, 2005, p. 371). Later in the article, Connell presents the results of a field study that explored the gender regimes in different worksites. According to the results, women's time was mostly occupied with domestic work, while for men sharing household chores was mostly a choice (Connell, 2005, pp. 373-374). According to Connell, the idea of work-life balance is "a conservative expression of a radical impulse" (Connell, 2005, p. 378). The impulse is for increased gender equality and justice. "This impulse

16

is expressed as a demand for 'balance' because of the impossibility of realizing equality within an institutional system that subordinates home to the economy" (Connell, 2005, p. 378).

Gendered nature of the organization is discussed by Joan Acker in her 1990 article "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations." Acker claimed that gender inequality in the workplace is produced and reproduced within organizations, and it is entrenched within a corporate structure (Acker, 1990, pp. 140-141). Connell also emphasized the gendered nature of organizations by pointing out that, for example, taking time off work for family reasons can damage one's career, and this move most of the time is taken by women; therefore, women are in a disadvantaged position at both home and work. The idea of work-life balance reduces the focus from the systemic nature of women's subordination within the institutions of family and work to the responsibility of individual women and their ability to manage their selves and their lives. Moreover, the idea of work-life balance neglects the fact that women are in a subordinated position both at work and at home and makes women question their abilities and time management skills instead of a larger problem affecting their life negatively.

2.4. Context Analysis

In this section, I will discuss the Georgian context and discuss the background of the interviewees in order to create a better understanding of the circumstances that shape the perception of time for the research participants. Interviewees have diverse educational backgrounds and work in different spheres; however, they all have at least one thing in common: their educational credentials exceed their current job requirements. Most interviewees talk about the scarcity of career opportunities in the Georgian labor market; however, they rarely complain about their current jobs. Moreover, they express gratitude for having stable employment and a steady source of income. This could be explained by the long periods of

economic vulnerability and high unemployment rates in the recent history of Georgia. High rates of unemployment result in desperation for work; therefore, the "right to work" becomes more relevant than seeking to improve employment policy, like reducing working hours (Shippen, 2014, p. 3).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the development of independent Georgia was hindered by an economic and social crisis. By the year 2002, only 20% of the Georgian population was involved in paid employment (Jones, 2013). Women made up 55% of the unemployed. By 2003, the newly elected, the market-oriented government further reduced employee protection and abolished labor inspection in 2005.

 Labor Code of Georgia was amended in 2013, introducing underlying mechanisms for the protection of workers' rights. In present-day Georgia, women mostly occupy lower positions on the job market and receive significantly smaller salaries than men. As of 2016, the total unemployment rate in Georgia was 11.8%, which is the lowest within the past decade (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018, p. 22). In the same year, 58% of women were considered economically active, in comparison with 78% of men. Most of the unemployed women had a university degree. (Geostat, 2017) The Georgian economy is characterized by both vertical and horizontal segregation: women tend to occupy lower positions than men in the same sector, and they also tend to work in less profitable sectors of the economy (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018, p. 22).

Moreover, a vast percentage of women are employed in the informal sector, not receiving even the most basic protection from the state. Therefore, while discussing the shortcomings of their employers, most respondents noted that it could be worse, and they are lucky compared to other people in more precarious working conditions. For instance, women employed in the informal sector do not enjoy any form of social and labor protection. The lack of adequate labor legislation, the rise of the informal economy, and unfair distribution of family responsibilities

make women vulnerable to precarious working conditions, and the interviewees acknowledge their privileged position in these conditions.

Although all of the interviewees of this research are employed in the formal sector, they still struggle to get essential support from the state and the employers, especially those with children. For instance, women in Georgia are granted "maternity and child care leave of absence" of 730 days, of which only 183 days are paid (Labour Code of Georgia, 2010). The monthly salary of women employed in the public sector is fully reimbursed during these six months; however, the law does not obligate the employers from the private sector to reimburse average monthly salaries for their employees. The only assistance is 1000 GEL granted by the state. Certain employers from the private sector provide paid parental leave regardless of the absence of legal obligation; however, it is extremely rare and depends on employers' goodwill. Therefore, women who intend to have children risk financial insecurity and severe time deficiency. As women in Georgia are considered to be primary caretakers of their children and are expected to prioritize family over career, this situation is hugely conflicting for them. Most of my interviewees who have children are in a privileged position to afford external help; therefore, they can manage to combine childcare with paid employment. However, in some cases, it is not within the financial means of a family to hire help; therefore, women are forced to give up their jobs in order to care for their children.

In addition, women's perception of their role is often affected by the attitudes of their employers. Even though the labor code of Georgia prohibits workplace discrimination based on marital status at all stages of employment, including recruitment, many women in Georgia are still asked by the employers whether they are married and have children. Obviously, this kind of information affects hiring decisions and places women with children in a disadvantaged position as they are perceived by the employers to be less productive. In 2007, Correll, Benard, and Paik conducted a laboratory experiment to test the hypothesis that the conflict between the

roles of a mother and an ideal employee was one of the reasons why mothers experienced significant disadvantages in the labor market (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007, p. 1298). They also conducted an audit study in which they evaluated responses to applicants from actual employers. Laboratory experiments revealed that mothers in the workplace were seen as less competent and committed than women without children. Moreover, they were held to higher expectations when it came to proving their hirability (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007, p. 1316). The results were different for men, for whom fatherhood resulted in better evaluations and salaries. Fathers were also judged less harshly than non-fathers (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007, p. 1317). These results are consistent with the traditional understanding of families consisting of male breadwinners and female caregivers. The results from the audit study confirmed the existence of the "motherhood penalty" and demonstrated that real employers prefer to hire childless women to mothers. According to the study, parenthood decreases the chances of being hired for women but not for men (Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007, p. 1330) These results highlight the prominence of essentialist views on motherhood, which place women in a highly disadvantaged position in the labor market.

According to the research conducted in Georgia in 2018, women spend 45 hours a week on housework on average, while men are spending no more than 15 hours (UN Women, 2018). Roles of men and women in Georgian society are highly differentiated, with women immersed in household chores even if they are involved in the paid employment when their husbands are not (Sumbadze, 2008, p. 88). Moreover, women's work within the house is largely unnoticed and is never valued as much as men's work outside of the home; therefore, women carry a dual burden, while men do not participate in the chores traditionally attributed to women (Sumbadze, 2008, p. 88). In addition to this, the nature of the social activities that men and women are involved in also differ. While women participate in social activities which offer emotional support, men participate more in group leisure activities (Sumbadze, 2008, pp. 89-90). Surveys

suggest that women are the ones taking care of cooking, shopping, helping children with the homework and care for the health of other family members (Sumbadze, 2008, p. 89). These results, although dated, coincide with the information about the allocation of time between men and women in the families of the interviewees.

3. Methodology

To answer my research question, I chose to use a qualitative research method of in-depth semi-structured interviewing; therefore, I had a specific interview guide with a set of questions I would have liked my interviewees to answer, but I was still open for new inquiries. I was interested in the "lived experiences" of the respondents, and their subjective outlook on the reality surrounding them (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 7); The interviews were not strictly controlled, and there was a room for spontaneity for both the researcher and the respondent (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 5). In other words, I tried to provide a certain structure, but it was flexible enough for the interviewees to formulate their ideas and concerns in their own words and from their own individual perspective (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 285). Considering my research question, this particular method seemed to have the most potential for producing knowledge from the dialogues as it allowed space for following up and exploring further on the most important parts of the interviews (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 286). I chose to say dialogues because this type of interview allows the researcher to become visible as "a knowledge-producing participant in the process" rather than hide behind the pre-meditated interview guide (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 286). This approach allowed me to create a space for the interviewees, where they felt comfortable enough to open up, go beyond the surface, and discuss their concerns freely.

For analyzing the interviews, I employed the method of thematic analysis which helped me study the perspectives of different respondents while focusing on the similarities and differences between them (Nowell, Norris , White, & Moules , 2017, p. 2). In this process, I used a six-phased method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): 1. I studied the data collected thoroughly and made primary notes; 2. I assigned specific codes to the sections of the interviews that I found especially interesting and useful for my study. This helped me to better understand the important parts of the interviews as well as patterns present in the narratives; 3. I grouped the codes under the wider categories/themes. This process helped me make sense of fragments

of the interviews which did not make as much sense when on their own (Nowell, Norris , White, & Moules , 2017, p. 8). While analyzing the data I used the inductive method. I did not have a pre-determined framework for coding and was relying entirely on the data collected; 4. Next, I reviewed the validity of the themes and checked whether there was enough data for the themes to function (Nowell, Norris , White, & Moules , 2017, p. 9). On this stage, I tried to correct all the mistakes that I had made in the process of coding and categorization (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 21); 5. I defined each and every one of the themes and named them accordingly; 6. I analyzed my data following the themes (Nowell, Norris , White, & Moules , 2017, pp. 11-12). This approach helped me to make a good use of the data collected and be efficient in a limited amount of time that I had.

3.1. Position of the Researcher

I relied on feminist standpoint epistemology and placed interviewees at the center of the research process, allowing women's experiences to be "the starting point from which to build knowledge" (Brookes, 2011, p. 4). Feminist standpoint epistemology creates the process of knowledge building that encourages the researcher to see the world from the perspective of women and apply this knowledge to social change; therefore, it is the mixture of a theory and a research method - "an approach to knowledge construction and a call to political action" (Brookes, 2011, p. 3). Sandra Harding argued that those lacking privilege in social positions is privileged in another way, namely, with respect to acquiring knowledge of social reality (Rolin, 2009, p. 218). According to Harding, the sense of the reality of the unprivileged is more objective than those of others. Kristina Rolin, in her article "Standpoint Theory as a Methodology for the Study of Power Relations," calls this claim "the thesis of epistemic advantage" (Rolin, 2009, p. 218). Rolin states that the thesis of epistemic advantage is often misrepresented in two ways: as essentialism and as an automatic privilege. The former assumes

that there is such thing as a universal women's perspective, and the latter assumes that those in subordinate positions automatically gain epistemic privilege (Rolin, 2009, p. 218). In this research, I try to emphasize the fact that the women interviewed hold a very specific position in the Georgian context, which affects the way they experience temporality. Their stance on the issues discussed cannot be generalized to a larger number of Georgian women in any aspect.

While selecting interviewees, I had the following criteria in mind: all of my interviewees were supposed to be married with children and working full-time. Since the interviews were conducted in the Spring of 2020 during the new coronavirus outbreak in the most parts of the world, I was unable to meet the respondents face-to-face and had to record interviews via phone or online. These circumstances altered my research process significantly since I did not have prior experience in conducting interviews online. My main concern was that the interviewees would find it harder to open up with me since we were not meeting face to face; therefore, I tried to reach out to potential respondents through my family and friends. This way, it would be easier for me to break the ice, gain their trust, overcome initial awkwardness, and build an interesting conversation without meeting in person. I had no difficulties scheduling interviews, as the topic discussed is of high interest to the women themselves and does not seem to be particularly sensitive at first glance. Though from diverse professional backgrounds, my research sample turned out to be a very specific group of women: with university education and higher than average income, living in Tbilisi; therefore, my interviewees had access to a number of privileges not available to other women living in Georgia, for example hiring external help, mainly in the form of other women, to do some of the housework. I consider it a limitation of my study that it does not include the perspectives of women with lower income and educational qualifications, or living outside of the capital. I acknowledge that the conclusions drawn from the data collected can be irrelevant for women not enjoying the same privileged position.

Since I intend this research to be feminist, I tried to stay mindful of the researcher-participant relationship and engage in the practice of reflexivity throughout the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 7). While I knew some of my interviewees personally, and I had a general idea about their work and family lives, I acknowledged that I was still an "outsider." As Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber describes in the "Practice of Feminist In-Depth Interviewing," the feminist interviewer is aware of the nature of their relationship to the interviewee, and understands their "particular personal and research standpoints and the role they play in the interview process in terms of power and authority over the interview situation." (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 4). I also took Hesse-Biber's advice and addressed the following questions: How do my own values and beliefs affect research process; What shapes the questions chosen to study, and my approach of studying them; How does the social, economic, and political context of where I live affect the research process on all levels? (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 16) My prior knowledge from various quantitative time-use studies regarding the unfairness of the distribution of time as a resource within dual-earner families affected the way I came up with the questions and organized the interview guide. Sandra Harding (1993) suggested applying the concept of "strong objectivity" to the research and argued that taking into consideration one's own standpoint during all steps of the research increases the objectivity of the researcher (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 18). My values as a feminist researcher were crucial for the research process as it shaped the way I approached and carried out the fieldwork as well as the process of data analysis. The social, economic, and political context of Georgia is what provoked my interest in this topic in the first place, as the long periods of massive unemployment, and current precarity of working conditions affect women disproportionately. The essentialist perception of motherhood and unequal distribution of unpaid labor deprives women of discretionary time. Having acknowledged this, my main goal was to talk to women who experience all of this firsthand and get the idea of their individual sense of time. While interviews started from the description of

their typical workday, we gradually transitioned into deeper, more complex conversations, discussing the unique, dynamic perceptions of time of the respondents.

3.2. The Limitations of the Study

One of the biggest limitations of the study was the process of collecting data. Due to various traveling restrictions, I was unable to meet the respondents physically and had to therefore conduct the interviews via phone or online. I believe that face to face communication is extremely important for qualitative research. Conducting the interviews in person makes it significantly easier to break the tension and create a comfortable space for the interviewees so that they can open up and give deeper, more complex answers to the interview questions. Meeting the respondent for the first time on the phone creates a certain level of awkwardness which is not easy to overcome in some cases and might discourage the interviewee from sharing their experiences and speaking broadly about the issues in question.

Another limitation of the study was that due to the COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to reach out to potential respondents from more diverse backgrounds. All women in my research sample were from more or less similar educational and occupational backgrounds and enjoyed a number of privileges not accessible to the majority of women in Georgia. These circumstances shaped the research in a number of ways. The reality described by my interviewees may not be relevant for other women who also experience high levels of time poverty shaping their perceptions of temporality. Some of the time management techniques described in the analytical chapter may only be available to my respondents because of their privileged positions in the society compared to other women. Nevertheless, I still consider the outcomes of this research to be significant.

4. Findings and Discussion

I argue that the dominant essentialist understanding of motherhood in Georgia alters working women's experience of time from the rigidity of capitalist temporality to the more malleable perception of time. Working mothers are continuously pressured to manipulate their time employing various time-management and time-saving strategies to fulfill their roles as primary caretakers while also maintaining full-time jobs. The precarity of working conditions in Georgia, unregulated working hours, and the lack of part-time job opportunities create additional tension in these women's lives. In the first part of the chapter (4.1), I discuss how interviewees perceive their roles as mothers and how they organize their time according to these perceptions. I address the glorification of motherhood in Georgian society, the ways in which it shapes respondents' sense of themselves, and how it affects their temporal experiences. In the second part of the chapter (4.2), I analyze the time management and time-saving strategies employed by the respondents like juggling different tasks and responsibilities (4.2.1); paying for help or receiving free help from their family members who are also female (4.2.2), sacrificing few years of employment after having a child and losing their professional positions (4.2.3); overscheduling (4.2.4) and reducing their leisure time to the minimum (4.2.5).

4.1. Valorization of Motherhood and Its Temporal Consequences

Motherhood is said to be a highly respected role in Georgia, with womanhood often equated with motherhood and reproduction and upbringing of the children considered to be the main function for women (Sumbadze, 2008, p. 86). This type of essentialist thinking on motherhood reducing women's identities solely to the image of mothers shape their temporal experience and

affect both work and family life. Mothers are expected to spend the majority of their time taking care of a child and being involved in every aspect of their life.

While discussing their experiences as mothers, more than a few interviewees emphasized the importance of a mother-child bond for the process of child development. According to them, it is crucial that women invest sufficient time in the upbringing of a child if they want to avoid problems later in life. Respondents also discuss the role of a father; however, it is clear that most of the child-rearing responsibilities fall on them, and they are the ones subject to blame in case anything does not go right in the life of a child. The fear of such judgment from society dictates women to spend more time with their children, and whenever this is not possible for various understandable reasons, they feel guilty.

> *If my income was not so important for my family, I would have*
> *stayed home for some time. I often have a feeling of dissatisfaction*
> *and feel bad for not spending more time with my son. I sometimes*
> *envy the parents who can afford that, with "white envy" of course.*
> [1]

The "motherhood myth" (Douglas, Michaels, 2005), or a cultural expectation of uninterrupted and high-quality involvement of mothers in their children's lives, often leads to maternal guilt (Rotkirch & Janhunen, 2010, p. 90). Women are encouraged to spend as much time with their children as possible, which creates additional time strain and emotional burden for them. "Mother-blaming" is a practice that has been present for a long time and often happens without taking a child's individual and developing characteristics into account (Caplan & Hall-McCorquodale, 1985, p. 612). Most of the time, the mother-child interaction is overemphasized, ignoring the role of a father or other caretakers, thus perpetuating mother-blaming (Caplan &

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[1] Interview with Nino on April 20, 2020

Hall-McCorquodale, 1985, p. 612). Sometimes women are blamed for the circumstances that are not under their control, like having to work long hours. Professor of psychology Vicky Phares gives an example of theories like Freudian theory, attachment theory, cognitive-developmental theory, and learning theory that positions the mother as an important parent and father with insignificant influence (Phares, 1992, p. 660).

Based on the interviews, the double standards regarding parenthood are the main reasons behind the dramatic shift in the way women experience time. If their partners took equal time for care work and household chores, the respondents would experience less time pressure and would have been able to spend more time according to their wishes; however, the perception of motherhood as something almost sacred and the overemphasis on the importance of mother-child bond is culturally entrenched and internalized by the interviewees.

> *I wish I could be there for my daughters as much as my mother*
>
> *was for me, but I need to work and bring bread on the table, that's*
>
> *the difference between my mother and me, she was a housewife.* [2]

In the quote above, the respondent compares the time she spends with her daughters with the time her mother spent with her when she was a child. The fact that she does not discuss her husband or her father says a lot about her understanding of parenthood, which is in compliance with the traditional views on this subject. Adrienne Rich, in her book *Of Woman Born,* discusses how most us have been raised by mothers or other women who took the role of our mothers. Even those, whose fathers took part in the upbringing process, rarely remember them for "their patient attendance when they were ill, their doing the humble tasks of feeding and cleaning us; we remember scenes, expeditions, punishments, special occasions. For most of us a woman provided the continuity and stability – but also the rejection and refusals – of our early lives, and

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[2] Interview with Tamar, May 30, 2020

it with a woman's hands, eyes, body, voice, that we associate our primal sensations, our earliest social experience" (Rich, 1995, p. 12). It is almost like the standards regarding motherhood, and the division of unpaid labor and care work has not changed much over the generations in Georgia. The thing that changed the most is women's increased participation in the labor market; therefore, some women in my research sample struggle with keeping up with the standards of mothering set by their mothers, who were housewives, while they work at least 40 hours a day and provide for a family.

This sort of discourse is consistent with the concept of "intensive mothering," described in Sharon Hays's book *The Cultural Contradiction of Motherhood*. Hays claims that working mothers are often conflicted about the contradictory cultural models of child rearing and paid labor, both of which require full devotion and commitment. Nevertheless, women discussed in the book think that every child should have a primary caregiver – the mother (Hays, 1998, p. 8). According to this view, children need a constant, uninterrupted nurture from a central caregiver, and mothers are the ones best suited for this role. While men share some of the responsibilities, they do not provide the same amount and quality of care (Hays, 1998, p. 8). Whenever a mother is not available to take care of her child, she finds a substitute primary caregiver who is also a woman (Hays, 1998, p. 8).

While talking about housework and childcare, women do not mention their husbands unless they are asked directly. In most cases, husbands take some part in childcare, like driving children to places or taking them for a walk; however, they barely do any housework. Most interviewees see their husbands' involvement not as their responsibility as a father but as "help." Men and women adopt different "gender strategies" while defining their roles as wives or husbands entail. These ideas of manhood and womanhood are deeply engrained in their consciousness from their childhood (Hochschild & Machung, 2012, p. 15). Interviewees see paid employment as the most

significant part of the day for their husbands, even if their own jobs are equally or even more demanding and vital for the family income.

> *My husband is an active father and tries to spend as much time with children as possible. He tries to help out with children. However, he is often very busy at work.*[3]

This type of thinking paired with the essentialist perceptions of motherhood is one of the core reasons for time poverty experienced by respondents and their need to manipulate after-work time to the extreme. While interviewees mention wanting to spend less time at work, none of them talk about spending less time doing childcare and housework, since they consider it as their duty as women and mothers. Women in Georgia are socialized from early childhood to complete this sort of unpaid labor without questioning the fairness of the distribution of these activities between themselves and their partners. To put it in other words, the men have a choice about whether or not they spend time on domestic work, and some do choose to help (Connell, 2005, p. 374).

Motherhood is still valorized and viewed as the main function of women, and it is well-reflected in these interviews. Moreover, in Georgia women who do not have children by choice or for other reasons, are often pitied. Various research reports regarding gender role attitudes in Georgia among the people of different professional backgrounds are full of quotes like this one: "The child is the most important thing in a woman's life, a childless woman… is like an abandoned house" (Training and Research Group, 2014, p. 21). Adrienne Rich also notes that terms like "barren" or "childless" have been used in negative connotation about women for a long time and reduced their identities to childbearing, while the term "nonfather" does not really exist (Rich, 1995, p. 11), there is no word for a childless man in the Georgian language while there are

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[3] Interview with Lela on April 23, 2020

multiple for childless women. These tendencies towards glorifying motherhood are connected to the idea of "new momism" introduced by Douglas and Michaels. In modern day Georgia, although there is an illusion of choice, women are still valued for their use of reproductive capabilities. Even if a woman achieves great success professionally, her life is considered to be unfulfilled and she fails to gain validation from the society unless she has children.

On the other hand, women who have children feel like they have completed their duty towards society and are privileged to do so. They are expected to show their respect to this role by building their lives around children. Women working full-time find it especially difficult to do this; however, all of my interviewees try regardless. This is one of the reasons why their perception of time is more flexible and adaptable to immediate circumstances and not just tuned to the rhythms of work. They are trying to balance contradictory cultural images of mother and paid worker as described by Hays and analyzed above.

4.2. Time Management Techniques and Temporal Experiences

As I already mentioned, all of my twelve interviewees are from dual-earner families making major contributions to the family finances, and most of them have stressful, demanding jobs; however, they still consider themselves to be responsible for every aspect of their children's life from physical and mental well-being to education and leisure. Although work is extremely important for the interviewees, their focus is much broader than maximizing productivity or climbing the career ladder. Interviewees perceive motherhood as their principal duty, trying to adapt other parts of their lives to the role of a primary caregiver to their children. This is not easy as all of the respondents work standard 8-hour workdays, often required by the employers to stay overtime. Unable to reduce their working hours or switch to part-time employment, interviewees have to utilize their after-work time in order to fulfill their roles as mothers;

therefore, they feel the need to be especially careful with their after-work time. This often means doing different tasks at the same time, dividing their attention between children and housework. They have to manage work time and after-work time as well as the relationship between these two.

Interviewees often emphasized that over the years they have gained and developed techniques that help them navigate through work and private life with more ease than they did before. It seemed like many of the interviewees downplayed the burden they have to carry in order to keep both work and family life going. This is one of the reasons why I argue that the perception of time for the working mothers in my research sample is malleable and adaptable. All throughout the interviews, it seemed that the women overestimated the control they have over their time. While working a minimum of 8 hours a day and spending rest of the day either doing housework or caring for the children, their days are packed; however, they still feel like they can squeeze in more activities in this time. In other words, they are constantly trying to manipulate the time they have in order to meet the number of standards set for them by society.

In other words, women interviewed are in a constant rush and experience a lot of time-related pressure. It was clear from the interviews that some women felt pressured to develop vigorous management and organizational skills in order to utilize their time beyond paid employment. Women use different techniques to save time. Most of them felt like they had a significant influence on the flow of time in their lives Dictated by the image of the efficient and always productive neoliberal subject, many of the women try to create and follow a schedule with specific amounts of time allotted to each task; however, most of the time things don't go as planned, and they have to juggle several tasks. Some of the respondents choose other strategies and pay for help or use the help of other female members of the family. There are respondents who have left their jobs mid-career after having the first child and went to work after a few years, losing their high positions at work. Most of them reduce their leisure time to the minimum

in order to fulfill the roles of mothers. Some women in the research sample use more than one of this strategies on an everyday basis. In the following sub-sections, I describe the abovementioned techniques and strategies in detail, along with the effects they have on the temporal experiences of the respondents.

4.2.1. Work-Life Balance and "Juggling" Responsibilities

Raewyn Connel, in her article *A Really Good Husband: Work/Life Balance, Gender Equity and Social Change* describe the process of "managing the relationship between household and workplace" as "juggling" (Connell, 2005, pp. 375-376). The word juggling is used by the respondents participating in Connell's study. They describe different ways of juggling their work and family responsibilities according to their priorities. However, some of the women participating in Connell's study have flexible jobs that accommodate their strategies (Connell, 2005, p. 376). Women in the sample of this research are unable to alter their working hours according to their needs. In the contrary, they are often forced to adapt their personal time to the needs of the employer and the company; therefore, their so called "free time" is often colonized by work. When this happens, women juggle their family responsibilities along with the work responsibilities. There is no linearity in this process, the perception of time by the interviewees is highly adaptable and dependent on the external circumstances.

> *I often have to be on long calls regarding the issues at work late*
>
> *in the evenings and sometimes even during the weekends. At the*
>
> *times like this, I just have to do what I have to do…*[4]

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[4] Interview with Tamar, May 30, 2020

As discussed above, the widespread essentialist views on motherhood in Georgia pressures women into taking too many responsibilities on their shoulders without even acknowledging the effects this kind of stress has on their physical and mental health. In addition, women are encouraged by capitalist rationality to enhance their productivity and efficiency at the workplace. Considering the scarcity of well-paying jobs in the Georgian labor market and the way the respondents' families are dependent on their income, it is crucial for these women to keep up with these standards. Many of them feel grateful for the jobs they have because their working conditions are less precarious than those of other women who are involved in informal employment. As glorified as motherhood is in Georgian mentality, it is also a major drawback in women's professional lives. Many of the interviewees have a very legitimate fear that they could be easily replaced at their jobs in case they let their family life interfere with their work life.

> *My boss found out I was pregnant with my second child right after*
>
> *I was promoted and she did not hide the disappointment. This kind*
>
> *of attitude somehow makes you feel guilty and less secure at the*
>
> *same time...[5]*

Most of the employers openly express their negative attitude towards employing pregnant women, women with young children, and sometimes even married women as they are viewed as potential mothers; therefore, as explained by the interviewee, women feel insecurity and instability regarding their jobs. The justified desperation for employment combined with the patriarchal conception of motherhood urges women to strive towards perfect work-life balance and keep up with the demands on both sides.

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[5] Interview with Nino on April 20, 2020

> *Being married or being pregnant translates into being less*
>
> *productive for employers. It makes you feel sort of guilty like*
>
> *you are doing a bad thing.*[6]

Obviously, this process is both physically exhausting and emotionally draining, and being discouraged from speaking out about these problems make women's emotional and mental state even more fragile. One of the interviewees mentioned that sometimes she reaches the point when she is extremely exhausted and no longer sees the point in doing everyday tasks; however, she does not have time to get depressed. Not allowing oneself to express dissatisfaction about current circumstances and enduring such amount of stress on a daily basis can be detrimental for women's health and well-being. Although the neoliberal subject takes all responsibility for her well-being and self-care (Rottenberg, 2014, p. 418), in the case of the interviewees, it is mostly impossible. As much as they try to make the most out of their time, they cannot fit everything in 24 hours as most of their time outside of work is spent on taking care of others.

Dale Southerton and Mark Tomlinson describe three mechanisms that contribute to the sense of "harriedness:" substantive overload, disorganized rhythms, and temporal density (Southerton & Tomlinson, 2005). First describes the volume of time required to complete the task, the second is coordinating social practices with the others, and the third is allocation of these practices within time (Southerton & Tomlinson, 2005, pp. 232-234). These mechanisms highlight the fact that the sense of acceleration of time and being in a rush can be different for everyone else. In my research sample, the experiences of women and their perception of hurriedness as well as time poverty have been expressed differently and have not been limited to the three mechanisms described above.

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[6] Interview with Nana on April 24, 2020

When asked what the most stressful part of their day is, most women answer that it is coming home after a long working day and having to face another set of responsibilities:

> *The most challenging part of the day for me is stepping into my*
> *house in the evening and realizing there is a dinner to be made*
> *and homework to be checked. This moment of transitioning from*
> *my work self to mom-self is really stressful.*[7]

All of the interviewees have to juggle these two identities on a daily basis and switch from one to another when needed, which shapes their sense of time as unstable. If at work, they follow a strict schedule and complete specific tasks set out for the day, at home, they switch to the role of a primary caretaker and start doing a number of different tasks erratically. As paid employment takes a minimum of eight hours a day, there is only so much one can do in the remaining waking hours; therefore, respondents feel constant stress and hurriedness accelerating their perception of time after work. The short period of transitioning from one part of the day to another described in the quote above is especially exhausting because of the obvious reasons. Overall, the experience of time for working mothers is characterized by more elasticity, as they are constantly trying to shrink it or stretch it according to the needs of their children and the circumstances of the day.

The reasoning of most women in the research sample regarding the distribution of their time between work and family often follows the lines of neoliberal feminist rhetoric seen in the books like Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In*. This tendency is interesting as women interviewed within this research do not enjoy many of the privileges that are accessible to neoliberal feminist subject constructed through these discussions. Nevertheless, many of the respondents repeated over and over throughout the interviews that despite the lack of time, if one has good enough time

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[7] Interview with Nino on April 20, 2020

management and organizational skills, it is very much possible to balance work and family perfectly without any significant difficulties.

The sense of hurriedness and temporal disorganization was even more intensified at the time of the interviews, as they were conducted in the Spring of 2020. Most interviewees' work and home life had transformed dramatically at that time due to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the world and locally. The government placed various restrictions from the end of February, and many workplaces were shut down. All of the interviewees except one have been working from home for months at the time of the interviews. For most of them, it meant even longer and less regulated working hours. According to one interviewee, who is a medical representative in a branch of a foreign pharmaceutical company, she has to make work-related calls and be in touch with the colleagues all throughout the day. Many employers are fighting to keep their companies operating during these uncertain times; therefore, they are constantly introducing new ways of working and are coming up with new tasks for the employees. Interviewees noted that it took them a lot of time to adapt to the new working conditions, and many of them are still struggling to keep up with this major transition. In addition to these hardships, it is especially hard for women with young children to concentrate on work and combine it with housework and childcare. If work hours were more or less stable and segregated from family life before, it is no longer possible. In addition, those who paid for external help are left without nannies and housekeepers, children are no longer going to schools and kindergartens, and the burden of care is intensified immensely.

4.2.2. Paying for Help

Most of my interviewees who have children are in a privileged position of being able to afford external help; therefore, they can manage to combine childcare with paid employment. They admit that it would be impossible for them to maintain their jobs without such services. However, in some cases, it is not within financial means of a family to hire help; therefore, women are forced to give up their jobs either temporarily or permanently in order to care for their children. Interestingly, none of the interviewees discuss the possibility of fathers sacrificing their careers for childcare. Men are expected to prioritize employment over care responsibilities, and they do it even if they earn significantly less than their spouses in dual-earner families. In contrast with men, women in Georgia are socialized from early childhood to complete unpaid labor without questioning the fairness of the distribution of these activities between themselves and their husbands. It is easier for them to pay for external help rather than question the distribution of labor in their marriage. Being free from certain household chores allows interviewees to spend more quality time with their children and fulfill their roles as mothers.

> *When I was younger, hiring other women for help was frowned upon; you were supposed to be this sort of "super mom." I think these attitudes are changing. I am not ashamed to admit that I can't do it all[8].*

Other interviewees have also mentioned that opening up about their vulnerabilities increased their freedom and allowed them to concentrate on what's most important, instead of trying to be perfect wives and mothers. They do not feel bad for relying on these services as long as they spend enough time with their children. Distributing part of their work to other women is one of

[8] Interview with Tamuna, May 15, 2020

the individual solutions which help women deal with the stress of everyday life without challenging the politics of the time. Obviously, solutions like this are not accessible for most women in Georgia due to a lack of finances. In some cases, women do not need to pay other women and, instead, receive help from other female members of their families. Usually, the helpers are their mothers or mothers-in-law.

> *My children visit their grandmother on weekends, and that's*
>
> *literally the only time I have to take care of myself[9].*

Due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Georgia and the subsequent lockdown, women were not receiving paid or unpaid help from other women at the time of the interviews and were still adapting to this transition. Most of them had to juggle multiple works and home-related tasks, especially those with younger children. These women are constantly worried about wasting time and try to make every minute of their lives as productive as possible.

4.2.3. Professional "Downgrading"

Some of the respondents acknowledge that their current working schedule is suitable for an individual with little to no responsibilities beyond paid employment, and name this as the reason for their constant time pressure. Most of the interviewees are unable to reduce or modify their working hours for personal reasons as their work time is highly controlled by their employers. On the contrary, they are often required to work overtime without any regard for their life beyond work. As discussed in the context analysis section of this research, the employer-employee relationship in Georgia is not well-regulated or monitored; high rates of unemployment and scarcity of good job opportunities give employers disproportionate power

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[9] Interview with Lela on April 23, 2020

and lead to the exploitation of workers. These employment practices paired with the unreasonably high expectations for mothers, leave women overburdened and extremely stressed. This creates not only a very tense temporal experience but also is a significant barrier in women's careers. Two of the interviewees mentioned that they had more interesting or lucrative jobs before having the first child but had to leave due to family reasons; because of this gap in employment, they were unable to go back to their old positions and have found themselves professionally downgraded.

> *I stayed at home for three years after having my first child because it was impossible to do my job while caring for the baby. My son is a difficult child, and I couldn't find the right babysitter. Of course, I was not granted a parental leave [10].*

In Georgia, traditional male characteristics are associated with employment, while women's significance is tied to the family; therefore, mothers are the ones who are expected to make substantial sacrifices for childcare. None of my respondents' partners left their jobs or made any significant changes in their lives after the birth of a first child, while the careers of women were hindered significantly. Due to professional downgrading, some of the respondents do not get fulfillment from their current jobs; however, they are currently unable to make changes. Working for wages without seeing the value in what you do and working the second shift to keep the family going is extremely exhausting. These women are always worried about wasting time and try to make every minute of their lives as useful as possible, especially for their children and family members. Essentialist attitudes towards motherhood widespread in Georgia and internalized by the respondents, shape the experience for time for them, characterized by more elasticity and malleability.

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[10] Interview with Tamar, on May 13, 2020

4.2.4. Overscheduling

According to some respondents, trying to schedule every minute of the day eases anxiety for them and creates a sense of control over their lives; however, keeping up with these schedules while having so much on one's plate is clearly not always possible. One of the respondents claimed that she has an internal clock and schedule according to which she completes one task after another. However, while discussing the technique of scheduling further, it was revealed that more often than not, things do not go as planned and she has to adapt to new circumstances and changed plans; therefore, I assume that scheduling is a time management technique that they often use at work, and they try to implement the same strategy at home; moreover, the whole "time management" and "work-life balance" ideology makes us believe that we are responsible for our own time poverty. If you don't have enough time to do something that is important to you, your poor time management skills are to blame, not the systemic inequality. It should also be noted that scheduling requires a lot of time and intellectual effort from women, which is rarely talked about in public and was not emphasized or even mentioned by the interviewees either.

The COVID-19 pandemic was especially hard on women who relied on the technique of overscheduling every aspect of their lives for saving time and easing anxiety. It is no longer possible to make any plans, and there are even more unpredictable obstacles coming up every day related to newly remote-jobs, housework, and childcare. Respondents who tried to draw a strict line between work and family time are now unable to make this distinction and often have to perform multiple tasks simultaneously. There are days when they have to manage both work and family-related crises at the same time. Being unable to separate work and family time created havoc in many women's lives. Although they are used to multitasking, they were not

ready for merging all of their responsibilities within a single space of their homes. In these conditions, time for the interviewees is perceived as extremely dense, unorganized, and virtually uncontrollable. However, for other interviewees with older children, lockdown means more discretionary time and less stress since they no longer have to drive their children around for extracurricular activities and classes.

4.2.5. Sacrificing Temporal Autonomy

All of the interviewees stated that they have little to no time for leisure activities, self-care, and self-development. Interviewees who have young children do not even mention leisure while discussing their arrangement of time unless specifically asked. For most, leisure is connected to spending time with children, like going to the park or having family outings. Some of them noted that they always wanted to take up physical activities or learn a new language but never found time for it. In some instances, women sacrifice their sleeping time as well in order to keep up with the tasks. One of the interviewees mentioned staying up late or waking up early in the morning in order to prepare dinner for the evening, adapting her time according to the needs of their family members. Most interviewees stated that they have little to no time to be alone and to take care of themselves since their non-work time is occupied by childcare and housework. Even though non-work time is generally considered to be "free time," for interviewees, this part of the day is often more stressful than the rest.

Michael Bittman and Judy Wajcman in their article "The Rush Hour: The Quality of Leisure Time and Gender Equity" discuss "dual burden" and the "second shift" experienced by women worldwide and argue that a 40-hour week and 5-day workweek is no longer relevant (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999, p. 1). According to them, working time is headed towards more and more flexibility, which is even more problematic for those who have family responsibilities outside of work. Bittman and Wajcman discuss "pure" and "interrupted" leisure and show that women's

leisure time is often invaded by children and their needs, while men enjoy leisure, which is much more uninterrupted and restorative (Southerton & Tomlinson, 2005, p. 218). Fragmentation of leisure deteriorates the quality of time and creates a sense of hurriedness (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999, p. 9). Many of the interviewees mentioned that they do not have time on their own. Instead, they spend the little leisure time that they have with their children; therefore, the only type of leisure that they experience is fragmented leisure. As I already mentioned, some of them were concerned about not spending enough time with children and scared of missing out on something important. For this reason, they tried to spend as much time with their children as possible, mostly at the expense of their leisure.

Bittman and Wajcman define adult leisure as time spent doing a leisure activity without the presence of children. According to them, mothers lack adult leisure time both in comparison with people with older or no children as well as men. (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999, pp. 17-18). This supports the argument that the experience of time can be significantly different for individuals, depending on their family situation and the division of unpaid labor. The experience was diverse within the research sample as well, depending on the type of employment and age of children; however, what they all had in common was that their perception of time was malleable and highly adaptable to the changing circumstances. For these women, time is not just money. It is not highly organized, homogenous, centered on productivity. Instead, time is full of unexpected turns to which one has to accommodate to in order to survive. Within my research sample, women are constantly driven by the needs of others, struggling to take control over their life. For working mothers, the majority of the day is colonized by necessity.

Moreover, while discussing temporal autonomy, some women talked in the past tense only:

> *My biggest regret is that I did not spend more time on my personal*
>
> *development before getting married. I could have studied more*

and become more successful. Unfortunately, I took all the free

time I had before for granted and did not make good use of it.[11]

The sentiment expressed in this quote was shared in many interviews. Women regret not utilizing the temporal autonomy they had before children and "wasting" it, instead of focusing on personal and professional development. It is considered that mothers are no longer allowed to think about themselves and should direct all of their energy to be a "good mother," even if it leaves them unfulfilled and exhausted. It is obvious that most of the women interviewed have internalized these views over the years and do not feel like they are entitled to personal space and discretionary time. A number of the interviewees have mentioned that they are no longer able to invest in themselves, and their responsibilities have overridden their professional ambitions. Most of these women still have the idea of success, which requires investing in oneself and working towards set goals in order to achieve professional development; however, overburdened with responsibilities both at work and at home, they do not feel like they can spare time for themselves.

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[11] Interview with Nana on April 24, 2020

5. Conclusions

In today's fast-paced world, time is increasingly valuable and often a scarce resource. It is also an exchangeable commodity - we constantly prioritize certain tasks over others in order to make the best use out of our time. However, we need to acknowledge how relations of power affect the distribution of time and make certain groups more vulnerable to experiencing time deficiency than others. Women in capitalist societies are often pressured to maintain the perfect "work-life balance" without questioning the economic and political factors causing time poverty in their lives. Depoliticizing time increases the stress levels of individuals without questioning the source of the problem. The lack of effective labor legislation, the rise of the informal economy, and the unfair distribution of family responsibilities make women vulnerable to precarious working conditions. As a result, women are torn between work and family and are more prone to experiencing time poverty.

The experience of time constantly changes according to the circumstances and the time-management tools used by women. Although time-saving and time management techniques create temporary relief for them, they do not challenge the current unfair allocation of time as a resource. The techniques described above have been generated over time, through the experience of constant rush and high levels of stress. They create the perception of time which differs dramatically from the dominant capitalist understanding of time which is "synonymous to synchronized, linear, measurable, divisible, commodified clock time, with its accompanying insistence on punctuality, speed, discipline, and hard work" (Bryson, 2007, p. 31). Instead, the perception of time for women who employ these times-saving techniques is flexible, adaptable, and malleable. Although they do not enjoy much temporal autonomy, they still try to take control over their time in order to provide for the family while also meeting societal expectations towards mothering.

Directing public conversation about time towards the "work-life balance" frames the issue as an individual struggle and encourages people to seek individual solutions by utilizing time management strategies and time-saving technology (Shippen, 2014, p. 18). However, the dominant understanding of motherhood prevents women from challenging the politics of care and time. Instead, they are encouraged to carry out their roles silently, without complaints.

Evidence from my research suggests that the dominant understanding of motherhood and the overemphasis on the importance of the mother-child relationship for the physical, mental and emotional well-being for the children pressure women into intensive mothering and into investing as much time as they can in providing maternal care for their children. According to the interviews, fathers do not spend nearly as much time doing caregiving activities, and their role in child-rearing is limited. Women only talk about mothering and rarely on parenting. They often compare mothering practices employed by them to the practices of their own mothers or other females in their lives, but never with their husbands and the fathers of their children. They do not feel like men are capable of providing the same levels of care, and most of them are satisfied with the minimum input and involvement from their husbands.

Respondents feel pressured to make the most of their time beyond paid employment since many of them already feel guilty for not spending "enough" time with their children. They are socialized to prioritize motherhood over work, even though all of them are parts of dual-earner families with significant, if not major, contributions to family finances. Despite this intense pressure, women still see it as their personal responsibility to manage time correctly and maintain a perfect balance between their work and family lives. Several of the interviewees mentioned that everything is possible if one has excellent time management skills and makes the most out of the day. The presence of this attitude suggests that women do not fully acknowledge the complex reasons behind their lack of temporal autonomy and view time-management skills as the solution. Women from my research sample are in a disadvantaged

position both in the domains of home and work. Therefore, working on maintaining the "work-life balance" is especially unrealistic for them, and even if they could somehow achieve a certain balance, it would not improve their quality of life significantly. Moreover, the work-life balance only serves as an illusion of having control over one's time. Since they are unable to reduce the hours of paid employment, women in my sample try to manipulate the time beyond their jobs, which requires management and organizational skills as well as a lot of mental energy and effort. However, this is the only way women are able to take control over their time. Based on these findings from the interviews, I argue that the perception of time for women in my research sample is what Edward Hall called "polychromic" as opposed to "monochromic" (Bryson, 2007, p. 130) in a sense that it is more people-oriented and the focus is not on dealing with each task separately. On the contrary, time is perceived as malleable and adaptable according to the needs of other people, especially children. I believe that this research contributes to the scholarship on the intersections of motherhood and time. It discusses different temporal experiences of working mothers who are situated in the specific Georgian context where women's working conditions are especially hard, and prejudices against them are strong. Nevertheless, they have all generated different techniques and strategies to cope with the situation, and the way they rationalize their use of these techniques creates a lot of space for the discussions about the gendered experience of time.

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